

# EPA Today's Youth Page

## BUILD's Students Continue to Excel, Lead, and Succeed in the New Year

By BUILD Staff

Meet Rocio, a senior at East Palo Alto High School. As a sophomore, Rocio's fierce potential was hidden under layers of anger and self-doubt, the result of an undiagnosed learning disability.



Rocio acted out in class to hide the fact that she could not read or write at the level of her classmates. Loud and distracting, Rocio would think of elaborate ways to leave the classroom so that others would not notice her lack of academic abilities.

### Being Honest

BUILD helped to change that. As the Chief Operating Officer of LatinStyle, Rocio soon understood the impor-

tance of being honest about the challenges she faced in order to most effectively help her team.

This year, still struggling to improve her basic skills, Rocio began working with Rhonda Racine, BUILD's college advisor. With Rhonda as an advocate, Rocio was able to receive proactive assistance for her learning disability.

"I didn't understand what my disability meant," Rocio explains, "but Rhonda helped to set up a meeting with the school, my mom, and me. Now I have extra support in my classes."

### Determined Leader

Despite her challenges, Rocio's grades have risen dra-

matically. A true leader who counsels younger BUILD students on the importance of staying in the program, her determination to succeed is contagious. "I am going to be the first in my family to go to college. I will have to work twice as hard, but I know I will be successful."



BUILD's younger class is also full of students with strong character. Keontae, a sophomore at Menlo-Atherton High School, describes himself as a "very, very hungry person."

And while he may have been referring to his passion for food as is common for any growing teenage boy, the term "hungry" definitely applies to his attitude

towards his business (Heart and Soul Publishing, a teen magazine), school, and his future.

Keontae's determination has grown since joining BUILD. Because BUILD sets a minimum grade point average for all students to stay in the Youth Business Incubator, Keontae was set on reaching and exceeding this requirement.

### Academic Achievement

During the first quarter of the school year, not only did most of his grades increase by a whole letter grade, but he also became a harder worker. "BUILD taught me to be punc-

tual because I want to be there on time for the other people in my business. I used to always be late to class too. But now I'm always on time."

Keontae plans to attend Duke University. "It's not because of the basketball," he says, "They have a really good music and arts program, and I'm going to stay an artist. That's not gonna change."

Besides going to college and possibly owning an R&B record label, Keontae's main goal is to "constantly get better," and BUILD has already seen him take great strides towards achieving just that.

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BUILD stands for Business United in Investing, Lending and Development. To find out more about the organization, see <http://www.build.org>.

## Taking Very Positive Steps - East Palo Alto's 2005 Graduates

### East Palo Alto Success Stories

By Karla Torres  
East Palo Alto Today

Students from East Palo Alto face hardships like poverty, language barriers and lack of family support. That's why it's so important to celebrate the community's success stories..



This column celebrates the dozens of students from Woodside, Sequoia, Menlo-Atherton, Carlmont and East Palo Alto high schools who have made it through the four years of high school and are now just days away from beginning the next four years that will leave them at the doorstep of their future. It is to these brave students that this article is written.

It is often said that the four years spent at college are the best years of one's life. For the students from East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park who

in the fall will be attending their respective colleges, this saying will soon become a reality. Though the next four years will have plenty of all-night study session, papers to write and ever present

stress, they will also be full of new and exciting people, novel experiences and memorable moments. Beyond it being a little scary to move away from home or simply leave the established feeling of high school, college offers it's students the opportunity to step out on their own.

I graduated from Woodside High School in 2002 and attended Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut the following fall. I am a senior now and know how it feels to step out of my "comfort zone," leave my family and friends and hometown. Things seem a little unclear; what will I study? Will I like my roommate? Will I like my school? I had these exact same questions when I first went to school and the one

thing that I can say is that college has become the best years of my life. For all my questions and hesitations I have met the greatest people who have become close friends and I have taken wonderful classes that have taken me from my Hartford campus to places like New Zealand and Italy. I have had wonderful times at school and am extremely sad to have only a year left to enjoy my friends and studies.

