

WALKER'S CLIENT PROFILE: FAMILY CONNECTIONS EL DORADO, INC.



As the only Family Resource Center on the Western Slope of El Dorado County serving 4,000 children, youth and adults per year, Family Connections (a non-profit organization) focuses all their resources on providing programs and services to the County's socio-economically diverse clients. Their programs are geared toward families with special needs and at-risk children as well as mental health counseling, youth development and mentoring, child abuse prevention, family support services, and more.

Family Connections occupies a 4,000 square foot space on Placerville Drive which houses 39 employees and 250 community volunteers. The panel (cubicle) system they had hailed from the 1980s and was breaking down, looking worn and was not technology-friendly. Though they were grateful to have received the panel system years ago, it was no longer serving their needs. Plus, 4,000 square feet may sound like ample space, but it was not configured for privacy, efficiency or growth. Eric Jackson, Walker's expert furniture/systems installer, was in their office one day making a delivery and noted the condition of the cubicles. As timing would have it, Walker's was going to

be remodeling their offices and showroom soon. Walker's existing system was offered to Family Connections and they gladly accepted the offer.

As Wendy Wood, Executive Director explained, "The physical structure of our office got in the way of ultimate performance and what we could provide for our clients. Much of what we do is based on developing relationships and it became increasingly difficult in a cramped, non-private setting." So, when all "systems" were a "Go!", both Family Connections and Walker's went into their respective tear-down modes. Family Connections' volunteers (some of whom are clients) started tearing down the old panels, boxed up office goods from desks and filing cabinets, painted and cleaned the carpet. Walker's went in to action too, disassembling, packing and temporarily moving in to their smaller warehouse. Panels were delivered and set-up at Family Connections and Walker's remodel was begun in earnest. As the saying now goes, "What a difference a week makes!" because marginal office spaces were transformed into great office spaces...all in a week's time.

Additionally, because of Walker's expertise in systems design, Eric was able to suggest a certain configuration for a specific use, like creating a distinctly private, quiet cubicle so clients can fill out paperwork. The reception area is bigger, the administrative area is efficiently configured so everything is integrated and flows, employees have a private lunch area, and confidentiality is enhanced. The new look now conveys an aura of professionalism that validates and honors Family Connections' capabilities along with highlighting the importance of each person who comes through their door.

"The approximate value of this gift is about \$85,000, which translates into being able to serve up to 300 additional clients for a year. Our administrative costs run about 10%, so 90% of our funding goes to programs and services. This is the largest in-kind gift we have ever received and we never could have afforded to purchase it outright. We are eternally grateful to everyone at Walker's."