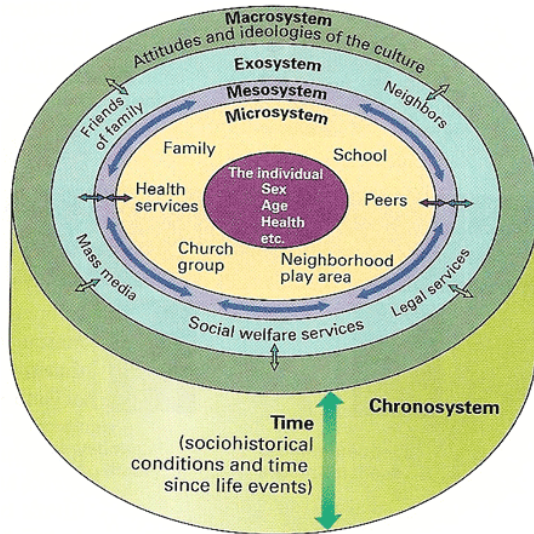


# Building Trauma-Informed Community Schools Focused on Systems Change Through Resident Engagement March, 2016



# SYSTEM IMPACT

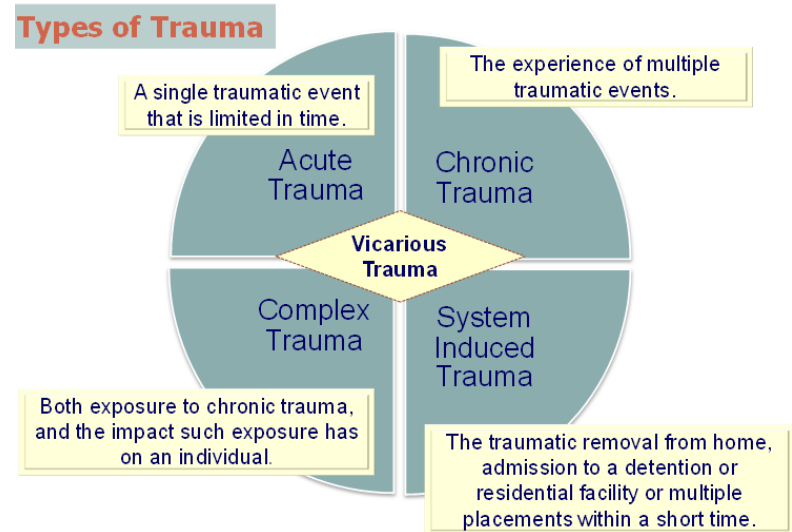
- Community Violence and Cumulative Trauma in City Heights



<http://nlyingst.iweb.bsu.edu/edpsy251/courseconcepts/251/bronfenbrenner.html>

- Poverty
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Gang and Gun Violence
- Lack of Access to Physical and Behavioral Healthcare
- Traumas Involving Community Agencies and Systems (e.g., Schools, Child Welfare Services, Law Enforcement, Courts, Immigration)

- Cherokee Point and City Heights residents have experienced a lot of acute, chronic, complex and system-induced traumas



# IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON CHILDREN

## Heightened Arousal



- fears and anxieties
- startles and hypervigilance
- sleeping problems (nightmares)
- overreactivity, anger outbursts, and irritability
- overcontrolling, “grown up”, excessively responsible behaviors



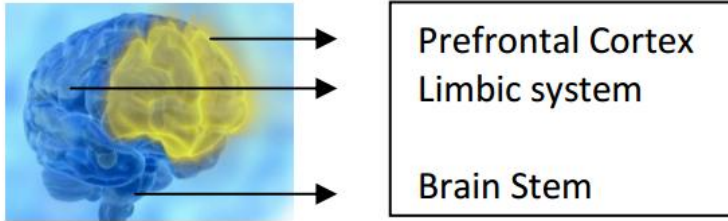
## Avoidance (Dissociative and Depressive Symptoms)



- withdrawal, passivity, and non-responsiveness
- emotional numbing
- memory and concentration problems
- denial and somatic complaints
- other depressive symptoms



## Trauma-informed means understanding the neuro-biological impact of trauma



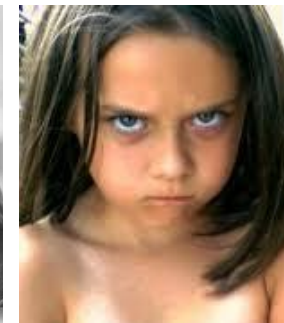
## Trauma-informed care means understanding trauma effects on learning and behaviors

- Attention and Information Processing
- Executive Functions: Planning and Problem-solving
- Attentiveness to Classroom Tasks
- Emotional Regulation
- Aggression, Impulsivity, and Reactivity

