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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mental Health Court Graduate Starts Job  
with County Health and Human Services Agency  
Jessie Tessler will be a Peer Support Worker and will also serve on  
CA Supreme Court Chief Justices Advisory Committee**

**(Woodland, CA) – October 31, 2018** – On Tuesday, October 30, 2018, 28-year-old Davis resident and Mental Health Court (MHC) graduate, Jessie Tessler, began work at Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) as a Peer Support Worker. Jessie graduated from Mental Health Court this past June. She joins fellow MHC graduate, Dennis Cortopassi, as a Peer Support Worker.

Jessie will be working on the Forensic Team, the same team that supported her through the MHC program. The Forensic Team provides services to clients in MHC, Addiction Intervention Court (AIC), and those found facing misdemeanor charges who the court deems incompetent to stand trial. As a Peer Support Worker Jessie will provide support, advocacy, education and outreach services to peers in the community. Peers include consumers of mental health services and their family members/caregivers in the community. She will also assist professional and paraprofessional Mental Health staff, and promote and support client participation in program activities.

When asked about starting her new role as Peer Support Worker Jessie said, "I'm very excited. It's always been a dream to help people in some kind of way and this job is my foot in the door to a career that I've always dreamed about. It's a beautiful feeling knowing that the turbulence of my past has given me experience so I can help others, instead of me feeling like I failed myself. I will be going to school in January to further my education to make my dream a reality. I am so grateful for what MHC has given me

and it's only fair to give back and help others with the tools I learned from the whole team from MHC.”

Kristi Abbott, Clinical Supervisor of the Forensic Team and Jessie’s new supervisor said “Jessie began to show the leadership skills and desire to give back to the community toward the end of her time in MHC. Her experience as a MHC participant puts her in the unique position to provide hope and a sense of community to those currently enrolled in the program.”

District Attorney Jeff Reisig praised the efforts of Jesse. “Jessie is a true testament of what can happen when the criminal justice system chooses to decriminalize crimes committed by those suffering from mental illness. Jesse’s new job and appointment to an important committee is proof that anything is possible with hard work, dedication and a team providing unlimited support.”

In addition, last week Jessie was notified by Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, Tani Cantil-Sakauye, that she has been selected as the Treatment Court Graduate representative on the Judicial Council’s Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee. Yolo County Superior Court Judge Janet Gaard, who presides over MHC and AIC, nominated Jesse to the Committee in September. The purpose of the advisory committee is to make recommendations for improving the processing of cases in drug, domestic violence, peer and other collaborative courts. The committee proposes rules, standards, and forms; reviews and recommends legislation; identifies potential funding sources; oversees the collaborative court grant process; makes recommendations on criteria and data collection for identifying the long-term effectiveness of collaborative courts; and acts on assignments referred to it by the Judicial Committee.

In her letter to Jesse, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye stated, “The years ahead will bring both challenges and opportunities to our branch of government. It is with great respect and appreciation that Administrative Director Martin Hoshino and I welcome [Jessie’s] participation in improving the administration of justice in California.”

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