



Calendar This Important Date!



Sunday, July 13
4:00 – 8:00 PM
\$50 per ticket

Michel-Schlumberger Wine Estate, Healdsburg

Please join The Survivor Project for a late summer afternoon of wine, food, music and auction.



Students Tina Ruggeiro and Merrilee Roscoe



Daniel Bryant, interviewee

The *Essence of Acceptance* Transforms Attitudes

The Survivor Project interviewed Tina Ruggeiro and Merrilee Roscoe, students in Lisa Cain's history class at Casa Grande High School, who participated in an oral history with Daniel Bryant, an African American. Mr. Bryant spoke about growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, being a child at the beginning of the civil rights movement, and being responsible for his successes as an adult.

SP: What surprised you about this oral history?

Tina: I don't really like speakers. I don't usually relate to them because they are usually a lot older than us, so I wasn't very excited to have one. Once he started talking I got interested in what he had to say. He didn't feel sorry for himself. I learned a lot about how people can have a bad experience that can make them a much better person.

Merrilee: He definitely changed my view of speakers. Usually they drag on and they are not really exciting, but he was able to talk about his experiences in an interesting way that wasn't upsetting. He had different tones, so he would be upset at one point but then he was able to change the class view

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www.thesurvivorproject.org

Features:

- Sonoma County Survivor Project exhibit
- Teachers' Guide to the exhibit
- Sample lesson from the *Essence of Acceptance* curriculum
- News, upcoming events, history of The Survivor Project
- Introduction to our Board and Staff
- Ways to get involved as a volunteer or donor
- Lists of related resources

Designed by Susan Bailyn of Bailyn Graphics and made possible in part by funding through a Tolerance Contract from the State of California via the Sonoma County Office of Education.



Pictured from left to right: Iraqui Imad Aljanaby, student interviewer from Sequoia High School, African American Juanita Ashe, students from Casa Grande High School, El Salvadoran Sarah Oliva, student from Sequoia, Shoah/Holocaust survivor Tova Weiss, students from Casa Grande.

School Highlights

Essence of Acceptance Interviews: Students at Casa Grande, Sonoma Mountain and San Antonio high schools have been interviewing Petalumans who include: Shoah/Holocaust survivors, Japanese Americans interned during World War II, African Americans, and Israeli Americans and Palestinian Americans. When a class requests an interviewee from a region currently in conflict, The Survivor Project brings a representative from both sides for a balanced perspective. Redwood City students at Sequoia High School have interviewed El Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Shoah/Holocaust survivors, and Afghanis. At Rio Lindo Adventist Academy in Healdsburg students interviewed an Israeli American and a Palestinian American.

Teacher Trainings: Teachers from the Sonoma County Court, Community and Alternative Schools program, Petaluma High Schools, and Sequoia High participated in the *Essence of Acceptance* trainings to integrate the curriculum into many aspects of the California State Standards, especially in language arts and social studies.

Partnerships: For the first time, The Survivor Project has partnered with other nonprofits to help implement the *Essence of Acceptance* into the schools and community. In the past, The Survivor Project found the interviewees for the participating classes. Through a Community Foundation Sonoma County grant we partnered with **Healthy Community Consortium (HC2)** and helped train them to find interviewees for the classes in their own community for the Petaluma high schools. Thanks to a grant from the Peninsula Community Foundation, we had an almost identical relationship in San Mateo with the **Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center** who found interviewees for Sequoia High School in Redwood City.

...Interview (continued from page 1)

and make sure people didn't feel sorry for him.

SP: How do you feel about human rights in terms of what you've learned this year, in terms of this experience, and how our human rights and responsibilities affect us?

Tina: It is upsetting because you have to hear and watch people going through such rough things that they shouldn't have to go through - being discriminated against because they want to state their opinion or show that they don't feel something is right. It is really unfair and you wish you could change something by just saying it shouldn't be that way. You wish that they could just not have to go through the pain that they went through. It is nice to know that the world has changed and to hope that it gets better each day.

Merrilee: I think it is really sad when people are treated differently because of the way they are - not only skin color, but sexual preference, religion. I think we've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. I don't understand what makes people think, just because they are a certain way that that's the right way to be and they're not in the wrong.

SP: Do you think this kind of experience can change the way we all exist together, in the school community, and in the world? How do you feel about this interview experience in terms of that kind of a change?

Tina: I think that it would make a lot of people realize that even the small things that we do, we don't mean to be racist or discriminatory to any

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A Few Thoughts from Phyllis...



