

CONNECTIONS



Center for Civic Partnerships

California Healthy Cities and Communities

WATSONVILLE NEIGHBORS WORK TOGETHER TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS

Watsonville residents are experiencing new ways to discuss their conflicts and cultural differences. The City's Neighborhood Services Division is addressing neighborhood conflicts through the Neighborhood Mediation Program, which just completed its second year. The program trains key city staff members from various departments and residents in conflict resolution skills that are both culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Watsonville is 95 miles south of San Francisco at the southern end of Santa Cruz County. With a population of over 47,000, 75% of which is Latino, neighbors can have language barriers that make communication difficult, even when conflicts are not present.

"Neighbors don't talk to each other. The Neighborhood Mediation Program gives residents an opportunity to dialogue not only about problems, but about common concerns that they may share. Conflict Resolution training should be part of every City's arsenal," says City Manager Carlos Palacios.

Mariaelena Tantalo, Neighborhood Services Division Manager, is promoting the program through the City's quarterly newsletter, which



Seated L-R: Gretchen Regenhardt, Nancy Heischman, Patricia Donahue. Standing L-R: Carlos Palacios, Mariaelena Tantalo, Reverend Daniel Moran.

reaches 15,000 homes, and through theatrical skits that Division staff performs for various city departments. The Division is housed in a portable trailer which moves from neighborhood to neighborhood every few years so that all Watsonville residents have access to its many services, such as home improvement grants and graffiti abatement. With each move comes an opportunity to resolve conflicts within a new neighborhood. The Division has allocated a dedicated staff member to work on the Neighborhood Mediation Program, strengthening the City's commitment to the program.

"Neighborhood Mediation has truly been institutionalized in the City. It is a tool that we are using to improve our quality of life," says Tantalo.

Complaints among neighbors range from noise, to barking dogs, to residents holding parties on the front lawn. Reverend Daniel Moran from Potter's House Church, a trained mediator, reaches out to those who feel most comfortable coming to the church to discuss their conflicts. "There are a variety of differences among Latino cultures, but one thing we all share is a common desire to be treated with respect," says Moran.

Gretchen Regenhardt, Director of California Legal Rural Assistance, has clients who have benefited from the program. "As an advocate for vulnerable residents, I am glad to be able to offer conflict resolution as an option. Some of our clients would be homeless if

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evicted. The hope is that we resolve conflicts before they escalate to that level.”

Getting working families to come to the table to face each other is not always easy. However, conflicts tend to escalate when not dealt with, and this is a large motivator according to Nancy Heischman, Director of the Conflict Resolution Center of Santa Cruz County. “Neighbors may live on opposite sides of the fence, but that fence is only a barrier that comes down as neighbors begin communicating” says Heischman. “Many clients have told me that the mediation experience has completely changed the way they deal with conflicts in their life.”

To date, 53 volunteers have been trained in conflict management through the Neighborhood Mediation Program and 26 of these have agreed to serve as community mediators. A bilingual role-playing component was recently added to the training to address diversity within communities. A Conflict Management workshop for 100 persons has also been presented at Mercy Housing in Santa Cruz.

“The health of a city is contingent on how healthy its neighborhoods are,” says Palacios.” 

Ralph Nunez, Park and Recreation Director with the City of Riverside, and Thea Perrino, CHCC Program Coordinator, presented “Improving Healthy Eating and Active Living in California Cities” at the California Nutrition Network for Healthy, Active Families’ Social Marketing Conference, held August 11-12, 2005 in Sacramento. The presentation focused on strategies developed in California cities for initiating and sustaining population-based

Welcome New CHCC Network Members!

Alameda County – UC Cooperative Extension
City of Covina
Desert Healthcare District
City of Glendale
Mono County Health Department
Public Health Law Program, Public Health Institute
San Francisco Department of Public Health
Shasta County Department of Public Health
City of Shasta Lake
City of Tracy
City of Willits

It’s not too late to join the CHCC Network! The Network is a membership program created for organizations and groups interested in the principles and practices of healthy cities and communities. It provides a means of affiliation with the California program and the international Healthy Cities and Communities movement. It’s easy to join – go to www.civicpartnerships.org and click on the Network link. Select *CHCC Network Brochure*, which includes a membership application form and instructions.

Participants have access to an array of services including:

- Funding notices and other important resources
- Priority status for CHCC funding opportunities
- Discounts on workshops/skill-building trainings
- Regional and statewide peer networking
- Assistance in addressing local government and community issues

“The CHCC Network supports our vision of building healthy communities by providing timely information on resources, best practices and events. The diversity of the members, both by geography and professional representation, keeps us abreast of emerging trends across California.”


*- Susan D. Harrington, M.S., R.D. Director
Riverside Department of Public Health*

Riverside’s Nunez Speaks at Conference



Ralph Nunez and Thea Perrino speaking at conference.


improvements in healthier eating and active living environments. Mr. Nunez discussed how the recreational field can contribute to these efforts.

Additional information on Riverside and other CHCC communities implementing healthy eating and physical activity promotion programs is available on the Center for Civic Partnerships web site (www.civicpartnerships.org). See the Publications and Fall 2004 *Connections* newsletter links. 

