



• LISTENING FOR A CHANGE •

Spring/Summer 2006

Vol 6 Issue #2



Save the Date!

Join us for a second
Spicy September
Saturday on September

9th from 7:00-10:00 pm at the Sonoma
Mountain Village in Rohnert Park.

We honor our Latin neighbors with salsa,
baile, llamas, comida, y mucho mas.

¡Vengan a una fiesta fantastica con amigos
y la comunidad!

The Connie Coddling Humanist Award will be
presented to Rabbi Michael Robinson.



Students participating from Prof.
Sarah Dove's SSU "Cross-
Cultural Communications &
Negotiation" class (a Service
Learning program)

“ We find ourselves too busy to sit down and
talk, but sometimes you don't have to talk, just
listen. ”

Lawee Roeum (at left)

“ It takes an interview with another culture to
better understand your own. ”

Sean Vongphakham (at right)

Essence of Acceptance Expansion

Thanks to the support of the Allstate Foundation, State Farm Companies Foundation, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, and friends like you, Listening for a Change will bring *Essence of Acceptance* to classrooms throughout California. Workshops are planned for Santa Clara in May, Los Angeles Unified School District in June and North Bay Area in late July and early August. The North Bay workshops will be held at Sonoma State University in collaboration with the Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide. (Visit our website for more detailed information.) Participating teachers will receive the *Essence of Acceptance* curriculum, instruction in effective teaching and ongoing support for implementation in their classrooms.

This is a big change and expansion for us! Previously, we were implementing school by school; now we're on the cusp of offering regional workshops throughout California and, perhaps soon, in other states.

It's been an interesting journey. For those educators who have been in the system for many years, there's always a pendulum swing. Presently, there's a focus on passing tests, with less emphasis on critical thinking skills. The window of skill and drill has been open a crack with the acknowledged importance by educators that service-learning is also vital.

Presently there is a service-learning movement throughout California called CalServe with some schools and districts taking it more seriously than others. CalServe is organized around one principle: the need to institutionalize service-learning at the county or district level. The concept is for elementary, middle school and high school students to learn more relevant information and become active in their community. *Essence of Acceptance* takes students through a thread of activities that develop critically important "civic skills," which have been found to lead students to become critical thinkers, responsible citizens, and future leaders. (con. on page 4)

Community Listening Project Update

Our *Community Listening Project* is becoming a strong thread of the Sonoma County fabric. Free workshops for interviewers have been held in alternate months at the Volunteer Center for the past two and a half years. There, participants learn the nuanced skills of oral history taking. They leave ready to interview their neighbors who are a little different from themselves. The program offers an institutionalized methodology to cross cultural boundaries and honor and know others. "Institutionalized methodology" sounds like a big description—basically it's a unique chance to be encouraged and supported to interview someone that you really don't know very well.

Students from Sonoma State University and Santa Rosa Junior College have been attending the *Community Listening Project* workshops. Sarah Dove's "Cultural Communications and Negotiation" class and Denny Bozeman-Moss's English classes are involved as part of the State University "Service Learning" program. Students from Filomena Avila's Social Services class at Santa Rosa Junior College have been involved as an optional class project.

“ Our partnership with Listening for a Change has been invaluable to us as an experiential learning component to our course, and I am confident that the students will take their new understanding with them into their communities and their world as they move beyond the university. ”

Sarah Dove,
Professor of "Cultural Communications and
Negotiation" at Sonoma State University



In addition to our *Community Listening Project* workshops, we've conducted several workshops adapted for unique circumstances. We were invited by two local nonprofits, Memorial Home Hospice and Restorative Resources, to work with their "Caregivers" and staff. Both organizations appreciate the need for their volunteers and staff to have oral history tools as options for patients or clients.

Nina Arbour, of Memorial Home Hospice, invited Listening for a Change to conduct a workshop in January. The over forty attending Caregivers can now offer the gravely ill person they work with the oppor-

tunity to have their story recorded for family and friends. A special thanks to Board Member Steve Miksis for bringing the Memorial Home Hospice and Listening for a Change together. A second workshop is being planned for the Fall.

Restorative Resources works with children who have broken the law. Part of the process is to bring victim, perpetrator, and supporters for both sides into a family group decision-making conference. This includes family, social workers, police, parole officers, teachers, etc. The perpetrator hears first hand from the victim the damages, suffering, and pain caused. The group, after intense listening and discussion, creates an appropriate restorative resolution for the perpetrator in order that she/he may help restore harm done to victim and/or the community. The goal is for direct dialog to occur between victim and offender in order to have direct accountability.