College offers students a chance to experience a new facet of life, live on their own, make their own decisions and become responsible for the consequences of those decisions: it brings them a step closer towards adulthood. As daunting as this all may seem, it also gives students a sense of excitement: to know that they will have such responsibility and have themselves to answer to. It is a lot to take in and at times it all seem like too much. But as was once said by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, "The universe is change; our life is what our thoughts make it".

A list of some high school graduates and where they will be attending college (if known):

- Woodside High School
- Tima Afoa
- Daria Alvarez- Foothill College
- Nancy Barragan- Canada College
- Dario Bernard- Chabot Community College
- Ernestine Brown- Prairie View A+M
- Freddy Bueno- Foothill College
- Ashlei Burley- Calvin College
- Jose Cardenas
- Juan Cardiel- Skyline College
- Beatrice Castro- De Vry
- Cedric Copper- Navy
- Crystal Cuevas- San Jose State
- Larreisha Evans
- Leslie Fernandez
- Daniel Gonzalez- University of California Merced
- Eduardo Hernandez- College of San Mateo
- Gil Hernandez- College of San Mateo
- Jessica Hernandez- Canada College
- Monzerrad Ibarra
- Tyrece Jacks- San Francisco City College
- Jasmine Lewis
- Elizabeth Lopez- San

- Francisco State
- Hector Lopez
- Isela Lopez- Foothill College
- Maria Magana- Kenyon College
- Michelle Marcelo- San Jose State
- Selina Moe
- Cynthia Nunez- Foothill College
- Jana Parker- Canada College
- Brenda Paz- San Francisco State
- Elsa Perez- Canada College
- Giovannye Perez- Canada College
- Yesenia Quezada- Foothill College
- Christian Ramos- Foothill College
- Leonard Ryans- College of San Mateo
- Maribel Sanchez
- Euri Thompson- College of San Mateo
- Falealea Tupoumalohi- Canada College
- Juan Velasco
- Lucia Villalobos- College of San Mateo
- Chimka Walker

**Karla Torres is an East Palo Alto resident who is finishing her senior year at Trinity College in Hartford Connecticut.**

## Scholarship Money Available

### For Minority Students

Below is a list of organizations and their websites that give scholarships to minority students.

- BELL Labs Fellowships for Under Represented minorities. <http://www.bell-labs.com/fellowships/CRFP/info.html>
- 2) Student Inventors Scholarships [http://www.invent.org/collegiate/](http://www.invent.org/collegiate)

- 3) Student Video Scholarships <http://www.christophers.org/vidcon2k.html>
- 4) microsoft.com:office:smarttags"
- 5)Coca-Cola Two Year College Scholarships <http://www.coca-colascholars.org/programs.html>
- 5) Holocaust Remembrance Scholarships <http://holocaust.hklaw.com/>
- 6) Ayn Rand Essay Scholarships <http://www.aynrand.org/com>

- Brand Essay Competition ><http://www.instituteforbrand-leadership.org/IBLEssayContest-2002Rules.ht>
- >8) Gates Millennium Scholarships (major) ><http://www.gmsp.org/nominationmaterials/read.dbm?ID=12>
- 9) Xerox Scholarships for Students [http://www2.xerox.com/go/xrx/about\\_xerox/about\\_xerox\\_detail.jsp](http://www2.xerox.com/go/xrx/about_xerox/about_xerox_detail.jsp)
- 10) Sports Scholarships and Internships < >B><http://www.ncaa.org/about/scholarships.html>

