



Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace Expands

This has been a promising year for Listening for a Change's newest Diversity and Inclusion program for businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies. Since its launch with the Community Action Partnership, Restorative Resources, and YWCA, two successful introductory lunch presentations to the community-at-large in Santa Rosa and Petaluma have been held. Interested organizations learned that we now offer programs for employees to understand cultural diversity and acquire active listening skills to help improve both relationships within their own organization and with clients, customers, and patients served.

CULTURE OF INCLUSION



The Diversity and Inclusion program teaches attentive listening skills and cultural awareness through a wide variety of interactive activities. As participants spend time interacting with each other and discovering similarities and differences, they gain a broader outlook and valuable insight into how others see and approach situations. In the process, participants become aware of their own assumptions, thereby helping them communicate more consciously and effectively.

Our goal is to help organizations create a Culture of Inclusion through three important ways (see triangle). Currently, Listening for a Change is in conversation with a number of *(continued on page 7)*

Essence of Acceptance Our School Program

In early August Listening for a Change participated in its second well attended and successful workshop for teachers with Sonoma State University titled *Exploring our Common Humanity — Integrating Genocide, Holocaust and Human Rights into the Curriculum*. Listening for a Change's Executive Director Phyllis Rosenfield and Caroline Chinn Gonsalves (MA in Multicultural Education) teamed with SSU's Dr. Myrna Goodman (Director of SSU's Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide), Dr. Elaine Leeder (Dean of Social Science) and Jennifer Norton (Regional California Teacher, US Holocaust Museum). The three day professional workshop included how to teach academic understanding of genocide; human rights; oral history taking; and creation of a Service-Learning project.

Listening for a Change has developed a new, unique relationship with Dominican University of California's Service-Learning program. Following an invitation last year to participate in teaching an oral history workshop for Tom Burke's Lifestyle Class, Phyllis began conversations with Julia van der Ryn, philosophy instructor and Service-Learning Director to create new projects. Phyllis had been working with Sparkie Spaeth at Marin Health & Human Services to create an oral history project for the new health centers being built in low-income areas. MH&HS is interested in hearing the health stories and perceptions of the community. Phyllis worked with Julia and Sparkie to engage MH&HS and Dominican students in a Service-Learning project. Mairi Pileggi's Women & Gender Studies classes took a workshop from Listening for a Change and then interviewed people at four MH&HS Bi-national Health Fairs to learn the thoughts, concerns and needs of a community that often is voiceless. Listening for a Change is now helping MH&HS select quotes and insights from the interviews to share with the community. *(continued on page 3)*

Community Listening Project Update



Elsie Rich, age 106, was interviewed by Phyllis Rosenfield at Santa Rosa Race Equality Week at Finley Community Center

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County (for the use of Room A for workshops) and the financial support from PG&E, Listening for a Change continues to be able to offer free **Community Listening Project** workshops to the general public.

The workshop process involves examination of cultural values and understandings and learning to take authentic oral histories. Participants then cross cultural boundaries and interview their neighbors, co-worker, etc—Someone to whom they may say “hello” but not really know. We believe this offers a unique opportunity to create caring community where stories are heard and honored. Check the listing of upcoming workshops in the adjoining box. Call our office to participate and bring a friend!

Our newest **We Listen** committee (Ellen Boneparth, Ellen Mundell, Debra Sands-Miller & Phyllis Rosenfield) has been analyzing transcribed interviews recorded by Community Listening Project participants. Themes and shared wisdom are being studied. Within the next few months a small booklet with analysis, quotes, and some photos will be shared with the larger community to promote discussion of issues and concerns experienced in the non-dominant cultures of Sonoma County.

Listening for a Change is working with KRCB PBS television and radio to help implement an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant received. Part of the grant is to teach non-dominant culture youth to conduct oral history interviews and send them into their own communities

to interview and record stories. Phyllis and Jesse Boggs have worked together and researched a computer kiosk which will be an excellent way to share stories in many different venues. Robin Pressman, KRCB Radio Program Director, and Nancy Dobbs, KRCB Executive Director, and Tatiana Harrison, Director of *Voices of Youth*, have been in conversation with Listening for a Change to create an oral history project that enables the teens to be well trained interviewers and share the stories gathered with a broad audience. Another teen team is being trained at the Community Media Center to film and edit the interviews. This is a very exciting and innovative program to be a part of!

On May 4th we were invited by Jessalyn Nash (former Executive Director of Restorative Resources & current *??Title?* to have a table at the Restorative Justice Conference at the Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel in Santa Rosa. This was an opportunity to learn more about Restorative Justice and have people involved in this work learn about our organization and how our work intersects.

A thank you to Jason Higashi, Jessica Flores, and Jim Leddy for helping at our booth at the recent Race Equality Week Celebration at the Finley Community Center. Our helium balloons with Listening for a Change on each one were a definite hit with the children! We only hope it didn't take too long to have the escapees come down from the gym-height ceiling. The highlight of the afternoon was Phyllis' interview with 106-year-old Elsie Rich. Elsie escaped Nazi Austria with her husband the very day that Hitler marched into Vienna. At 106, she definitely has many stories to tell.

