**Minding Mendocino**

By Jessica Maness, LCSW, Long Valley Health Center

**Going It Alone**

There is a fire in this community, the likes of which is rarely seen. We wild ones came here to be connected with something more, despite the cities with their resources and their access. As a newcomer, I am coming to realize the power that is here. Laytonville has many different and often difficult stories that have not resulted in a community halt, and to the contrary a harder ‘group pull’. We have grown so used to figuring it out; it is second nature to most of us to ‘just wing it’ with or without anyone else’s help. That is strength, resiliency, resourcefulness, and problem solving at a foundational level. There is much this community can do when connected and working together.

And in times of trouble that seems to be exactly what happens. It is said that Laytonville goes through fires and floods, tragedies and good times as a community. There are beautiful stories of unity and how people find belonging in this area. I believe in the power of this community and the dreams of its members, and I wonder: What is it that we need, in order to continue doing what we do in the best and most expansive way? Now, by no means is it that someone can wave a wand to give us those things. Yet, sometimes by identifying it therein lays the first step to gaining it. What resources, assistance, healing, information, or materials would keep us burning the brightest as a community?

There are, of course, dedicated community members asking these very questions and then meeting to discuss their own thoughts. Therefore, the second step may be to use our voices to communicate our ideas and needs to the right people. There were the surveys that many of us filled out over the summer so that these questions could be better answered. It is also sure that any of these committee members would be happy to hear the thoughts of individuals on these matters, and share them at the meetings. Is everyone who has some insight, questions, or ideas speaking up? Is everyone who is having problems gaining acknowledgement for those problems and possibly some help?

Sometimes we humans get so conditioned to going without help when it is unavailable, that we do not take advantage of what is there when it is available. A bigger problem exists when available resources are unknown to those who may use them. So here is my opportunity to mention new resources at the Long Valley Health Center. LVHC now has another LCSW to provide behavioral health therapy: Larann Henderson, who moved here in October. Nate Bevens, ASW is going to take new clients soon and may be providing some helpful groups for the community so stay tuned. Also, Ashlee Milenewicz is participating with the team from Project Sanctuary and she will be offering anger management, empowerment, and financial empowerment groups right here in Laytonville every Wednesday. Ashlee is ready to go with these groups and individuals as soon as there are enough participants so please call!

We are also gifted with this community and the resources that are here, such as our wonderful schools, Laytonville Healthy Start Family Resource Center, NAMI group, and the many talented helpers and healers that live here. It is not necessary for you to go it alone. So, if you have an idea (or a need) call one of your community resources and see if we can help, or direct you to someone who can assist you. Times are changing, and working as the powerful community we are can make the difference we all are looking for.

Remember to write in with topics of your own, and until next time: Thank you Laytonville for allowing me to become more and more a part of you. You are strong and beautiful. PO Box 870, Laytonville, CA 95454. (707-984-6131).