In our last issue I used the metaphor of being fisher-people as an important activity of a non-profit staff---The fishing continues, but there are fewer and thinner fish and perhaps a more appropriate metaphor is that we've become "rock hounds". Unfortunately, the rocks are heavy and there's not much underneath!

*With adversity comes creativity---We are taking a fresh look at how to continue to share our **Essence of Acceptance** and new **Essence of Community** program with additional schools and communities. Now that our curriculum is complete and we have broad experience with different schools and communities, we are considering novel ways to market both the curriculum and trainings for teachers and community members. Since our website is up and running (www.thesurvivorproject.org) we are able to advertise and distribute. In addition, we're exploring relationships with the California Department of Education, California State University system and any other like-valued organization that might be interested in collaborative efforts. Have other ideas? Please contact me at our office!*

We have only one fundraiser each year. Thanks to the generosity of Jacques and Barbara Schlumberger, we are having our third summer event on Sunday, July 13th from 4:00-8:00. You'll be receiving an invitation soon, but mark your calendar now, for a lovely summer afternoon of wine, food, music and a lively auction at the Michel-Schlumberger Wine Estate. Our Board is working hard to make this an especially memorable event.

Today it often feels as if we're going backward in areas of cultural respect and understanding. The Survivor Project is an organization that lifts rocks and works against this backward roll---Through your support you help transform a mind.....Please give generously to be a part of this important, pro-active work.

Phyllis

Religious Community Support

The Survivor Project has been fortunate to receive generous financial contributions from the Santa Rosa Church of Religious Science through their member tithing and Congregation Shomrei Torah's "Robert and Claire Harris Social Action Fund." Both congregations have, or will soon display, the Sonoma County Survivor Project traveling exhibit.

Congregation Shomrei Torah displayed the exhibit as part of their expanded Yom Hashoah Memorial Service. Yom Hashoah is the Day of Remembrance for victims of the Nazi Holocaust. This year, in addition to remembering the six million Jews who perished under the Nazi regime, Shomrei Torah lit an additional five candles to represent political prisoners, the disabled, Jehovah's Witnesses and Christians of conscience, Gypsies/Romas, and homosexuals.



Valentino Pecak and Shawne Refate from the Gypsy/Roma community light candles at the Yom Hashoah commemoration.

Photo by Mermaid Productions, Keely Durvin.

Members of other persecuted communities were invited as special guests, including Native Americans, Cambodians who survived the Pol Pot regime and Armenians.

The Church of Religious Science will exhibit the entire traveling exhibit in their foyer for two weeks beginning May 30th through June 13th. In addition, the Church has asked The Survivor Project to conduct two Sunday afternoon workshops with congregants. The June 22 workshop, from 1:30-4:30, will be about understanding what human rights are and how they must be guarded. Participants will become familiar with the United Nations Declaration of Human

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Staff Welcome & Appreciation

As our organization continues to prosper and grow, we've been fortunate to have had a series of very talented young women to help us move to our next stage.

Caryn Shapiro comes to us from the Rudolf Steiner Foundation in San Francisco as our Project Coordinator. She brings much to our organization with her thoughtful ways, non-profit experience and hard work. Caryn graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara and holds a Masters in International Relations from Golden Gate University.

Both of Caryn's parents left South Africa in the early 70's. Fluent in Spanish, Caryn studied for a semester in Chile and traveled widely through Peru, Chile, Brazil and Argentina as well as throughout Western Europe and South Africa. After working and studying in San Francisco for six years, Caryn has recently returned to Santa Rosa. We are especially happy to have Caryn back as a dynamic, extremely capable person in our organization.

If you contacted us this fall, you may have spoken with **Liora Abraham-Brosbe**. Liora used her passion for human rights to help complete our curriculum and move our new website along. Now in Israel, she'll be back in the Bay Area in the fall to study at the California Institute for Integrative Studies where she'll be completing a Masters in counseling and theater.

Did you notice that our newsletter was especially well written last fall? That's because **Caitlin Costin** did most of the writing. Caitlin begins a Masters in Journalism at Columbia University this fall.

The summer of 2002, **Amanda Mihalik** worked with The Survivor Project. Amanda is a pre-med student at Seattle University with a focus on international issues. She shared the position with **Leah Lander** who recently returned from a semester in Italy through the University of California at Davis.

Somehow, in spite of being a young organization, we've been able to attract an incredibly talented staff. It's no surprise that we've been doing so well!

...Interview (continued from page 2)

group of people but we do, just because of the way we are brought up. We don't see that we do it, it just becomes habit. Sometimes I feel almost guilty being white and hearing someone talk about their experiences because, even though I've never done anything personally, I still kind of feel guilty that I'm associated with those people. Even if you're African American and you've never been discriminated against, you still know that you are a part of a group that has been. [Mr. Bryant] didn't make us feel bad about something that we didn't do because sometimes it feels like speakers guilt trip you... not purposefully but you just kind of feel out of place and uncomfortable when you are listening.

