



• LISTENING FOR A CHANGE •

Fall/Winter 2005/06

Vol 6 Issue #1

SONOMA COUNTY COMMUNITY LISTENING PROJECT

“To come to an Anglo-Saxon society was a shock of a lifetime. Think for a minute...maybe the accent bugs you and you want to run off. But think again and realize that this person has a soul like you do.”

Chegar a uma sociedade anglo-saxônica foi um grande choque. Pense por um instante... talvez o sotaque seja irritante e lhe cause aborrecimento. Mas pense novamente e você se conscientizará de que essa pessoa tem uma alma semelhante à sua.

Ana Marcina Geiser - Brazilian American

Share your story.
Know your neighbor.
Become a listener.

(707) 578-5420 > www.thesurvivorproject.org

SPONSOR COMMITTEE - Cudding Foundation, Community Foundation Sonoma County, The Survivor Project, United Way Sonoma-Mendocino-Lake, Volunteer Center of Sonoma County

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“Not a lot of jobs I could have done having had polio. It seems a lot of people resented me because I was deformed and crippled. I didn't understand it.”

Dean Woolridge > Challenges from Polio

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Essence of Acceptance Secondary School Program

Listening for a Change's acceptance of diversity curriculum, *Essence of Acceptance*, for secondary social studies, language arts, and service learning classes is expanding. Thanks to grants from the Allstate Foundation, the State Farm Companies Foundation, and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, *Essence of Acceptance* is beginning its move into classrooms throughout California and beyond.

The San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles classrooms have been targeted for the first year. Sonoma State

University and Los Angeles Unified School District have committed to Teacher Workshops for spring and summer 2006. Listening for a Change is in the process of setting up workshops for teachers through local offices of education and academic credits through Sonoma State University. The plan is to offer five workshops, with the venues in different geographical areas.

Essence of Acceptance is a curriculum that brings community members from diverse cultural and ethnic groups to the schools to share their personal stories of discrimination and loss of human rights. The curriculum consists of four sections: Human Rights, Oral History, Interview, and Community.

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Community Listening Project Update

Schedule for Interviewer Workshops

Saturday, November 5, 9 A.M.—1 P.M.

Saturday, January 14, 9 A.M.—1 P.M.

Saturday March 11, 9 A.M.—1 P.M.

All the above workshops are held at the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County, 153 Stony Circle, Suite 100, Santa Rosa

For additional information call 578-5420

The Community Listening Project, continues to become more a part of the fabric of Sonoma County with each passing month.

Created as a structure to allow individuals to cross boundaries and come to know neighbors, the *Community Listening Project* brings new faces to the public policy table as well.

When we reach out to one another through active listening, an opportunity is created to acknowledge our common humanity. Lisa Slater and Phyllis Rosenfield first created the Sonoma County Survivor Project (interviews of Shoah/Holocaust survivors, Cambodians from the Pol Pot regime and Japanese Americans interned during World War II) in the early '90's. They noticed a consistent pattern: Where people knew their neighbors, their neighbors were more likely to help in times of need. In Nazi Europe this meant hiding family members or taking care of property. For Cambodians, it meant neighbors working together to create a plan for survival. For the Japanese Americans, it meant coming home to find their taxes paid and farms intact.

So, what does this mean for us? Our contention is that once we listen deeply to someone's story, they can no longer be "other"...It seems when we humans disengage and see fellow human beings as someone not like us, someone less deserving, taken to its most extreme (as in war), the "others" become someone we can hurt or kill.

In our four hour workshops we teach interested volunteers to become oral historians. This means simply to become active listeners who know the importance of open ended questions, follow-up questions, and body language that says "I care about what you're telling me."

Each story is recorded and transcribed. Thanks to the many hours of volunteer help from Hank Cohn, we have a system to work with volunteer transcribers and transcribe all interviews. Both interviewers and interviewees receive copies of the oral history.

Many nonprofits across the county have supported the work. They have displayed over 300 posters of interviewees (see front page). PBS KRCB television and radio has been especially generous in playing video and audio portions of interviews.

Our next step is to analyze some of the information and data we've recorded. Listening for a Change would like to publish a booklet sharing what we've learned with the community at large. Do you have interest or talents to help us with this process? If so, please contact our office.

There are volunteer needs for interviewers, interviewees, transcribers and document analysts-Please call. We need you!

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Through participation in the program, students:

- Study about human rights in the context of their current curriculum
- Learn to take proper oral histories
- Conduct an oral history with a local community member who has suffered a loss of human rights
- Reflect upon what they have learned
- Create a responsive community project that demonstrates their understanding of the importance of civic involvement and responsibility

If you would like to know more about this program, please visit our website at www.listeningforachange.org In the coming months we will be posting the locations, dates, and times of the workshops. If you, or anyone you know, would like to attend please call our office.

578-5420

A Few
Thoughts
from
Phyllis...



