

2008 Price Child Health and Welfare Journalism Awards

Special Award

El Observador

Articles by Rossa Doño, Hilbert Morales and Rosario Vital

*bilingual articles focusing on
child-related health and well-being topics*

THE # 1 BILINGUAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPER IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

EL OBSERVADOR

SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1980

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 7 FEB 15 - 21, 2008

WWW.EL-OBSERVADOR.COM

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 4399
San Jose, CA

Lowering the Drop-Out Rate

Rossa Doño
El Observador

The first three hours after school are the hours that adolescents are likely to fall into gangs, sexual and drug activities. For this reason, the YWCA has imple-

mented a credit recovery program for four East Side High Schools for students who need to make-up credits to graduate.

The program is available at James Lick, Overfelt, Yerba Buena and Andrew Hill High Schools. With the East Side Union High Schools receiving the

highest dropout rate in the Santa Clara Valley, this program helps students excel in their education.

"New Options offers students credits towards their education and we offer help with their homework in all subjects," said facilitator Elizabeth Ruiz.

Three hours a day after

school, this program has an hour of credit recovery in the subject the child needs, an hour of homework and an hour of enrichment where the students learn about themselves and their potential decisions.

"We offer them resources," said Ruiz, "We have mentors,

Pg 5



Students at James Lick High School play the "Human Knot" while learning to communicate and work as a team.

Lowering the Drop- Out Rate

From pg 1



advisors and work with their parents not only to help them academically but as a person with social, learning and personal skills."

With curriculums that teach the students about sexual education and drug prevention, as well as games that teach them to better communicate and work as teams, the students are learning everyday skills needed in the workforce.

"As adolescents, sometimes you make mistakes," said Ruiz, "and this program helps them realize that they can make-up for those mistakes. We are here to encourage and motivate them, to make them realize that they are capable of achieving the goals and dreams that they may have."

Started in 1995 at Overfelt High school, the program began this year through state funding and has been able to expand to four High Schools.

Students seeking to recover credits from failed classes can speak to a site coordinator at the school or contact the YWCA in San Jose for more information.Δ

EO

EL OBSERVADOR

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 9 MARCH 7 - 13, 2008 www.el-observador.com



Juvenile Justice Concerns

Hilbert Morales, MPH

At a press conference held Friday, Feb. 29, 2008, regarding the

Juvenile Justice System of Santa Clara County, retired social worker Noemi Baiza commented, "Today two of three children in the system are Latino kids." The 'system' is composed of Children's Shelter, Juvenile Hall, Juvenile Court System and the Department of Family & Children's Service, Social Service Agency.

The San Jose Police Department often is involved in the process of taking a child into custody with recent developments establishing alternatives to the custody process being proposed by La Raza Roundtable and supported by Supervisor Blanca Alvarado.

For the past 10 years or so, the Juvenile Justice Committee, with Raul Colunga representing LRRT, has looked into the operations of this 'Juvenile Justice System'. Sylvia Alvarez related the psychological trauma that a child experiences when taken away from their familiar environment of parents, extended family and friends. Ms. Alvarez stated that one single Latina mother told her, "Here, our children are really not our own once they fall into the custody of the juvenile justice system." A major concern is that these kids eventually become totally enmeshed in the system only to learn antisocial behavior and even criminal practices.

One revelation was an allegation that the current authority of the social workers involved is not subject to monitoring. This denies the ability of the community to know just who is responsible and account-

able. Much of this information is kept confidential under the current client privacy policies.

It was obvious that the one agency of this Juvenile Justice system not present was a representative who could speak to the usual and customary practices of those social workers who are responsible for making the judgment call that a child is endangered and must be taken into the foster care program.

Since these are the agents who authorize the taking of a child from its familiar family setting, it seems reasonable to ask Norma Doctor-Sparks, Director, Department of Family and Child Services, Social Services Agency, to inform the community about the legal standards involved and the process which these social service workers use. What is the level of management evaluation and monitoring?

According to Ms. Noemi Baiza the rule that is currently used by social workers is, "If in doubt about that kid's safety, yank it out." Once a child is removed from his/her family setting, is any review or evaluation of that action conducted? It seems that this portion of the Juvenile Justice system needs to become transparent. The local Latino community needs to understand why so many of its kids end up in foster care placement.

