



WE LISTEN ME LISTEN

Community Voices from Sonoma County

SONOMA COUNTY—SEEING A COMPLETE PICTURE

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 intergroup conflicts and misunderstandings. Unfortunately, emphasizing only the positive parts of Sonoma County distracts us from confronting the challenges we face.

This report, **WE LISTEN**, is brought to you by volunteers and staff from *Listening for a Change*, a community association. It seeks to deepen our understanding of social relations in Sonoma County. We have tried to provide a portrait that includes the voices of some who aren't always heard, but have much to teach us about ways we practice acceptance which might create a richer, more caring community life. Where we can identify problems in group relations, we suggest solutions that can be made in simple neighborly ways to improve the quality of life for all.



• LISTENING FOR A CHANGE •

WHO IS FEATURED IN WE LISTEN

LISTENING FOR A CHANGE BOARD

WE LISTEN COMMITTEE

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This report, WE LISTEN, is based on interviews made by volunteers from *Listening for a Change*, a Sonoma County nonprofit organization that promotes understanding and acceptance of human diversity through education, oral history and the arts. The volunteers learned oral history techniques through Community Listening Project (CLP) workshops, which offer individuals the opportunity to hear others' stories and complete an oral history of a community member with whom they are not acquainted. Of the approximately 180 interviews done for CLP, 45% were randomly selected for use in this study. The views expressed are representative rather than definitive.

The WE LISTEN report is composed of 48 females and 29 males. Concerning age, 34% were under 35, 30% were 35-55, and 36% were over 55. Ethnicities and races included 27% Hispanic; 21% Asian; 22% White; 9% European foreign-born; 9% African-American; 8% Native American and 4% Other Ethnicities. Other groups included 9% LGBT and 3% physically challenged. There are more nonwhite group members than are found proportionally in Sonoma County which gave us a wide set of views from voices that are not always heard or understood. We have retained as much as possible the actual language of the interviewees.

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FOR SOME, SONOMA COUNTY IS CARING, RESPECTFUL, INCLUSIVE, AND COOPERATIVE

NOHEMI (Mexican-American female, age 32)

A **community is a group of people that supports each other**, that looks after one another, that together makes something from themselves, and helps those in need. In Graton, you go down the street and there are many men asking for work. The daughter of the people I rent from, she brings them coffee and bread. I also see Americans that give fruit, lots of apples. In the school I went to in Graton, a teacher brought bread and lettuce. So, they help you, and this is part of the community.

RICK (Filipino/Mexican-American male, age 50)

Diversity of the culture is a lot better. Race or color doesn't matter to do business. A **community is inclusive of people from different ethnic and racial groups**. I never have had someone call me a Mexican or a Spic or something like that.

HINDA (European-American Lesbian female, age 70)

Well, I certainly think **it's much more open around this area** than it would be in the mid-West where I grew up. I can't imagine it happening as easily in some other areas.

VERA (Native American female, age 61)

You know, I've never (knock on wood) never felt like, "Oh she's Indian. Let's get away from her!" Or, you know, don't rent to her.

SIM (Filipino-American female, age 38)

When I first got here I wanted to know the population. How is it as far as prices? Is there a lot of ethnicity? And there was mainly a lot of Caucasian, but Petaluma has a different feeling, **it actually kind of welcomes me**. I didn't feel like a minority. The whole community was just awesome!

ELEE (Chinese-American male, age 52)

Our new Chinese American **Community Center is going to be called multicultural**.

Yes we are Chinese American, but America is also a part of us and we can no longer stand alone. Our culture will include Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and we have European-descent Americans, you know Caucasian people, so we are inclusive with all people, and this is what is truly the melting pot of America.



*Yes, we are
Chinese American, but
America is also a part
of us...*

WE LISTEN
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So, I am a Brazilian, and I am an American. I love being a Brazilian and I feel so welcomed in this country.



ANA (Brazilian-American female, age 61)

I never wanted to lose my identity. I became an American citizen when they accepted dual. So, I am a Brazilian, and I am an American. **I love being a Brazilian and I feel so welcomed in this country.** And it hurts me to think that people come here and don't feel they belong.

