

**Summer 2013 Newsletter**

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**by John Esterle**

TWI revised our mission statement this past year to reflect our deepened understanding that "investing in relationships, constructive dialogue and the connections they generate" is the heart of what we do – and should be named as such.

Jill Blair, TWI's board chair, does an excellent job of framing what I'm talking about in her article, Connections Matter. Her piece also serves as a great introduction to the "connections" stories that follow – stories that grew from seeds planted at our March 2012 retreat.

From the Kids Table to the Adult Table: Taking Relationships Seriously in a World of Networks is a new article I had the pleasure of co-writing with Malka Kopell and Palma Strand (TWI is supporting their Civity Project). Many people agree on the importance of social networks in addressing public concerns but funders, we argue, need to allocate resources to building and sustaining authentic relationships to strengthen community and civic networks.

The importance of authentic relationships is echoed in our profile of RYSE Youth Center's noteworthy Listening Campaign in Richmond, California. Kanwarpal Dhaliwal says that what they are learning from this effort "confirms RYSE's belief that building meaningful relationships is just as important as the services we provide." And what RYSE is doing confirms why we are gratified to be able to support them.

I continue to be encouraged by how many others are tilling in similar soil to TWI, while at the same time I don't think there are many foundations that are quite as explicit as we are about valuing and resourcing dialogue and relationship building. Making the broader public case for what we fund and how we fund is our ongoing opportunity and our challenge as we look to spending out in 2022. We hope this newsletter, which features a number of "connections" stories, helps in that regard.

In many ways, it has been a powerful summer for dialogue – or more precisely –the need for dialogue. The rulings from the Supreme Court, the verdict in the Zimmerman case with both male and female leaders at the helm. Their intention was to provide a neutral platform for civil dialogue on critical issues and today CityClub endures as a model of civic evolution. CityClub, under the executive leadership of Dianne Douglas, is helping redefine the civic landscape in Seattle – providing powerful combinations of face-to-face and technology-assisted educational and engagement opportunities.

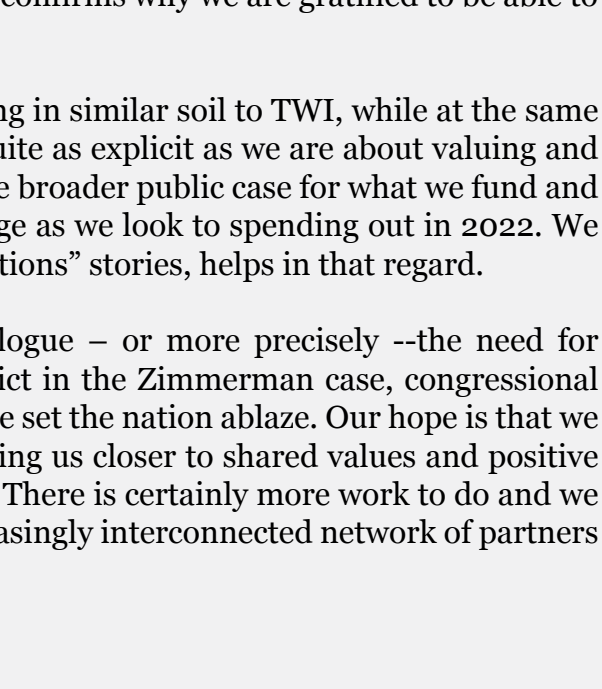
One World Now! is a global leadership development program that offers young people an opportunity to learn foreign languages, study abroad, develop cultural competency and acquire leadership skills that serve them in all facets of their personal and professional pursuits. Launched in Seattle a little more than ten years ago and still led by the young social entrepreneur, Kristin Hayden, One World Now! has programs and partnerships that span the nation and the globe – promoting the power of young people to lead the world to a more peaceful future by building relationships that bridge differences.

The Center for Courage and Renewal exists to "nurture personal and professional integrity and the courage to act on it." With Terry Chadsey providing vision and leadership to the work, the Center offers retreats and programs that engage participants in thoughtful reflection and renewal, the Center encourages the relationship between our inner and outer selves and reminds us of the importance of having alignment in the values and approach we employ in all spheres of our lives.

