

THE WIRE

CONNECTING INDIVIDUALS WITH RESOURCES & HOPE - TO RECLAIM LIVES AND LOWER RECIDIVISM



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FROM INCARCERATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

By Danny M.

Before my release from a California state prison, I enrolled in a correspondence college program. My goal was to complete the Certificate of Accomplishment in General Business. However, I did not obtain my certificate before paroling, so I decided to include higher education in my reentry plan. I believed a post-secondary education was an opportunity that could potentially open doors that would not have been easily accessible with my two felony convictions. I had to figure out a way to mitigate the barriers I would encounter upon my prison release, such as being denied for employment, housing, and social services.

Not long after I paroled, I enrolled at Cerritos College. Upon becoming a student, I focused my time and energy on creating a routine revolving around my classes, work, and networking with faculty, staff and students. This routine allowed me to utilize the campus not just as a student but as a community member. It was at Cerritos College where I obtained my first job as an adult through the work-studies program.

These experiences taught me the importance of networking and building relationships with administrators, faculty, staff, and students on campus. What helped me succeed at Cerritos College was the support system of people who became my mentors and role models.

In 2012, I graduated from Cerritos College with an Associate of Arts degree in Spanish and transferred to the University of California, Berkeley in the Fall of 2012. Similarly to Cerritos College, upon my arrival to UC Berkeley, I sought to establish a support network of people who would help me accomplish my academic goals. While at UC Berkeley, I co-founded the Underground Scholars Initiative (USI), a support program for formerly incarcerated students. I graduated from UC Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Ethnic Studies in Spring 2015. Additionally, upon my graduation, I was awarded the 2015 John W. Gardner Fellowship for Public Service. The Gardner Fellowship made it possible for me to move to the East Coast to work, for ten months, at the Vera Institute of Justice in New York City and the New Jersey Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prison at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey.

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In 2016, I was the Soros Justice Advocacy Fellow at the Opportunity Institute in Berkeley, California. My goal was to empower formerly incarcerated students by creating a statewide network of people who have successfully transitioned from incarceration into higher education. The goal was to collaborate with other formerly incarcerated students and graduates to build a prison to school pipeline that puts higher education in conversation with other reentry resources. Higher education exposed me to so many opportunities, such as employment, housing, scholarships, and community organizing. These opportunities allowed me to transform my life and family.

I am currently a graduate student in the Social and Cultural Analysis of Education program at California State University, Long Beach. My career goal is to become an Ethnic Studies professor and a Research Director at a California Community College. Ultimately, I want to work with and support currently and formerly incarcerated students who wish to pursue higher education. I genuinely believe that without higher education in my life after my release from prison, I would not have accomplished all that I have done thus far, and will continue to do as we build the prison-to-university pipeline.

You may think that higher education may not be for you, but let me reassure you that there is something for everybody. Whether you want to get a certificate in a career trade, attend a community college for an Associates degree (there are over 100 across the state!), a Bachelors degree from a 4-year university or a graduate degree (a Masters or doctorate degree); many of these opportunities can often be available free of charge with grants and scholarships. Additionally, there are dozens of support programs for formerly incarcerated students in all three of the major higher education systems in California: community colleges, California State Universities (CSUs) and Universities of California (UCs). So you're not alone, education has changed the lives of many others like us.



Rising with two of his children.

PARENT-HOOD

By Beto V. & Cami A.



Parenting in the age of technology and social media has challenged parents to think outside of the box with their children in order to adapt to their culture. Ryan Flaco Rising noted that this generational difference was one of the most challenging aspects of parenting after release. After all, we often have the tendency to parent the way we were parented. So if our parents were absent or really old school, it was actually a reflection of the way they were parented. Not surprisingly, that is usually how the cycle continues. For many of us living life on the installment plan, we often try to pick up where we left off. But that quickly proves challenging as our kids get older and develop their own identities; often having to make sense of feeling abandoned, inadequate or unloved. Feelings that many of us have probably experienced ourselves. As we prepare to reconnect with loved ones on the outside we must realize that there is much for us to learn and that there are programs such as South Bay Community Services Group Parenting Classes [call (619) 585-5133] and the Father 2 Child Program [call (619) 942-0309] that help us learn how to approach parenting and shift our mindsets.

