New Grants for Neighborhood Listening Project

Listening for a Change is honored to be the recipient of two grants, helping to expand and improve our Neighborhood Listening Project in secondary schools.

An Education Field of Interest grant from the Community Foundation Sonoma County was received to support our programs at Cloverdale High School, Healdsburg Junior High, and as supplementary support for the new Piner High School and Roseland University Prep programs. A second grant was awarded from the City of Santa Rosa Reclaiming our Youth Gang Prevention/Intervention grant to support innovative new programming at Piner High School and Roseland University Prep with guidance from the Sonoma Juvenile Probation Department.

Our programs teach youth to be respectful listeners and conduct oral history interviews. By practicing with one another, each student learns to demonstrate appropriate body language, create a trusting relationship, ask open-ended questions, and create thoughtful follow-up questions. Students are then ready to interview members of the larger community from a wide range of backgrounds. These include family members, neighbors, people who were troubled teens and are now successful adults, and people of diverse ethnicities, cultures, religions, and sexual orientation. In a time as divided as ours, these programs offer youth the construct and time to deeply listen to and engage in conversation with people at a level that gives them a more nuanced understanding of themselves and the world around them.

We have strong support implementing this program thanks to Cloverdale Superintendent Claudia Frandsen, Cloverdale High School principal Teresa Burke, teacher Wendy Conner, Healdsburg principal Deborah Hall, Healdsburg School Board Member Judy Velasquez, Healdsburg teachers

Here’s How You Can Help: As the students conduct interviews using equipment from the Community Media Center of Sonoma County, the next challenge is to edit and translate the growing number of dynamic interviews. While there is student and staff support for this work, we will need additional help in transcribing and editing. If you’re interested in learning more about what the students are learning, please con-

continued on next page
tact our office to learn how you can become actively involved.

This is a big project—We need to find funds this year to purchase free-standing touch-screen computer kiosks to share the stories with the communities-at-large in public venues. We are planning to have at least one kiosk in each participating community by May of 2012. Your support of time or money can help us attain this goal.

Got eScrip?

This is a really easy way to help Listening for a Change as you shop at Oliver’s Markets.

Next time you’re in an Oliver’s Market, please fill out the quick page (When you fill out the form, if you don’t see Listening for a Change, just write it in—we’re definitely registered with them!) and immediately receive a plastic tag to put on your key chain. Then, each time you shop, show the cashier the little tag before you pay for your purchases & 3% (or on days that end in 5, 5%) of your payment will go to Listening for a Change!

Have you attended one of our Free Community Listening Project Workshops yet?

Participating in the Community Listening Project workshop was a real eye-opener. Learning how to listen, learning how to ask questions—all the things we think we know are called into question and we re-learn. It was truly a fun, informative, and rewarding experience!

Marlene Ballaine, Board Member & Workshop Attendee

Here are some new opportunities for you and your friends!

Saturday, Jan 14th from 9:00 AM-1:00 PM
Saturday, April 14th from 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Held at the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County
A Few Thoughts from Daphne...

I’m thrilled to see the Occupy Wall Street movement and its cross-country progeny still going strong, a month after its impromptu emergence as a street protest in New York. Quite apart from whether I support its particular goals (which continue to be somewhat ambiguous to me) I am enjoying seeing protest in action. People are actually disrupting their lives, taking time out from work and families and other day-to-day obligations and taking to the streets, where they seem to be staying, despite legal hurdles, discomfort, and changing seasons.

Having been a teen in the 70’s and at Berkeley during the anti-apartheid protest against investments in South Africa in the 80’s, I was beginning to think such activism was a thing of the past. Other than a couple of rousing anti-war marches in recent years, I haven’t seen anything of this ilk, especially not in little old Sonoma County.

The growing divide between the haves and the have-nots is a problem for our communities. The growing influence of corporate money in elections is a problem for our society. The unbridled greed of corporate America, without regard for the 99%, or the environment for that matter, is not sustainable long-term.

Now, more than ever, the simple message of Listening for a Change resonates. “Creating connections, one story at a time....” The human connections that we forge with our neighbors, co-workers, and community members have tremendous capacity to enrich and sustain us. To understand one another, to gain perspective by learning what makes each of us unique, to support one another regardless of our differences, to find commonality where none seems to exist, weaves a very strong fabric for our community.

With our Listening Projects active in four Sonoma County high schools right now, we are spreading the word and watching teenagers glow as they realize the power of simple interview skills to conduct oral histories which enable them to connect with people they might never come in contact with otherwise. Both interviewer and interviewee seem to gain from the experience, and it is particularly rewarding to see young people open up to the process, leave their comfort zone, and appreciate the rewards of engaging with others who may have never otherwise entered their world.

Listening for a Change is persevering despite tough economic times. If you feel that you have a contribution to make, either time or money, (or both!) please contact us.

Laura Blum Board Treasurer

It’s a long way from Brooklyn, New York to Santa Rosa, California and quite a distance between work as a massage therapist and as Financial Director for the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County. Laura Blum is a person with a broad range of life experiences and interests.