EVANGELINE (Filipino-American female, age 55)

I came from the Philippines. I have met people here that came from Africa and Brazil and Nicaragua. There is so much diversity and yet I haven't yet encountered any negativity in terms of one turf taking another turf. **The community where I am is like a molding, melting pot for all the different people.**

JANE (European-American Lesbian, age 58)

I live in the same culture everybody else does because I'm not in a gay community, you know, and there's sometimes I miss that, but I also enjoy living in a normal neighborhood where the kids are out playing on their skate boards, and there's grandma and grandpa 'cross the street. Everybody in my neighborhood knows I'm gay, so I'm part of the neighborhood. There's the gay lady that lives up the hill there, you know, and I like that. **I like being incorporated into the norm.**

BETH (European-American, HIV positive, age 34)

I would have to say that in Sonoma County—I'm really blessed to live in such an incredible community—but also with **the greatest specialists right here in Santa Rosa.** When we work together on any level--it doesn't matter if it's HIV, raising a child or dealing with the disease of an addiction-- we work to find a solution so we can live long and healthy lives.

LILIAN (Cuban-American female, age 53)

As a whole, I'm happy to be in Sonoma County. I feel like there's so much help for people of other cultures. There's a lot of community services. I think Sonoma County is really working hard on that and I can see it. **There's a lot more help than people know for people of different cultures.**

OTHERS EXPERIENCE A DIFFERENT SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY STYLE SEGREGATION—IMAGINARY LINES

SUSANA (Peruvian-American Jewish Lesbian female, age 48)

Santa Rosa is very segregated if you ask me. There is the East and the West, and those two worlds meet in the garden, when the gardeners come or the cleaning ladies.

DRAKE (European-American male, age 63)

Fair housing organizations still exist, and they still exist for a reason. The laws are still on the books for a reason. People still bring suit for discrimination on the basis of race and all kinds of other factors because it still happens. So, I would guess it doesn't happen as often. I would hope it doesn't happen as often. It certainly doesn't happen as overtly. Yeah, it's still around—it's a work in progress.

ANA (Mexican-American female, age 31)

I think it's more invisible that the barriers are there. People mingle but they don't become interracial friends. **I think there is an imaginary line between people.**

JESSICA (Mexican-American female, age 36)

It's frankly very segregated—**It's about where people live and how the cultures divide.**

ALLEN (Korean-American, age 42)

Racism is rampant. Unfortunately, in the last 7 to 8 years it's gotten more prevalent and it's more accepted. It's being couched under different terms, but **it's racism none the less.**

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NOT SO WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY HERE?

MARINA (Mexican-American female, age 34)

It's my feeling that most **people just don't care about the neighbors**. In Latin America we know our neighbors. We know if they need something and we talk to them and we know a little bit about them. There is more communication. Here everything is like too cold to me. You know, I don't know who my neighbors are. We say just "Hi" and it seems that everybody avoids everybody. I have seen them but I don't know what they do for a living, for example.

MICHAEL (African-American/Native American male, age 37)

I tend to believe that people here in Sonoma County are a little more resistant to diverse people than they would like to share. I'm almost 40 years old and people still lock their doors when I walk through the crosswalk, whether I'm with my kids or not. So that just kinda tells me that uh, **it's really no different from the '60s or '70s**. Time has changed, it's just people aren't changing with the times.

YESENIA (Mexican-American female, age 29)

American people don't interact with each other right away. It is really hard for them to introduce

themselves, to be friendly. I don't know if they are afraid of foreign people. **People work all the time**. So, that's what I noticed. It was depressing for me to adjust to the American life. Some believe that community members stereotype others without getting to know them.

PILAR (Colombian-American female, age 22)

In Colombia every time you see foreign people you tell the people, "Do you need help?" or "I will show you that part of the city," Americans are not very open to say, "Where are you from?" or "Would you like to meet my friends?" No, no it's hard to make friends. Maybe the style in America is too fast. **People don't have time to talk or care about others**.

MICHAEL (Cuban/German-American male, age 26)

A lot of people who are prejudice are afraid. I think fear is a real big factor whether it comes to cutting yourself off from the community, holding themselves back from understanding someone's upbringing, or diversity. **Fear is a real controlling factor**.