“It felt amazing to be reconnected with my kids after prison. I was so empowered and felt so complete as a person. I was so happy and humble to have the opportunity to be in their lives and be a part of it. I felt the fruits of my labor on myself pay off when I was able to take them to the beach and help them with their school work and cook them a meal. For me, this is what life is truly about.” - Ryan Rising

Serving his last term in 2013, Ryan Rising was one of 30,000 California prison residents who took part in a 59-day hunger strike in protest against solitary confinement techniques. Rising recalled the protest as an act of unity out of solidarity for one another, which sparked a culture shift away from individualism and toxicity towards one of unity and knowledge. This was a pivotal shift for a young man who had been a part of the system since his youth and who was preparing to be released.

“Knowledge production became the new addiction”, he recalled, and by 2015 the father of two began the journey of rewriting his legacy. Following his release, he recognized the challenges ahead. Rising scheduled a parent-teacher conference with his son’s administrators, and it was at this meeting where he was reunited with his son at last. “I gotta do what fathers do; be involved in my child’s schooling” -- a word of advice for fathers approaching release. But it requires patience and forgiveness (from others and self) to reach these milestones. Entering your children’s lives often also means having to gain trust back from your children and family members - and in some cases, complying with court-mandated requirements. Because of this, Mr. Rising suggests fathers incorporate a set schedule of family days or check-ins throughout the week in order to rebuild those connections and communication with one’s children. In the Rising household, Thursdays are reserved for boba outings with his daughter. Throughout his undergraduate career at the University of California Santa Barbara, Rising has earned a 3.8 GPA, commenting he went from writing in bars to commas. But his greatest accomplishment yet has been getting full custody of his daughter and providing her a home with his wife and step daughter. He utilizes his academic achievements as a parenting strategy to motivate his children’s success. “Their growth enhances my growth”, he stated.

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In addition to his academic career, Rising collaborated with the Underground Scholars Initiative (USI) program, a support program for formerly incarcerated students, to start a chapter at his current university. The USI program offers academic support, for example building resumes, for those who want to pursue higher education - which Rising believes is the ticket out of the recidivism factory. He is dedicated to helping others "see the end result so [they] can be the decision makers in [their] communities and produce the knowledge to create solutions." While change begins with us, it is continued through generational momentum and our children.

If you are interested in learning how to be a present parent (for self-interest or court), connecting with others and establishing yourself in the parent-hood, check out some of the resources mentioned earlier or the Positive Parenting Program [call (858) 637-3375] and SAY San Diego Dad Corps [call (858) 565-4148 extension 107].

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EMPLOYMENT

By Beto V. & Irene B.

There are over two million individuals incarcerated throughout the United States. Many of which will be returning citizens at some point in the near future. With growing unemployment rates, many people are experiencing difficulty finding and obtaining employment. So how can we expect returning citizens to find gainful employment to provide for themselves and their families? Finding a job in today's economy is difficult enough - let alone with a criminal record. Thankfully, there are organizations aware of this difficult barrier for those getting out and are committed to providing opportunities specifically for them.

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) began as a demonstration project of the Vera Institute of Justice in the 1970s and in 1996 became an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the goal of eliminating the barriers formerly incarcerated individuals face upon release.

Services that once began in New York State, have now become available in ten states and in thirty cities, including San Diego, CA. CEO has served over 34,000 individuals to remove employment barriers, instill self-confidence and find full-time employment. Through their Theory of Change model, CEO aims to break the cycle of recidivism by increasing accessibility of life skills, education, short-term paid transitional employment, full-time job placement, and post-placement services for those that are eligible. To begin the eligibility process, the participant must first be referred by a parole or probation officer. Second, the participant will attend an orientation where they will bring a release form, government-issued photo ID, social security card or birth certificate.



Nosotros Alumni volunteers at community beautification events. (Not CEO employees.)