There's a little good news for education in California-Have you heard about Service Learning? Basically, it's an instructional strategy for integrating civic responsibility into the educational experience of our children. Service Learning is the understanding that serious effort needs to be made to nurture thinking, responsible citizens who not only know, but have experienced civic engagement. Research has shown that there's been a decline in civic participation over the last 40 years and this is especially true for young people.

This is an exciting time for Listening for a Change. Our Essence of Acceptance curriculum fits the needs of Service Learning for grades 8-12. Through grants we've received, Listening for a Change is reaching out, not only to the Bay Area, but to Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). LAUSD is now requiring high school students to have a semester of Service Learning before graduating. What a concept!!

Education cannot be simply "skill and drill". Serious effort must be given to sending out thinking, responsible citizens who not only understand, but who have experienced civic engagement. Our Essence of Acceptance curriculum gives students the intellectual foundation for understanding human rights. In addition, students learn how to take oral histories (i.e. learn how to listen), interview someone who's lost rights, and then do some reflective thinking to create a community project in response to their experience. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all high school students went through this process?

Your support is helping us bring Essence of Acceptance throughout California. Your generosity helps to continue the Community Listening Project. Please know how very important your contribution is....

Phyllis

Co-Sponsoring the 2005 Reverend James E. Coffee Human Rights Awards

Last year we were honored as the first nonprofit recipient of the Rev. James E. Coffee Human Right Awards. This year we are again honored to partner with the Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights and the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County to make this awards ceremony ever more meaningful for the community.

Please join us at 6:00 pm, Thursday, December 8th in the Merlot Theater at Luther Burbank Center.

Dr. Samson Munn, director of radiology at Kaiser Permanente, will be our guest speaker. Dr. Munn has been active in international human rights work through an original organization that brings together children of Shoah/Holocaust survivors and children of Nazi perpetrators to listen and heal. In addition, Samson works with other international communities. His passion has been the application of "personal story-listening, story-telling and discussing-to engender genuine understanding, profound empathy and active, practical, productive responses."

Awards will be given recognizing an individual, company, government and community organization who have made significant contributions in promoting and advocating human rights issues.

This is an important event to attend. Please call the Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights for ticket information at 565-2693.

We're Everywhere!

Have you seen our informational table with posters, flyers, curriculum, VCR playing a DVD in Petaluma? In Santa Rosa? In Burlingame?

Over the past months Listening for a Change continues to conduct outreach to the community in as many venues as possible. You may have seen us at: Leadership Santa Rosa Multicultural Day, Cinco de Mayo, California Council for the Social Studies Conference, Petaluma Heritage Festival, Sonoma County Office of Education Japanese American graduation, Sonoma County Forum, Chop's Teen Center's Film & Dialogue Festival, or KSRO Radio, or KRCB Radio and television.



*Board
Member
Elee Tsai*

Elee Tsai's journey from communist China to Santa Rosa has given him a global outlook. "I feel I belong to the whole human race. We are all one community, a part of everything on this earth. If something happens to one, it happens to all."

Elee was born in Hong Kong and was raised in Beijing. It was the capital of China and allowed foreigners, so the city was a showpiece. Residents of Beijing were allowed privileges people in the rest of China didn't have. He also came from a privileged background. Both his grandfathers were educated in the West. His paternal grandfather went to Harvard and his maternal grandfather had two Ph.D.s from the University of Berlin.

Elee's own early education was very structured under Communist rule. Teaching was politicized and was essentially brain washing. The government used fear and shame to frighten students away from subjects they didn't want them to think about. They were told to spy on their parents. Elee and his family were somewhat protected from the most severe repression because of an ironic twist of fate. His grandfather on his mother's side had opposed Chiang Kai-shek's government because of its corruption, and his grandfather was killed by Chiang Kai-shek. The Communists therefore considered his grandfather a hero. Even so, he and his family were very careful to monitor what they said and did. His mother listened to short wave radio broadcasts from the free world, which was illegal, and made Elee recognize early the dangers around him.

Elee's parents divorced when he was very young, and at 15 years of age, in 1967, his mother brought him to the United States, first to El Cerrito, then to Albany. At Albany High School he experienced racism for the first time. He also discovered that religious organizations sometimes used the same methods of indoctri-

nation as the Communists. Later, through his mother's experiences at U.C. Berkeley, where she was working for a Ph.D., he became aware of gender discrimination.

Elee studied architecture at U.C. Berkeley, where he was inspired by professors outside the mainstream, one of whom worked with Native Americans. Here he recognized that he must be involved in a larger America, not just in the Chinese American community.

“ I feel I belong to the whole human race. We are all one community, a part of everything on this earth. If something happens to one, it happens to all. ”

After working in San Francisco and at Sea Ranch, Elee moved to Santa Rosa and opened his own firm. He has designed 300 or more houses, and has also designed some commercial buildings, notably the building at the corner of Steele Lane and Cleveland, a remodel of a Victorian house on B Street in the downtown historic district, and an Art Deco office building on B Street. He has received numerous awards for his work.

Elee feels times have been changing. When he first came to Santa Rosa, he was the only minority person in the local AIA.