ISSUES OF IGNORANCE AND CULTURAL STEREOTYPING

MARINA (Mexican-American female, age 34)

Everything is so different here. How many TV shows do you get from other places? In Mexico you can watch television from the United States of course, but also from Spain and you get shows from other countries from Latin America. Most people here just get to know what they have in America and they get to know some of the problems that there are in the rest of the world, but they look at these problems like a way to prove “Oh yes, we’re living a much better life” but **they don’t get to know the good things that are going on in another country.**

JANICE (Portuguese/Native American female, age 56)

The United States is just all about money and taxes. You see other countries—they don’t do that. They make sure that their people have food, clothing, shelter, education—but in their way of doing it. So, I respect other countries and their morals and characters and all their diversity, more than I do here, because to me personally, the United States is greedy. **This is a country of greed, and it hurts.**

ALLEN (Korean-American, age 29)

A lot of people think I’m Native American more than I’m Hispanic or Latino. Then when they find my name that’s when they start thinking I’m Latino. A lot of people think I’m Native American. In fact, I’ve had so many people say since I was in high school, they said, “You know who you look like?” “Yeah, the guy in One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest.” I don’t look anything like him, but people do that. **Again the stereotype...**there’s a big guy with dark hair, high cheek bones and dark skin so he must be an Indian.

I tend to believe that people here in Sonoma County are a little more resistant to diverse people than they would like to share.

I’m almost 40 years old and people still lock their doors when I walk through the crosswalk, whether I’m with my kids or not.

If the ability to speak Spanish could be seen as a skill and a real benefit, I think that would help incorporate the southwest community.



COMMUNICATION AND CONVERSATION CHALLENGES

JESSICA (Mexican-American female, age 36)

Sonoma County talks a good talk but I think it has its own prejudices. Maybe they're more economic. Maybe they are ethnic. You have this very strong service economy here because of restaurants, wine shops, hotels, golf clubs that really cater to upper middle and upper income folks. **The hidden population** is all the people that are behind that and those you don't see in the kitchen and in the vineyard. And all the folks you don't see cleaning your hotel room. I think that's what's going on in Sonoma County.

YESENIA (Mexican-American female, age 31)

Immigrants are exploited both by the dominant culture and by other immigrants. Indigenous people don't know how people take advantage of them. When they immigrate to work, there's people taking advantage of them. And sadly, it's not only the American people or natives that are taking advantage of them, but our own culture is taking advantage of them.

MARINA (Mexican-American female, age 34)

When he [her husband] first started his job in Sonoma County he would come home so devastated everyday. It was so painful for him going to work and everyone be working. They'd be sitting at their desk and no one said "Hello" to anyone. He said it was the most absolute strangest, horrifying experience because in Latin America it's impossible! You always say "Hello" to every single person that you come into contact with in your work environment. **Here everyone is just so focused on doing their work, no communication.** He suffered. He's been here ten years now so he's probably used to it but it was such a shock.

VALENCIA (European-American female, age 30)

I would really like to see the southwest community (Santa Rosa) incorporated into the idea of community. I think that **often the students and the culture are excluded** and that has some drastic effects on our overall community. We don't really have a community that's open to people that only speak a non-English language. If the ability to speak Spanish could be seen

as a skill and a real benefit, I think that would help incorporate the southwest community.

PREJUDICE/PRE-JUDGING

JIM (European-American gay male, age 62)

I grew up in Santa Rosa...went to schools in this area. I very early knew that I was a homosexual individual and that it was not a time for coming out. And I felt incredibly isolated...but I heard that, you know, homosexuality was a sickness and that **there was just nothing worse for a man to be than a homosexual man** because it was considered a deviance and a perversion. And I didn't feel any of those, any of that. I just felt very, very isolated.

MICHAEL (African-American/Native American male, age 37)

Going to department stores—Macy's, Mervyn's, and Sears, it doesn't matter—with my four year old daughter, **I tend to be followed**, uh, abnormally asked "Would I like some help?" So I just kinda contribute that to be the hue of my skin—being half black and half Indian, my skin is a little darker—I just feel that is just gravitated towards in stores.

