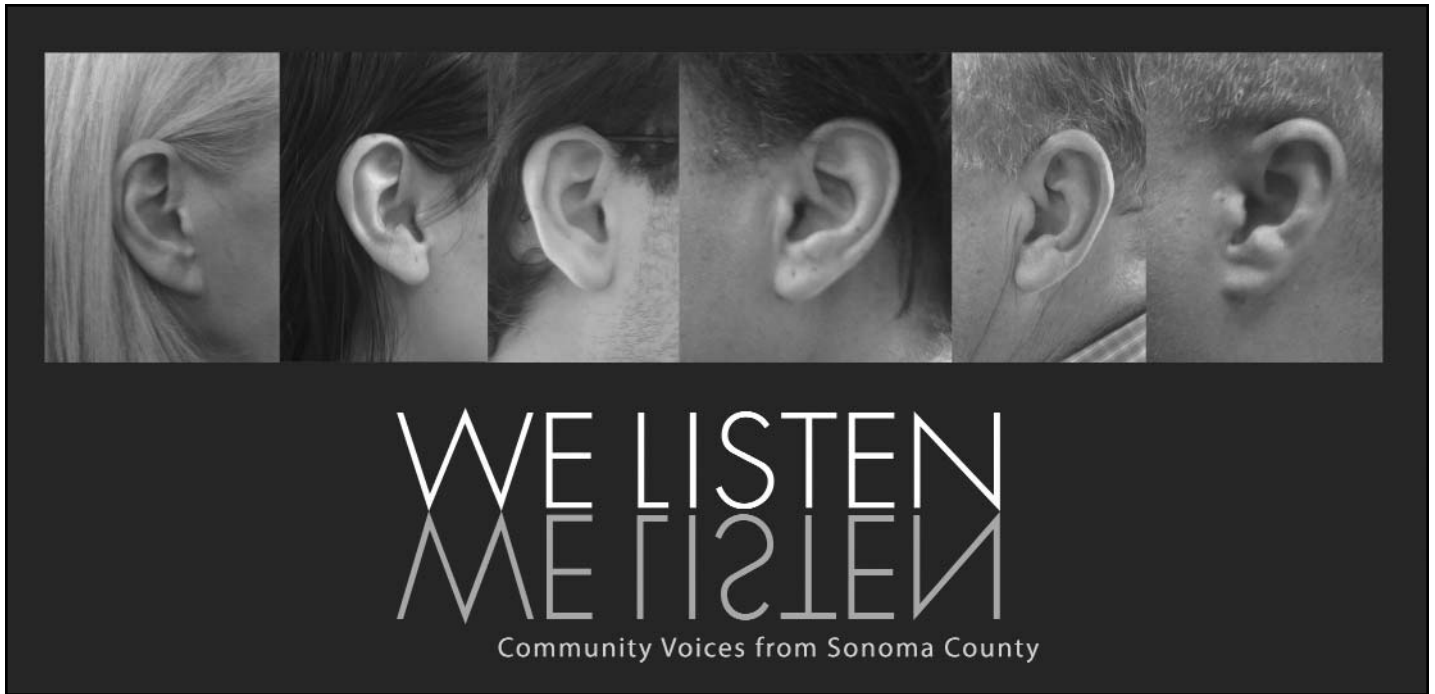




• LISTENING FOR A CHANGE •

Fall/Winter 2008/2009

Vol 9 Issue #1



Bailyn Graphics

We Listen Report as Supplement in January *Press Democrat* Will Help Create Community Conversation Circles

Sonoma County takes great pride in its image—beautiful landscapes and seascapes, pleasant small cities and towns, endless vineyards, a myriad of leisure time activities, and culinary pleasures that include fine restaurants, cooking schools, gourmet shops and wine bars.

But is this picture complete? Community concerns are airbrushed out of this idyllic travelogue picture of the county. Like every community, Sonoma County struggles with its share of tensions, economic problems, and inter-group conflicts and misunderstandings. Unfortunately, emphasizing only the positive parts of Sonoma County distracts us from confronting the challenges we face.