Leading from the Heart was launched in 2011-12 by long-time philanthropic leader and activist, LeAnne Moss. LeAnne expressed an ambition to support Seattle social justice leaders to sustain their efforts by building healthy connections among them and providing opportunities for reflection, growth and transformation. Leading from the Heart is focused in particular on supporting those leaders who work on the most difficult social and economic challenges of our day. It provides support that enables these courageous leaders to integrate inner transformational tools with organizational practices and create constructive connections to one another that foster impact.

Back to dinner in Seattle – one might imagine given the players that our dinner was generative and inspiring. The four leaders of these important Seattle institutions knew one another but not well and this was a chance to break bread and break out new ideas. Out of this first meal came a second and then an idea for sharing in one another's mission-driven work. And that's where the TWI Connections Grant came in – between July 16th and July 18th the Center for Courage and Renewal hosted a series of conversations and events that featured Parker Palmer discussing his latest book, **Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit**. With a small connections grant from TWI, the Center was able to extend tickets to all of its events to each of the other TWI-supported organizations. And because the organizations are so different, serving different audiences and purposes, the Connections grant helps not only to strengthen the relationship between the specific organizations but literally to build connections among the diverse populations served by each.

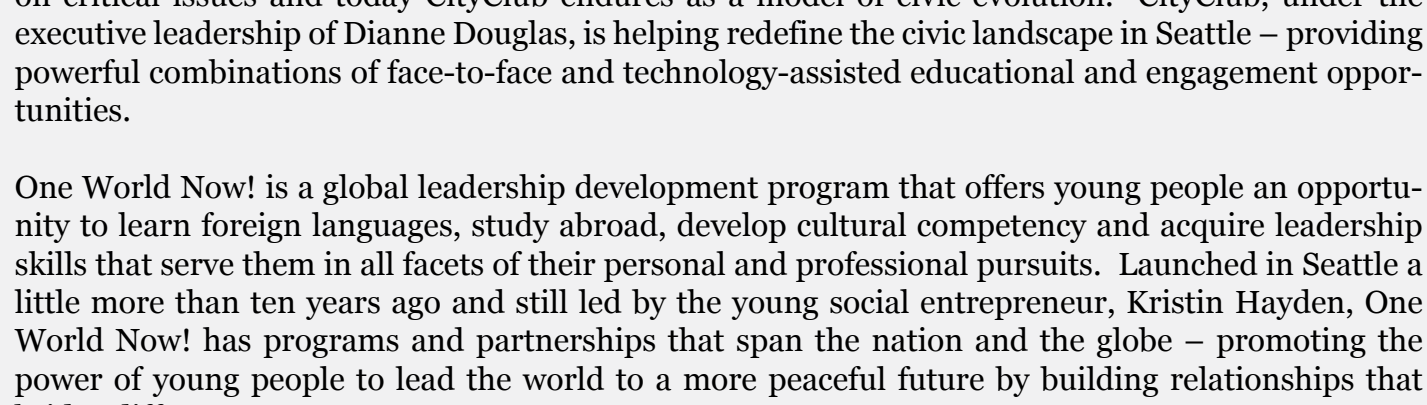
Last month I moved from Seattle back to California. I will miss my Seattle "siblings" but I am confident that the relationships that TWI has helped to inspire will continue and that there are more meals in the making and more connections to be constructed.



**Connections Matter**

**by Jill Blair**

If TWI were expressed as a mathematical formula it would be as follows:



That's our theory of change in the world; that's our theory of philanthropy; and that's just our theory plain and simple.

[Click here](#) to read more, including the story of how Amy Lazarus from Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, Margaret Anderson from Hutchins Dialogue Center at Sonoma State and Kirk Boyd from the International Bill of Rights connected and what came of it.

**Seattle Connects**

**by Jill Blair**

In Seattle we try to do a lot of things around meals – mostly because the food in Seattle is so good and many of our local chefs are models of engaged citizens – they donate time, money and food and often speak out on behalf of local matters. With that as our context, as a TWI board member based in Seattle, I decided to invite our local grantees out for dinner to meet and talk. And so we did – five of us, the Seattle CityClub, the Center for Courage and Renewal, One World Now! and an emergent transformational leadership effort called Leading from the Heart. Bound only by their geography and connection to TWI, these four organizations and leaders could hardly be more different from one another.