JANE (European-American Lesbian female, age 58)

I always tell people, think about it for a minute, just think about it for a minute. Would you choose to be gay? Would you choose this lifestyle, you think this is fun, you think this is a walk in the park? **This is not a comfortable lifestyle**, this isn't fun, there's no support for it. I can't walk down the street and hold her hand. We can't stop at a crosswalk and exchange a peck on the cheek, there's no way. This is not something that anyone would consciously, if they knew what this life was like, they would not consciously choose it. So what in the hell do you think I am doing? This is the only way I can live, I was born this way.

HANNAH (Nigerian-American female, age 22)

Here, it's weird, like you walk into a store and people will stare; **some people stare**. Like you don't see a lot of cultural difference, like the most I've seen racially is probably, I want to say twenty black people since I started living here.

ROBERTO (Mexican-American male, age 43)

I've been called bad words before, but they don't stick in my brain as life changing, or stick in my brain. Sometimes, like waiting in line at a grocery store, they looked at the person behind me because **they didn't think I spoke English** until I spoke.

HOWARD (European-American Jewish Gay male, age 41)

I mean, one thing that always strikes me is I'll go out with my partner, and we'll just, you know, be kidding around town or joking with the sales clerk. And they'll just look at us like, "Huh? What?" And **we truly feel like strangers in a strange land**.

LORA (European-American, age 27)

I speed way more than Dan [her African-American husband]. We used to go over Chanate 3 or 4 times a day and over the course of two weeks, Dan got pulled over 4 times—never got a ticket, just got stopped. And I'll tell you **he was driving while black in a rich neighborhood**. I don't want my girls to experience that. I don't want them to have to worry about going to college while black, driving while black, eating in a restaurant while black. I just don't want it to be an issue for them.

LILIAN (Cuban-American Jehovah's Witness female, age 53)

It's so hard sometimes for people to accept others because of their color, who they worship as far as religious background, and their nationality. It's hard to know if it will ever be okay, if people will come to the conclusion that it's okay to be of a different color. It's sad, but we're imperfect people.

I don't want my girls ...to worry about going to college while black, driving while black, eating in a restaurant while black. I just don't want it to be an issue for them.

WE LISTEN
ME LISTEN

KNOWLEDGE GAPS ABOUT OTHER CULTURES AND COUNTRIES

CARMEN (Chilean-American female, age 43)

You go to places and see people and they ask you where are you from, and I say where I'm from, and **people don't know where that country is**. So, if they see me, they look at me and I look Hispanic to them, and they think I'm from Mexico, but I'm not. But, no matter, I don't care if they say I'm Mexican because we all speak Spanish anyway. But, people need to be more aware of other things.

SANDRA (Argentinian/Colombian-American, age 31)

Sometimes when the people know I am not from here and I don't speak perfect English **[they think] I am kind of stupid**.

CLAUDIA (Brazilian female, age 24)

I think for the reason I am a woman, I sometimes don't get this kind of discrimination (for my accent). Depends like when I am in the grocery store, people are like "Ah. You have a cute accent." **And they try to flirt with me** or something like that.

WORKPLACE EXCLUSION

MARIA (Chilean-American female, age 64)

People think that I can't have all this strong background and this technical and have a Spanish accent. That is everywhere! And then they forget, but **the first impression is to them is it's not possible...** You see it in their eyes.

JESSICA (Mexican-American female, age 36)

I'm really impressed with the overall attitude here at [my work] and the people that I work closely in terms of their consciousness and their acceptance and understanding of other groups and where they're alliances lie. That being said there are certainly odd pockets, even here at [my work], that **you're sort of amazed at people's comments**— Even in this day & age some of people's racist comments strike you as odd.

ELEE (Chinese-American male, age 52)

I had a really difficult time starting (an architectural practice) because of not being a male Caucasian. When I first came to Santa Rosa, the local AIA, I was the only minority there and **I think they just don't take you very seriously**. I think now it's different. It was always difficult in the beginning, like you have to prove yourself.

DEAN (European-American male with physical challenges, age 75)

When I went to work as a barber, the barber's union, the secretary took one look at me and signed me up as a non-beneficiary member. I want you to know I've been a hell of a lot healthier than 99% of those other people, but **I couldn't get benefits**. So this is prejudice.