Certainly that information can be made available to the concerned public without violation of client information privacy concerns. It seems that the Juvenile Justice Committee has some more work to do. Let's make certain that the concerned Latino community supports that effort. **A**



eo

EL OBSERVADOR

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 13 MARCH 28 - APRIL 3, 2008 www.el-observador.com

"SI SE PUEDE"

Cesar Chavez P. 3

Sheehan Campaigns
to Replace Pelosi P. 6

¡SALVEMOS A LA JUVENTUD!

Save Our Youth

¡SALVEMOS A LA JUVENTUD!



El número de jóvenes en la cárceles sigue en incremento. Ellos necesitan de ayuda.

Por Rosario Vital
El Observador

Un reporte del febrero del presente año proporcionado por El Centro Juvenil de Libertad Condicional de la ciudad de San Francisco indica que más del 30% de los jóvenes en este lugar son latinos, el 80% de ellos son hombres y un 20% son mujeres. La mayoría de estos jóvenes encarcelados tienen 16 y 17 años. En San José por ejemplo el 62% de los jóvenes detenidos son latinos.

Como parte de la rehabilitación de estos jóvenes, la organización sin fines de lucro Comunidad San Dimas (CSD)

con sede en San Francisco, busca voluntarios que formen parte de este gran cambio para los jóvenes con problemas que por diferentes motivos terminaron pagando una pena condicional.

"Comunidad San Dimas es un programa espiritual conformado por un grupo de voluntarios que visita los centros de detención juvenil del área de la bahía de San Francisco a fin reducir la rebeldía entre adolescentes de alto riesgo", dijo Julio Escobar, Director de CSD.

Urgen voluntarios

El próximo 10 de abril es la fecha límite para sumarse a esta labor social. Es importante que la persona voluntaria complete los tres días de capacitación que serán los sábados 12, 19 y 26 de

abril. Esta persona debe ser mayor de 18 años de edad con ID de California u otro Estado válido.

La tarea consiste en visitar jóvenes en las cárceles una vez a la semana (4 horas por semana), asistir a las reuniones mensuales y es importante que sean bilingües.

"Deseamos ayudarles material y espiritualmente. Intentamos ser una familia para quienes no la tienen y para aquellos que la tienen también. CSD por muchos años se encarga de ayudar a reconocer y a desarrollar sus propias capacidades y talentos mientras que acentúa que tales habilidades son de importancia vital en la comunidad.

¿Por qué cada día hay más jóvenes en problemas?

"Hoy en día es común que ambos padres trabajen y supervisen menos tiempo a sus hijos. Muchos de ellos tienen dos empleos. Los hijos menos supervisados por sus padres tienen más probabilidades en delinquir, pertenecer a una pandilla o consumir drogas", explica Escobar.

CSD apoya a los jóvenes desde 1992, en el año 2004 inició su obra social en San Leandro, en 2006 hizo lo propio en el Centro de Detención Juvenil en San Mateo.

Si desea participar como voluntario debe contactar a Julio Escobar al (415) 244-5594. A

Save Our Youth

In a recent study conducted by the City and County of San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department, 30 percent of all youth inmates are Latinos, 80 percent of which are male and 20 percent female, and the majority are 16 and 17 years-old. In San Jose, 62 percent are Latinos.

In helping to rehabilitation of these youth, the organization Comunidad San Dimas (CSD) or Community San Dimas, is looking for volunteers to become a part of the change that these young adults need to improve their lives.

Comunidad San Dimas is a spiritual program formed by volunteers who visit juvenile halls in the bay area of San Francisco, to reduce the troubles that high-risk youth may get into, said Julio Escobar, Director of CSD. Volunteers Needed

The deadline to become a volunteer to these young adults in need is April 10. It's important that the person volunteering complete three days of training, Saturdays, Apr. 12, 19, and 26, must be 18 years of age, with a valid California ID or other U.S. state, bilinguals wanted.

Volunteers visit the youth in the juvenile halls once a week (four hours a week) and attend monthly meetings.

"We deliver the Word of Our Lord to our young sisters and brothers and share the love of Christ with them. We want to help them, both materially and spiritually. We seek to be like a family for those who are estranged from or do not have one of their own. For those who do have a family, our wish is to support them, both as individuals and as a unit. We desire to function as messengers of hope for a brighter future through faith, education, and employment, helping them to recognize and develop their own abilities and talents, while emphasizing that such skills are of vital importance to our community. We wish to serve as a source of inspiration for churches and the Hispanic community. We want them to be concerned with the needs of our young sisters and brothers. Together, we can discover ways to convey God's love for them," says their website.