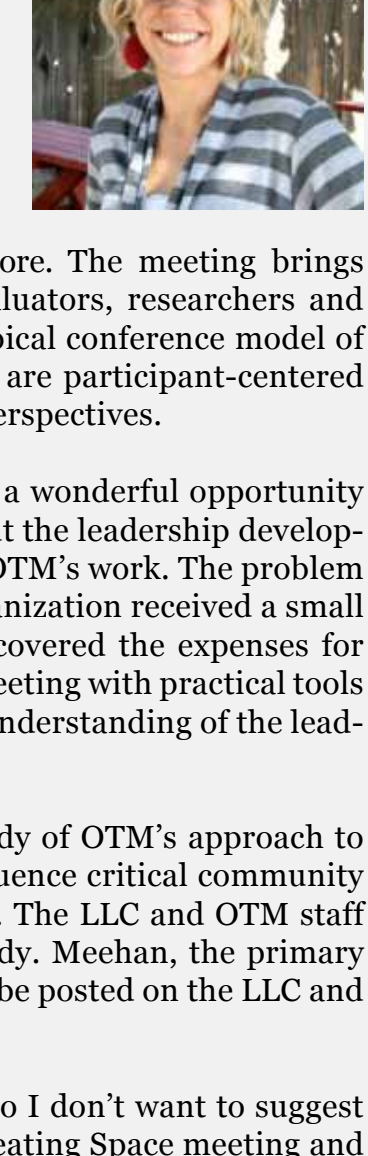
Seattle CityClub is a 30 year old organization founded by a team of women who were engaged in civic and political concerns but not welcome in the male-dominated civic venues of that era. Despite the gender bias that inspired their own endeavor, the leading ladies launched CityClub with both male and female leaders at the helm. Their intention was to provide a neutral platform for civil dialogue on critical issues and today CityClub endures as a model of civic evolution. CityClub, under the executive leadership of Dianne Douglas, is helping redefine the civic landscape in Seattle – providing powerful combinations of face-to-face and technology-assisted educational and engagement opportunities.

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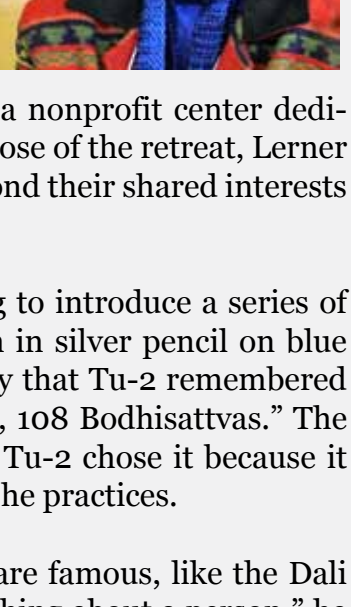


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**The Leadership Learning Community and On the Move**