Winter/Spring Schedule for Interviewer Workshops

Saturday, December 8th, 9 A.M.-1 P.M.

Saturday, February 9th, 9 A.M.-1 P.M.

Saturday, April 5th, 9 A.M.-1 P.M.

Workshops are held at the
Volunteer Center of Sonoma County,
153 Stony Circle, Suite 100, Classroom A,
Santa Rosa

For additional information call 578-5420.

A Few Thoughts from Phyllis...



Listening for a Change---I love our name. Once in a while it helps that your husband is a punster and comes up with just the right language. Thank you for your brilliant breakfast-table help, Arnie!

What would our world look like today if: our government took a bit more time to hear and understand other states' issues (Diplomacy is what I believe it's called...); our schools were respectful institutions where real learning, questioning, and transformation took place; our communities invited everyone to the public policy table to hear and consider issues from multiple perspectives; and our homes were safe, secure places for all family members to grow and love? People certainly would be listening, for a change.

Part of the challenge is that listening takes time. Time has become such a valuable commodity that listening to others is often seen as a "waste of time" or, perhaps, "small talk." So how do we create time to hear one another in order to elect the right politicians, create a fulfilling work environment, strengthen our families, build our communities and have "big" conversations?

First, we need to shift our attitude away from thinking that listening is not a good use of time. Listening and sharing with others is how we connect, what allows for our humanity. Other animals don't have complex language so shrieks, barks, and chest beating have to suffice. We're so fortunate—we can intentionally create space to hear and be heard, to connect and transform.

Second, it would be helpful to create a climate where we learned to play nicely on the listening and conversation see-saw. How many people do we know that talk about themselves nonstop and don't take a breath to ask about you? Or, if they do, don't offer you enough time or follow-up questions to take in what you have to say? So, in a just world, we'll have equal status conversation. In other words, the skills to both share one's story and listen with a non-judgmental, open heart and mind.

Join our organization in promoting Listening for a Change in all aspects of our lives.

Phyllis

Rev. James E. Coffee Human Rights Awards Event Saturday, January 12th

Listening for a Change is again co-sponsoring this inspiring event with the Commission on Human Rights and the Volunteer Center.

This year's event is coordinated with Martin Luther King weekend celebrations across Sonoma County. We hope you will join us to honor and celebrate the people and organizations dedicated to making Sonoma County a welcome home to a diverse population.

In addition to honoring those who are carrying out the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Dr. Francisco H. Vazquez, Sonoma State University professor and community activist, will share his thoughts on how to create a community and world where human rights are shared by all.

The event is to be held at the Mary Agatha Furth Center, 8400 Old Redwood Highway, in Windsor. Ticket price includes a pasta and salad dinner. Adults are \$10 in advance and \$15 at door, youths up to age 18 are \$5. Please contact the Commission on Human Rights 565-2693 or chr@sonoma-county.org.

(Essence of Acceptance, continued from page 1)

From this innovative relationship with Dominican University, additional ideas have emerged for Service-Learning oral history projects with Dominican students mentoring at-risk teens. We are writing grants for this promising project.

Phyllis and Regina Brennan, World History teacher at Santa Rosa High School, presented our *Essence of Acceptance* program at a recent California Council for History Teachers conference in Riverside. This is the fourth year Regina has successfully used the curriculum with her students and she was able to share tips on how to effectively implement lessons. Phyllis gave an overview of integrating lessons into existing social studies and language arts curriculums. If you'd like to know more about *Essence of Acceptance*, visit our website at www.listeningforachange.org or contact our office. The extensive curriculum binder and video are available to purchase for \$150.

The Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights is in conversation with Listening for a Change to host Diversity and Inclusion workshops for the Commissioners as well as consider helping them work with their school program which focuses primarily on Diversity Clubs in the secondary schools. This is a welcome invitation to help deepen our work in the schools and community.

Wine, Summer & Song was a resounding success! Thank you!

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Above: Allen Odom and LFC Board Chair Meg Alexander



Below: Michel-Schlumberger Winery courtyard, with Susan Curry and Julie Hahn seated at front



Above: Mime Nancy Gold greeting Vera Korkus and Eunice Valentine



Below: LFC Board member Christyne Davidian and Event Co-Chair Ellen Mundell selling heads/tails raffle necklaces

Below: Barbara Schlumberger bidding at the live auction



Right: LFC Board member Anne McGivern selling heads/tails raffle necklaces and Susan Bailyn showing off the prize, a \$200 magnum of fine wine



Above: Roberta Delgado, Mark Spaulding, and LFC workshop presenter Caroline Chinn Gonsalves



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Lois Santero of Sonoma Mtn High School recounted her experience using LFC's *Essence of Acceptance* curriculum in her classes



Phyllis Rosenfield presented the 2007 Connie Coddling Humanitarian Award to Helga Lemke

Cathy Wild was the lucky winner of the heads/tails raffle



Above: Kenn & Elaine Cunningham taking bids at the live auction, with Gerri & Sid Lipton in the front row



Gayle Guynup, Greg Spaulding and Brian O'Malley



Raleigh & Burton Fohrman and LFC Executive Director Phyllis Rosenfield

Below: Irwin Leibowitz and Mary Jane Schneider sampling Night Owl Catering's wonderful food, served by volunteer Amiko Anne.





