

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM SUCCESSFULLY CHAMPIONS MENTAL WELL-BEING FOR UNDERSERVED

Alliant Educational Foundation-Funded Program Provides Much Needed Mental Health Services for Local Youth

SAN DIEGO (September 5, 2024) – With a deepening teen mental health crisis in this country, the San Diego Regional Children's Mental Health Consortium is championing the well-being of area youth by providing vital mental health assessments, diagnoses and treatments – making a profound and enduring impact on the lives of underserved San Diego children and families.

Launched by **Alliant Educational Foundation** (AEF) in 2020 amidst a nationwide mental health crisis, last year the Consortium provided much-needed mental health services to at-risk children and youth, facilitating nearly 2,000 individual and group sessions for 153 clients.

A four-way regional partnership between AEF, **Alliant International University** (AIU), a roster of high-profile nonprofits and core funders, the consortium bolsters children's mental health and helps strengthen positive parenting – with doctoral students from AIU's California School of Professional Psychology assigned to participating agencies with a site supervisor and a licensed clinical psychologist to provide clinical assessments and therapy.

According to recent treatment outcome data, the Consortium has generated significant results, providing a model for future programs throughout California. Last year, 70% of students treated in partnership with San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) showed improvement in overall mental health functioning, while 75% showed decreased depression and 43% decreased their generalized anxiety disorder.

According to AEF's CEO Valin Brown, children from underserved communities of color are more likely to experience mental health conditions due to discrimination, socioeconomic conditions, trauma and barriers to quality mental health care, and 82% of those served in the Consortium were identified as Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). Without proper intervention, students with mental health disorders are more likely to drop out of school, have learning difficulties and experience behavioral problems.

"Despite helping clients that are experiencing severe challenges, the San Diego Regional Children's Mental Health Consortium is making a difference through holistic, trauma-informed mental health treatment," Brown said. "We are thrilled with our most recent outcomes – which are a testament to the efforts, resources and talents of our graduate student providers and local nonprofits. Working together, we are able to build bridges between Alliant International University and local nonprofit agencies, allowing better access to quality mental health assessment and treatment for communities in need."

Danielle Miller, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist for SDUSD, added that the Alliant graduate students are providing critical mental health support during a time when teen mental health challenges are a significant concern nationwide: "Through the support of the Alliant practicum students, we are able to expand the continuum of mental health services offered through the school district and fill in the gaps to meet more student's needs – students that may not otherwise have access to services." In fact, across the Consortium's partners, 77% of youth had experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), emphasizing the need for mental health services.

Current consortium partners include:

- San Diego Unified School District (Canyon Hills and Morse High Schools)
- San Diego Center for Children
- Father Joe's Villages Programs
- Turn Behaviour Health Services
- Neighborhood House Association
- South Bay Community Services
- YMCA Behavioral Health

"Because of the San Diego Regional Children's Mental Health Consortium's success, Alliant Educational Foundation is launching the San Francisco Bay Area version this September, and the board has just greenlit planning for an in-house Sacramento version that will focus on mental health support for adults experiencing trauma," said Brown. "Alliant International University's network of psychology students across California makes this partnership possible, and we look forward to continue expanding."

Alliant Educational Foundation is proud to fund roughly half the cost of the program, with the remainder covered by a combination of funders, including San Diego Foundation's "Healthy Children & Families Initiative," the David C. Copley Foundation and Nordson Corporation.

For more information or to get involved, please visit www.allianted.org.

ABOUT ALLIANT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Alliant Educational Foundation (AEF) was established in 2015 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. AEF partners with Alliant International University and other institutions of higher education to provide a steady stream of funding and resources dedicated to supporting student scholarships, faculty research grants that will enhance academic outcomes, and broader community impact needs across the State of California. A core component of AEF's mission is to support post-secondary students from a diversity of backgrounds as they prepare for careers of service and leadership that improve lives in underserved communities. For more information, visit www.allianted.org.

Media Contacts: Sandy Young / Jean Walcher, J. Walcher Communications
sandy@jwalcher.com / jean@jwalcher.com, 619-295-7140