On Sunday, January 25th, Listening for a Change's We Listen report will arrive as a supplement in the *Press Democrat*. Thoughtful quotes from some of the 180 oral history interviewees conducted by Sonoma County neighbors, friends and associates offer a portrait that includes the voices of some who aren't always heard, but have much to teach us about ways we practice acceptance and might create a richer, more caring community life.

(continued on page 6)

To have your group or organization participate in Listening for a Change's Community Conversation Circles: contact our office at 578-5420 or welisten@listeningforachange.org or visit our website at www.listeningforachange.org

Essence of Acceptance Updates



Marin County Community School students conduct interviews of neighbors who are models of resiliency

Left to right:

Richard Hymns, LucasFilm, 3-time Oscar winner for sound editing

Ebonique Kendall
Jamaree Saucer

“I learned that my life could be hard, but there are people’s lives that are harder than mine.” **MCCS Student**

Our school program, *Essence of Acceptance*, continues to be implemented throughout the region by teachers who have participated in our workshops.

One of the more innovative new programs is through a **State Farm Youth Advisory Board** grant we received with Dominican University’s service-learning program to bring an understanding of human rights and oral history taking to at-risk youth at Marin County Community School (MCCS). Thanks to the cultural and educational skills of Listening for a Change’s Caroline Chinn Gonsalves and key MCCS teacher, Sheridan Gold, who has enthusiastically embraced the pedagogy, the secondary school program is going well with students engaged and growing with each interview experience.

Dominican University students under the guidance of Julia van der Ryn & Jenny Bray have supported the students as they move through the process of interview preparation, interview, and reflection. Next semester additional Dominican classes will be participating. The *Essence of Acceptance* segment of the program is being implemented with the support of Phyllis Rosenfield and Caroline Chinn Gonsalves.

Teachers from Sonoma County Office of Education’s Alternative Education Program will be participating in a workshop in December. Additionally, several teachers from Community Action Partnership’s Youth Build School are beginning implementation. Listening for a Change can help you tailor this dynamic program to meet the needs of your students.

Please contact our office if you, or someone you know, would like to bring *Essence of Acceptance* to their classroom.

Community Listening Project

Would You Like to Interview Your Neighbor?

If you’d like to interview your neighbor, please join one of our free, upcoming *Community Listening Project* workshops to learn basic oral history skills and consider your own culture(s) as well as those in the surrounding community. Everyone is welcome from teens to elders and every age in-between! Visit our website for information and contact our office to enroll: 578-5420 or info@listeningforachange.org.

2009 Schedule for Interviewer Workshops

Saturday, Feb 21st, 9 A.M.-1 P.M.

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

Saturday, Oct 24th, 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.

Caroline Chinn Gonsalves Brings Strength to Our Programs

A Few Thoughts from Board Chair Meg Alexander



The election of Barack Obama is just too big to go without note even by this small news outlet. Our 44th president is usually described as Black. But more accurately, he is multi-cultural and multiracial. He both stands for change and embodies change.

So does Listening for a Change. We are proud of our mission: "promoting understanding and acceptance of human diversity". And though we are working through education, oral history and the arts, it has been exhilarating through this long campaign to experience some sustained political attention to issues of race and culture as part of our dialogue at a national scale.

Let's bring this dialogue home. We are a multi-cultural and multi-racial community, but are we comfortable with this? Can we embrace this as a strength? Can we engage in a community dialogue that one by one and two by two builds community and connection? Can we listen? Do we know the questions to ask?

I encourage all of you who have been energized by the message of "Yes We Can" and "Fired Up and Ready to Go!" to read our report "We Listen: Community Voices from Sonoma County." Read it cover to cover. It is being published on Sunday, January 25, 2009, as a supplement in the Press Democrat.

Take particular note of "Simple Solutions for Significant Change". Be in touch with us if you have ideas or want to initiate a dialogue. Use us as a resource.

