

From 2011 – 2015, California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Initiative funded the Trauma-Informed Community Schools (TICS) project in the Cherokee Point neighborhood of City Heights in San Diego. BHC's mission was to make transformative community change by supporting active engagement of adult and youth residents in creating solutions for their well-being and neighborhood. Our TICS project, emerging out of BHC's Peace Momentum team meetings held by Mid-City CAN, focused on prevention and promoting trauma-informed, compassionate and restorative practices within a community neighborhood school. This involves building on strengths and helping the residents to help their children, to feel a connection to their family, school and community, and to feel empowered to advocate and promote change for themselves and their neighborhood. Both Youth Leaders and Parent Leaders in the Cherokee Point neighborhood have been successful in raising attention and developing community solutions for key problems and issues they target for change. Here are some achievements of the Cherokee Point Elementary School Parent Leaders since 2011.



Throughout the TICS project, the residents were asked what they wanted and they guided many of the grant activities that occurred 2011 - 2015. There were 9 months of resident community meetings where we all got to know each other and where residents provided feedback regarding their priorities for their children, families and community. They identified needs that included: how they can help their children succeed in school, relaxation and health promotion activities for parents, positive discipline and parenting tips, and coping with domestic and community violence.



Family-Community nights over 9 months provided opportunities for relationship building as residents voiced their concerns for their community

Principal Higa and teachers at Cherokee Point had already created a warm, welcoming school, promoting trauma-informed, compassionate practices and using restorative circles in their classrooms. Over the years, Parent Leaders have been encouraged to increase their engagement and work collaboratively with the school and community partners to help their children and themselves. They facilitate bi-monthly meetings, plan and present at the monthly Principal's Chat and community workshops, and help coordinate and recruit other parent volunteers to help Principal-led community building activities (e.g., food distribution, school clean-up). They attend weekly computer and English sessions where they help create newsletters and monthly calendars of parent engagement opportunities, build leadership skills, and form relationships with each other. Cherokee Point serves as a neighborhood learning center, and the welcoming school focuses on the whole child and provides a setting where sustainable parent and resident leadership can thrive.



Principal Godwin Higa and CPE teachers promote a positive school climate

Principal's Chats address residents' needs  
(e.g., community safety, immigration laws)



Computer/English classes

School Smarts Program

CPE honored by SDUSD District for High Quality Indicator 12: Supportive and Safe Environment

## Building Sustainable Resident Leadership with a Strengths-based Train-the-Trainer Model

Guided by feedback from early family community nights, workshops were developed for parents by San Diego State University (SDSU) faculty and students. For example in 2012, Dr. Colette Ingraham and her graduate students in School Psychology led bilingual parent workshops on how to help children with homework, ways to encourage positive parent-child communication in the home, and how to help their children get into college. Dr. Audrey Hokoda from SDSU's Child and Family Development (CFD) department also led trainings on the effects of trauma on children and families, depression, and positive parenting practices. Carmen Rodriguez, a graduate student in the CFD department, helped lead these lessons, and also led a workshop on Common Core State Standards and differences in school systems in the U.S. versus Mexico.



Parent Leaders co-presenting on restorative practices with SDSU School Psychology faculty and students

Parents learning First 5 Pathways to Competence lessons



Parent Leaders attending Jeana Preston's CA Parent Center's Parent Leadership Academy

Parents lead educational workshops on trauma-informed practices, self-care and resources

Following best practices for trauma-informed care, parent leaders began educating others about the impact of trauma on their children and their own well-being. With community partners, they developed and individualized lesson plans that educate about trauma symptoms, self-care coping strategies, and resources in the community. They have also led workshops on such topics as: Positive Discipline, Depression, Family Values and Resilience, and Positive Communication.



## Focus on Early Childhood Education

Guided by parent and resident feedback, by research on the effects of trauma on the brain, and by our intention to emphasize prevention, early childhood education has been a key focus. In collaboration with community partners (SDSU CFD department, Family Health Centers of San Diego), parents of pre-K children were given over 30 sessions of a First Five program (Pathways to Competence). The lessons focused on positive discipline in dealing with behavioral and emotional challenges, and on promoting parent-child attachment and social competence in young children.