Now what does Restorative Resources have to do with *Essence of Acceptance* or the *Community Listening Project*? Jessalyn Nash was certain there was an intersection and when she and Phyllis Rosenfield sat down to brainstorm, they realized that the young perpetrator could be taught how to conduct oral histories of her/his family, community members, or victim. This process could become a part of his/her healing and restoring. Often people who act out are disengaged from their families and loved ones. The staff at Restorative Resources now has the capacity to teach their clients how to interview. The hope is that a more empathetic and closer bond will begin to develop between the estranged youth, her/his family, and the community.

Workshops at the Volunteer Center will resume Saturday, October 7th. Contact our office if you'd like to attend. There are volunteer needs for interviewers, interviewees, transcribers and document analysts. Please call - We need you!

Fall Schedule for Interviewer Workshops

Saturday, October 7th, 9 A.M.—1 P.M.
Saturday, December 2nd, 9 A.M.—1 P.M.

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.

A Few Thoughts from Phyllis...



Once in awhile one reads an article in the local press that strongly affirms the work we do at Listening for a Change. On March 28th, I was pleased to discover a piece in the Editorial section of the Santa Rosa Press Democrat reprinted from the Washington Post by Sandra Day O'Connor and Roy Romer, superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District. They are the co-chairs of the national advisory council of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. Listening for a Change has recently become a member of California's Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. I was in Sacramento at the Department of Education on March 30th to attend our first meeting.

Responding to a cry from President Bush and Bill Gates for better math and science education, they note that "We should be equally troubled by another shortcoming in American schools: Most young people today simply do not have an adequate understanding of how our government and political system work, and they are thus not well prepared to participate as citizens."

...."As the 2003 report 'The Civic Mission of Schools' noted: 'Individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens, but must be educated for citizenship.' That means that civic learning—educating students for democracy—needs to be on par with other academic subjects.".... "Only then will we not only be more competitive but also remain the beacon of liberty in a tumultuous world."

Our Essence of Acceptance curriculum fulfils the mandate of The Civic Mission of Schools" with its Six Promising Approaches to Civic Education, especially the third approach that says: "Design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction."

This is a small ray of light in what has been a rather dark time for critical thinking and civic education in the schools. Thanks in part to renewed interest in civic education, we are proud to bring our curriculum via workshops to teachers in Northern California and now Los Angeles.

If you'd like to read this article, you can visit our website (go to Items of Interest on the News page). To read the Civic Mission of Schools report, go to www.civicmissionofschools.org.

Please know that your support helps us reach out locally and across the state to teachers and their students.

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

2005 Reverend James E. Coffee Human Rights Awards

In December of 2005 Listening for a Change co-sponsored the Rev. James E. Coffee Human Rights Awards with the Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights and the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County. In 2004, the first year the awards were given, we were the proud recipient of the "Community Organization Awards". In 2005 we helped plan and implement the program which was held at the Luther Burbank Center's Merlo Theater.

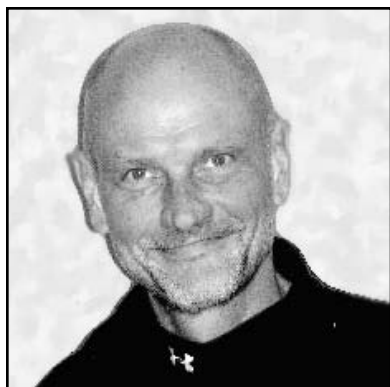
One of our suggestions was to have Dr. Samson Munn of Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa be the guest speaker. As a child of Shoah survivors, Dr. Munn has been active in a unique international organization, the Austrian Encounter, that brings children of Nazi perpetrators and victims of the regime together to listen and heal. He has helped bring this process to other situations in South Africa, Israel/Palestinian territories, and Ireland. Dr. Munn's inspirational presentation helped remind us how simple acts of patient listening make a very big difference....



Dr. Samson Munn & Rev. James Coffee (left to right)



Shirley Gordon (State Farm Insurance), Jack Weber (Agilent Technology), Phyllis Rosenfield (Listening for a Change), Harry Trout (Chair, Human Rights Commission), Dr. Samson Munn (Guest Speaker, Chief of Radiology, Kaiser Permanente), Dawn Matheny (Director, Human Rights Commission), Carol Russell, Mistress of Ceremonies (left to right)



Board Member Steve Miksis

Steve Miksis joined Listening for a Change's Board because he has a strong conviction about the power of listening. He was "drawn to it simply by what you do which is to listen to people...the organization seemed like a good fit for me."

