

BUILDING bridges



COPC Works to Build Community Together

Welcome to the inaugural issue of **Building Bridges**, the newsletter for UCI's Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC). COPC demonstrates the commitment of the School of Social Ecology and the University to serve our immediate community in ways that engage and empower community members themselves. The goals of COPC are twofold: to build stronger ties between UCI and the local community, and to cultivate collaborations that harness the strengths of the university--teaching, research, and outreach--to assist communities experiencing demographic change.

COPC serves the Westside area of the City of Costa Mesa, which is experiencing rapid demographic change. COPC research, outreach, and classroom-based projects are designed to study and to help address the impacts of this change. The work of the COPC is guided by a Community Advisory Committee - which includes representatives from city government, churches, community and youth organizations, and Westside residents. Priorities identified by this Committee include education, urban planning, and relationship-building.

We are excited about the numerous COPC projects underway. These projects include a study examining the attitudes of Latino Westside residents toward the police and the legal system. Professor John Dombink of UCI's Department of Criminology, Law

and Society is conducting this investigation. Findings of the study will be used to improve access to legal services for residents. Also, students of Professor Kristen Day in the Department of Urban Planning, completed a study on pedestrian safety issues affecting three Westside elementary schools. The study

was done for the Costa Mesa Department of Transportation Services. Finally, UCI students in a class taught by Professor George Tita, also in the Criminology Department, developed a series of maps that show the magnitude of demographic change in Orange and Los Angeles counties between 1990 and 2000. These maps will allow COPC to continue developing its expertise on the impacts of demographic change and will provide important informational and educational resources for our community partners.

Successful community building begins with investing in people and their dreams, developing bonds of trust, and nurturing leadership. We welcome your participation and support.



COPC Director Victor Becerra and Executive Director Professor Kristen Day.

“ Successful community building begins with investing in people and their dreams, developing bonds of trust, and nurturing leadership. ”

*Victor Becerra
Kristen Day*

The New Westside Story



Costa Mesa Experiences Demographic Shift

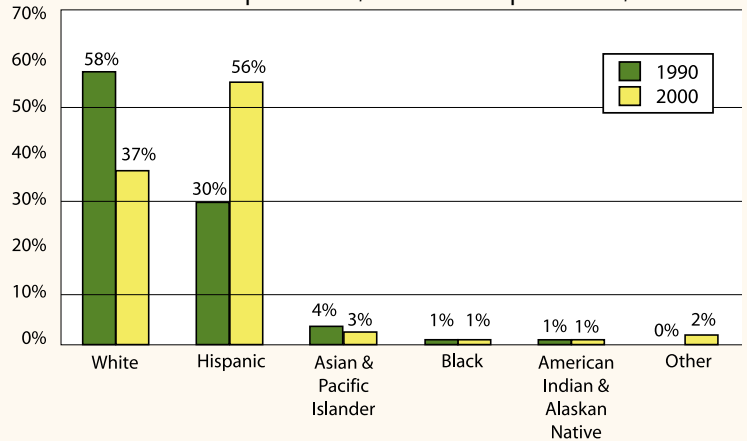
COPC serves the Westside area of the city of Costa Mesa, which is home to 37,000 residents. Demographic changes in the Westside mirror those taking place across Orange County and the State of California. Since 1980, the Westside has grown from approximately 18% Latino to 56% Latino. Similar trends are occurring at the County level. Orange County residents are now 31% Latino, and one of every two Orange County kindergarten students are Latino. The State of California is changing too. California residents are 32% Latino in the year 2000, up from 26% Latino in 1990.

The changes in California's population bring opportunities and challenges, especially in the area of education. Additional resources are needed to enhance educational performance and college attendance among Latino students throughout the state. Cities, schools, universities, and community partners must work together to be sure that California residents are well-prepared for the jobs of the future. One goal of the COPC is to create a model of successful collaboration in communities experiencing demographic changes. This model, and the lessons learned in the Westside, can be of value to communities throughout the state.