And for those of you who care about these issues, I also encourage you to support us in these difficult times, as you are able. Small or large, each contribution is used well and much appreciated.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Meg".



It doesn't take long to know that Listening for a Change has a jewel of an instructor, workshop leader, teacher-coach, and program developer with Caroline Chinn Gonsalves. As our Program Associate, her knowledge, experience, and infectious energy impress all who meet her. For Caroline, "The fit (with Listening for a Change) is natural, challenging and exciting and both engages and challenges me!"

With a Masters in Cross-Cultural Education, Caroline taught high school for six years at Saint Mary's College High School as well as being the Director of the Community Service Program at the school. In addition, she taught in the Teacher Credential program at Saint Mary's College. Helping students to learn in and outside the classroom and honoring a wide range of learning intelligences is an area in which Caroline excels.

From 2001-06, Caroline was the Assistant and then Executive Director of Summer Search North San Francisco Bay Area, a unique nonprofit that works with promising students from low income homes to support them with confidence and skill building activities, mentoring, and engaging programs. The program is implemented throughout the year, but each student participates in a very special summer enrichment program tailored to her/his interests and needs. Summer Search works to be a stabilizing, character-building support system through the high school and college years.

With her previous work experiences and in her capacity with Listening for a Change, Caroline says helping others acquire new or enhanced listening skills and challenging both teachers and students to take risks, is quite satisfying. "Feeling like you're heard, that's where it touches me."

As a third and fourth generation Chinese-American, Caroline grew up quiet outside the home. A turning point was when she attended an eighth grade environmental camp and, for the first time, was asked to present a speech at the closing ceremony. Everyone was quiet and respectfully listened and honored what she had to say. "I think that unleashed me in all kinds (continued on page 6)

Sunset Soiree was a resounding success! Thank you!

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A special thank you to these contributors for venue and services: Jacques & Barbara Schlumberger, Reach360, Bailyn Graphics, and NorthBay Biz



Left: Michel-Schlumberger Winery courtyard



Below: Anne McGivern, LFC Advisory Leader, selling Heads/Tails Raffle necklaces



Right: Schlumberger security



Above: Connie Coddling presenting the 2008 Connie Coddling Humanist Award to Jim Foster, Executive Director and co-founder of Positive Images



Above: Jim Wilkinson, Sandy Brown, Neva Turer and David Karpilow at the Tomato Table, provided by Patricia Hom's Night Owl Catering

Photos by Garry Greensweig

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Left Teacher Molly Bass and her students, Abby Bordin and Amy Moses, spoke about their experience in the classroom with our *Essence of Acceptance* program

Below, left to right: Board member Wes Winter, Peter Kingston, and Steve Gustafson



Left: Phyllis Rosenfield, LFC Executive Director, and Barbara Greensweig

Below: Group at Silent Auction Table



Above: Meg Alexander, LFC Board Chair, and Pam Drexler





Volunteer of the Year Deborah Perel

Deborah Perel says she “retired” two years ago, but what she really means is that she’s still working, just not employed! In addition to volunteering for 6-8 hours each week for Listening for a Change, she’s a tutor at Wright School, a driver for Sebastopol Senior Center and most recently she’s working with the Sonoma County Library’s Adult Literacy program with a woman who is an immigrant from Mexico. This is not everyone’s vision of retirement, but one from which the entire community benefits. Deborah said: “My parents have set the standard for me. They’ve been volunteering for years. I always felt that I would like to give back to the community as they have done.”

For Deborah, born and raised in Petaluma on a small chicken farm that raised chickens to become fryers, life was low key and idyllic except that it was a lot of hard work. There was always something to do on the farm to get the chickens ready for market or prepare for the next round of chicks. Her grandparents came to Petaluma to join a Jewish cultural and political community to work the land. All of her grandparents sang in the Jewish Folk Chorus. Her cousin, Scott Gerber, is a well known Yiddish singing cowboy!

