

PhotoVoice Project Created by City Teens

by Pam Keller, Executive Director
Fullerton Collaborative

On August 20, teens from the Garnet Community Center presented a unique project at the Downtown Thursday Night Market. It was 105 degrees that day and the teens were shy and unsure of how to share their stories with perfect strangers. But, after practicing on friends, they felt they were ready.

Earlier, each teen had been given a disposable camera and asked to take photographs. The specific instructions were to capture images that prevent kids from being active in their neighborhood. Each participant chose their most important photo and wrote about why that particular picture had the largest impact on them. Then the PhotoVoice Project created a poster of the photo, and what the teens had written about it, to share with the community at the market.

Their first "customer" was very interested in what Gerardo had to say because he also lives in a neighborhood that has crime and graffiti and wants to work to create solutions to solve those problems.

The teens want to make changes in their community but they realize they cannot do it alone. After sharing their stories and conversing about the photos, community members were asked what they would do if they lived in a neighborhood with these issues.

Fernando explained his photo, "This is a picture of someone jumping over the school fence. He has to jump the fence in order to find a safe place to play. There is no other place in our neighborhood, but the street. I am worried that someone will fall and get hurt when they jump the fence. I think we should talk to the principal of Topaz School to see if he will unlock the gates so we can play." (Topaz is located in Fullerton but is in the Yorba Linda Placentia Unified School District.)

A community member agreed that they

should talk to the school district about opening the gates of the playground so the kids have somewhere to play.

Three of the photos showed an empty lot behind the Garnet Community Center. Adrian, Oscar and Janet chose this as their most important image. The lot sits vacant with a chainlink fence around it. The teens are very interested in seeing this lot used as open space in their community. The suggestion from a resident was to tell people in their neighborhood to talk to the owners about the possibilities and start a petition to garner support for a park.

Martha chose a photo of her cap and gown from her graduation last spring and said she tries to help her friends stay away from gangs and drugs, and to stay in school and graduate, but she recognizes that they need help to achieve these goals. She wants to work with the community and says, "It's hard to achieve things in our community because we don't have the tools to stop what happens here. We are not physically active because we don't have space, playgrounds, and many other things that could help us be healthy."

Jose took a photo showing large pieces of broken furniture tossed out near some trash bins. "It's not safe to leave it there." He said the community should tell people how to throw away big items.

Diana's photo showed her concern about the hazards of drinking in public, which make it unsafe for children to play.

In response to Jesus' photo of a garage filled with junk and full of rats, a viewer told him to call the Fire Dept. and report a fire hazard. This could get the garage cleaned up, and help get rid of rats in the neighborhood.

After spending several hours talking to a variety of friendly faces (and being rejected by people who weren't interested in talking at all), the teens had several reactions to their experience:

Jesus said, "People gave us their advice



Above: Teens created a unique PhotoVoice project with assistance from Sandra Orozco, Matt Anderson and Pam Keller.



At Left: Several of the teens took photos of an empty lot in their neighborhood they would like to see made into a park.

about what we should do with the problems in our community." Oscar was inspired, "It was good because we got to experience something we had never done before."

The teens from the Garnet Center will be presenting their posters in two more venues. Please come out and hear what they have to share!

•Saturday, Sept 19: 10am-1pm Fullerton Goes to College @ The Fullerton Senior Center, 340 W. Commonwealth Ave. 714-738-6305

•Saturday, Oct. 17: Block Party @ The Garnet Community Center, 3012 Garnet Lane. 714-996-2574

The PhotoVoice Project was directed by Sandra Orozco (Community Action Partnership of OC Community Building Initiative) and Matt Anderson (City of Fullerton, Community Service Specialist).

PhotoVoice is an award-winning international charity. Through establishing in-field photojournalism workshops its projects enable those who are traditionally the subjects of photography to become its creator. Through photography these individuals find confidence in their voices and are enabled to speak out about their challenges, concerns, hopes and fears.

4th Annual *Taste of Villa Del Sol*
Friday, September 18th, 2009 7-11pm

\$50 per person

Advance ticket purchase is suggested

Live Rock N Roll Entertainment

Selected drinks & heavy hors d'oeuvres compliments of the fabulous Villa Del Sol Restaurants

Held in the historic courtyard of Villa Del Sol

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Fullerton, CA 92832

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Fukui and Fullerton Sister City Junior Ambassadors met Fukui Mayor Shin'ichi Higashimura and the President of Fukui Sister City during their visit.

Jr Ambassadors in Sister City Fukui, Japan

Fullerton's Junior Ambassadors with chaperones Eva Arevalo and Emmanuel Sanchez were graciously hosted by families in Sister City Fukui, Japan during their visit from July 30 through August 8.

The group visited many interesting sites including the Dinosaur Museum with its international fossil study center, and the stunning Yokokan Garden, as well as attending the Fukui Phoenix Festival and more.

While in Kyoto, Ambassadors visited the Heianjingu Shrine built in 1895 to commemorate the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of Kyoto; the famous Kiyomizudera Temple first built over 1000 years ago; and the 328-foot-long Sanjyusangendo Temple with over 1,000

statues, plus a statue of the main deity created by the Kamakura sculptor Tankei, which is considered a National Treasure.

The trip marked the 20th anniversary of Fullerton's Sister City partnership with Fukui, which began when then Mayor Molly McClanahan traveled to Japan and signed the proclamation.

Ambassadors included: Javier Weatherspoon, Marlana Eley, Kayla David, Kathleen Luka, Tess Jordan, Sam Levine, Richie De La Luz, David Tsuda, Alexandra Kraus, Rachel Lee, Megan Kuster and Megan Woods.

Go to www.fullertonsistercity.org for more information on Fullerton Sister City and upcoming events.