Merrilee: I think that by hearing someone talk about their experiences it will definitely change your views. When you hear somebody specifically talk about what they went through - they witnessed it, and felt the pain - and then you see that it is not a speech. You get a different feel and can definitely learn something new.

Lisa Cain is co-chair and teacher in the Social Studies department at Casa Grande High School in Petaluma. Lisa has taught the Essence of Acceptance curriculum throughout the 02-03 school year.



SP: What is important to you about teaching, and what are your personal goals as a teacher?

Lisa: It is important to me that students see a connection to something bigger than their own life. In high school it is hard to realize that there is more to life. Studying history reminds students that high school isn't the "be all end all." History classes are particularly relevant right now due to current events.

It is my goal is to have students walk out of the classroom looking for history in their own lives. I'm excited about the *Essence of Acceptance* program because I've done other assignments when we study immigration at the turn of the century and then

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Vice Chair
Patrick Grattan

With his blond, boyish good looks, Patrick Grattan is perhaps not

the first person one thinks of as an active board member of a non-profit based on acceptance of diversity. Pat has long been known in our community for his unique compassion, concern and caring for others. Always quietly stretching himself, he often goes beyond his own comfort level and borders to explore new ways of looking at and understanding the world.

Pat is native to Sonoma County. However, interspersed throughout his childhood and young adulthood, Pat's family lived for periods in Japan, Oregon and Thailand. Both of his parents were educators, but every few years his father would become dissatisfied with his job and would look for something new. When Pat was ten, his father took a job with the US government in a civilian capacity, moving the family to Japan for two years. In his junior year at Santa Rosa High School, they bought a cattle ranch in Oregon, where the family moved for two years. It was a very remote lifestyle: 16 miles from town, on a gravel road. There were only eleven kids in Pat's graduating class! In college, he spent a special summer in Thailand with the family. It was the early exposure of many cultures, places, experiences and schools that have created the interesting chapters in Pat's life.

The family's high respect for education in general, and reading in particular, helped shape Pat's desire to pursue academics. He earned a BA in Economics at UC Davis and received his law degree from UCLA. At one point Pat realized he was a good student but, in his modest way, wasn't sure he was good at much else! Following a scholarly path, Pat chose to pursue a law degree because he felt it would provide flexibility and career options. However, after considering the

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Treasurer
Vicky Mwangi

Vicky Mwangi grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. She was a middle child in between an

older sister and a younger brother. Her father passed away when she was young, so her mother raised her and her siblings. However, in the African community there is a lot of extended family, so she had lots of cousins, uncles and aunts around while she was growing up.

Vicky was educated in Kenya. She holds a BA in Education and Accounting, and she is a qualified CPA in both Kenya and the United States. Growing up, Vicky always thought she would be a doctor. However, in a biology class one afternoon, Vicky was assigned to dissect a little white mouse. She found that she couldn't bring herself to cut it up. Her teacher kept telling her that it would be okay, but she just couldn't do it. At that moment, she realized that she was not going to be a doctor, and she changed her course work to economics, geography, and business. She decided to be a teacher, while specializing in subjects that would allow her to move into accounting.

After university, Vicky received a scholarship to study in Australia for one year. After that year, she came to the United States to visit her sister. She had worked as an auditor for Price Waterhouse in Kenya, therefore she was able to get a job in Santa Rosa as a CPA at Zainer Reinhart Clarke. She had intended to stay in Santa Rosa for three years, but she met her husband, got married, and three years turned into twelve. She now has a five year old son. She and her husband have since divorced, but she feels that life has been good in the U.S., and she wouldn't change her decision to stay.

She explains that over the last 30 years, Kenya has been having political problems which undermine economic stability for individuals and families. In Kenya, as in the U.S., women make less than their male counterparts. It is also more difficult to find a

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U.S. Foreign Service, Pat became what he calls a "regular lawyer." He enjoys his practice and clients as a partner in the well respected Santa Rosa law firm of Geary, Shea, O'Donnell and Grattan.

"...teenagers can be taught the importance and benefits of accepting the fact that other cultures are just as valid as their own, and worthy of being understood."

Pat believes The Survivor Project has very high goals and has the potential to make a big difference in our society. He began supporting the Project's work in the early 90's because he was quite moved by the original Sonoma County Survivor Project (now on the website). As a founding Board Member, Pat always brings thoughtful questions and an open mind. He feels that his participation in the work of The Survivor Project has made him more sensitive to the difficulty minority cultures have in becoming accepted by the majority culture.

