

IVFC’s Vikki Miller hits the ground running hard

Even when not riding her horse, Vikki Miller is a mover and a shaker.

For although she’s only in her third week as newly hired executive director of Illinois Valley Family Coalition (IVFC), she’s already working at a gallop and making tracks to improve services and programs, including obtaining grants.

She was one of 17 applicants for the IVFC post, and one of two finalists.

“I’m very much looking forward to working with a wonderful group of folks, the board of directors and the super staff,” said the new resident of rural Cave Junction.

Although she most recently lived 6 1/2 years in the small town (126 residents) of Valley Ford between Sebastopol and Bodega Bay in California’s Sonoma County, Miller is no newcomer to Illinois Valley. She’s visited many times because of family here; the reason for her relocation. Plus, she has “a wonderful boyfriend,” Bruce Lawson.

Besides enjoying family and friends, Miller feels a definite orientation toward helping those with special needs in society.

She grew up in Morro Bay, Calif. After moving to San Diego, she earned, with honors, bachelor’s and master’s degrees in sociology. Her emphasis in her undergraduate degree was deviant behavior; and in her graduate degree, immigration and child abuse.

She also completed a graduate-level program with Western School of Law in conjunction with San Diego State University and Children’s Hospital of San Diego. It focused on the legal, medical and psychological components of child



Vikki Miller

abuse.

Miller’s internship was with the San Diego District Attorney’s Office.

“The program really opened my eyes to the prevalence of the problem of child abuse in this country,” she said.

She speaks fluent Spanish, and her master’s thesis was titled, “The Experience of the Undocumented Mexican in the United States.” Regarding what she went through to gather data for the thesis, she said, “It is such a controversial subject, and there are definitely aspects of this issue that many people don’t consider, including the real impact on our economy.”

She taught 10 years with San Diego Unified School District in the Special Education Dept., working in a variety of programs with special-needs children including the medically indigent, emotionally challenged, learning handicapped, and delinquents.

While living in Valley

Ford, Miller ran a human resource agency four years, and taught at a high school for a year. During her last two years in California, the multitalented horseman and administrator helped found and operate a biodiesel co-operative, now open 24 hours a day, at New College of California in Santa Rosa.

She has a background in management, with some grant-writing experience.

Besides working, Miller, who has 35 years equestrian history, thoroughly enjoys riding her horse, “Chico de Ore,” and dealing with her new Nubian goat, “Primavera Clover.” She also likes to go on Nature walks, “and ‘Primavera’ usually tags along, walking right beside without a leash, like a dog.”

Concerning her work, she notes, “I’ve been in social services all my life, primarily dealing with children, but with adults too. Special needs are my forte, and I feel a special kinship with those needing assis-

tance.

“I enjoy helping and dealing with those sorts of issues. Making a positive difference is what I’m about; it’s what I want; and I’m delighted to have this opportunity here.”

Miller said that she sees a definite need for services in Illinois Valley. “I want to improve the existing programs, expand what is offered, and go after grants to facilitate that,” she said.

“Of particular concern,” she said, “are issues surrounding education. One example is that I.V. high school and middle school alternative students currently are housed at the coalition, meeting in the same large room.”

She’s also working on producing a quarterly newsletter, “Community Connections, News and Views.” The newsletter, she added, “will have something for all of the local residents and will be out soon.”

Some of the programs housed at the IVFC Bldg. on E. River Street are:

Early Intervention, Family Friends, I.V. Safe House Alliance, Three Rivers School District Alternative Education Center, Work Source Employment, I.V. Community & Human Services, Senior & Disability Services, Job Council, Rural Advocacy Program, and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 867.

“There’s an immense challenge here,” said Miller, but I’m up for it, and I’m pleased to be here.”

Miller replaces Kathleen Doyle, who left to take the job of development director with Grants Pass Family YMCA.

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Dimensional printed montages at RCC gallery

“Brecciated Time,” a collection of prints by Idaho artist Candace Nicol, will be displayed through April 30 at the Rogue Community College Fire House Gallery.

The exhibit features dimensional printed montages created from collagraph prints, solar plates and four-color polyester lithographs.

The multilayered prints, “which explore the com-

plexities of thought and memory,” have been widely exhibited. Nicol is completing work on a master of fine arts degree at Boise State University.

A geological term, “brecciated” refers to various pieces of rock held together by a binding medium. Nicol’s work compares the construction of personal identity to a similar process.

The artist will offer a

two-part workshop involving gel plate techniques from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday, April 14-15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is a fee.

The RCC Fire House Gallery is in Historic City Hall, Fourth and H streets, Grants Pass. The gallery is open from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays.

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