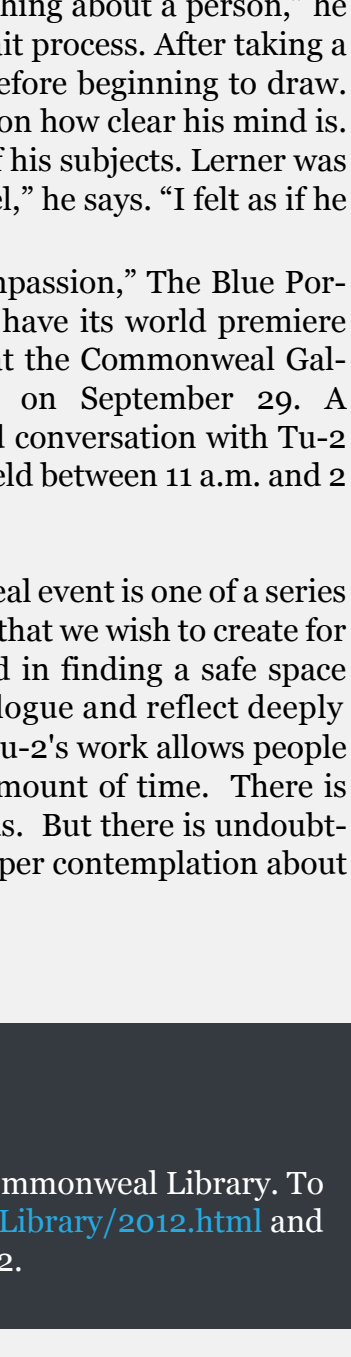
**by Deanne Stone**

Deborah Meehan's and Leslie Medine's paths had crossed before the TWI 2012 retreat. Both have been participants in The Conversation Lab, a continuing conversation group of practitioners and funders that explores different facets of leadership. Meehan is the executive director of Leadership Learning Community (LLC), a national nonprofit organization in Oakland that is transforming the way leadership development work is conceived, conducted, and evaluated, primarily within the nonprofit sector. Medine is a senior fellow (this July she stepped to the side as executive director) at On the Move (OTM), an organization in Napa that develops



young people as leaders by building experiential community programs that challenge inequities in their communities. The interests and aims of the two organizations are closely aligned and, over the past year, Meehan and Medine had talked about ways they could work together. This year they succeeded.

"Our culture thinks of leaders as individuals and attributes organizational changes to the most visible person," says Meehan, "when it's really the working group that's doing the change possible. We're big believers in leadership as a collective process. On the Move is doing the type of leadership development needed in the nonprofit sector, and we wanted to find ways to promote it."



This past March, Meehan invited Medine (then executive director) and two OTM staff members, Alissa Gentile, associate director (soon to be executive director), and Nick Challed, grants director, to LLC to participate in a Webinar about OTM's model of supporting emerging leaders in schools, public institutions, nonprofit organizations, and the health field. The Webinar marked the first collaboration of LLC and OTM.

The two organizations spotted a second opportunity to collaborate. In May, LLC held its 10th national meeting, Creating Space X, in Baltimore. The meeting brings together hundreds of leadership development programs, funders, evaluators, researchers and consultants to share ideas and build connections. In contrast to the typical conference model of presentations by invited speakers or experts, Creating Space meetings are participant-centered and driven, maximizing participants' exposure to multiple voices and perspectives.

Meehan and Medine agreed that the Creating Space meeting would be a wonderful opportunity for Gentile and OTM program director, Ian Stanley, to learn more about the leadership development field, meet others working in the field, and get more visibility for OTM's work. The problem was how to pay for registration, air travel and hotel expenses. Each organization received a small connections grant from TWI. By pooling their funds, LLC and OTM covered the expenses for Medine, Gentile, and Stanley to participate. "We came away from the meeting with practical tools we picked up from observing facilitators," says Gentile, "and a deeper understanding of the leadership development field."

Recently, OTM and LLC embarked on a third collaboration, a case study of OTM's approach to bringing together people from different generations and sectors to influence critical community issues, such as education and the emancipation of youth in foster care. The LLC and OTM staff will meet in August to talk about major themes, and the 8-12 page case study will be posted on the LLC and TWI Web sites and promoted through social media.

"Leslie and I already had the desire to work together," says Meehan, "so I don't want to suggest that we had to have money to collaborate. But TWI's support for the Creating Space meeting and the case study allowed us to expand do more together than we could have without financial support."

To listen to the Webinar, go to <http://www.leadershiplearning.org>. Click on "Our community" and "The Leadership Webinar series." Scroll down to March 2013, Raising Up the Next Generation of Public Sector Leaders.