Orange County residents are now 31% Latino, and one of every two Orange County kindergarten students are Latino

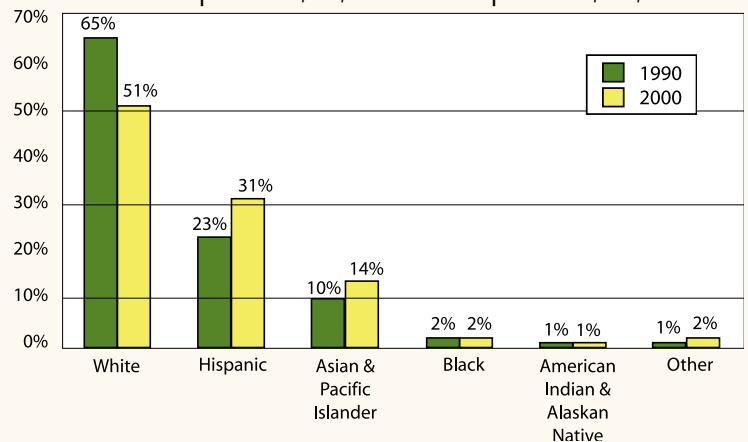
Westside, Costa Mesa Population, 1990-2000

1990 Population: 29,206 2000 Population: 36,953



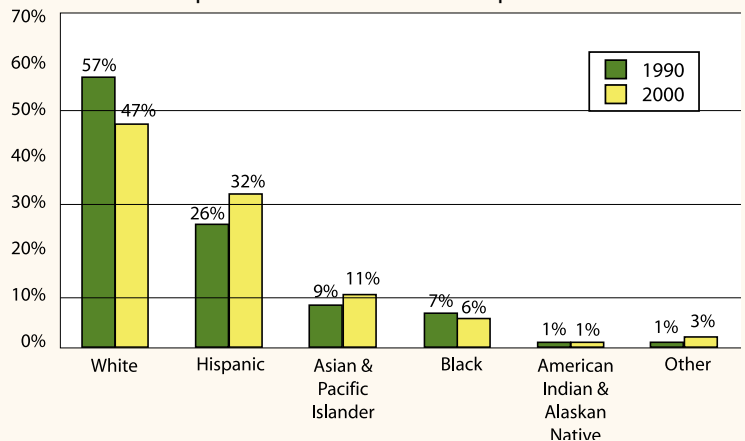
Orange County Population, 1990-2000

1990 Population: 2,410,556 2000 Population: 2,846,289



California County Population, 1990-2000

1990 Population: 29,760,021 2000 Population: 33,871,648



Latino Youth Conference Stresses Cooperation in Making College Preparation a Family Affair



COPC activities place a fundamental value on **partnerships**. These partnerships represent "a commitment among multiple parties to invest resources in pursuit of mutually

beneficial ends" (Urban Institute 2002). A clear demonstration of this commitment is our support for the Latino Youth Conference (LYC).

The Latino Youth Conference was initiated by Save Our Youth (SOY) in 1996 to enhance academic preparedness among Latino students in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District. Many Westside parents are first-generation U.S. residents who may lack the tools and knowledge to help their children prepare for college. Preparing students to attend and succeed in college is key to the well-being of Westside youth and their families. That is why the COPC Community Advisory Committee identified education as a top priority on the Westside.

In respond to this concern, COPC has joined with our community partners as a co-sponsor of the Latino Youth Conference (LYC). The goal of the conference is to enhance student's scholastic performance and their readiness for college. Last year, the conference was held at UCI for the first time, bringing several hundred Westside middle and high school students to the campus for the day. The conference provided students with information about the college preparation process and with grade-specific strategies for improving their scholastic performance. COPC staff coordinated the activities of a planning committee of

members from various campus and community organizations. Participating community organizations included: Save Our Youth (SOY), Girls Inc. of Orange County, Madres Costa Mesa, Migrant Education, Youth Employment Services (YES), Orange Coast College, THINK Together-Shalimar Teen Center, St. John's the Baptist church, and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District. Participants from UCI included the UCI Student Volunteer Center, Center for Educational Partnerships, Learning Academic Resource Center (LARC), and MEChA. Students attending the conference participated in workshops on study skills and preparing for the SAT college entrance exam, among other topics.



Participants agreed that the conference was a great success. The comments of one student, Hugo Cardoza, now a senior at Newport Harbor High School, sums up the general sentiment: "It was exciting to get a firsthand glimpse of college life. [W]e learned it takes a lot of hard work and good grades."