- 11) National Assoc. of Black Journalists Scholarships (NABJ) ><http://www.nabj.org/html/studentsvcs.html>
- 12) Saul T. Wilson Scholarships (Veterinary) ><http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrphr/jobs/stw.html>
- 13) Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund [http://www.thurgoodmarshall-fund.org/sk\\_v6.cfm](http://www.thurgoodmarshall-fund.org/sk_v6.cfm)
- 14) FinAid: The Smart Students Guide to Financial Aid scholarships) <http://www.finaid.org/>
- 15) Presidential Freedom

- Scholarships <http://www.nationalservice.org/scholarships/>
- 16) Microsoft Scholarship Program ><http://www.microsoft.com/college/scholarships/minority.asp>
- 17) WiredScholar Free Scholarship Search [http://www.wiredscholar.com/paying/scholarship\\_search/paying\\_scholarship\\_search](http://www.wiredscholar.com/paying/scholarship_search/paying_scholarship_search)

**\*\*\*See Page 23 for more announcements**

# PERSONAL STORIES

## A Tribute to my "California Mom" Mrs. Lonetta McGee

By Minnie Warren



Lonetta McGee

"Mom" McGee moved to California from Hattiesburg,, Mississippi with her husband and children in the mid 1950's and has lived in East Palo Alto since then. Two or three of the older boys were already living in California when she arrived. When her husband moved back to Mississippi, "Mom" continued to live here and raise her children on her own.

She worked two jobs -- the Veterans Hospital in Palo Alto and The Ravenswood School District -- most of the time while her children were growing up. The older kids helped with the younger ones while she worked. She has lived on the corner of Garden and Menalto for years.

Lonetta "Lonnie", is one of five siblings. She and her beloved brother were raised in Mississippi, where she was born, by an aunt while her three sisters lived with their mom. "Mom McGee" said she always wanted a large family and wanted her children close to her.

Her wish came true: "Mom" McGee was blessed with 13 children. She had an undying fascination with twins. She always wanted twins but had a "Chinese Dozen", thirteen singles. She, then, proceeded to add me out of love and she "fostered" approximately 20 children, five of whom she has adopted.

We can't even count the numerous neighborhood kids she's looked out for, fed, clothed, spanked when necessary and loved.

Her own children include 6 boys and 7 girls. They are Lawrence (Deceased-1986); Mary, John Earl, Earl Charles, Alberta, Ellouise, William, Will, Walter "Pop" (Deceased-1982), Joyce, Dorothy Jean "Punkin", Dorothy Faye "Faye", and Bobbie Ray.

Her additional assorted foster and adoptive children chosen out of love include Minnie, because she loves me, Shaniece, Desiree, two sets of adopted sisters and brothers: DeShawn, Nahsai and Rogelio and Herlinda.

She now has 44 grand kids, 55 great grands, and 7 great-greats.

The count on the grands, great grands and great-great grandkids are estimates, but we think we counted them all. Though her kids are now somewhat spread, they are all in the area, with three living within yelling distance. Alberta lives across the street from her, "Punkin" (Dorothy Jean) lives to the right of her in the corner house of the adjoining street and youngest son, Bobbie Ray lives with her.

The Santa Clara County Foster Care program has never hesitated to place wards of the county/state with her. If it takes a village to raise a child, then Mom McGee, in essence, has something of a "village" all by herself. She gives damaged children, loving care and nourishment until they're permanently placed. She has been given appreciation awards from Families First of Santa

Clara County.

With the help of Dorothy Jean, "Mom" has managed to keep and raise, between them two sets of foster/adoptive kids from different ethnic backgrounds. She has black children (two sisters and two brothers) and two Latino children (a brother and sister) that she is permanent-



"Mom" McGee with members of her family

ly responsible for.

She has been given children straight from the hospital after birth. She has received addicted babies, babies with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and babies, with Munchausen's Syndrome, etc. Whatever their race or their situation, she has given them all loving care. She is fabulous with the children she raises. She gives love to all including me and my family.,

We are treated as her own children and grandchildren. I call her my "California Mom." because my own mother and

siblings are home in the Midwest (Wisconsin).