**Commonweal, Tu-2 and Angela Oh**

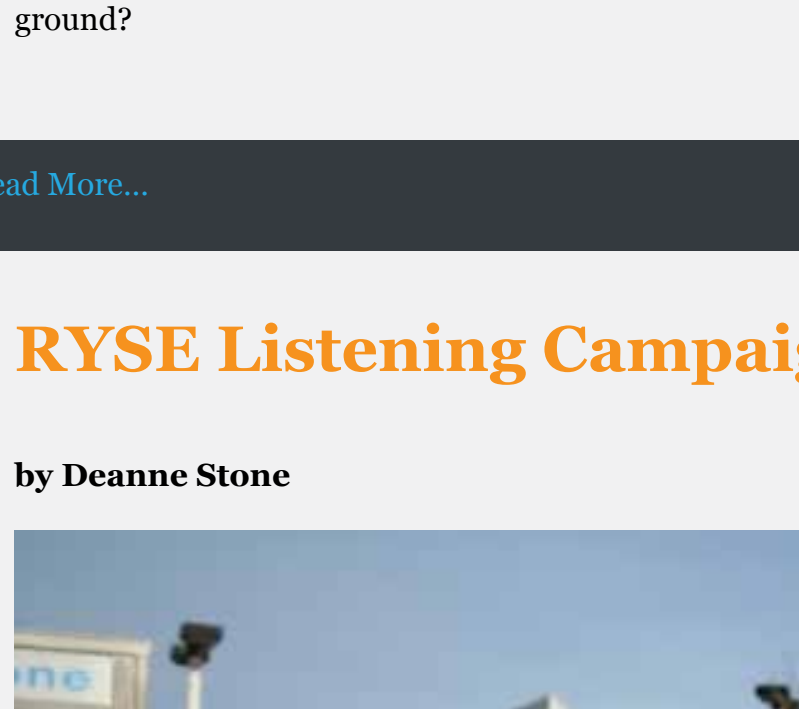
**by Deanne Stone**

Michael Lerner remembers walking into the large meeting room on the first day of the retreat. Everyone was busy talking except for one man. He was wearing a cowboy hat and gazing out of a window. Lerner introduced himself to the man, known as Tu-2, a Taiwanese artist living in Los Angeles.



Tu Ying-ming was attending his first TWI retreat with his wife, Angela Oh, the former executive director of the Western Justice Center Foundation. Lerner is president and co-founder of Commonweal, a nonprofit center dedicated to healing, learning, the environment, and justice in Bolinas. By the close of the retreat, Lerner and Tu-2 had established what Tu-2 described as a magical connection beyond their shared interests in spirituality, meditation, and art.

Tu-2 chooses subjects with whom he feels an intuitive connection. Some are famous, like the Dalai Lama; others are simple people and a few are children. "When I feel something about a person," he says, "I want to draw him." Tu's meditation practice is integral to his portrait process. After taking a subject's photo, he meditates to channel his energy and purify his mind before beginning to draw. Some portraits take three days to complete, other three weeks, depending on how clear his mind is. More than a realistic likeness, Tu-2's portraits capture the inner qualities of his subjects. Lerner was honored to be included in the series. "Tu-2 sees subjects at such a deep level," he says. "I felt as if he had drawn my soul."



"The Gift of Compassion," The Blue Portrait Series, will have its world premiere public opening at the Commonweal Gallery in Bolinas on September 29. A presentation and conversation with Tu-2 and Oh will be held between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

"The Commonweal event is one of a series of opportunities that we wish to create for people interested in finding a safe space to engage in dialogue and reflect deeply on the fact of our inextricable interconnection to one another," says Oh. "Tu-2's work allows people to spend themselves for deep reflection and conversation in a very short amount of time. But there is something that the images elicit in the viewer that cannot be put into words. But there is undoubtedly an effect that can best be described as an "invitation" to move into deeper contemplation about self, others, the condition of our world."

For more information on "The Gift of Compassion," go to: <http://tns.commonweal.org/events/tu-2-tu-ying-ming/#.Uebm6VMYKX1>

Lerner recorded a one-hour interview with Tu-2 and Oh for the New School Commonweal Library. To listen to the interview, go to: [http://www.commonweal.org/new-school/TNS\\_Library/2012.html](http://www.commonweal.org/new-school/TNS_Library/2012.html) and scroll down to Insight: Seeing the Inner Self Portraits by Tu-2, October 16, 2012.