Board Member Wes Winter

The son of a lumberjack, Wes fills a room with his 6 feet 3 inch height and his positive, can-do presence. Listening for a Change is honored to have him as a Board Member. He brings nonprofit experience and personal wisdom to our table.

The youngest of five children born to parents of modest means who struggled to make ends meet, Wes learned early on that the neighborhood community somehow always had caring people who helped raise and look out for him.

In his parents' car, taking his mother to the hospital to give birth, an elderly neighbor tapped on their windshield. When his mother rolled down the window she said "Don't bring home any stinking baby boys!" Wes and the neighbor, Edna Bryant, fell in love with each other and were joined at the hip until she died when Wes was thirteen.

Wes says, "There was always this little cluster of elderly ladies in the background and they would turn over and it would become a different elderly lady at some point. Some would pass away or we would move away, but they were always there. And they were the ones that helped me move toward college, left me my first house, and left me college money so that I would be sure to go. They never hesitated to tell me what to do! ...They were like great-aunts who would always make sure everything was okay and that the bills were paid, that I was getting my daily dose of reasoning about why I shouldn't ever drink or ever smoke."

When Wes was twelve, he began listening, really listening to folksinger Joan Baez's albums. In fact, he attributes Baez's messages of peace and changing the world as "propelling him forward." He went on to read and learn about Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Ira Sandpearl, "discovering what the world looked like outside of my home and what some alternatives might be."

In high school Wes was active in helping organize an Amnesty International Club. After attending San Francisco State University, in 1979 he began his career in public service. Beginning with an entry level position working with pre-schoolers with the Bay Shore Child Care Services in Daly

City's Hunter's Point, Wes' organizational and people skills moved him up the ladder to Associate Director. After this position he became Associate Director of the Children's Council of San Francisco.

Wes and his partner, Bill Heikkila, came to Sonoma County in 1989. Both had good jobs, Wes as Executive Director of Circuit Riders. Sadly, Bill's HIV evolved into full blown AIDS. He died in 1999.

Wes has always liked the way nonprofits work. He should know—After Circuit Riders, Wes became Executive Director of the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County, one of the largest in the country. Wes thinks that nonprofits don't receive the credit they are due. "They're invisible safety nets in the community. People in the general community don't understand the role of nonprofits and they don't understand what a great system it is....I think the amount of work that gets done by most nonprofits is so huge that it would shock most people to know what goes out the door, what the deliverables are."

Wes identifies primarily with the nonprofit and the gay communities. When he thinks about community he doesn't think of neighborhood, but of "a system of satellites who move around out there and we occasionally bump into one another and when we do we recognize each other and there's always a conversation to be had."

Two years ago, Wes took a new position as Senior Marketing Director for the building of Fountaingrove Lodge. The Lodge is to be a senior housing development for retired gay and lesbian people. Wes is excited about using the Listening for a Change interviewing model and services with the seniors and kids from Positive Images (a nonprofit for LGBT teens) when the time becomes right. "I think that's going to be a huge transformer. Not just for the kids that are doing the interviewing and learning about the seniors, but for the seniors who for the first time are really being able to tell their story to a young person. It just seems so powerful!"

When asked about Listening for a Change, Wes said: "When you look at the folks who are involved and how committed they are, that says there's something really here. As a gay guy living in mainstream culture I've really benefited from being in such a diverse culture as we have here in Sonoma County and to be able to do something that helps other people to benefit from that feels really good to me. I love the idea of working not just for ethnic diversity, or cultural diversity, or gender diversity, or orientation diversity—It's all of those things put together and how we make this big impact in these very simple, quiet, calm ways. I think that's very exciting."

Thank you to our Major Funders:

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In Memoriam:

In memory of David Frank by Allen Odom

(Diversity & Inclusion, continued from page 1)

businesses, nonprofits and government agencies to create a program best suited to their organization. These include: California Human Development Corporation, Marin Health and Human Services, Medtronics Inc., Memorial Hospital, Sonoma County District Attorney's Office, and State Farm Insurance Diversity Council. If you would like to know more about how this program can be implemented in your workplace, please contact our office to receive a brochure and fee schedule information.

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Mission

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

Programs

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.

Diversity & Inclusion is a program for businesses, nonprofits and government agencies which teaches attentive listening skills and cultural awareness to help employees interact more effectively.

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. The exhibit can also be viewed at www.listeningforachange.org.

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