Her favorite activities include church ( She is a long-time member of Mount Olive Baptist); going to the Casinos (She has the luck of the Irish and she usually wins); and listening to "Sporty" as she calls the lead singer with her favorite

Mississippi Gospel group: Lee Williams and the Spiritual QCs. She enjoys cooking greens (a rite of passage every Sunday for her children, grandchildren and the neighborhood folks) along with other great dishes; and gathering up the many, many kids for whatever activity is planned for the day..

This is for you "Mom Grandma", We Love you! Minnie Warren and the McGee Children

Minnie Warren is the City Clerk for the City of East Palo.

## The Power By Yolande Barial

The Power is in Me to be all that I can Be  
In Me To Be  
To Be  
Is the Power which is all That I must Be

Friends Leave Families Disappoint Sleep on in Silent Repose

Knowing that the Power is in what you do Not what they say, They think or They want

The Power to Be is in you

Stop asking another to give you what can not name and then sulk and whine and complain

You see I asked for a tree but was given an acorn I asked for vintage wine and was given a grape I asked to be blessed with consecrated oil yet received an olive

I got deep when I shoulda got disciplined

You see "you can't stay stuck in the same place - Change is gotta come"

The Power is in Me to be all that I can be In Me To Be is the Power which is all that I must be In silence is growth

Be Still Stop asking

Sit with "It"

Whatever that "It" is

If it's a him let it be If it's a boss let it be If it's your mom let it be If it's your child let it be The Power is not In the "It" It is in the "Me"

What's given to you may not look like what you think but Integrity birthed in us is not always revealed in miraculous action

But in teeny tiny steps In small action and in small thoughts

All with a great story to tell, Have had great disappointments

Only after the pain has passed Bruises are healed Can we talk about it

The "its" must die in order for our souls to live

Some of the best plant fertilizer is compost - dead

The olive must be crushed in order to release its juices And only then can consecration take place

Grapes must be plucked from the vine, crushed and heated and cooled to become what's poured into bottles and

continued on page 23

## Raising Money-Smart Kids

By Leila Perera  
EPA Today Contributor

Every year, American children receive over \$15 billion in allowance, gifts and wages reason enough to start teaching children money management and consumer skills at a young age.

The following tips can make the difference between children who grow up to be financially secure - and those who don't.

### Teach by example:

The best way to instill good financial habits is by "walking the talk." For instance, when you go shopping, include your kids in the process - planning, budgeting, and comparing prices and quality.

If they urge you to buy something that is over budget, explain that spending more on the item you're pur-

chasing today is not as important as saving up for something else you need or want in the future.

Live within your means:

Children who learn to prioritize their spending learn the most valuable money management lesson: to live within their means. Reinforce the message by not jumping for the credit cards or giving extra money just because your children ask.

When kids want an expensive "status" item, like hundred-dollar athletic shoes, consider having consider having them pay the portion of the price that exceeds what you think is reasonable.

They'll appreciate the item more and may think twice about paying that much when they outgrow this pair in six months. If you choose, go ahead and lend money, but treat it like a bank loan.

Charge reasonable interest and set a time frame for repayment - it will teach them how loans and credit in

the real world truly work.

### Encourage savings:

Encourage your children to make saving a fixed category in their spending plan. Discuss goals and calculate how much should be put away each month.

Break down savings into long-term, for college or a car, and short-term, for a new bike or a senior trip to Europe.

If you see your children about to make a mistake in spending their allowance, let them. Better to learn on a small scale now, than lose money with big mistakes later.

It's never too early (or too late) to develop healthy financial habits. The rewards of wise money management are the same for adults and children alike - a greater appreciation of what you have, a sense of empowerment when you reach your goals, and long-term financial security.

## YUCCA cont. from page 6

demands of government officials.