Unlike a lot of idealistic concepts, Pat feels that the mission of The Survivor Project is very solid and has the potential to help transform attitudes. He thinks that through the Essence of Acceptance program, it is possible that teenagers can be taught the importance and the benefits of accepting the fact that other cultures are just as valid as their own, and worthy of being understood.

Rights as well as create their own declaration of human rights. The following Sunday, June 29th, will be spent learning the basic skills of oral history taking. The culminating experience will be to do group interviews with local community members.

The Survivor Project is open to creative ways to share its important work with schools, religious groups and the community at large.

job in Kenya and making a living is a day to day struggle. Vicky feels that in the U.S. one has the security that if one puts in the effort, they will "make it."

Vicky first experienced culture shock when she arrived in Australia. Growing up in a metropolitan city like Nairobi, and working for an international company like Price Waterhouse, she was always surrounded by people of other cultures, however the majority of the population are African. In Australia it was the exact opposite. Vicky felt like she was the only black person as far as the eye could see. For the first time, she felt like she was in the minority. "Culture shock was realizing, I'm black and here I am." However she feels that since she grew up in a city, it didn't take along time to adjust, perhaps because of a survival instinct.

Vicky tells the story that during her stay in Australia, she went into a grocery store where a mother was shopping with her little girl. When the little girl saw Vicky she said, "Mommy, there is a black girl." The mom was so embarrassed. Vicky went up to the girl and said, "Yeah, I'm black. Do you want to touch me?" And the little girl said, "Yes." The mother thanked Vicky for not getting upset.

Vicky became involved in The Survivor Project in 2002. At Zainer Rinehart Clarke Vicky works with a lot of non-profits, and is considered an expert on non-profit accounting. When Ruben Weinzveg, an associate at Zainer Rinehart Clarke and long-time supporter of The Survivor Project, told her that The Survivor Project was about understanding and acceptance, Vicky immediately decided that she would like to be involved as a board member.

Vicky believes that The Survivor Project has a great deal of potential to impact a lot of people, especially during this time of war, when humans have the propensity to narrow their minds to hate a certain group of people. The Survivor Project really brings that to the forefront for a generation that can miss it if nobody does exactly what The Survivor Project is doing - bringing faces to these younger people who say "I am human, just like you." Vicky feels that The Survivor Project has a great mission, impact, and is directed to the right people.

A Special Thank You to All Our Friends and Supporters Who Have Given So Generously Since November 2002:

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Community Foundation Sonoma County

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Sonoma County Office of Education (contract for a State Department of Education Tolerance Grant)

...**Interview** (continued from page 4)

students ask their family about their immigration stories. What is exciting is that the students see the connection to their family. They see that history is about people, their own lives and the human experience, not just about a bunch of dead men. I find that the *Essence of Acceptance* talks a lot about the human experience.

SP: Are students aware of what is going on in the world around them with regard to diversity and race?

Lisa: It is embarrassing to say, but while students of color are acutely aware, I think the majority of the students aren't aware. Part of that is the age group and where they are socially. However with exciting material, they become very interested. Unfortunately the newspaper and the nightly news don't hook them in. The Survivor Project is a vehicle to get students hooked in to larger issues.

SP: Why did you decide to use the *Essence of Acceptance* curriculum? What was appealing about it?

Lisa: The curriculum is so thorough, so well put together. Every step has been outlined. The flexibility is wonderful from a teacher's standpoint. Phyllis herself has also been a wonderful resource and motivator.

SP: Will you continue to use the *Essence of Acceptance* curriculum?

Lisa: Yes. As this is the first time we have used the curriculum, I have just gotten my feet wet with it, and so I look forward to doing more next year.

I would like to commend the whole program. The first time you use the curriculum, you're at level one, and I can see that as you continue to use it, it will become more integrated without thought. As we do the smaller pieces we get a picture of how things can be next year. Because it is so complete and richly written, it takes a while to absorb, but is worth it.

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Our Mission

The Survivor Project promotes understanding and acceptance of human diversity through education, oral history, and the arts.

Our Vision

As our communities become increasingly diverse, it is imperative that we find meaningful ways to respect and understand the rich and complex cultures among us.

Our goal is to work to eliminate prejudice and intolerance in order to promote true acceptance of others.

We achieve this by working with communities to develop oral history/arts projects with personal histories of community members who have lost human and/or civil rights.

Each project becomes a catalyst for positive change through introspection and application.

5079 MONTECITO AVENUE
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404

• THE SURVIVOR PROJECT •