## Teachers may describe them as:

- Spacey or zoned out
- Disrespectful or rude
- Lacking intelligence
- “Out of control”
- Anxious
- Annoying
- Aggressive

- Trauma induces Fight or Flight response
- Fear and trauma responses activate limbic system of brain that governs arousal and emotional reactivity
- Ability to access pre-frontal cortex which governs abstract thought and problem-solving is compromised in children experiencing trauma
- Toxic stress inhibits learning
- There are long-term consequences on brain development



## Principles of Trauma Informed Care



- Recognize the impact of violence and victimization on coping skills
- Establish recovery from trauma as a primary goal
- Employ an empowerment model to elicit and build on strengths
- Partner with the individual/client (relational collaboration)
- Design the meeting environment to ensure safety, respect, and acceptance
- Highlight strengths and resiliency
- Be culturally competent by understanding the individual/client from the context of his or her life experiences

Building Solutions Toolkit: Tools and Resources to Respond to the Impact of Violence and Trauma in our Communities Using a Trauma-Informed Approach (2012).

## Ten Principles of a Compassionate School

1. Focus on culture and climate in the school and community.
2. Train and support all staff regarding trauma and learning.
3. Encourage and sustain open and regular communication for all.
4. Develop a strengths based approach in working with students and peers.
5. Ensure discipline policies are both compassionate and effective (Restorative Practices).
6. Weave compassionate strategies into school improvement planning.
7. Provide tiered support for all students based on what they need.
8. Create flexible accommodations for diverse learners.
9. Provide access, voice, and ownership for staff, students and community.
10. Use data to:
  - Identify vulnerable students, and
  - Determine outcomes and strategies for continuous quality improvement.

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.



The California Endowment

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

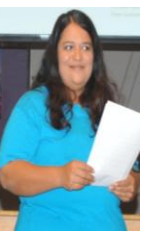
Parents learning First 5 Pathways to Competence lessons



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

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

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 1 ½ 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.



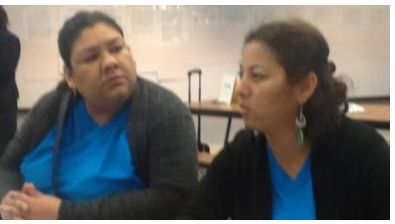
Parent Leaders learn First 5 Pathways to Competence Program and Circle of Education programs from SDSU faculty and students



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

**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**



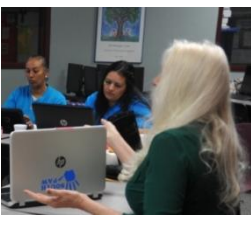
**Presenting at the 19th Annual Character Matters Conference at University of San Diego**

**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**

## Increased capacity and opportunity for youth leadership

Like the Parent Leaders, Youth Leaders have advocated for issues that are important to them.

Cherokee Point Elementary (CPE) 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> graders, teens (e.g., Youth Voice), and university students (i.e., SDSU, Alliant University) participate in the trauma-informed leadership training.

Curriculum includes lessons on self-care (mindfulness, zumba), restorative practices, multiple intelligences, and advocacy.



## Sample Service Learning Projects (2012-2015)



- Immigration Rights
- Homelessness
- Animal Cruelty
- Bullying
- Discrimination Against Disabilities
- Gang Violence
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Violence





The Family Violence Prevention and Response Summit, May 2014



<http://www.acesconnection.com/g/aces-in-children-and-youth2/clip/tics-youth-leadership-interviews>

## Wilson Middle School Restorative Justice Social Leadership Club



Middle school youth leaders meet every Thursday after school.



Youth, ages 11 to 20, meet on Thursday's in the Mid-City Police Division and partner directly with the Juvenile Services Team.



Annual Mid-City Community Toy Drive



Youth Voice presenting before the City of San Diego's Youth Commission sharing **Impact on Risk and Protective Factors for Healthy Youth** on January 18, 2012

Partnering with SDSU's Child and Family Development Department:  
***These Hands Don't Hurt*** Violence Awareness Fair