Parents learning First 5 Pathways to Competence lessons



SDSU students teaching lessons focused on building learning readiness skills



Parent Leaders leading Circle of Education lessons with other parents: Building self-esteem and self-care skills

Over the past 5 years, hundreds of SDSU CFD student interns have worked with Cherokee Point teachers in preschool and kindergarten classes, and with Parent and Youth Leaders. Trained in CA Preschool Learning Foundations and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines, SDSU students help in classes, and receive mentoring from Cherokee Point teachers as they help and work with children and families in City Heights. Over the years, SDSU students led Circle of Education music and literacy-based lessons addressing socio-emotional skills (e.g., relaxation, self-care, empathy, cooperation, anger control). A selection of lessons and activities that relate to trauma effects, such as self esteem (e.g., "I am Special"), friendship and cooperation (e.g., "My Magic Words Wand", "Our Classroom Manners Poster", anger control (e.g., "The Wild Me"), and self-care (e.g., "The Stretching Paints", "Aerobic Streamers") were run by SDSU student interns in the pre-K and Kinder classes.



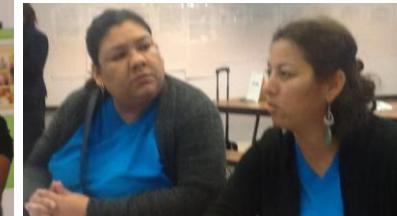
Parent Leaders learn First 5 Pathways to Competence Program and Circle of Education programs from SDSU faculty and students

Parent Leaders welcome new pre-K and kinder parents to Cherokee Point

Last year, Parent Leaders led close to 20 Circle of Education lessons with groups of 10 – 12 other parents at Cherokee Point. Meeting weekly for 1½ hours, the Parent Leaders chose several lessons that corresponded to lessons that SDSU students led in their children's classrooms. After teaching a lesson to other parents, the Parent Leaders gave each parent a copy of the lesson and a bag of accompanying art materials for parents to lead activities at home with their children.

## Expanding Resident Empowerment Beyond Cherokee Point

The Parent Leaders have broadened their influence beyond the Cherokee Point Elementary neighborhood as they have been asked to present at community conferences and events. They spoke at the School Bus Express, shared their views on equitable school funding, and are represented in the state-wide LCFF video created by The California Endowment (TCE). Parent Leaders also shared their vision and work with educators from Harvard University and San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), highlighting how their focus on trauma informed and restorative practices corresponds with SDUSD's Vision 2020.



Parent Leaders shared their views on equitable school funding

Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Meeting



Parent Leaders meeting with Harvard and SDUSD Educators

Parent Leaders with Councilmember Marti Emerald

Parent Leaders with Cindy Marten, Superintendent, SDUSD



Presenting at the 19th Annual Character Matters Conference at University of San Diego

Visit from Echo Parenting, Los Angeles

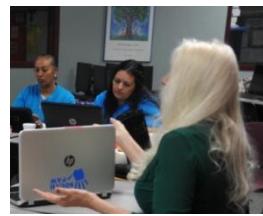
North County Regional Education Center

Central Elementary, City Heights

Parent Leaders have continued to present to visitors who want to learn more about TICS as a model of change. Parent Leaders have shared their experiences with professionals from Johns Hopkins University, Echo Parenting in Los Angeles, and Rady's Children's Hospital, among others. Parent Leaders have also traveled around the County presenting about trauma-informed and restorative practices and parent leadership at such venues at the National Conflict Resolution Center, Restorative Community Conferences, and the North County Regional Education Center. This year they are learning how to post their work on ACEs Connection to inspire others to value trauma-informed, compassionate, and restorative practices.



Restorative Practice and Restorative Justice Summit



Learning to post on ACEs Connection