**The World Cafe and One World Youth Project**

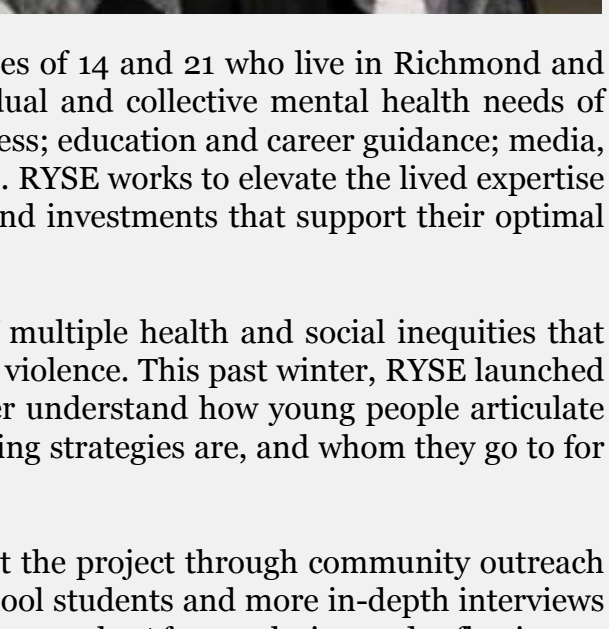
**by Deanne Stone**

Juanita Brown and Jess Rimington struck up a conversation at the TWI retreat that blossomed into a personal and professional intergenerational friendship. Brown and her husband David Isaacs are the founders of The World Cafe, a dialogue method based on seven key principles for fostering collaboration, sharing mutual knowledge, and discovering opportunities for action. Rimington was the founder of One World Youth Project (OWYP), a project she started in 2004 when she was 18 years old. OWYP connects university students around the world to act as cross-cultural facilitators in their local public middle school classrooms. It also links campuses across the world to a network of universities so that student facilitators can work together across borders for their classrooms. Rimington recently stepped down from OWYP after it was acquired by the El-Hibri Charitable Foundation. (See following article for more details.)



Although they are generations apart in age—Brown is 68 and Rimington, 27—their interests intersect. Both are advocates for intergenerational collaborations. And long before she met Brown, Rimington was using the World Cafe model in her work as a facilitator and activist when she was still in high school.

Rimington had hoped to visit Brown and Isaacs on their farm outside of Asheville, N.C., but she was sidetracked by the OWYP acquisition. Meanwhile, Brown and Isaacs were planning for the Staging Change Institute 2 in Jonesborough, TN in late April. The Institute is a gathering of storytellers, performance artists, and community and build relationships through collaborative performances that, ideally, lead to committed actions. Brown wanted to invite a young person engaged in social action to participate in the Institute. She used the TWI travel grant to bring Rimington to Jonesborough.

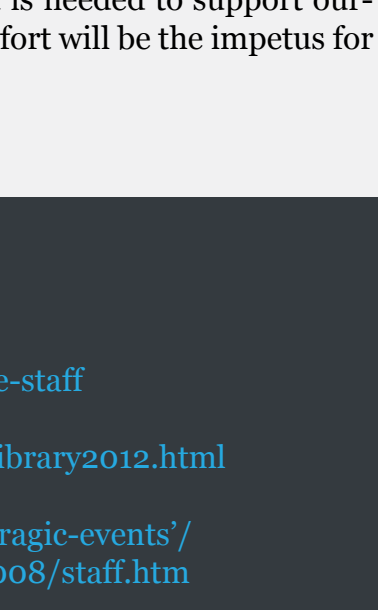


Rimington spent a night on Brown and Isaacs' farm in Asheville before going to the Staging Institute together. Rimington appreciated the opportunity to talk with Brown about the processes they were observing at the Institute and to make new personal and work connections. Even more meaningful, she says, was the time she spent on the farm with Brown and Isaacs. "It was wonderful to spend time in their home talking about things that really mattered to us," she says. "It is so rare for grantees to get to know each other in this way."

**One World Youth Project Acquired**

**by the El-Hibri Foundation**

This past November, One World Youth Project (OWYP), became a program of the El-Hibri Foundation in Washington, DC. Jess Rimington, OWYP's founder, stepped down as executive director but will remain active in the organization as chair of the advisory board. Cady Voze assumed the role of project director.



The work of OWYP will continue as before, only with the benefit of a larger support staff and greater resources. "At a time when funding is scarce," says Rimington, "we believe that strategic collaboration is the way forward for the nonprofit sector. We hope our acquisition will be an example for civil society of how to pool resources and work together more effectively."

Rimington has joined the founding team of a new social enterprise, Delivery Associates, which will help governments globally deliver the results they want through education reforms. We look forward to hearing more about Rimington's new venture.

