



BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

CONSTRUYENDO COMUNIDADES SALUDABLES

SOUTH KERN · SUR DE KERN

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We are proud to launch our new webcast series: "In the 661"

Building Healthy Communities Kern in partnership with South Kern Sol youth media, have launched a new youth-produced webcast. "In the 661" will present stories, current events and good work happening in the community—all through a lens of health and racial equity.

The show not only gives youth the opportunity to learn about what it takes to produce a video segment, but it also gives young journalists the opportunity to lift up issues that matter to them and might otherwise go untold.



There's a lot of good work happening across the community, but rarely do organizations or residents who are working to improve community health have the opportunity to amplify their voice via mainstream media.

This show gives residents and organizations the opportunity to examine health in interesting and innovative ways. Health doesn't only happen in a doctor's office. Health happens where we work live and play. Health happens when people tap into their power, work together and change the odds in their neighborhoods.

The show will be aired weekly on ["In the 661's" Facebook page](#) and will be shared widely on Building Healthy Communities Kern's website and social media platforms.

The new show is produced by South Kern Sol youth reporters, Alejandra Alberto, Dean Welliver, Marilu Cisneros, and Veronica Morley and hosted by former KGET news anchor, Kiyoshi Tomono.

[Click here to see our latest segment.](#)

BHC-SK Partners Talk Integrated Voter Engagement

In an effort to create lasting infrastructure for broader civic engagement, power-building and exercising power, Building Healthy Communities Kern partner's have turned to a proven model: Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE).

The Dolores Huerta Foundation, Faith in the Valley Kern, United Farmworkers Foundation, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability and the Center on Race Poverty and the Environment have teamed up to integrate the model within their organizations to ensure increased civic participation among voters in Kern by training community members to reach out to their peers to increase voter participation.

Last week, the groups gave a presentation to about 50 partners about the new model and shared how they are incorporating Geographic Information Systems to ensure an effective campaign.

Research has proven that IVE is the most effective method to increase civic engagement that is continuous and ultimately leads to policy changes.

"It's important to leverage our resources and unify as organizations. We have seen an electorate shift in areas in Kern that have been forgotten," said Joey Williams of Faith in the Valley Kern. "We are building and strengthening our voting power, so that public officials put our priorities of good jobs, health care access, immigration reform and education at the front of the agenda. At the same time passing policies locally and statewide to bring funding, resources, and opportunity to Kern"

Third Annual LGBTQ Youth Summit Offers Youth a Special Space

By Dean Welliver, South Kern Sol

The Third Annual LGBTQ Youth Summit hosted by the Kern County LGBTQ Youth Roundtable was held this past Saturday at Cal State Bakersfield. The summit offered middle school and high school aged LGBTQ youth a space where they could be themselves without judgement, make new friends, and learn about the resources that are in the community to support them.



"The goal of the event is to bring the LGBTQ community of Kern County together and to ensure young people who identify as being part of the community do not feel isolated," said Gloria Garcia, lead organizer of the event and LGBT Community Worker at California Rural Legal Assistance.

To Julian Melendez, a senior at Foothill High School, the LGBTQ Youth Summit provided an opportunity for LGBTQ youth to connect to their culture.

"It gives a lot of youth a lot of information that they didn't receive in school and this way we interact with our own gay culture we are more in tuned especially because in Bakersfield there isn't very much pride," said Melendez.

Melendez also noted the importance of having an event like this in Bakersfield.

"I feel like it is important having it in Bakersfield because it does much to combat the conservative nature of Kern county and I feel like it raises lots of awareness for these types of issues," Melendez said.

[Read more from South Kern Sol here.](#)

A forgotten history: Why doesn't my school place a great emphasis on Black History Month?

By Ja'Nell Gore, South Kern Sol

Every year, some local high schools have assemblies recognizing Cinco de Mayo - a holiday largely ignored in Mexico, but held up in America as a day to celebrate Mexican culture with piñatas, tacos and a lot of alcohol. Meanwhile, throughout the whole month of February, my high school has done nothing to commemorate Black History Month.

Schools should be doing something to show appreciation, or even just acknowledge the evolution of black history - but at Bakersfield High School, nothing like that happened last month.



I would have loved to attend an assembly where they focused on my culture and history, opening the eyes of kids who know little about it.

And this desire of mine isn't uncalled for, especially in a district that has acknowledged it engaged in a years-long practice of disproportionately suspending and expelling minority students, including African Americans. The district was sued, settling the lawsuit last year for more than \$670,000. Among the settlement terms? The district must recognize Black History Month and allow students to celebrate.

Instead of taking initiative and organizing such a celebration, they are leaving it up to students. Considering that most students have never planned a school event (or don't even know they have the option) why would they 'leave it to the kids'?

[Click here to read the full story in South Kern Sol.](#)

We have the power to build healthy communities for the next generation!



A #HealthyKernCounty benefits us all.

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www.healthysouthkern.org

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