He was one of the founders of the Redwood Empire Chinese Association in the 1980s. Their new sanctuary will be multicultural, including Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, European, inclusive of all people. "I don't see a choice. If we're not inclusive, we will self-destruct. The whole planet is the same way."

Elee believes change can only come about through education, that prejudice and discrimination are caused by ignorance. He feels the most important thing is to teach young people to think for themselves.

"You cannot use law to force people to change. Change comes from understanding. That is the importance of Listening for a Change."



*Board
Member
Padi Selwyn*

LFAC: What made you interested in becoming involved with Listening for a Change?

I first saw the photo exhibit from the Survivor Project several years ago, and was deeply moved by the stories and text. The universality of human rights abuses, displacement from home, and struggles of so many peoples really struck me. I thought this was a fantastic educational vehicle. It spoke volumes and communicated in such an accessible manner. I later met Phyllis Rosenfield through our synagogue and in getting to know her, began to learn about the organization and its goals.

I have strong memories of watching television documentaries as a child about the Holocaust, and hearing stories about WWII from my father, who served in the army. The horrible images of these films were branded into my memory, and learning about racism and the dehumanization of others for political gains in other countries as well, influenced me.

I grew up during the civil rights era, the war in Vietnam, and the woman's movement. In addition, I began traveling abroad as a high school student, and experiencing first hand that people are really all alike...we all want the same things for a good life. Working to help bridge our differences, which are really only cultural anyway, is important to me.

I feel that peace will only be achievable if we can learn to accept and appreciate our differences as human beings.

LFAC: What are some of the things that you hope to accomplish as a Board Member?

Helping raise money for the organization is key, since getting our message out takes resources. I enjoyed co-chairing our recent Ole' event to that end. Since my expertise is in the area of marketing

and public relations, gaining increased visibility for the organization will be an ongoing goal.

LFAC: Can you give us some personal background that will help you accomplish these goals?

I worked in advertising on Madison Avenue, moved to California and worked as PR Director of Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital for 5 years. At age 26 I started my own full service advertising and public relations agency, specializing in health care and financial services accounts. At that time, I also became a co-founder of National Bank of the Redwoods and served as a board member for 20 years, 'til it was acquired last year by Westamerica Bank. Following the NBR acquisition, I became the Senior Vice President, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Exchange Bank.

I served on numerous non-profit boards over the years, including the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce, Family Service Agency, The Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, Rotary Club of Santa Rosa and as president of the National Speakers Association in San Francisco, to name a few. In addition to Listening, I am also a board member of The Childrens Village; a unique concept in foster care; creating a village of nurturing family homes for foster children and their siblings underway in Santa Rosa.

“ I feel that peace will only be achievable if we can learn to accept and appreciate our differences as human beings. ”

I also had a 10-year career as a professional speaker and trainer, speaking internationally on marketing for small businesses, fostering innovation in the workplace and creative problem solving. I am co-author of *Living Your Life Out Loud: How to Unlock Your Creativity and Unleash Your Joy*; published in 1997.

Padi Selwyn was born on Long Island, New York. She is a New York University graduate with a BA in Journalism and Psychology. She is married to Reuben Weinzveg and has two sons in college, Daniel, age 18 and Eli, age 21. Her parents and sister and husband also live in Santa Rosa.

Everyone Agreed that Spicy September was a **FUN** Fund Raiser !!



Raffle Ticket Anyone? Vistara Voss



Baby & Mama Llama greet guests Arnie Rosenfield, Robin & Abe Wachsberg, Danielle Waggoner, handler. (Thanks to Marlene & Marty Stein)



Lisa Hardin Stokes Dips into the Chocolate Fountain



Connie Codding, Padi Selwyn, & Lisa Hardin Stokes



Ole! Susan Bailyn, Tracy Stewart & Norma Smith Davis



Cuyuy Musicians Javier Salmon & Cory Veltman



Connie Codding receiving Humanist Award from Phyllis Rosenfield



Jeanne & Ed Buckley

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Mission

Listening for a Change promotes understanding and acceptance of human diversity through education, oral history, and the arts.

Programs

Listening for a Change works to achieve its mission through two dynamic programs -*Essence of Acceptance* and the *Community Listening Project* – and an exhibit, *Sonoma County Survivor Project*. Each is a catalyst for change in achieving acceptance of diversity in our schools, neighborhoods and greater communities.

Essence of Acceptance uses the techniques of oral history and the arts in a comprehensive curriculum to teach empathy and awareness of our common humanity in secondary schools.

Community Listening Project trains members of diverse community cultural groups to take oral histories of other groups as a means to cross boundaries and build community.

Sonoma County Survivor Project is a traveling exhibit of photographs and oral histories of Sonoma County residents who survived a dramatic loss of human rights. Exhibit can also be viewed at www.listeningforachange.org.

SANTA ROSA, CA 95401

1300 NORTH DUTTON AVENUE

• LISTENING FOR A CHANGE •