Lastly, after learning how CEO works, the participant will be able to enroll in a program and begin engaging in CEOs offered services. Through this model, when given the opportunity, persons with criminal convictions are able to maintain their freedom and lead a productive life, stable for themselves and their families. A 2015 study, conducted in San Diego by Harder+Company, found that CEO participants were less likely to return to custody or be charged with new crimes compared to their counterparts. A person's past does not dictate their future. Regardless of one's past, CEO believes that employment preparation and support, that is immediate, effective, and comprehensive, has the potential to shape a stronger future. Although capturing one's life transformation is somewhat impossible, programs such as CEO have contributed to San Diego's decrease (-17%) in new felonies, criminal charges (-17%) and people returning to custody (-12%). CEO's transformational power of work radically rebuilds and restores lives. If you are interested in connecting with CEO or seeing if you are eligible to participate, please contact (619-684-4810) or visit (<https://ceoworks.org>).



**Center for
Employment
Opportunities**

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By Irene B.



Education is not the one-all-save-all but if people want that, there should be pathways.” -Lily Gonzalez

Lily Gonzalez, a mother and the first “homegirl” from Homeboy Industries to graduate with her four year degree and Masters of Arts degree from Cal State Northridge in Chicano/a Studies, is currently working to address the barriers in access for formerly incarcerated individuals who are pursuing higher education at Project Rebound.

Initially, Gonzalez had no intention of pursuing a degree. Instead, she began working at Homeboy Industries and soon after found herself involved in an Education workshop, where she later connected with an advisor who greatly encouraged her to apply to college. As a mother of two, she admits going back to school was overwhelming and strongly encourages others to take baby steps and rely on their community. Gonzalez is equally passionate about helping others overcome the stigma of therapy and working to address the systemic inequities that affect men and women of color. When she is not working or supporting Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, she is teaching her children the importance of change within these systems. Not having been able to hug her daughter for three years while incarcerated, she appreciates and cherishes the moments she creates when drinking boba with her daughter and playing legos with her son.



Lily Gonzalez (left) with two colleagues.



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

By Oscarin O. & Dana B. & Irene B.



It has been said that, ‘hurt people hurt people’. Now if you are anything like me, you might need to say that a few times before you can receive the message. You see, oftentimes many of our rash outward expressions or animated outbursts that have the tendency to manifest are usually a defensive mechanism that kicks in as a protective measure. We might feel inclined to hurt before we get hurt. But you’re not alone - we have all experienced trauma. According to the American Psychological Association, trauma is defined as ‘an emotional response to a terrible event’. Trauma has many faces, and it often shows itself in events or environments that have been normalized for us, either presently or in our childhood.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Dr. Gabor Mate’s once said, “When you study prison populations and childhood trauma, you see a common preponderance of childhood trauma and mental illness.

The two go together.” This exemplifies our society’s need for understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The decades-long research is the largest public health study in our nation that millions of people have not heard of. Over 440,000 individuals have been part of the ACE study through Kaiser Permanente in San Diego county.

This research-proven opportunity is a paradigm shift in how we support individuals, and families, who have been impacted by poverty, community violence, human trafficking, domestic violence, gang violence, being undocumented, a refugee, etc. in preventing systems retraumatizing already traumatized individuals and families.

We are harmed through relationships, and through relationships, we heal. Neurologically, we are wired to connect with each other. When we are born, we need the secure attachment of trusted adults in our lives. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study was published in 1998 by co-principal investigators, Dr. Vincent Felitti, Kaiser Permanente, and Dr. Robert Anda, Centers for Disease Control. continued on page 7

COVID-19: WHAT CAUSES IT AND HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF

By Gabriela G. & Gina M.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, similar to the Flu which is caused by influenza virus. More contagious than influenza, however, SARS-CoV-2 spreads through microscopic water droplets in the air called respiratory droplets. When you breathe, cough, sneeze, talk, or sing, your mouth sends respiratory droplets of different sizes into the air. Some droplets are so small that they float in the air instead of falling, creating an invisible cloud. When someone has COVID-19, their surrounding invisible cloud filled with SARS-CoV-2 can enter someone else's mouth, nose, or eyes causing COVID-19.