Deborah likes what Listening for a Change does in the community and thinks it’s very important to hear what other people of other backgrounds have to say. She’s especially pleased with the upcoming publishing of the We Listen report. “I’ve been very excited in doing transcriptions about what I’m hearing and have wished that what I’m listening to could be shared with the community.”

Bringing her twenty years of experience as an office administrator for the schools and as an auditor for the State Comp Insurance Fund to our Listening for a Change organization, Deborah has helped implement several Listening for a Change programs, written budgets, worked tirelessly on our annual events, and completed numerous transcriptions for the Community Listening Project.

Deborah has two young adult daughters, Marisa & Elana, and lives with her husband, Geoff, in Sebastopol. Listening for a Change is most appreciative of all the time and diverse support she gives our nonprofit.

(We Listen Report, continued from page 1)

Neighborhood organizations, community social groups, nonprofits, religious groups, businesses, etc. are invited to contact Listening for a Change to schedule and arrange for a We Listen report facilitated dialogue. Skilled volunteers are prepared to offer guided conversation about sensitive issues and to consider what we can do to help make Sonoma County a community where all are welcomed and respected.

A special thank you to our major funders for the Community Listening Project and its We Listen report: Community Foundation Sonoma County/Schulz Family Fund, the Daphne Smith Fund of the Community Foundation Sonoma County and the Coddling Foundation. Our We Listen committee’s dedicated members are Ellen Boneparth, Ellen Mundell, Jim Foster, William Hazelwood, Deborah Perel, and Phyllis Rosenfield. An additional thank you is extended to Gaye LeBaron, Pete Golis, Caitlin Costin, Hillary Costin, and Edmund Buckley for document editing.

Getting to know your neighbors and associates can make our vision of acceptance and caring a reality. We must begin with a small groundswell to build change. All of us need to think, act, and engage.

(Caroline Chinn Gonsalves, continued from page 3)

of ways!” says Caroline. Never having been put in that situation before, she felt more confident to speak up and was reassured that what she had to say was important and had validity. This stayed with Caroline and gave her confidence as she moved into her high school years.

As lead coach and support for Listening for a Change’s Essence of Acceptance program with the Marin Alternative Schools through a grant from the State Farm Youth Advisory Board, Caroline gives generously of herself. She works with teachers, high school students and Dominican University college students to teach human rights and oral history interviewing. Her insights, hard work, and positive approach help bring people from many different backgrounds together to hear and understand one another in a deeper, more authentic way.

Caroline’s background, experience, and skills in cross-cultural studies make her an excellent fit not only for Listening for a Change’s Essence of Acceptance school program, but for our Diversity and Engagement program for businesses and nonprofits as well. As an active, engaged listener in the community, schools, and businesses, Caroline does indeed fit well into Listening for a Change’s programs and needs.

Thank you to our Major Funders:

Codding Foundation
Community Foundation Sonoma County - Schulz Donor Advised Fund
Daphne Smith Fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County
State Farm Youth Advisory Board

A Sincere Thank You to All of Our Friends and Supporters Who Have Given So Generously from May 2008 through November 2008:

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In Memoriam:

In memory of Vivian Frye from Ed & Leyah Brosbe, Ellen & Herb Brosbe, Margaret & Albert Crenshaw, Timothy Edwards, Jennie Gottheiner, my dear cousin from Jane Kerschner, in loving and grateful memory from Catherine A. Mayer, Rebecca McClure, with love from My Morning Jacket & Flatiron Management, Phyllis & Arnie Rosenfield

In memory of Tamara Hashizumi from Gordon Larsen

In memory of T.C. Stevenson, MD, from Elaine Stevenson



Vivian Frye & Vicky Mwangi volunteering at 2007 Michel-Schlumberger event

In Celebration:

In honor of Rose & Si Siegel from Cynthia and Ron Macken

In honor of Jim Foster from Nancy Vogl

In honor of Ruben Brosbe for completing his 1st year as a NY teaching fellow from Liora Brosbe and Danny Issacson

In celebration of Edith Newman's 85th birthday and Ellen & Herb Brosbe becoming grandparents from Debbie and Tad Shapiro

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