The chances of failure may appear high. Yet Flores seemed confused when asked about what she would do if DTSC renewed Romic's operating permit despite YUCA's efforts. It is clear the thought of defeat had never crossed her mind.

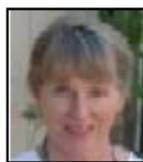
Instead, she stated without hesitation, "I know eventually we'll get Romic out."

### Contacts

For more on YUCA, see the organization's web site <http://www.youthunited.net>

For more on Romic Environmental Technologies, see <http://www.romic.com/>

Valicia Saucedo wrote this article when she was an intern with the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media. She was sponsored by the Rebele Internship Fund at Stanford Univ.



## Get Fit EPA: You Can Only Be As Fit As You Choose To Be

By Kathleen Alexander  
EPA Today Contributor

Eat fresh fruits and vegetables and drink lots of water and don't sit around. Get up, move, do whatever exercise suits you and your body type.

vered hair giant groundhog. Then Ogonna Nnamani, an Olympian and Stanford student, told her story. She had asthma as a child but she



Your body depends on you—you're the mechanic, so give it high-grade fuel and keep it tuned up. That's the gist of the message delivered to 600 people at the Get Fit EPA community campaign kickoff event at Cesar Chavez Academy on Saturday, October 15th.

Anita Black, fitness expert from East Palo Alto, was the MC. She opened the event with a warm-up, accompanied by the Get Fit mascot and the San Jose Earthquakes' mascot, a sil-

vered hair giant groundhog. Then Ogonna Nnamani, an Olympian and Stanford student, told her story. She had asthma as a child but she

overcame it. First she walked, then power-walked and then she ran and ended up on the U.S. Olympic Women's Volleyball team and received the 2004 Broderick Award that is given to the top female college athlete in the nation. Dance performances included the graceful youth of Ballet Folklorico, the rhythmic Northern California Soul Strutters from East Palo Alto, and performances by teen hip-hop dancers and by Polynesian children and their

instructor.

Public health nutritionist, Lydia Guzman, planned a menu of veggies and dip and fruit parfait and a demo on stir frying vegetables. The food offered was so popular, she and her team were cutting and cooking for three hours straight. UC Extension nutritionists had the same turnout for their nutritious food demonstration.

Get Fit EPA is a collaborative, started by RFHC, inspired by Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, Ravenswood City School District, and the City of East Palo Alto Community Services, that includes the Boys & Girls Club, El Concilio, Junior League, New Perspectives, One East Palo Alto, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, San Mateo County Health Department, and the YMCA.

*S p e c i a l Acknowledgments: Thanks to Citibank/Citigroup Foundation, the Junior League, and Palo Alto Medical Foundation for their financial support of the event. Kay Hatta created the Get Fit carrot costume for her son, Royd Hatta, who designed the Get Fit Logo. Thanks, too, to Marlene Bjornsrud of the Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative for her help.*

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## GETTING ALONG



BY ELISABETH SEAMAN  
WITH JACK HAMILTON

Your neighbors music annoys you. The auto mechanic overcharges you. Your co-worker bugs you. Your significant other doesn't listen to you. Sound familiar?

We feel annoyed, frustrated and sometimes even angry, when we think we are not being treated with respect and consideration. Is there anything we can do about it?

Here are some tips that can help. They take practice but they work.

Ask for some time to talk Explain the problem from your viewpoint State the effect the problem has had on you Say what behavior you would prefer Ask for a response.

Consider the problem of the music-playing neighbors. They play heavy metal full blast, well into the night and on weekends, and, as a result, it is hard for you to

get much sleep. Besides that, their teen has a garage band, and the whole neighborhood has to put up with the raucous sounds that come from the garage.

It might seem obvious that the first step would be to talk to the neighbors, but that is easier said than done, because we are often reluctant to step into the unknown. Here are some questions that may pop into your mind:

Can I stay calm? Will they get upset when I bring up the problem? What if they are violent? What if we speak different languages? Can we really solve this by talking?