The good news is that most people with COVID-19 don't have symptoms. But even without feeling sick, they can still spread the virus to others. Those that do get sick can experience a variety of symptoms. The most common symptom is the loss of taste or smell. More severe symptoms include fever, cough, vomiting, diarrhea, and trouble breathing.

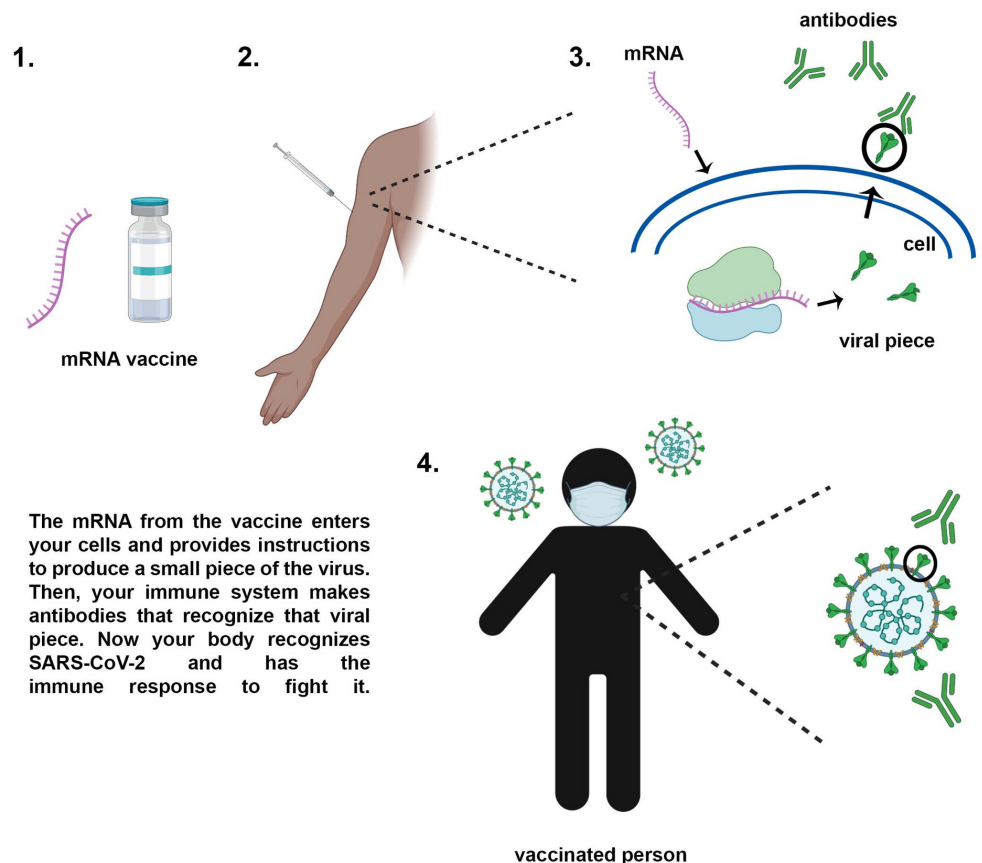
Can COVID-19 be prevented?

If you walk through an invisible cloud full of SARS-CoV-2, you may get COVID-19 and not know it. The best way to prevent getting infected is to protect the parts of our body where the virus enters—the nose, mouth, and eyes. Using a mask protects your nose and mouth, and to protect your eyes you should wash your hands and try not to touch your face. Also, try to stay 6 feet, or two arm lengths, away from others when possible.

Just like we can prevent Flu with a vaccine, scientists have developed new vaccines to prevent COVID-19. There are currently two COVID-19 vaccines approved in the U.S.—from companies Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna—with more on the way!

More than one year ago, COVID-19 changed our lives. Here, we'll walk you through what you need to know about COVID-19.

How the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines work



How do the COVID-19 vaccines work?