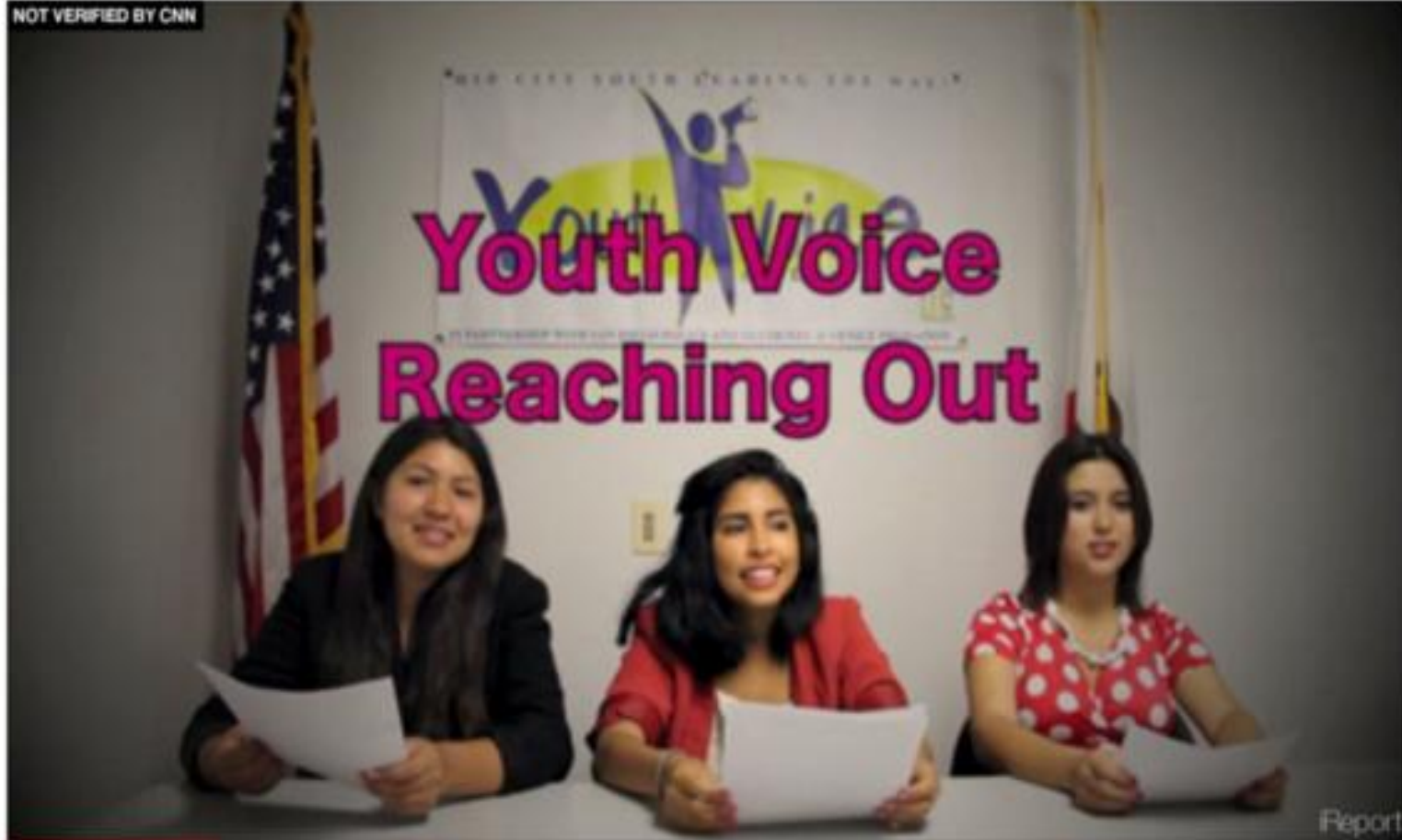
Youth Voice Underage Drinking YouTube  
Channel 10 Special Edition  
May 25, 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OulT-SvCcnw&feature=youtu.be>

**Underage Drinking and...**

**SUICIDE**

NOT VERIFIED BY CNN



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VIEWS

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# Live Well San Diego- Resident Leadership Academy



Youth Voice leaders co-presenting at International Conference  
***We Can't Wait: Early Childhood Development***  
September 17, 2015



## **Youth Empowerment**

Meet every Sunday at Teralta Park with children, youth and families

# ACEs Connection Network

Join the movement to prevent ACEs, heal trauma, build resilience.



## san diego county aces connection

This is the online platform for our ACEs, trauma-informed, and resilience-building movement. It is a call to action – a place to work collaboratively across sectors and communities, to transform our county to one of hope, healing, and resilience for all.

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**Childhood Trauma:  
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DANA BROWN · 2/21/16 · 9:30 AM

VIDEO



**How San Diego Unified is  
Treating Childhood  
Trauma (CenterScene)**  
5.05 minutes

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September 2015	November 2014
August 2015	October 2014

Contact Information:

Principal Godwin Higa  
Cherokee Point Elementary School  
[ghiga@sandi.net](mailto:ghiga@sandi.net)

Dr. Audrey Hokoda  
San Diego State University  
[ahokoda@sdsu.edu](mailto:ahokoda@sdsu.edu)

Dana Brown  
ACEs Connection  
[dbrown@acesconnection.com](mailto:dbrown@acesconnection.com)