Education Equity

DHF continues spearheading the Kern Education Justice Collaborative (KEJC) — a network of parents, youth, legal agencies, faith based and community organizations focused on bringing about education equity in Kern. Their target is the School-to-Prison Pipeline at Kern High School District (KHSD), the largest unified high school district in the state with over 37,000 students. The Local Control Funding Formula’s (LCFF) requires schools to gather community input through a process called the Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP), which culminates in an annual budget. The DHF worked with parents and provided trainings on the mechanics of the LCAP process and encouraged them to push hard for equity in the allocation of Supplemental and Concentration Grant Funds (SCGF), which are intended by the LCFF to be allocated equitably for high needs students.

The KHSD administrators were called to task for allocating a majority of the LCAP’s $37 million in SCGF on a system-wide basis. Rather than targeting allocations of funds intended for high needs students at schools with larger percentages of high needs students.

One instance where the SCGF were not being used according to the spirit of the LCFF was in the 2015-16 LCAP allocation of $1.3 million dollars to Kern Learn, a program that would benefit mostly mainstream students rather than children with high needs. The community brought these concerns to the KHSD Board of Trustees and launched a campaign to raise public awareness. In a victory, the allocation for Kern Learn was removed in the 2016-17 LCAP. In addition, $1,900,000 over two years have been allocated to create parent centers with a mandate to provide guidance for parents in advocating for their children’s education at every school site in the KHSD.

Read the full article online at tinyurl.com/WMNL2016Education

Parent Engagement

Ongoing training (pictured below) on parents’ rights, the disciplinary process, and basic information about how schools are funded under the LCFF helped parents in Lamont, California to become actively engaged in the LCAP Process. Parents Involved in Education (PIE) developed a collaborative partnership with the Lamont Elementary School District and made some important policy changes. The LCAP was translated into Spanish to increase parent engagement. Recommendations to implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) and Restorative Justice practices resulted in the district approving funds to hire a PBIS staff Coordinator.
**Education Legislation**

DHF advocated for the passage of AB420 in 2014. There has, since, been a 40% statewide decrease of suspensions from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015 for willful defiance among K through 3rd grade students. Data for 2015-2016 is not yet available.

DHF Education Director, Erika Brooks, and South Kern Organizer, Timo Prado, as part of a statewide coalition, sent letters and gave testimony to the State Education Board of Education to include suspension rates as an indicator of effective school climate in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) formal evaluation. President, Dolores Huerta, provided testimony to the board in August. In September the board approved suspension as part of the LCFF evaluation metrics for school districts across the state.

DHF supported the successful passage of SB 527 allowing school districts and other local education agencies to apply for California Department of Education grant programs which must be used for planning and implementation of evidenced based non-punitive discipline programs such as Restorative Justice and Positive Behaviors Interventions & Supports. Both are multi-million dollar grant programs.

**School Safety**

In June 2016 the Kern High School District (KHSD) passed a policy allowing non-staff Carrying Concealed Weapons (CCW) permit-holders on school grounds with the permission of the Superintendent, a policy the DHF and the Kern Education Justice Collaborative vehemently opposed. In November, the KHSD Board of Trustees furthered the policy enacting a proposal allowing the Superintendent to select CCW permit-holding teachers and other staff to carry firearms on high school campuses as well. These policies put over 37,000 students at risk, and will do nothing to make campuses safer. KHSD already has a police force that is properly trained in the use of firearms. Putting more guns on campus only threatens to create more problems than it solves. Research shows that having ready access to guns increases the risk of homicide and injury by accidental discharge and that gun-violence disproportionately affects people of color. KHSD is a racially diverse school district with some campuses having ethnic minority populations of 89% or more. It will also increase liability costs. Allocations toward insurance companies will be taken from general funds and away from classroom instruction. The KEJC held press conferences prior to the KHSD board meetings to rally the community to protest these dangerous policies. This served to raise public awareness through the media’s coverage of KHSD’s policies. The KEJC have launched a petition directed to the KHSD Board asking them to rescind these dangerous policies and return KHSD to a gun-free school zone.