You may have heard that these vaccines use a new technology. Traditionally, most vaccines work by introducing a small, harmless part of a virus into your body. Your immune system, then, ramps up and makes antibodies that recognize the virus, helping you fight it off in the future. The current COVID-19 vaccines use the same idea, but instead of introducing a part of the virus, they provide the instructions, or mRNA, so your body can make it on its own. And like traditional vaccines where you only need a bit of virus to make antibodies, the mRNA only makes a bit and then breaks down. (see image above)

Sometimes your body needs an extra push to make those antibodies. To make sure everyone is covered, the current COVID-19 vaccines require 2 shots, about a month apart. There is a chance you will have some common side-effects after the first or second shot such as a sore arm, being tired, or having a fever or headache. Although unpleasant, these side-effects happen because your immune system is ramping up; it means the vaccine is working, and you'll be protected from the severe symptoms of COVID-19.

Is it Safe?

Several myths have circulated about these new vaccines such as that: these vaccines are not safe because they were developed and tested too quickly, they cause severe side effects, they change your DNA, and they cause infertility. All of these myths are false. The technology in these vaccines have been in development for about ten years, and these specific vaccines have undergone rigorous clinical trials—with over 70,000 participants in both trials. Now millions of people have received these vaccines in the U.S. with very few severe reactions and extremely high protection from severe COVID-19. In this case, the benefits greatly outweigh the risks.

**The County of San Diego is currently distributing vaccines based on federal and state guidelines set forth for priority groups to ensure equitability. To learn more about the current tier system visit the COVID-19 Vaccine Phases page at [SanDiegoCounty.gov](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By Irene B.

D'Andre Brooks, a reformer, advocate and a native San Diegan is dedicated to positively impacting his community. As a member of San Diego's Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention and a Juvenile Justice Program Associate at the Children's Initiative here in San Diego, Brooks is fighting to provide opportunities and resources for young at-risk youth. While spending his young adult life years incarcerated, Brooks decided to take control of his future and began educating and manifesting a new life for himself. Although this was no easy feat, during prison riots and lockdowns, he was able to acquire 36 transferable units. His resilience, despite having two strikes, is a testament to his unwavering ability to pursue a career that focuses on making an impact, not only in his life but in the lives of others.

Brooks graduated from San Diego State University with a degree in Criminal Justice and is currently studying for his Masters of Public Administration. Today he is an entrepreneur and an active father.



Mr. Brooks at his first graduation.

“The most rewarding thing about the work I’ve done is being able to showcase the fact that individuals such as myself are more than capable of succeeding and making a significant contribution to society when given the opportunity.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Housing

Your housing environment can positively or negatively impact your sobriety. If you are looking for a sober living household please contact Second Chance--(619)-234-8888; Restoring Citizens--(619)-623-2747; Living Life Solutions--(619)-303-5107. For general housing, health care and other basic needs please call 2-1-1 to speak with a live person, 24/7. All calls are free and confidential.

Treatment

Finding an effective treatment center is an essential step of your reentry plan. You are not alone on this journey. Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center offers drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs at no cost. Please contact them at (619)-239-4037 or visit their website:

<http://sandiegoarc.salvationarmy.org/> for more information. If you are looking for an intensive residential rehabilitation center in North County, Alpha Project: Casa Raphael may be the place for you. To learn more about Casa Raphael, please call (760)-630-9922.

Food:

Food security is a common challenge for returning citizens. If you are in need of emergency food assistance please contact any of the resources below:

Emergency Food Distribution Network/CalFresh: Get extra money for groceries each month through CalFresh! Apply online at Apply for California Food Stamps Online | GetCalFresh.org or call 619.323.2841 option 2 to request a callback or make an appointment.

How to Complete your CalFresh Application:

1. Navigate to this website: <https://www.getcalfresh.org/en/apply>
2. Scroll all the way down and click the "Get Started" button
3. Enter your basic information (i.e. zip code) → submit your application
4. Submit relevant proof requested (ID, paystubs or rent receipts)
5. Do an interview with a county worker (30-60 min interview)
6. Get your benefits!