Escobar said. It's common for both parents of a child to work these days, making it harder to supervise and easier for a youth to become delinquent, join a gang, or consume drugs.

If you wish to Volunteer, contact Julio Escobar at (415) 244-5594. A

eo

EL OBSERVADOR

1 de Mayo

TODOS A MARCHAR

P. 7

The Future of the Internet

P. 4

Jump
Rope For Heart

Salta por tu Corazón

"Jump Rope for Heart"

P. 10

Photo by Rosalind

1998 NUMBER 17 APRIL 2000 www.elobservador.com

Niños del segundo grado del Washington Elementary School saltan por su salud y bienestar.



¡Salta por tu corazón!

Por Rosario Vital - El Observador

"Quiero que mis alumnos estén activos, se ejerciten a diario y prevengan enfermedades que es común en los latinos. Los recursos son limitados pero existe mucho entusiasmo entre mis estudiantes", dijo Claudia Tagimara, maestra del Segundo Grado de la Escuela Primaria de Washington en San José.

Esta escuela cuyo 90% de estudiantes son latinos participa por segundo año consecutivo en el programa nacional "Salta la Cuerda por tu corazón" el cual es promovido por la Asociación Americana del Corazón.

Combinar actividades físicas en la escuela es un elemento básico para mantener a niños saludables. "Los niños son el futuro de este país y queremos que sean una comunidad activa y sana. Al mismo tiempo estamos promoviendo a que niños junten dinero para apoyar a programas de ayuda a personas que sufren de ataque al corazón o derrame cerebral", dijo Camie Sánchez, representante de la Asociación Americana del Corazón.

Sánchez informó a El Observador que unen esfuerzos con 93 escuelas primarias y esto ha tenido mucho éxito.

Junten dinero para una noble causa

Parte del programa "Jump Rope for Heart" consiste en que los niños reúnan fondos para contribuir a programas que tratan a pacientes con problemas cardíacos en los hospitales de Stanford, Children Hospital de Oakland, Universidad de Berkeley y San Francisco.

El año pasado Joanna Borraya

alumna ahora del 2do. Grado de Primaria de la Escuela Primaria Washington no solo brincó la cuerda sino brincó de alegría al ser reconocida como la estudiante que más dinero reunió para esta sana causa. Joanna reunió \$1,002 y esto fue posible gracias a su trabajo y compromiso al aceptar ayudar a otros. "Joanna es un ejemplo de estudiante que contribuyen al bienestar de la familia, gracias al apoyo de estudiantes como ella logramos recibir algunos 'elementos deportivos'", dijo Tagimara.

La Asociación Americana del Corazón informa que el tipo de Diabetes II se está incrementando entre los niños. Si la tendencia actual continúa, adolescentes con diabetes tipo II tendrán problemas al corazón a comienzos de los 20 y 40 años de edad.

Un serie de estudios han demostrado que el incremento de actividad física está relacionado con un buen rendimiento escolar. Los niños con sobrepeso en Estados Unidos entre 1980 y 1990 aumentaron de tres a cinco millones de adolescentes. El 10 por ciento en sobrepeso o en riesgo de convertirse en sobrepeso.

Las enfermedades cardiovasculares es la principal causa de muerte en los niños mayores de 15.

Para que estos programas continúen, la escuela solicitará el próximo 19 de mayo una festividad para recaudar fondos. Si desea colaborar con la escuela puede en donaciones como agua, equipos deportivos o lo que sea de su voluntad. Puede contactar a (408) 633-6261 o visite www.americanheart.org/jump.

"Jump Rope for Heart"

By Rosario Vital - El Observador

"I want my students to be active, exercising daily and preventing diseases that are common in Latinos. Research is limited but there's a lot of enthusiasm in my students", said Claudia Tagimara, Second Grade teacher of Washington Elementary in San Jose.

This school, where 90 percent of the students are Latinos, participated in "Jump Rope for Heart," a national program sponsored by the American Heart Association.