Please sign the online petition at tinyurl.com/stopKHSDguns.
Civic Engagement

Working in collaboration with Latino Interactive Voter Education (LIVE) Project and California Calls, a statewide alliance of 15 organizations, DHF hired 32 canvassers for a 7-week phone banking and door to door canvassing campaign in Kern County and recruited 90 volunteers who educated voters on key local and statewide propositions. DHF Civic Engagement Coordinator, Jess Contreras, oversaw the campaign which contributed to the passage of the following initiatives: Measure J, a community college bond for facility development projects, including $25 million allocation for a new Arvin facility; Proposition 55 raised taxes on the wealthiest Californians to fund education and health care; Proposition 56 increased taxes on cigarette and tobacco related products to fund healthcare and smoking prevention for children and seniors; and Proposition 57, The Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act protects minors as young as 14 from being tried as adults and provides incentives for incarcerated people to complete rehabilitative programs.

The Cali Calls team exceeded voter engagement goals, registering over 900 eligible voters, contacting 17,700 registered voters, and identifying 12,000 supporters who pledged to turn out to the polls.

In July, DHF launched the “Si Se Puede, If You Vote!” Campaign, a massive coordinated non-partisan civic engagement effort targeting youth, new citizens, and low propensity voters in Kern and Tulare Counties for voter registration, education, turn out, and voter protection. Over 200 volunteers joined the DHF’s civic engagement efforts leading up to the general election.

Young Voter Empowerment Project (YVOTE)

In May 2016, DHF signed on with the Young Voter Empowerment Project (YVOTE), a statewide coalition focused on making millennial voters (ages 18-34) into a permanent voting bloc in California in order to reshape the electorate to be more reflective of the actual population. Under the direction of Civic Engagement Director, Gerald Cantu, Ph.D. in Kern County and Organizer, Irlanda Ramirez in Tulare County, outreach efforts included a mix of canvassing, phone banking, and text-messaging. DHF youth organizers used the Hustle mobile app to create one-on-one relationships with supporters through text messaging, bringing the power of old-fashioned in-person organizing to an easy-to-use SMS platform. This was part of a pilot experiment to determine whether contact through text increases likelihood of turn out.

The canvassers on the YVOTE Team registered over 100 eligible voters and exceeded their goal by contacting over 5,000 eligible voters, more than 3,500 pledged to vote in the 2016 General Election.

Poll Monitoring

In partnership with Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ), DHF trained 20 poll monitors to ensure that county registrars were in compliance with state and federal laws protecting voters’ rights.

Read the full article online tinyurl.com/WMNL2016CivicEngagement
Health and Safety

DHF Health Policy Organizers, Elizabeth Martinez and Yesenia Ocampo, worked with Vecinos Unidos “United Neighbors” of Arvin and Greenfield to establish health and safety committees.

The “Always Fresh” committee collaborated with the Kern County Department of Public Health to conduct the “Smart Lunch Room Assessment” Training along with a cafeteria site visit to assess the cultural relevancy of the foods being served and provide their input for improving the meals and reducing food waste. Many parents became active in the Arvin Union School District (AUSD) Wellness Committee meetings. They successfully advocated for a policy promoting the purchasing of goods or services from local suppliers benefiting student eating habits, the local economy, and environmental quality. In 2016, 25% of the produce served in school meals was purchased within a 200 mile radius of the Kern County line. That percentage is set to increase every year, with 75% achieved in 2021.

The “Comets for Open Schools” committee facilitated a joint-use agreement between the Arvin Zumba Group and AUSD allowing the use of the gym and cafeteria at Haven Drive Middle School for Zumba classes during the week – an agreement 5 years in the making.

In April “Unity in Feet and Wheels” organized a Walking School Bus Event to promote physical activity, teach children pedestrian safety and help to raise awareness about walking and bicycle infrastructure needs in the city. That morning, 3rd grader, Jose Gallegos exclaimed, “This is so fun! I wish we could do it every day!” Jose got his wish. The event was so successful, that it inspired administrators at Sierra Vista Elementary School to work with committee members to launch a daily Walking School Bus Program. In addition, the Unidad en Piez y Ruedas “Unity in Feet and Wheels” Vecinos committee received training on how to effectively advocate through the 2016-2017 District’s Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP.) The committee members attended the LCAP hearing and made recommendations, which led to the allocation of funds for Safe Routes To School district wide.