Bread Day Program (TACO) Third Avenue Charitable Organization provides two hot meals per week to anyone in need -Address: 1420 Third Avenue San Diego, CA 92101 -Phone: 619-235-9445 -Every Monday @ 4:00PM and Friday @ 9:00AM

ABOUT NOSOTROS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Nosotros Alumni is a local non-profit located in Chula Vista, CA composed of men (alumni from MAAC's Nosotros Men's Program) and women in recovery from substance abuse and familiar with the justice system. Our organization is primarily focused on fostering a sense of empowerment and self-worth for returning citizens through civic engagement, education and advocacy. Our efforts include identifying aftercare options for individuals in recovery, and providing civic engagement opportunities that promote leadership and reduce stigma. Our goal is to improve the quality of life for underserved communities, create generational change and increase equitable opportunities for marginalized groups.

Contact us: www.nosotrosalumni.org



Photo credit: MAAC Project

SO YOU'RE GOING TO GET OUT - NOW WHAT?

By Dr. Luis S. Garcia

September 25, 1997 will always be a special day. Not only was it my 29th birthday, it was also the day I was released from Chino State Prison after serving a one-year parole violation. The last of two previous state prison incarcerations. One of the best feelings I remember having as my release date neared was happiness. I was going home. Looking back, each time I left prison I was determined to succeed. To not return. Yet, here I was leaving the prison environment for a third time. What was different this time? Honestly, I was afraid of what my life had become. I felt I was becoming institutionalized. The attitude of not caring if I returned to prison or jail began to permeate. Fortunately, during this parole violation period I received assistance from the prison's forensic psychologist and the clinical social worker. They laid the foundation for me to feel that I could change my life trajectory for the better. As you begin the next chapter of your life and begin thinking about your future and what you are going to do, I want to offer four simple suggestions that could be helpful. As you prepare to leave the institution behind, please give yourself permission to consider the following:

Think Future. First thing, imagine the life you want to live in your future. Your plan begins today. Barriers will come your way, but there will be the opportunity to navigate around them and pursue your dreams. Do not allow negative thinking or feelings to overcome your dreams.

Think Positive. Remember to remain positive. If doors are closed, others will open. It may not seem like it at that precise moment, but whatever your dreams may be, chances are if you do not give up, you will arrive where you need to be. Listen to trusted friends, mentors who care about you.

Think Sober. If alcohol or other substances have hindered your life, be honest with yourself and live your life free from mind-altering substances. They will interrupt your goals and dreams.

Think Success. Allow yourself to feel the dream of success. You are going home. You will be home. That is success right there! You will have many opportunities to live the life that you have dreamed to live - but you will need to be patient with yourself. You will be surprised by the joy you will feel as you work toward your goals. Especially, when you accomplish what your heart set out to do.

Remember, "Time is the great author. It always writes the perfect ending" (quote from a 1952 movie called Limelight). When I reflect back on the many trials, tribulations, and successes I have experienced since I left prison, time is the great author. The endings and the new beginnings I have encountered in my various life experiences have demonstrated that the aforementioned suggestions — which my grandfather, Luis N. Garcia, shared with me during one of my terms — do work, and can work, in anyone's life, if we decide to take action. I wish you all the best in your journey.



*Dr. Luis S. Garcia has a Doctorate in Educational Leadership for Social Justice from Loyola Marymount University, a Masters in Social Work from the University of Southern California, and a Bachelors in Theology from Loyola Marymount. December 2020 he was granted his Associate Clinical Social Worker registration by the State of California Board of Behavioral Sciences, allowing him to perform clinical social work under the supervision of a current licensed mental health professional. He discharged his H-17161 number June 2000. With God all things are possible (Mark 10:27)

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE (CONT.)

The ACE study, which reflects household dysfunction, in utero to age 18, along with expanded ACE studies reflective of community trauma and across the lifespan, proves the impact of trauma (acute, chronic, complex, systems-induced, and vicarious) which affects our neurological, biological, and epigenetics (family history and DNA), and our capacity to access our "thinking" brain (capacity to access the prefrontal cortex which is where we access logic, reasoning, emotional control, self-regulation, capacity to learn). When we feel safe, with a trusted adult, we can soothe an anxious brain and dysregulated body. When we feel safe, we can calm a brain in hypervigilance. When we feel safe, we can access our higher level executive functions in our "thinking brain".