Staff Updates

Thea Perrino is the new California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) Program Coordinator for the Center for Civic Partnerships. Thea has nine years of experience working as a community organizer for various state and local public health programs. Most recently, Thea served as the Program Supervisor for the Orange County Cancer Detection Partnership. She has also worked as a Health Educator for the Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team in Orange County; a Prevention Specialist for Community Prevention of Alcohol-Related Problems in Hayward; and a Field Representative for Assembly Member Ellen Corbett of San Leandro. Thea has a Master's degree in Public Health from UCLA and an MBA from UC Irvine.

Jade Chin is the new Project Assistant for the Center for Civic Partnerships. With over 18 years of administrative support experience, Jade is well-qualified for performing a wide range of duties including meeting/event planning; maintaining project databases; preparing reports; layout and design of newsletters; and many other administrative tasks. Jade also serves as a board member of the Sacramento Chinese Community Service Center.

Beth Topf, Technical Assistance Specialist II, recently graduated with a Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration from CSU Sacramento and is exploring new career opportunities. Beth managed the weekly listserves for the Center and assisted staff with research, marketing and programmatic efforts. We wish her all the best! 


Spotlight on San Francisco's Department of Public Health

Welcome to new CHCC Network member, the San Francisco Department of Public Health! The Department delivers a broad array of primary health care and prevention programs to residents of the City and County of San Francisco.

In 2001, the Department's Occupational & Environmental Health Section created the Program on Health, Equity and Sustainability (PHES). In the PHES vision, San Francisco communities are engaged in democracy and committed to equality and diversity, creating and maintain sustainable and healthy places for all San Franciscans to live, work, learn, and play.

The Program supports strategies for urban health and social and environmental justice through conducting and supporting environmental health research, expanding public understanding of the relationships between the natural, built, and social environments and human health, facilitating dialogue and collaboration among public agencies and community organizations, and supporting local participation in public policy-making.

Dr. Rajiv Bhatia, Director of the Occupational and Environmental Health Section, oversees the PHES as well as several new initiatives to improve neighborhood environmental quality, ensure safe and adequate housing, support worker health rights, enhance connections between agriculture and urban consumers, and integrate public and urban planning practices. As part of these initiatives, the Department has been developing and evaluating new tools for health impact assessment and applying them to land use planning. Dr. Bhatia's presentation slides from the 2005 CHCC Annual Conference are available at www.civicpartnerships.org.

A CHCC program participant from 1993-2000, San Francisco successfully implemented injury-prevention interventions for low-income older adults; a pedestrian safety needs assessment, policy recommendations and training program for residents; and an immunization program for children and families. For more information on the Department, visit <http://www.dph.sf.ca.us>. 

"Better Neighborhoods and a Better City for Everyone: A Vision for Housing, Transportation and Street Improvement." Available online at http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/mayor/policy/newsom_neighborhoods.pdf.

"The most livable cities are those guided by a planning process that integrates planning across city departments and throughout the City."

*- San Francisco Mayor
Gavin Newsom¹*

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California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) assists cities and communities with developing, implementing and evaluating inclusionary, community-driven programs, policies and plans, which address environmental, social and economic determinants of health. CHCC advocates a broad definition of health: a shared vision; widespread community participation; system reform; collaborative partnerships engaging local assets; and a means to measure progress and base improvements upon results.

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A Center of the Public Health Institute

Events & Resources

Websites

The California Attorney General's SafeState provides county and other data to promote crime and violence prevention. <http://www.safestate.org/>

The National Low Income Housing Coalition site includes the report, "Out of Reach," listing housing affordability data for every jurisdiction in the country. <http://www.nlihc.org/>

The California Center for Regional Leadership supports, facilitates, and promotes innovative regional solutions to help achieve a more sustainable California. <http://www.calregions.org/>

Affordable Housing Design Advisor developed by HUD, the AIA and other financial and nonprofit organizations, includes guidelines, checklists, photo galleries, and resources for communities planning affordable housing projects. <http://www.designadvisor.org/>

Publications

Guidance for Evaluating Mass Communication Health Initiatives: Summary of an Expert Panel Discussion. Centers for Disease Control. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/communication/practice/epreport.pdf>

Logic Model Development Guide: Using Logic Models to Bring Together Planning, Evaluation and Action. W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Available at <http://www.wkcf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>

Selling Healthy Lifestyles: Using Social Marketing to Promote Change and Prevent Disease. Grantmakers in Health. Available at http://www.gih.org/usr_doc/Selling_Healthy_Lifestyles_Issue_Brief.pdf

Events

League of California Cities Annual Conference
October 5-8, 2005
San Francisco, California
www.cacities.org/ac

Health By Design Symposium
October 20, 2005
Sacramento, California
Sponsored by the UC Davis Health System and the American Institute of Architects, Central Valley Chapter
www.healthbydesign.org

Latino New Urbanism
October 21, 2005
Cal State University Los Angeles
Campus - Golden Eagle Banquet Tower
A project of the Transportation & Land Use Collaborative of Southern California (TLUC)
www.latinonewurbanism.org/

California Chapter of the American Planning Association Conference
October 30 – November 2, 2005
Yosemite, California
www.calapa.org

Creating Community: California's Mental Health Services Act
December 5-7, 2005
Pasadena, California
www.housingca.org/conference/mh_conf.php

5th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy & Livable Communities
January 26-28, 2006
Denver, Colorado
<http://www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/SmartGrowth/>