The Dolores Huerta Foundation in partnership with Cultiva La Salud (CLS)* “Cultivating Health” is working to reduce health disparities among Latinos in Arvin and Greenfield through interventions that address poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

DHF helped organize Fairview Elementary School in Greenfield and the Arvin Union School District to celebrate International Walk to School Day on October 5, 2016. Thousands of students in the Central Valley walked to school along with parents, teachers and community leaders.

*Funding is provided by the Public Health Institute, through funding from The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
Leadership Development

Farmworker, Lorena Rojas is a Spanish-speaking mother of three. She met DHF Organizer, Elizabeth Martinez, at a Health Fair at Haven Drive Middle School in Arvin. She attended her first Cultiva la Salud meeting in June 2015 and joined the “Always Fresh” committee working on improving access to healthy food and school wellness policies. She attended DHF parent training workshops where she learned the importance of parent engagement, her rights as a parent, and the structure and function of the school and district. Lorena gained valuable public speaking skills and learned how to make an effective presentation to decision makers. She became active in pushing for a school environment that promotes students' health, well being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. She joined school parent committees such as the English Learner Advisory Committee at the school and district level. After attending the “Gardens in Schools” Training, she began advocating for a community garden at Sierra Vista Elementary School. School administrators now recognize Lorena as a voice of the community. Her community work has inspired changes at home as well. She’s started her own garden, and is now feeding her own family a diet lower in fat and sugar and higher in nutrient rich vegetables and grains. (Pictured right.)

In May, DHF joined a statewide coalition for a day of action in Sacramento to encourage legislators to support SB 1418 and SB 10 to expand health care coverage to all Californians.

Health Advocacy

The Tulare Vecinos Unidos “United Neighbors” continued to learn about increasing opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity to reduce the prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes in their community. They participated in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) aimed at improving nutrition and physical activity behaviors of low-income families, particularly those with young children. They attended a Project LEAN training focused on helping parents engage in Local School Wellness Policies. DHF Tulare Organizer Irlanda Ramirez, provided additional training to 70 parents on how to advocate for policy improvement at their local school district.

Parents regularly attended Woodlake School District board meetings and made public comments. Through their advocacy, they reactivated a, nearly defunct, School District Wellness Council.

The Tulare Vecinos Parent Committee began working, last year, on a plan to promote a Farm to School Procurement Program in which students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons and farm field trips. It became official school policy this fall, empowering children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy.

Woodlake Vecino, Maria Teresa Serrano Lara said, “Taking these classes has completely changed my life. Before, my family and I only drank soda. Now we drink nothing but water. I used to have high cholesterol, and now I’m fine. I participate in all this, because I enjoy helping the community. It’s important for our children’s health!”
Equality

In January 2016, the Dolores Huerta Foundation launched its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Equality Program. Equality Organizers, Moises Duran and Dean Welliver, are working to organize students, families, and community members to take a more pronounced and active role in creating safe and welcoming school climates, mobilizing the LGBT vote, addressing health inequalities like STD transmission rates and lack of health care services for transgender residents, and providing safe spaces for LGBT and straight allied youth to grow as leaders! DHF launched the program to address the inequalities that LGBT residents of Kern County are experiencing in the areas of health, education, youth, and civic engagement.

They started the group Teens 4 LGBT Equality. It is currently the only active community based youth group in Kern County providing engaging and fun extracurricular activities focused on building community and learning about LGBT identities and rights.

While California does have legal protections safeguarding LGBT student’s rights, Kern High School District (KHSD) has failed to make all students feel safe. KHSD Board of Trustees member Chad Vegas stated publicly that LGBT students are “sexually perverse” and “mentally ill” at a school board meeting addressing a non-discrimination policy intended to protect transgender students. He invited parishioners from his church who made disparaging comments towards the LGBT community, including the malicious misgendering of a transgender woman giving public comment. In the face of these hostile and traumatic attacks, the LGBT community showed great strength and poise and was ultimately able to celebrate the policy approval.

LGBT Youth Prom

Youth in Kern County experience a lack of LGBT-inclusive social spaces. On June 17th, the DHF Teens 4 LGBTQ Equality group planned “Let Your Queer Glow”- the first teen-led Kern County LGBT youth dance. They transformed the Bakersfield Gay and Lesbian Center into a glowing neon space galaxy. Over fifty of their peers danced and enjoyed themselves without having to worry about potential backlash from other students and staff.