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California's first Surgeon General, released a 438-page report on December 9, 2020, on reducing, by 50%, in one generation, the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Every single one of us has an opportunity, and a responsibility, of being part of the solution.

A Response to Trauma

ACEs include but are not limited to: various types of abuse, neglect, substance use, domestic violence, family separations, divorce, incarceration, and mental health issues. Although Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, are traumatic events that were experienced before the age of 18; research has indicated that they can have severe implications on health and well being as adults. ACEs can impact anyone regardless of race, social groups and status - trauma impacts us all. Just ask Oscarin Ortega.

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Mr. Ortega is a product of the Crown Heights neighborhood, a small, migrant community nestled in Oceanside, California, where about 80% of the residents are considered to be living below the poverty line. As a current resident and having grown up there, he shares firsthand memories reminding him that living there has always been about survival.

"It is hard to dream when you are hungry and working several jobs to make ends meet", Oscar says. That is why, given this context, it is not surprising that he decided to devote his life to improving conditions for those who live in Crown Heights and similar neighborhoods. Oscar shares with us the following:

"I know all too well the lures of gangs, drugs, alcohol, and crime."

"My initial foray into the community was with the young people. I know all too well the lures of gangs, drugs, alcohol, and crime. I also know that many of the people living in my community have experienced a wide range of traumas. I started educating myself so that I could be part of the solution. I became involved in a variety of ways in the community. I became trained in trauma-informed practices and restorative practices and began running groups for young people. This work paid huge dividends. Young people stayed in school, got jobs and were willing to help others. I am committed to continuing this work even as I work now during the pandemic to help feed this community." Mr. Ortega, through Lived Experiences, a grassroots nonprofit organization, located in North County, is providing at-risk youth opportunities to overcome emotional and physical trauma before it manifests in their adulthood.



Through evidence-based approaches, weekly group sessions are allowing disconnected youth to understand the effects of trauma in their lives while learning coping and healing mechanisms. To the community, Lived Experiences is a tangible example of revival and restoration through their commitment to justice, fighting for every human to live an emotionally and physically healthy, rewarding life. Although not everyone experiences the same type of trauma, they are often impacted similarly. Recognizing the implications of trauma at an early age and how it can impact us as adults has become the centerpiece for the work of professionals like Dana Brown. Ms. Brown is an Organizational Liaison with ACEs Connection. Among her role as a Commissioner with the City of San Diego's Commission on Gang Prevention & Intervention and various other titles, she uses her voice, actions, and privilege to foster change in communities of color that are disproportionately affected by systems-induced trauma. Although Ms. Brown grew up on a farm, in a predominantly white community, she quickly learned to see the disparities around her and was never the same. When asked at what point her passion for healing justice began she quickly recalled, "It started in high school when reading *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* in social studies class." This was a pivotal moment for her, the book had opened her eyes to many of the genocidal injustices Native Americans suffered. As a passionate advocate for criminal justice and trauma-informed education, Ms. Brown exudes energy and genuine commitment to the youth she works closely with in an effort to teach them about trauma, the impact from it, and building resilience through adversity. Driven by her compassion and knowledge Ms. Brown asks us to consider the same question she poses to her youth leaders, "What is something that has broken your heart or someone you love and you want to use your voice to make it better?" For more information on the Lived Experience Organization's weekly groups or mentoring please call (619)368-3790 or visit www.livedexperiences.org. To learn more about ACEs visit www.acesconnection.com.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:



Dr. Larry Carter, Prof. Emeritus, UCSD & all our sponsors

Beto Vasquez, Editor-in-Chief



Beto is President of Nosotros Alumni, an educator, and an interdisciplinary scientist. After overcoming challenges growing up (school dropout, homelessness, incarceration and addiction); he is now an educational advocate for marginalized groups and a great proponent of diversity in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) fields.

Amanda Brown Livewell & Interns



Amanda Brown Livewell is committed to creating a world that works for everyone. With the help of Cami A. and Irene B. and the partnership with Nosotros Alumni Association the first issue of *The Wire* was made possible.