A warm and thoughtful person Laura was a good student and, her father, a dentist, strongly encouraged her to go into medicine. For awhile she moved in that direction as she began her studies at the University of Massachusetts.

Laura became a student of yoga, a vegetarian, and began to study Hinduism and Buddhism, exploring alternative ways of thinking and living. After two years at the University of Massachusetts, Laura realized that a career in medicine was not the right path for her.

Through a journey to the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, she began to explore the practice of massage therapy. Laura learned that she liked helping others and at the same time helping herself through the healing of massage therapy. She studied in massage school in Santa Fe, New Mexico and later with Marian Rosen in Berkeley and became a Rosen Method Body Work therapist.

Though she liked the practice of massage therapy, Laura learned that whether in Calistoga or Santa Rosa, her strengths were not in marketing herself or bringing in clients. Laura started taking computer courses at the Santa Rosa Junior College. She fell in love with computers. In 1988 she began a part-time position with the Community Support Network keeping their books. She soon learned that she liked maintaining financial records for nonprofits and had a talent for it. Over the years she acquired more extensive financial skills and is now the Financial Director for the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County where her work supports the mission to “Connect Volunteers for a Vibrant Community.”

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Another Wonderful Sunset Soiree at Michel-Schlumberger!

We are sincerely appreciative to our friends and supporters, Jacques & Barbara Schlumberger, for the Generous Donation of their Beautiful Winery and Wines. This was the 10th year of enjoying the event at this venue.

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Ron Simon, Sally Bimrose, & Phyllis Rosenfield
Cloverdale High School Student Amanda Lawson explains Neighborhood Listening Project
Gayle LeBaron & Barbara Schlumberger

Jon Codding, Diane Sellars, & Sherry Catlett
Cloverdale H.S. Teacher Wendy Conner, Preston Addison, & student Amanda Lawson

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*Volunteer Center of Sonoma County*
*Yoga Center of Santa Rosa with Pam Field*

Congratulations to Gaye LeBaron!
2011 Connie Codding Humanist Awardee
Laura worked for the Community Action partnership (CAP) from 1996-2001. During that time she became one of the original members of their Diversity Committee led by Barbara Love & Roberta Hunter with the support of then executive director, Helga Lemke. As a Jewish lesbian, Laura found that the issues raised by the group were relevant and powerful for the workplace.

Her first experience with Listening for a Change was when she was impressed by a Listening for a Change presentation created for the business and non-profit community. By joining the board of Listening for a Change, Laura has enhanced her ability to voice issues of acceptance of diversity and community understanding from the marginalized person’s perspective.

Laura and her partner, Debra Kelly, have a son, Ben, who is a very big part of their lives. They both have been volunteering for his co-op charter school for many years. “It’s been a wonderful experience learning about parenting and thinking of things from a positive perspective and supporting that.” In addition to her involvement in Ben’s school, Laura is a former board member of the California Parenting Institute. Kelly is a Marriage and Family Therapist. She is a supervisor at both Lomi Psychotherapy Clinic and Chrysalis Community Counseling Services as well as having a private practice. She was previously a social worker at Face to Face.

“We’re pretty much a non-profit family.” Their teenage son Ben, like his mothers, does volunteer work in the community. “We’re trying to instill in him the importance of community involvement and giving back. We’re very fortunate that we have the life style that we do—it’s important to give back to the community.”
Thank you to our Major Funders:
City of Santa Rosa Gang Prevention Grant
Community Foundation Sonoma County
Daphne Smith Fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County

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In Celebration
In appreciation to Arnold Rosenfield for officiating our wedding from Hannah & Cary James.
In appreciation & recognition of Judge Arnold Rosenfield officiating our wedding from Joe & Elana Neiner.

2012 Jessica Flores Award

The board of Listening for a Change will again host a second Jessica Flores Awards event. The award has been created in memory of our former board member and board secretary, Jessica Flores. Jessica was a gifted 37-year-old attorney who worked to create a more just and equitable community for all people. The Jessica Flores Award will be given to a civically engaged person under the age of 40.

The board is inviting nominations—Please mail or email us the name of your nominee and two paragraphs explaining why your nominee is worthy. Your participation is needed and appreciated!
LISTENING FOR A CHANGE

1300 NORTH DUTTON AVENUE
SANTA ROSA, CA 95401

MISSION
Listening for Change promotes understanding and acceptance of human diversity through education, oral history, and the arts.

PROGRAMS

Essence of Acceptance uses the techniques of oral history and the arts in a comprehensive curriculum to teach empathy and awareness of our common humanity in secondary schools.

Community Listening Project trains members of diverse community cultural groups to take oral histories of other groups as a means to cross boundaries and build community.

Diversity & Engagement is a program for businesses, nonprofits and government agencies which teaches attentive listening skills and cultural awareness to help employees interact more effectively.

Sonoma County Survivor Project is a traveling exhibit of photographs and oral histories of Sonoma County residents who survived a dramatic loss of human rights. The exhibit can also be viewed at www.listeningforachange.org.

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