ROBERTO (Mexican-American male, age 43)

As a doctor I notice that the nurses don't want to make the effort to try and understand them [patients]. They'll call me an hour later 'she's yelling and screaming and I don't know why' well why don't you ask her? 'I don't speak Spanish and I can't find an interpreter.' Well **that's a waste of my time just to be an interpreter when I could be seeing patients**. Those kind of issues--because they don't know what a patient is saying, a patient not getting their medications correctly because no one took the time to explain it to them in their language, those I encounter over and over again.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS?

CARMEN (Chilean-American female, age 43)

When he [her son] was in elementary school, there was a kid that was saying very bad words about Mexicans because he thought James was a Mexican kid. So I talked to the teacher too, and the teacher said, "Okay, I'll talk to his parents." And the teacher did talk to his parents, but **his parents said they didn't care** because they really hate Mexicans.

JUANITA (African-American female, age 77)

When my kids were growing up and we had the PTA, I've always been one who would go to a meeting. And so I would be sitting in meetings, and it would just be me, it seems. And I think, hey wait, what am I doing, or not doing? But I soon learned, and I would be listening, I soon learned that people would say well this is doctor so and so, and he has a doctorate, and **he is this that and the other**. And I would go, well I'm trying to raise kids, and I wanted to come back to school. And it soon disappeared, as soon as I started believing in me.



THY (Vietnamese/Chinese-American female, age 27)

I have a friend, he's Filipino and so **he tells all the people she's smart because she's Vietnamese she's good at math**. That's not true.

LORA (European-American, age 27)

Our schools are completely segregated here. When we were looking at a school for Coby [Santa Rosa elementary schools] we were looking at statistics, like demographics. There were not enough children who were in poverty to go to that school so there weren't even statistics for children in poverty. That's how rich that school is—less than 1% of the students there that live in poverty versus the school that Coby was supposed to go to, which is the complete opposite and the neighborhoods are real close!

CLAUDIA (Brazilian female, age 24)

When I went to the Master's program, then I started not feeling accepted. People were older than me. They had all their Master's degree. And I didn't speak the language very well when I entered in the program. And then we had exercises and I felt that people didn't want to be in my group. Or in the coffee (room), nobody waited for me to get my coffee and things like that. And then **I start feeling discrimination for the first time**, and then I was so upset, sad because I always felt so welcome.

DEVELOPING THE PHOTOGRAPH OF OUR COMMUNITY: COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Many participants suggest ways to increase friendliness among community members and neighbors. They object to values of extreme individualism and consumerism. They wished community members were less home centered and isolated from one another.

BREAKING THE ISOLATION CYCLE

SUSANA (Peruvian-American Jewish Lesbian, age 48)

I wish there were a cultural shift where people would work less and would give each other permission to be in each other's lives much more. Like to knock on your neighbor's door and say "Hey, can I come in? Let's have a cup of coffee, let's chat."

Community means being safe to be you, safe to be different, where there is interdependence, meaning you don't have to be self

reliant about everything. You can call on someone to ask for a favor. And there is this agreement to help each other, to care for each other. I experience a void of community here.

TA-RAN (African-American male, age 28)

I would change just the friendliness. I remember as a kid growing up—every-

body knew everybody. Like now, I lived here 4 years and I barely know the people in my circle. People stay in the house a lot now—kids play video games, they don't play as much. I would just say **I would change these people getting to know each other more, including me too.**

ZACK (European-American male, age 20)

I would say that **I would like to see more communication, more friendliness—open commu-**

nication where you can just go to your neighbor's house and ask for some sugar, or feel comfortable saying hello—more politeness within the community. Whereas, you know, sometimes you walk by and people have their head down.

