



County of Sonoma

State of California

Date: May 14, 2024

Item Number: _____

Resolution Number: _____

4/5 Vote Required

Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, Honoring and Commending Luana Vaetoe as Recipient of North Bay Leadership Council's

2024 "The Lightbulb Went On – Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit" Award

Whereas, Luana Vaetoe, Becoming Independent's (BI) CEO, is a pioneer and innovator in both the human services field and the business community. Since taking the helm as BI's CEO in 2013, the agency has benefited from her foresight and ability to recognize opportunities to create sustainable methods for service that benefit both BI and the community; and

Whereas, Luana's leadership, creativity, and influence has significantly impacted BI and the community. Understanding a nonprofit's dependency on government resources was not a sustainable and predictable business model, Luana found an innovative way to increase revenue for the organization, create stronger partnerships with businesses and community members, and allow for greater personally significant opportunities for the individuals BI supports with the founding of the agency's Social Enterprise Division (SED); and

Whereas, SED is a revenue-generating arm of the organization with three objectives: 1) to create job training and employment opportunities, 2) to provide expanded visibility for BI and 3) to generate stable sources of earned income. Today, BI is one of the leading nonprofits utilizing the social enterprise model in the North Bay; and

Whereas, the newest addition to BI's SED and "Light Bulb" moment is the launch of The Backdrop, a dynamic state-of-the-art 20,000sf flexible indoor/outdoor event center located in

Santa Rosa.

Whereas, the launch of The Backdrop fills the need for a large and versatile event space, while also providing a benefit that other event spaces cannot offer: vocational training and workforce development to advance the independence of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The people served at BI who have an interest in working within Sonoma County’s vast and growing hospitality field can build and hone their skills through providing professional event services. Once trained, these skilled workers will be ready for competitive employment, filling the widening gap in staffing needs in our community. In addition, 100% of the rental revenues go directly to fund BI’s programs and services; and

Whereas, Luana’s ingenuity, creativity, and dedication to strategic nonprofit and for-profit business growth has aided in BI becoming a completely solvent and debt-free business and executing a capital and redevelopment campaign resulting in a \$7.5M building renovation, all while significantly increasing hourly staff rates, contributing to greater staff retention in a precarious market. Luana has set BI’s business model and the future of BI’s services on an upward trajectory that will continue for decades to come.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors does honor and commend Luana Vaetoe as a recipient of North Bay Leadership Council’s 2024 Leaders of the North Bay Award for “The Light Bulb Went On: Innovation and Entrepreneurial Spirit.”

Supervisors:

Gorin:	Coursey:	Gore:	Hopkins:	Rabbitt:
Ayes:	Noes:	Absent:	Abstain:	

So Ordered.