This year through the generous support of the Los Angeles Times, COPC and our partners will also host a conference aimed at parents of Westside Latino students. Parents attending the one-day event will learn motivational strategies to help prepare their children for college. Additional sessions will cover how to pay for college and courses required for admission to the UC and California State University systems. The Latino Youth Conference will help equip both youth and parents alike with tools for improving their futures, and by doing so makes college preparation a **family** affair.



LYC planning committee members (left to right) Oscar Santoyo, Lucy Santana, Elvira Diaz, and Lupe Vidales.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their many generous contributions to COPC.

Avila Family
Ted Smith
UCI Foundation
Melinda Perry
St. Andrew's Church
Steve Allee
St. Andrew's Church
Dr. Gwen Parry
Hoag Hospital
Dean Ron Huff
UCI School of Social Ecology
Professor Scott Bollens
UCI Department of Urban & Regional Planning
Dr. Manuel Gomez
UCI Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs
Dr. Juan Lara
UCI Center for Educational Partnerships
Kelley McGregor
UCI School of Social Ecology
Elizabeth & Tom Tierney
UCI Foundation
Dr. Jesse Miranda
Vanguard University
Dr. Mikki Gil
Vanguard University
Gisselle Acevedo-Franco
Los Angeles Times

Carol Bonner
Orange County Los Angeles Times
Michelle Williams
Times-Mirror Foundation
Tony Dodero
The Daily Pilot
Tom Johnson
The Daily Pilot
Honorable Frances Muñoz
Superior Court Harbor Justice
Ernesto & Socorro Vasquez
McLarand Vasquez Ernsiek & Partners
Fernando & Olga Niebla
International Technologies Partners
Isabelle Villaseñor
Dejon Enterprises
Lydia Wang-Himes
Himes, Jepson, Peters Architects
Steven and Ryan Kray
Community Advisory Board Members
Leda Albright
Families Costa Mesa
Mirna Burciaga
El Chinaco Restaurant
Dave Brooks
Newport-Mesa Unified School District Board of Education

Gil Carmona
University of Southern California School of Social Work
Diane DeLuca
Keep Costa Mesa Beautiful Committee
Elvira Diaz
League of United Latin American Citizens
Pastor Bill Gartner
Harbor Christian Fellowship Church
Steve Hayman
Department of Administrative Services, City of Costa Mesa
Laura Johnson
St. Andrew's Church
Melinda Perry
Church Outreach network
Oscar Santoyo
Save Our Youth
Bill Turpit
Latino Community Network
Alma Vergara-Marquez
Orange County Council of Congregational Organizations
Isabel Vinson
Parent

We would like to recognize our many organizational partners including: Keep Costa Mesa Beautiful Committee; City of Costa Mesa; Newport-Mesa Unified School District; Save Our Youth; Todos Hermanos; Girls Inc. of Orange County; THINK Together; Shalimar Teen Center; Church Outreach Network; Center for Urban and Ethnic Leadership at Vanguard University; Graduate School of Education at Vanguard University; Youth Employment Service; Madres Costa Mesa; Latino Community Network; Latino Business Council; Daily Pilot; Orange County Register; Orange County Human Relations Council; Migrant Education; St. John the Baptist; Harbor Christian Fellowship; Orange Coast Community College; Coastline Community College; UCI Center for Educational Partnerships; UCI Volunteer Center; UCI Learning Academic Resource Center; UCI Office of Financial Assistance.

We would like to pay a special tribute to **Maria Elena Avila**, Owner of Avila's El Ranchito Restaurant in Costa Mesa. Her passion for the community, especially the education and advancement of Westside youth, has inspired and guided the development of the COPC.

Recent COPC Projects

- ▶ UCI Urban Design students assisted the Keep Costa Mesa Beautiful Campaign in planning a Westside Clean Up Day, involving Westside residents and business.
- ▶ COPC Partners participated in the annual Health Resource Fair sponsored by the Costa Mesa chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).
- ▶ COPC will offer SAT preparation courses for Westside high school students this spring.
- ▶ UCI Students work as tutors in the new Wilson Street Learning Center, sponsored by T.H.I.N.K. Together and located at Harbor Christian Fellowship Church.
- ▶ Tony Raeker, a UCI graduate student in Urban Planning, is conducting his Masters thesis, looking at Best Practices in complying with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards for environmental regulation and lessons for the City of Costa Mesa.

Building Bridges

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