MARINA (Mexican-American female, age 34)

Many times I'm in the car and I look for a window and I see well it's just like a ghost town, especially at night. Many places they don't have enough street lights. If you want to walk at night it's awful because it's too dark. The street lights are just for cars, it's not for people. **I think that having a better public transport would help.**

MICHAEL (Cuban/German-American male, age 26)

I think if people contributed a little more in their neighborhood, in their home, as far as going out to meet someone and help someone. I think about the school situation, maybe the parents of their son or daughter that is going to school can meet some of the other parents. It doesn't seem like people are really outgoing, they return home and do their thing, they go to work, they drop their child off at school, they go do their activities, they are very to themselves. I just think **if everyone took time to meet someone, to introduce themselves to another person,** that it might bring the community a little tighter.

BORY (Thailand-American male, age 20)

I think everybody should meet each other and start socializing with each other, each race and religion. It's the reason why we have racism. We like to keep to ourselves. We feel secure when we don't express our feelings to other kinds of people, except for the people in our group.

I would just say I would change ... people getting to know each other more, including me too.



CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

JOSE (Mexican-American male, age 18)

I would like to see a place for youth to go. If there was more of that, then there'd be a lot less crime. **There needs to be more community involvement, more activities, or find out what kids want and try and build it.** Because if you don't build it for them, if you don't help them, they don't care.

ANA (Mexican-American female, age 31)

I think we have to **start working with the kids** cause with the adults you cannot do anything about it cause they have already made up their minds

VALENCIA (European-American female, age 30)

It's important to remember that individuals all over our county are being successful. I'd like to **see more people being celebrated**—especially students from economically low backgrounds or Spanish speaking homes.

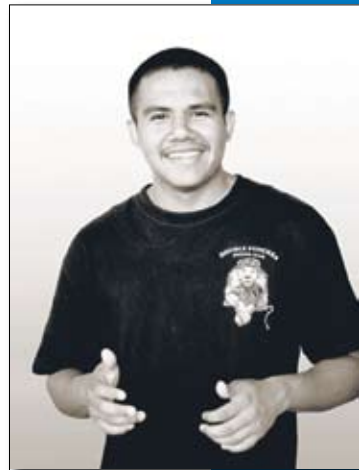
MULTI LANGUAGE ABILITIES AS A GIFT

ANA (Brazilian-American female, age 61)

To come to an Anglo-Saxon society was a shock for a lifetime. Think for a minute. Maybe the accent bugs you, and you want to run off, but think for a minute and realize that this person has a soul like you do. **If we could start a campaign to look at each other with more compassion, it would be a different world.**

ROBERTO (Mexican-American male, age 43)

A patient not getting their medications correctly because no one took the time to explain it to them in their language. It's not the nurses' fault, they're overwhelmed. It bothers me they haven't tried to **learn Spanish in an area where 20% of the patients are all Spanish Speaking.**



I would like to see a place for youth to go. If there was more of that, then there'd be a lot less crime.

It's my feeling that most people just don't care about the neighbors. In Latin America we know our neighbors. We know if they need something and we talk to them and we know a little bit about them.



SPEAKING UP AND OUT

BETH (European American HIV+ female, age 34)

Just awareness and education on issues. I'd have to say within my community that actually Sebastopol is a wonderful community. The citizens actually care about the issues that come before City Council—just **awareness on how we as a society impact our environment; how what we do today will affect our children.**

DRAKE (European American male, age 63)

There was \$50,000 that the City Council was going to decide what to do with. There was an application, by then PEO for about that amount for our youth program. The City Council decided that they were going to use the \$50,000 to put flowers in the median at Oakmont. Someone who was sitting **at that meeting, your basic average citizen and they got up and said, "this is wrong.** There are 300 kids over here who need after-school services, and they need recreation and homework tutoring, etc. We can get along without the flowers in the Median." She, this one woman who actually did that, made such a stink that the City Council had to backtrack

JESSICA (Mexican American female, age 36)

I think that a lot of this attitude change is with one person at a time. In my opinion that's the best way to look at it. It is the conversation that we have with other people. It's the way that you carry yourself. **I think it's challenging people.** As uncomfortable as

that is, really challenging people and pushing their buttons in a positive but critical sort of way and understanding our own actions and what we do and put our best foot forward.