A Certified Public Accountant with Linkenheimer LLP, Steve uses his listening skills as he works with clients and their financial issues. He's a primary creator of KiddAccounts Children's Money Management Program, a financial literacy curriculum for elementary school children. This is a unique curriculum that is free to schools and is taught by volunteer CPA's. Since the Journal of Accountancy published an article in 1998, Linkenheimer LLP has licensed the program to CPA firms across the United States. If you'd like to know more about this, contact Steve at (707) 546-0272

Steve has been a Memorial Home Hospice volunteer "Caregiver" for many years. It is through his experience sitting with very ill, dying patients that he's become more acutely aware of the power of listening. This year he brought Phyllis Rosenfield and Nina Arbour together to discuss collaborative efforts. In January Phyllis conducted a workshop for 43 caregivers. Not only did the Caregivers acquire better active listening skills, but they now offer their patients opportunities to have their story recorded. A second workshop is being planned for the fall.

During a dark time in Steve's life someone reached out and listened attentively to him. This simple act helped change the direction of his life. Steve spends much thought and energy returning this gift to others. Because he has a brother who committed suicide he knows that one can not always tell when someone needs a good listener. Steve has been a presenter to high schools through the Sonoma County Task Force for the Prevention of Teen Suicide. He's spoken with many young people throughout Sonoma County. His hope is that "if at-risk teens can see a grown man who's felt that way and is now okay, then maybe there's help for them as well."

Steve and his wife, Marsha, model acceptance of diversity for their teenage children, Paul, age 19 and Annie, age 16. Marsha is a daughter of a Holocaust/Shoah survivor and the specter of the consequences of hate and intolerance are never far away. The two work at being available to their children and try to stay open to listening and dialogue. "Listening is a gift we can give everyday. It doesn't cost anything. It doesn't take a lot of effort. It's just there and it's so powerful!" He's proud that both of their children are good listeners.

Steve would like to see more young people exposed to Listening for a Change's *Essence of Acceptance* and *Community Listening Project* programs and possibly a young person on the Board. "The real thing we can do is bring in a new generation—exposing them to the value of listening."

“ Listening is a gift we can give everyday. It doesn't cost anything. It doesn't take a lot of effort. It's just there and it's so powerful! ”

Essence of Acceptance Expansion

(from page 1)

Students become more engaged in their community if some of their studies are linked to research, study, reflection, and involvement in the local community.

The *Essence of Acceptance* curriculum contains all of these pieces. We teach teachers how to engage students in thinking about human and civil rights, how to conduct authentic oral histories, how to interview someone in their own community who has suffered a loss of rights and how to prepare a reflective project based on what the student learned and applied to issues in the community today. The students become thoughtful, civically engaged participants under the guidance of responsible adults. This is what service learning is all about.

Our Valuable Volunteers

Listening for a Change could not exist without the enormous amounts of volunteer work donated by members of our community. The gift of time is truly a gift from the heart.

Our primary volunteers are involved with board responsibilities, attending a workshop and interviewing community neighbors, transcribing interviews, and helping produce our large annual event. These volunteers are treasured and appreciated and are the fabric of our nonprofit.

Once in awhile we have people who give an inordinate amount of time and energy.

Ellen Mundell

Recently we honored Ellen Mundell as the Volunteer of the Year for Listening for a Change at the annual Volunteer Center of Sonoma County Luncheon. Ellen, and her husband Mike, have been active supporters of our work since its inception in the late 1980's. Recently, Ellen retired from her position as school counselor at Steele Lane Elementary School, where she is sorely missed. Their loss is the community's gain—Not only has Ellen been working with Community Listening Project volunteers, but she helped formulate an idea for work with local at-risk teens. Most recently, Ellen has taken on the responsibility of Co-Chair of our "Spicy September" event. In addition to her time with Listening for a Change, she helps run a children's group at Sutter Home Hospice, volunteers with the Jewish Family and Children's Services Agency and is on the board of Life Works. Every nonprofit needs a clone of Ellen!



Photo: Duncan Garrett, Press Democrat

Hank Cohn

Hank (Hans) Cohn moved to Santa Rosa just a few years ago. A retired Los Angeles social worker who worked with foster care children, he has a unique reason to be involved with Listening for a Change.

Hank and his younger brother, Bert, escaped Nazi Germany as one of a handful of children on an American Quaker "Kindertransport". Sent by his parents to a Jewish children's hostel in France to avoid the Nazi regime, he and his little brother were randomly selected to bring to America and safety. The other children from the hostel perished. His parents, and most of the rest of his family, were murdered as well. Hank knows what it is like to suffer from prejudice and discrimination and how very important it is to cherish our common humanity and safeguard our democracy based on justice and rights for all.