To get a better idea of how your neighbors might respond, think about what might happen if the situation were reversed.

**How would you like your neighbors to approach you?**

Say, for example, that your neighbors object to something happening at your home, such as the volume and type of music you play or your dog's barking at all hours.

How would you like your neighbors to approach you? Would you want them to call you, write you a note, or come to your door and talk to you? What would you like them to tell you about the problem they've been experi-

encing?

Basically, you're asking yourself how you would like to be treated in a similar situation. Coming up with answers can prepare you for the way you approach your neighbors. See how taking the following steps might suit you:

Let your neighbors know what the situation is - they may not be aware of your problem.

I often hear music coming from your home. Next, tell them how it affects you.

I have a hard time dealing with the volume of the music, especially after six in the evening and on weekends.

This tells them what bothers you, without blaming them. Tell them what you would like. If you're willing, I'd like to talk with you about this.

You're asking them for something, rather than telling them what to do. Your neighbors may be willing to talk with you right then.

If not, hopefully you can arrange a time that works for both of you, and include whoever else should be there - the person who plays the music, the bandmembers, as well as others who have an interest in the situation.

Maybe you'll need an interpreter. Thank your neighbors for their willingness to

help.

When you do get together: Thank them again for their willingness to discuss the issue that is bothering you Restate the problem. Ask the neighbors to tell you how they see the situation.

**Plan to check in with each other, maybe after a week, a month, a couple of months.**

Listen carefully to your neighbors' point of view. You may want to ask some questions to try to understand their situation better.

Together, work out some arrangement that will work for both. It may not be ideal from either point of view, but something that both of you can agree will work.

Then try the new arrangement for a while. Plan to check in with each other, maybe after a week, a month, a couple of months.

Try these steps next time you have a misunderstanding or conflict with someone. With practice, you'll find that getting along isn't so difficult, after all.

Elisabeth Seaman and Jack Hamilton, partners in Conflict Prevention & Resolution Services, are mediators, facilitators and trainers in communications skills. They can be reached at 650-493-2990 or [cprservices@igc.org](mailto:cprservices@igc.org).

### Cañada College

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### DANIELS, MEDIA LYNCHING OF BENNETT

ridiculous and morally reprehensive thing to do, but your crime rate would go down. So these far out...these far reaching, you know, extensive extrapolations are, I think, tricky."

So, in the overall context of a 3 hour show talking about New Orleans, race, crime, and the specific context of flawed arguments dealing with lower crime rates due to increased abortions, Mr. Bennett was essentially saying that to argue that crime is down because abortion is up is bad reasoning, and so also is any argument which says aborting every black baby in this country for the sole purpose of reducing crime.

As a pro-life proponent, Mr. Bennett, as his own words

indicate on his website ([www.bennettmornings.com](http://www.bennettmornings.com)), was well aware of the disturbing statistical fact of "the horribly and tragically large abortion rate in the black community- a rate three times higher than in the white community..." Was his mention there also a racist comment, or was he expressing concern for the problem of too many abortions occurring in the black community?

People have said that what Mr. Bennett said was a "Freudian slip" or "brain hiccup" showing his true racist attitude. But this is mere speculation and assumption, not a fact based on careful investigation or research.

Careful research shows that Mr. Bennett has stood up

against racial bigotry in the 60s and was beaten up for. It shows that Mr. Bennett has taught the philosophy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the college level at a time when it was unpopular. Mr. Bennett's wife heads an organization (Best Friends) that helps inner-city kids, many of whom are black. What member of the KKK does such things?

Mr. Bennett's mere words about abortion and black babies, taken out of context, is not what should disturb us. What should truly disturb us is the fact that the African-American abortion rate is the highest of all races. Is it really racist to want more black people here due to less abortions? Mr. Bennett didn't

think so, and neither should anyone else.