**From the Kids' Table to The Adults' Table**

**by John Esterle, Malka Copa and Palma Strand**

It's hardly news to say that personal relationships built on trust, respect, and empathy are an important factor in creating resilient, adaptive, and innovative organizations and communities. Indeed, people working in a range of contexts and settings often say that personal relationships are foundational to their work. Why is it then that when it comes to writing grant proposals and measuring impact, relationships – and the processes involved in building them – too often recede into the background?

[Read More...](#)

**RYSE Listening Campaign**

**by Deanne Stone**



RYSE Youth Center is a haven for youth between the ages of 14 and 21 who live in Richmond and West Contra Costa County. RYSE addresses the individual and collective mental health needs of young people by providing programs in health and wellness; education and career guidance; media, arts, and culture; and youth justice and youth leadership. RYSE works to elevate the lived expertise of young people and advocates for policies, programs, and investments that support their optimal health and wellness.

Young people in these communities bear the burden of multiple health and social inequities that result in generational, chronic, and complex trauma and violence. This past winter, RYSE articulated an assessment project, the Listening Campaign, to better understand how young people articulate their experiences of violence and trauma, what their coping strategies are, and whom they go to for support.

The campaign began by informing the community about the project through community outreach and focus groups. It conducted written surveys with high school students and more in-depth interviews in dialogue groups. So far, it's talked with close to 400 young people. After analyzing and reflecting on the data collected in Phase One, researchers identified emergent themes that will guide Phase Two of the study. Later this summer, it will present the initial findings to partners and stakeholders.

Young people identified gun and gang violence as most common in their neighborhoods along with sexual and domestic violence. Their responses range from becoming angry and violent themselves to hopelessness and despair. Many expressed mistrust of adults who they say are quicker to judge them than to listen to them.

The most commonly identified method for coping with violence is drugs and alcohol abuse. Kanwarpal Dhaliwal, RYSE's community health director, says that police providers, funders, and policymakers have to think about the service and programmatic implications of youth numbing their pain with drugs and alcohol. "If we employ zero tolerance for drugs and alcohol in our programs and kick out youth for breaking the rules," she says, "then we punish them for coping skills they developed to survive inequitable conditions they didn't create. Our charge is to work together with and on behalf of young people to keep them safe and engaged rather than filtering them out and increasing their risk of harm."



The most encouraging coping method young people reported was turning to an adult for support. "All it takes is one adult to listen to them," says Dhaliwal, "not to point out their deficits or try to fix their problems, but just to listen. This confirms RYSE's belief that building meaningful relationships is just as important as the services we provide."

The next level of the study, conducting tailored focus groups, will take place over the course of the summer. Dhaliwal emphasizes that the Listening Campaign study is not about changing individual behavior but rather about understanding how the systems responsible to and for young people can be more empathic and responsive to their needs and priorities. "Our aim is to validate what young people say they are experiencing and how they experience adults," she says, "so that we can align the policies, programs, and investments with what they need and expect."

A key learning from the Campaign has been the mindfulness and attention required to name and hold the heaviness of the data collected. "This has been an intense process for the staff and the partners we have presented to," says Dhaliwal. "As we move into Phase Two, we have to take time to embody this information, identify what it may bring up for us, and what is needed to support ourselves and one other in the discomfort we feel. We believe that the discomfort will be the impetus for creativity and change."

Photo credit: Healing the Heart of Democracy - <http://www.couragere Renewal.org/blog>

Deborah Meehan - Eugene Kim eekim from Flickr

Alissa Gentile - <http://www.voicesyouthcenter.org/category/branches/move-staff>

Angela Oh Portrait - [http://www.tu-2arts.com/Blue\\_Series.html](http://www.tu-2arts.com/Blue_Series.html)

Michael Lerner Portrait - [http://www.commonweal.org/new-school/TNS\\_Library/2012.html](http://www.commonweal.org/new-school/TNS_Library/2012.html)

Staging Change Institute - <http://stagingchangeinstitute.org/>

Phon - <http://www.rysecenter.org/most-of-my-childhood-memories-were-tragic-events/>

Kanwarpal - <http://contra.napanet.net/depart/disti%20Archive%2009-11-2008/staff.htm>