Last year Hank went back for the first time to his family home in Stralsund, Germany and was pleasantly surprised that the local community's high school students had researched and written a rather extensive history of his family. He witnessed the

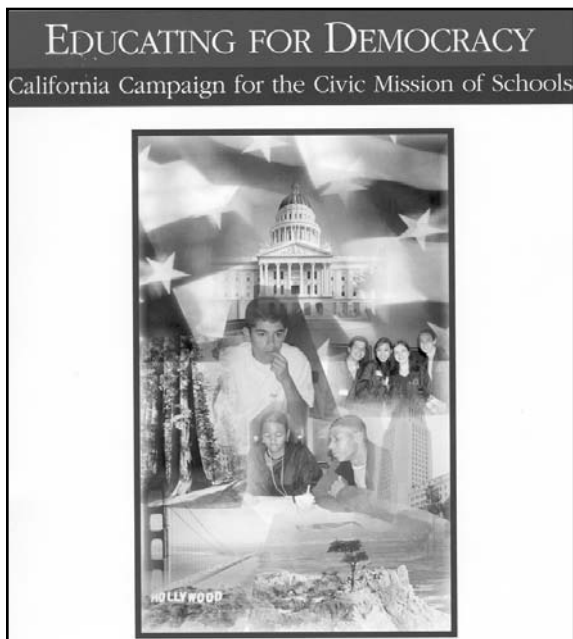


Photo: J. Zink

repair of the old Jewish cemetery where his ancestors are buried, and of monuments set in honor of the now extinct Jewish community. This year he brought his daughter, Rene Cohn Tolliver, and son-in-law, Tom Tolliver, back to visit Stralsund. In the cemetery is a new stone inscribed: "May their memory be a blessing for us all."

Over the last two years Hank has given untold hours to Listening for a Change. He is very computer
(continued on page 6)

California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools



We have joined the California Campaign for Civic Mission in the Schools.

You may be asking what is the California Campaign for Civic Mission in the Schools? What does it have to do with Listening for a Change?

The California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools is an effort to enlist support of education, business, law, veterans, labor, parents, and service groups around the state to promote civic education in California's public schools consistent with the recommendations in the Carnegie/CIRCLE Civic Mission of Schools report.

In 2004, the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools was convened by Constitutional Rights Foundation in collaboration with the Center for Civic Education and a statewide coalition of non-profit educational, business, governmental, and civic groups. Funded by the Carnegie corporation of New York, the Annenberg Foundation, and the W.R. Hearst Foundation, the goals of the campaign are to strengthen civic education throughout the state by working with schools, building public support, and conducting research to determine the effects of current educational practices.

Phyllis has met with Constitutional Rights Foundation Executive Director, Todd Clark, at which time Listening for a Change was invited to join the statewide committee. Since meeting with Todd, she has attended a meeting at the Department of Education and is now a member of the Practice Committee which is planning a "Constitutional Day" for schools across California in September.

Listening for a Change has a strong "civics" component—We teach the relevance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the US Constitution, as well as comparative study of constitutions of other countries. Students conduct oral histories of community members who have lost rights in order to learn the importance of guarding our rights. After reflective thinking, students ask themselves what they can study and then do to make a difference...They become civically engaged in our democratic process.

To learn more about the Campaign, visit www.crf-usa.org

Our Valuable Volunteers *(from page 5)*

clever and has taken responsibility for transferring our Sony Mini Disk recordings into CD's for transcribing and as a copy for both Interviewers and Interviewees. Hank has recently begun offering time to schools to come and tell his story. If you, or someone you know, would like to have him speak to a local classroom, you may contact him through our office.



Baerbel Bayer(at left) and Hank (at right), being interviewed for Ostsee Zeitung in Stralsund



Photos: J. Zink

Translation:

In memory of the murdered members of the Cohn Family
 Fritz and Lisa Cohn
 nee Joseph
 Georg and Charlotte Lesser
 nee cohn
 May their memory be a blessing to all

Thank you to our Major Funders:

The Allstate Foundation/Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation
Daphne Smith Fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County
Schulz Allocated Donor Fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County
Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund
State Farm Companies Foundation

A Sincere Thank You to All of Our Friends and Supporters Who Have Given So Generously from November 2005 through May 2006:

\$1000-\$1999

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John Weinstein & Heidi Stewart

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Russell & Peggy Bair
Clem & Ann Marie Carinalli

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Gerry & Jane Baldwin
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In Memorium

Neil Goldstein in memory of Paul Hoffman

In Celebration

Leah Mundell & David Trilling in honor of Mike & Ellen Mundell

New: Kaiser Permanente's Neighbors in Health

A community response to the needs of those
without medical insurance

Sunday, August 6th - 8:00 am -1:00 pm
Stein Medical Center
3976 Old Redwood Highway

Listening for a Change will be participating
through an informational table & by having
volunteers available to conduct &
record oral histories

Call our office to volunteer your help.

BOARD MEMBERS

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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.

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· L I S T E N I N G F O R A C H A N G E ·

