

Notes from Facilitated Discussions at Reunion del Pueblo, 9/17/05

Translation provided by Cio and Berta.

Notes by Susannah Clark, October 1, 2005

Office of Supervisor Cynthia Murray

There were five facilitated breakout sessions conducted in Spanish at the Reunion del Pueblo on September 17: Health, Education, Transportation and Housing, Youth and Youth Activities, and Civic Engagement. The following notes reflect a summary of the information shared with the audience at the end of the evening.

Health:

Needs identified:

Health care visits are very expensive and without insurance it is difficult to pay the bills. Are there programs that can pay for costly operations?

There aren't any bilingual people in doctor's offices; it is frightening to ask the cost of services and to ask for someone who speaks Spanish. Also, there are no nurse's assistants that would make services more affordable.

There is no information about health services in the City of Novato; if the services exist, people don't know about them.

The programs that are in Novato are for children; there aren't any dental, vision or maternity services in Novato, or a clinic for women's services like the one in Montecito.

Marin Community Clinic is not sufficient to meet the needs of the Spanish speaking community in Novato.

Novato Human Needs Center is very helpful in directing people to services and information about insurance.

Education:*Needs identified:*

There is no adult education or literacy programs in the schools in Novato and if there were, we would need childcare during the sessions.

The lack of translation services at school meetings discourage parent involvement (there needs to be translation available in ALL meetings). Parent involvement in the higher grades is very important. Parents need to go to meetings at the schools and with other parents.

More encouragement and information needs to be given to students and parents about higher education and what scholarships are available to Latino families.

Transportation and Housing:*Needs identified:*

There are too many requirements to rent. There needs to be an easier process and assistance in filling out the forms.

Information about transportation and housing needs to be made available in Spanish.

More routes are needed. It is difficult and very time consuming to get around Marin.

More economical transportation is needed for students and parents. Passes are needed for parents to pick up kids from school, and free passes for youth.

Civic Engagement:*Needs identified:*

There needs to be more locations and ways to find out about what is going on and things we should know about.

Currently, people find out about politics by listening to the radio, through the schools and on the Internet. There isn't any communication with politicians.

Currently, people are involved in school parent meetings, the 4th of July parade, the Canal Welcome Center and as volunteers in the schools.

Barriers to participation are language, lack of communication, racism, lack of unity, lack of initiative, lack of legal help and lack of affordable childcare.

Youth and Youth Activities:

Needs identified:

Sports are very popular; there need to be more and more affordable opportunities or funding and transportation to make the activities accessible to Latinos.

Latinos would enjoy sharing in regularly scheduled social and cultural activities, with mariachi, guitar, dancing.

There need to be activities including art for youth, and they would need to be transportation and be affordable. And there are children with special needs who have no socialization activities available to them.

We need mentors, who can help with homework, more than just one hour a week. Parents don't know how to help their children with their homework. Help is needed for all youth, not just those who are below average.

Youth need a safe place to socialize, more places, clubs, where youth have to stay and be supervised and where it is safe inside, but also outside when they leave the building.

There needs to be more staff in the school office who are bilingual and can communicate with parents. There is discrimination in the schools, among students as well as teachers and staff.

Summer and after school activities are needed and funding and transportation made available so children can attend and participate.

Solutions:

Mentors, bilingual staff, cultural education and information about discrimination.

More teams and activities for Latinos.

Education for parents of youth, including more opportunities for parents to talk to and meet with each other. There are meetings for Latino parents, they have to make time to go to them.

Adults have to listen to youth and be involved from early in children's lives, avoid gang involvement and drugs.