Fifteen year-old West High Student Toni attended the dance and said, “My favorite part was that I could talk with people that know what I’m going through. You get to be yourself and celebrate it. It’s really fun.”

“Joining Teens 4 LGBTQ Equality has had a positive impact on my life, because I would have never done stuff like this before! It has motivated me to go outside of my comfort zone and try new things! My favorite part of being in the program is that I get to be involved in the community and meet other youth who are facing the same challenges we face and who understand our problems!” –Teen Leader, Paola Hinojosa.

LGBT Youth Advocacy Impacts KHSD Policy

Teens 4 LGBT Equality, Dolores Huerta Foundation and allied organizations working together to provide a safer school climate, education, and visibility for LGBTQ Youth and allies were given extensive training on the school budget process and how to advocate for their educational needs. Youth discussed their personal experiences and identified gaps in services and policies in the Kern High School District (KHSD). Through the LCAP process, youth were provided an opportunity to directly advocate for their needs and practice public speaking. Fifteen students attended several LCAP public input sessions and provided recommendations to the KHSD board. Read the full article online at tinyurl.com/WMNL2016Equality.
Dolores Huerta in Action 2016

Presented with Atlanta Braves “Hank Aaron Champion for Justice Award” Panel Discussion with Hank Aaron and Oscar “The Big O” Robertson for Hispanic Heritage Weekend in Atlanta, GA on June 20th.

Fontana Unified School District dedicates the Dolores Huerta International Academy on October 11th.

Presented with the California League of Conservation Voters Environmental Leadership Award in San Francisco, CA on June 9th (pictured bottom right).

Honored with the Norman Felton and Denise Aubuchon Humanitarian Award at the 25th Annual Death Penalty Focus Awards Dinner in Beverly Hills, CA on May 12th. (Pictured right.)

Joining families, activist, artists, and elected officials for a rally at the U.S. Supreme Court to show support for the president’s executive action on DAPA and DACA on April 18th.

Keynote speaker at the Fifth Annual Coachella Valley Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast on May 20th.

At Standing Rock in support of the Oceti Sakowin and environmentalist, fighting the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline on November 17th.
A Note from the Executive Director

Thank you for your continued support. I am proud of the work the DHF has accomplished this year thanks to the contributions of our generous donors and esteemed volunteers. I look forward to expanding our team in the coming year to continue the important movement building work in the Central Valley to end the school-to-prison pipeline and replace it with the school-to-social justice leadership pipeline. Riding on the success of this year’s voter outreach efforts, DHF plans to keep in close communication with our supportive voter base to continue engaging voters year round. Our LGBT Equality team will continue developing youth leaders working to create supportive communities and safer school climates. Our Healthy Environments team will train more residents to advocate for improved infrastructure that encourages walking and biking as well as increasing access to healthier food.

I am super excited to announce the world premiere of DOLORES, a feature documentary about my mother, Dolores Huerta, at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. Produced by Carlos Santana and directed by Peter Bratt. The film is an in depth and personal portrayal of Dolores’ life’s work of “weaving movements” in the most radical social and cultural movements of the last fifty years. At this critical juncture, we see this film as a great opportunity to teach the world about the power of grassroots community organizing and move people to direct action. I hope we can count on your enthusiastic support to spread the word. We will keep you posted about the progress of the film at DHF’s website and Facebook page. ¡Sí Se Puede!

In Solidarity,

Camila Chávez
Executive Director

Youth

DHF was excited to welcome students and mentors from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, California for a collaborative intensive voter engagement summer experience. Twenty-nine Freedom Center middle and high school aged young people spent their summer break, sleeping on a hard gymnasium floor, knocking on several thousand doors in temperatures of 100 plus degrees. They were immersed daily in a rigorous civic engagement curriculum based on personal and social transformation through developing ethical values of interdependency, sustainability, and care for the common good. They registered hundreds of eligible Kern County residents to vote targeting youth and Latinos: communities with historically lower rates of voter turn out.

Dr. Roy Wilson, Executive Director of the Freedom Center provides this rigorous civic engagement experience to students to prepare them for ongoing civic engagement and community organizing and develop within them a life-long commitment to public service and the further development of democracy. The youth developed their speaking skills, social skills, team building and self-confidence prepared for leadership roles in community and civic life.