

Venue, City and State of Town Hall: Pickleweed Community Center, San Rafael, CA

Date of Town Hall: Saturday April 26, 2008

Lead Sponsoring Organizations: Grassroots Leadership Network of Marin, Parent Services Project, Parent Voices of Marin Child Care Council

Themes

1. Our parents' world, our world, our kids' world

How are our lives better and worse than our parents and grandparents, and what does life look like for our children and grandchildren?

Stories

Education-related

- Had more opportunities than my mom; she couldn't go to college, she was one of 6 kids, today, I can go to college.
- I can take classes to get ahead in life
- My parents were one of 10 children and couldn't even go to elementary school
- My grandfather was able to go to college on the GI Bill
- I was the only one in my family to go to college
- I have a college degree but it hasn't provided a better economic life
- Now there are too many prisons and not enough schools
- I am a child of parents from Germany and Texas. My parents had to drop out of school because of my birth. I get to go to school.
- Involvement of families in education
- No access to special education

Cost of living/Employment/Economy

- My salary is \$50 per day and I have to pay \$35 a day for child care
- Good: there is work in the United States
- I pay all that I earn to childcare costs
- Living has become harder over the past ten years because businesses are moving out of the country
- There is a gap in income growth from generation to generation
- I am the son of immigrants, my parents had limited opportunities. I had more options, and my kid will have even more options, but it's a tougher economic world.
- My mom emigrated from Mexico, had to raise whole family alone. Now I have papers, it's easier for me. I was the older kid and had to help a lot in my family.
- I have three jobs – if you study here you can do better than your parents. There are more opportunities in the United States but there are difficulties too
- Housing is too small for the number of people
- Inadequate retirement
- Childcare is harder to find for our children
- Good roads

- Green environment
- Sacrifice to have basic needs met
- Need better salaries (just salaries for universal preschool teachers)

Health

- Health/disability – importance of child care; suicide prevention (therapy)
- It took all my personal funds to pay for a health care emergency

Lifestyle

- Life was simpler back then.
- It's hard now for families to spend time together
- There is a better quality of life now than in my parents' generation
- The media now is having a negative impact on children. This wasn't so bad in prior generations.
- The war is a trauma for families and very costly for the country
- Loss of values/culture
- My parents had a normal life in the 60s fought for civil rights, I was disowned by my parents, my husband left me with three kids, I spent time in a mental hospital. My kids went to foster care and became street kids.
- As a parent, it is very hard to give our kids all they need
- Victim of domestic violence was referred to a shelter but want stable roots. My kids and I faced hunger, lack of transportation, and needed stable roots.
- Systems are not working, unions and churches aren't working, change depends on us, the working families
- WWII was different than Vietnam and Iraq
- Every generation faces different challenges. In the past there was overt racism. Now there are technological advances that make other things difficult.
- I spent 35 years as a state legislator. It was hard to get noticed as a Latino in the state legislature. Now there is a Latino caucus with 30 Latino members

Youth

- My dad was in jail a lot, I didn't get to know him. MY parents were young.
- My brother was shot in 2004.
- There were lots of family arguments, because of family members being displaced by Hurricane Katrina.
- Because of gangs and drug violence it is not safe for me to go live with my father.
- I am a 12-year old. My mom works a lot and I have to take on many family responsibilities
- I had a hard start, got into trouble. But I got some training, support and a GED. Went to culinary school. Got a second chance that my parents didn't get.
- Here without family I earn less than I need – I don't have enough to cover my expenses
- I know my neighbors – they help sometimes

2. Ideas about the platform – ISSUES

What are important values for society?

- ✓ Health care costs
- ✓ Health insurance

- ✓ We need more economic stability
- ✓ Good jobs/wages are not high enough
- ✓ Salaries too low to be able to retire
- ✓ Very low salaries and employers who do not motivate or educate their workers
- ✓ No work

- ✓ Education
- ✓ Exit exams- if you don't pass, you can't graduate
- ✓ Debt for going to college to get undergrad degree is \$40,000. It's scary to think about raising a family.
- ✓ Lack of funding for minority students
- ✓ We need a commitment to public education
- ✓ Cuts in school budgets and layoffs of teachers
- ✓ Increase access to higher education/college
- ✓ Special education is not so accessible and very costly when there isn't health insurance

- ✓ Lack of programs for youth
- ✓ The government is cutting programs and services

- ✓ Too much money going to the military – too many lives lost
- ✓ War
- ✓ Many poor families abandoned by the war

- ✓ We need more hospitality towards immigrants
- ✓ Immigration – want a better life for their children; we have to speak up for our parents.
- ✓ Not being able to stay with one's children out of the need to work in the United States