Combining physical activities in schools is a basic element in maintaining healthy kids. "The children are the future of this country and we want them to be an active and healthy community. At the same time we are encouraging the kids to get donations to help people who suffer from heart attacks or strokes," said Camie Sanchez, representative for the American Heart Association.

Sánchez (old El Observador, 93 elementary schools have joined forces and been really successful).

Donations for a Noble Cause

Part of the program "Jump Rope for Heart" consists of the kids getting donations for programs that treat patients with heart problems in Stanford Hospital, Oakland's Children's Hospital, Universities of Berkeley and San Francisco.

Last year Joanna Borraya, who is now in the second grade at Washington Elementary, not only jumped rope but jumped for joy as she was recognized as the student who acquired the most funds for this cause, raising \$1,002 in donations.

Joanna is an example of a student who contributes to the well being of a family, thanks to students like her we were received sports supplies," Tagimara said.

The American Heart Association informed that Type II Diabetes is increasing in children and if this trend continues, adolescents with Type II Diabetes will have heart problems by the age of 20 or 40 years of age.

A series of studies has shown that increase in physical activities is related to good grades.

Overweight cases in children have tripled between 1981 and 2000. More than three out of 10 adolescents are overweight or at risk of being overweight.

Cardiovascular diseases is the second cause of death in children younger than 15.

For these programs to continue and due to budget cuts, the association and the school will host an event on May 19 to get more donations. If you wish to donate anything to these schools, you may contact them at (408) 535-6261 or visit www.americanheart.org/jump.



Getting A Head Start: 900 Kindergartners Enter EVC

SAN JOSE, Calif.

On Thursday, April 24, the Evergreen Valley College campus, welcomed 900 kindergartners, 60 percent of whom are Latino, from the Alum Rock School District for a half-day of learning, exploration, and fun.

The gap in math and reading scores between Latino children and their counterparts, which begins as early as kindergarten and persists

sults in a decreasing percentage of Latinos at each stage of the education pipeline.

Evergreen Valley College is determined to buck that trend by exposing Latino children to the world of possibilities that a college education can bring them.

Dr. David Wain Coon, President of Evergreen Valley College, says, "Exposing our youth early to the wonders of education is so impor-

students is often too late."

EVC has been working on bold initiatives to open the doors to education for English Language Learners. "Of the 9300 students at Alum Rock's 20 elementary schools, 77 percent are Latino. Many of these students will feed into the East San Jose high schools. Our hope is that they will eventually enroll in our college or other colleges, to create better futures for themselves and their



eo

EL OBSERVADOR

Manténgalos ocupados

P. 8-9

Obra de teatro enseña
cómo defenderse del ICE

PEOPLE ASK FOR MORE SIDEWALKS IN EPA

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 30 JULY 11 - 17, 2008 www.el-observador.com

Keep Them Busy

By Rosario Vital
El Observador

The dream of a young adolescent in a Los Altos High School has become a reality. Akash Nigam (14) had the big vision of putting together a soccer camp for middle schoolers. Starting with 30 participants, this year the number has increased to 105, making it a successful camp.

"This is an example of how the community unites to create space and opportunities for others. We looked for young kids to participate and at first there were only a few, but by the second day we had 100 kids after those that were registered brought their friends," said the President of Mesa de la Comunidad, Oscar Garcia.

Akash is a passionate soccer player, who worried about the lack of possibilities for young soccer players in lower income families, thus bringing together his love for soccer and care for the community.

"I'm happy to create activities, to see a smile on the kids faces," said Akash during the award ceremony on July 3 at Bubb Elementary School.

"It's a very productive event for our families, my son was busy part of the afternoon and had a good time. This is important for the families that don't have extra money, but with a \$5 donation are able to keep our kids busy," said Maria Chavez.

Far from Gangs, T.V and Electronic Games

All kids and adolescents are at risk when at home. The fact that their parents are at work all day and kids are exposed to television and video games, and may be alone part of the time, creates problems among young adolescents, frustrating them, which results in them joining a gang," said Marco Garcia, a Mountain View Police Officer and founder of programs for at-risk kids.

"Twenty percent of commercials on television are about junk food. One hour of television makes kids gain an extra 167 calories. Can you imagine a child sitting for five hours in front of the T.V., the internet or video games. It's important that kids be physically active," said Maria Alvarez from Common Sense Media.