ROBERTO (Mexican American male, age 43)

We are building a culture anew, the city is evolving and diversifying whether we like it or not, and we can do it begrudgingly or we can do with delight. So I think that if we take time as a city or as a community to highlight the aspect of our elderly volunteers who clean up sidewalks or our shopkeepers. The things that make this place special—I think the restaurants get a lot of press, but I also think that when I hear another view from Santa Rosa, what about the people here? The dog supply store you know? I would love to hear about them and how they got started. It would be nice if we were respectful of all members of the community, keeping in mind the people that are keeping those places open— not the customers, but the backside people.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Here are 9 SIMPLE IDEAS for small steps we can take to begin making a difference:

1

GATHER A GROUP

SELECT a section from this report and gather a group from your neighborhood, class, board, book club, religious organization, office group to participate in an open discussion of communication and acceptance within the group. Group facilitation is being offered by **Listening for a Change**: www.listeningforachange.org

2

KNOCK ON YOUR NEIGHBOR'S DOOR

KNOCK on your neighbor's door and join or create your own Neighborhood Group—Meet once in a while for social events & problem solving.

3

LEARN HOW TO LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

LEARN how to listen attentively—People feel honored when someone cares enough to listen to them. Consider learning how to conduct an oral history and then interview your neighbors. Visit www.listeningforachange.org for information about free local oral history workshops.

4

EXTEND A HELPING HAND

EXTEND a helping hand to a person you don't know well. Do something such as taking in newspapers, bringing food to a frail person, helping with a garden project. These small gestures build community.

5

VOLUNTEER IN A SCHOOL OR NONPROFIT

VOLUNTEER in a school or nonprofit outside your neighborhood that engages a community different from your own—Help a child or adult with language, reading, math concepts, sports activities, etc.

6

STEP OUT OF YOUR CIRCLE OF COMFORT

STEP OUT of your circle of comfort to meet and engage with neighbors and co-workers. Ask and explore these questions:

- Why do we fear others?
- Why do we pre-judge?
- What can we do to diminish pre-judging?

7

ENCOURAGE A BUSINESS TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

ENCOURAGE a business to promote efforts to treat all customers & employees with respect. Bring diversity and engagement workshops to your work site.

8

VISIT A NEIGHBORHOOD YOU DON'T KNOW

VISIT a neighborhood you don't know well. Shop, try a new restaurant, play in a park, or walk the residential streets.

9

SUPPORT A COMMUNITY AGENCY

CONTACT a community agency and ask about programs that will help you know and support your community in a greater way.

Please join us in extending yourself to neighbors, associates, and community members.

Help "develop" a picture of Sonoma County that includes true community and acceptance of diversity.



• LISTENING FOR A CHANGE •

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DONORS WHO MADE THIS REPORT POSSIBLE

- CODDING FOUNDATION
- COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SONOMA COUNTY/ SCHULZ DONOR ADVISED FUND
- DAPHNE SMITH FUND OF COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SONOMA COUNTY



JOIN OUR EFFORTS TO CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY!

I WANT TO BE INVOLVED:

- Participate in a **Community Conversation Circle**
- Learn how and conduct **Oral Histories** of your "neighbors"
- Support our efforts through a **Financial Contribution** below

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Check enclosed: payable to **Listening for a Change**

Credit Card: ___Visa ___MC

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Expiration: [][] [][]

Contribution Amount:

- \$ 25 \$ 250
- \$ 50 \$1,000
- \$100 Other: \$ _____

In order to be environmentally aware, we ask that you provide the envelope. Please see address listed at top of page.

Listening for a Change is a nonprofit 501(c)(3). Contributions are tax deductible.

THE BIG PICTURE—NEXT STEPS TO INCLUDE US ALL

HOW CAN EACH OF US CREATE A WELCOMING COMMUNITY?

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.

GET INVOLVED

■ Participate

Consider having your group or organization participate in **Listening for a Change's Community Conversation Circles** to discuss issues raised in this report.

■ Volunteer/Learn

Volunteer or learn about *Community Listening Project, Diversity & Engagement* or *Essence of Acceptance* programs.

■ Donate

To donate to our organization, please visit our website or complete form at left.

We appreciate the endorsement of *Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights, and the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County.*

INTERIOR PHOTOS: JANE BARON

GRAPHIC DESIGN: BAILYN GRAPHICS

WE LISTEN
ME LISTEN