- ✓ Drug use
- ✓ Easy access to drugs at school
- ✓ Gangs

- ✓ Parents need help with their children
- ✓ How parents can find help in raising their children
- ✓ Single mom – cannot work or take classes because needs to stay home with the youngest children
- ✓ Stress on parents
- ✓ Children are spending too much time alone unsupervised by their parents
- ✓ After school programs that help children with homework

- ✓ Inadequate housing: have to rely on family ties, which can strain the family
- ✓ 16 people in a two-bedroom apartment
- ✓ Huge communication problem between generations and cultures and institutions

- ✓ Too many children in one apartment
- ✓ Child care/child care waiting list
- ✓ Childcare is very costly and inaccessible to the majority of families
- ✓ On the childcare waiting list for three years
- ✓ Child safety
- ✓ No transportation options
- ✓ Cannot drive
- ✓ Too many cars
- ✓ Gas prices
- ✓ Unity
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Traditions
- ✓ Culture
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Loss of values
- ✓ Cannot vote
- ✓ Discrimination in general
- ✓ Neighborhoods are dangerous and not accessible to all of the community
- ✓ More information for the Latino community

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Reduce violence, increase community service, no jail for first time offenders.
- ✓ Quality child care, better screening of child care providers, better training for providers
- ✓ Increase diversity of teachers.
- ✓ Need single payer health care
- ✓ Provide more books to students who can borrow them to know what to study for the test we can't afford those books
- ✓ Safe housing
- ✓ Better justice system
- ✓ Safer community
- ✓ Advocate for abused women
- ✓ Rent control
- ✓ Funding for education
- ✓ Hope
- ✓ Inculcate values and moral principles Inculear valores y principios morales
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Family support
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Discipline
- ✓ Guide for parents
- ✓ Sports that are accessible to youth
- ✓ Affordable child care for all
- ✓ Better unions and job benefits
- ✓ Support the DREAM act

- ✓ End the WAR
- ✓ Increase access to child care
- ✓ Eliminate disparities due to class and race
- ✓ Help people start new businesses
- ✓ Need more opportunities to own a home
- ✓ Invest wisely in education and transportation
- ✓ Scrutinize the media's total involvement in public life
- ✓ Invest in early childhood education instead of prison
- ✓ Create links between school and long term goals
- ✓ Affordable housing
- ✓ Help more people learn to speak English
- ✓ Involved teachers
- ✓ Financial aid for working students
- ✓ Youth programs
- ✓ More progressive tax system
- ✓ More voter education, community involvement
- ✓ Sliding scale payments for services (housing, etc)
- ✓ Help the middle class so they don't fall into lower economic class
- ✓ Follow through on promises
- ✓ Don't cut funds
- ✓ Immigration
- ✓ Immigrants are good
- ✓ Permit immigration for people of good moral character
- ✓ Lower taxes
- ✓ Value us as workers
- ✓ No more raids
- ✓ Injustice
- ✓ Involve us more in forums
- ✓ Transmit messages person to person
- ✓ More publicity, flyers
- ✓ United community
- ✓ Events on the weekends
- ✓ Increase diversity of teachers
- ✓ Get rid of No Child Left Behind
- ✓ White flight from public schools
- ✓ If you graduate high school with a B average you should go to college free
- ✓ Provide free access to quality child care
- ✓ Support the Dream Act
- ✓ Immigrants should join the youth movement
- ✓ Single payer health care should be a right, not a privilege
- ✓ Create a social justice team at the federal level
- ✓ Community land trust
- ✓ Eliminate people's fear about people of color
- ✓ More community meetings for people to get educated
- ✓ More people need to get involved
- ✓ Joint the Marin Organizing Committee
- ✓ Youth voices need to be heard
- ✓ Continue to talk about racism

- ✓ Use less electricity
- ✓ More collaboration in the home
- ✓ Meetings for parents to get involved in schools
- ✓ Grants for the Latino community
- ✓ To have rights
- ✓ Legalization for immigrants
- ✓ More low-cost apartments/housing
- ✓ Change the laws to give more opportunities to undocumented immigrants.
- ✓ No gang activity/don't support gangs
- ✓ More after school programs
- ✓ Communication between parents and children
- ✓ Recycle plastic
- ✓ Educate and share information
- ✓ Student grants (DREAM act)
- ✓ Licenses for all
- ✓ Legalization
- ✓ Housing – good/accessible
- ✓ Low rents
- ✓ Better salaries
- ✓ End the war
- ✓ Stop corruption
- ✓ More help with special education