An Ideal Camp

In the "Kick, Lead and Dream" Camp, kids exercise by playing scrimmage games and developing a healthy competitive environment. Perfectly integrated in the program is a motivational speaker aimed at explaining to the kids their endless possibilities and keeping away from bad influences such as gangs.

Mountain View Police are Friends in the Community

"Our community is our friend and we are here to serve and contribute in different social causes," said the Mountain View Chief of Police, Scott S.G. Vermeer.

The police of this city also formed part of this program, donating their time in the entertainment, talks and security. This sports camp was possible due to the support from the Mountain View League of Activities, The Mountain View Police Activities League, and Mesa de la Comunidad. This is a model of good summer camps that families of other cities could follow.Δ

Manténgalos ocupados

Por Rosario Vital - El Observador

El sueño de un joven adolescente de la escuela secundaria de Los Altos, Akash Nigam se hizo realidad. El año pasado tuvo una gran visión, al desarrollar un campamento de fútbol para menores. En ese entonces el número de participantes fue de 30, este año el número de participación se incrementó a 105, haciendo de esto un campamento exitoso.

"Esto es un ejemplo de ver cómo la comunidad se une para crear espacios y oportunidades a otros. Nosotros buscamos a los menores

para que participen, el primer día llegaron unos cuantos, al segundo día se completaron a 100 con la llegada de más amigos de los inscritos", dijo el Presidente de Mesa de la Comunidad, Oscar García.

Akash es un apasionado por el fútbol, pero al mismo tiempo se preocupó en dar una oportunidad a los niños que tienen menos posibilidades económicas. Dos elementos que ha sabido combinar: su labor comunitaria y pasión por el fútbol.

"Me siento orgulloso de crear actividades, de ver una sonrisa en todos los pequeños y otros jóvenes como yo", dijo Akash durante la ceremonia



Niños de las escuelas de Castro, Crittenden y Graham de la ciudad de Mountain View se beneficiaron del programa "Kick, Lead and Dream".

de clausura que tuvo lugar el pasado 3 de julio en la escuela primaria de Bubbb.

"Es un evento muy productivo para nuestras familias, mi hijo estuvo ocupado parte de la tarde y la pasó muy bien. Esto es importante para familias que no tenemos recursos y que con un costo simbólico de \$5 mantuvimos ocupados a nuestros hijos", dijo María Chávez.

Lejos la tv y juegos electrónicos

"Cualquier niño o joven adolescente se encuentra en riesgo aún esté en casa. El hecho que los padres estén todo el día en su trabajo y los niños expuestos a la televisión y los juegos de video o la mayor parte del tiempo solos, crean problemas entre los menores quienes llegan en un momento a estar desorientados y con tendencia a caer en pandillas", dice el Oficial de la Policía de Mtn. View y fundador de programas de ayuda para

niños de alto riesgo, Marco García.

"El 20% de los comerciales que transmite la TV en español es de comida chatarra. Una hora en la televisión hace que los niños ganen 167 calorías. ¿Se imaginan un niño sentado por 5 horas frente a la tv, el internet o a los juegos electrónicos? Es importante que los niños hagan actividades físicas?", dijo María Alvarez de la organización Common Sense Media.

Campamento ideal

En el campamento llamado "Kick, Lead and Dream" los niños se ejercitaron y tuvieron juegos en equipos separados, lo que fomenta un clima de sana competencia. Perfectamente integrado en el programa de fútbol había un orador invitado del programa destinado a proporcionar la motivación y fomentar el desarrollo de habilidades para la vida que ayudará a desviar de malas influencias como las pandillas.

Policía de Mtn. View amigos de su comunidad

"Nuestra comunidad es amiga y estamos aquí para servir y contribuir en diferentes causas sociales", dijo el jefe de la Policía de Mtn. View, Scott S.G. Vermeer.

Los policías de esta ciudad también formaron parte de este programa, donando su tiempo en las entrenamientos, charlas y seguridad. Este campamento deportivo fue posible por La Liga de Actividades de la Policía de Mountain View(MVPAL), El Club de Fútbol de Los Altos y Mtn. View. (MVLA), Mesa de la Comunidad. Esto es un modelo de campamento de verano que familias de otras ciudades podría seguir cuando no tienen recursos económicos.

*(Read the English version online
www.el-observador.com)* Δ