Comments? Questions? [Adan700@aol.com](mailto:Adan700@aol.com) (complete article on this topic available at <http://www.geocities.com/adaniels700/LynchingofBillBennett.html>).

**Arthur Daniels** is a writer and commentator who worked for a local nonprofit agency in East Palo Alto.

continued from page 9

peers to donate to the fund. They filled two and a half water jugs with money totaling \$2,700, which they presented to Katrina families during the concert.

Profits from ticket sales and donations collected during the concert totaled about \$11,000.

All donations have been put into a special fund at the East Palo Alto branch of the California Bank & Trust.

Those wishing to donate to the fund can send their donations to the

Ecumenical Hunger Program, 2411 Pulgas Ave., East Palo Alto, CA 94303 or to the California Bank & Trust, 1735 E. Bayshore Road, East Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Donations should be earmarked for "Katrina Survivors

continued from page 9

### TAYLOR,ROLE OF POVERTY

the more relevant issue that no one is discussing; even the "liberal" politicians and civil rights activists who have labeled Bennett a racist are stopping short ofostering meaningful discussion about the underlying assumption that fueled the comment in the first place. Journalists who irresponsibly report on Bennett's public airing of a "fantasy of genocide" make it easier for him to present himself as a martyr in the face of such inaccuracy. Instead of being shocked that he said it, we need to look at what he said. The problem is not the statement itself - we should never be afraid of hearing someone's honest opinion; the problem is that no one is talking about why the statement is factually

wrong.

In asserting that the crime rate would be lowered by aborting all black babies, Bennett assumes that there is some kind of inherent, biological and/or cultural link between race and crime - an assumption that should hardly go unchallenged. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004 ended with 32% of American black males and 12% of American Hispanic males in prison, compared to a mere 4.6% of white males. And while these statistics may seem to "prove" that crime really is a racial issue, less simplistic and more relevant social explanations have linked crime to poverty for centuries, in eras and countries where the image of the black

criminal were not nearly as pervasive as they have become here. In reality, high rates of black crime are just as attributable to the racism, poverty, and discrimination that disproportionately constrain blacks' choices, as they are due to those poor individual choices themselves.

Some may call this "making excuses," but it's vital that we acknowledge the existence of structural and institutional factors that make this a much more complex issue than statements like "blacks commit more crime" would make it seem. The vast majority of crime is inextricably linked to poverty, and while blacks may occupy the position of a people disproportionately immersed in poverty right now, poverty is

not inherently black - poverty is inherent to any capitalist economy, and is in that way just as American as apple pie and baseball. So even if Bennett's poor example were realized, and blacks were the victims of a fetal genocide, or shipped "back to Africa," or rocketed to the moon, America would not be crime free. Not long after the initial celebration, a new segment of the population would have to replace us in the economic spectrum, because poverty is not a social ill in this country - it's a necessity. And as long as that is the case, crime will be a constant problem as well. Hopefully it won't take such a drastic example to make people realize this; hopefully we won't get so stuck on throwing around the "R" word that

we fail to take advantage of the attention surrounding this and other comments to shed light on an issue too often ignored.

**Jennifer Rae Taylor** is currently pursuing a BA with Honors, in Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CSRE), and a minor in Political Science. at Stanford University. She was awarded the Black Community Service Center Dean's Award for Academic Excellence in spring of 2003 and 2004. She was nominated for the university's freshman writing award, The Boothe Prize. She maintains a 3.7/4.0 GPA and will graduate in June 2006.

## Stanley "Tookie" Williams - Would His Ideas Be Helpful in East Palo Alto?

For years while he was on death row, Stanley "Tookie" Williams wrote books for children and counseled young people about the dangers of gang membership and the steps to take to avoid such membership. Below is one of the steps that he suggested youth groups take to eliminate group warfare. Do you think his "Protocol for Peace" would be helpful in stemming gang violence in East Palo Alto? Share your thoughts with us and we will include your comments in the next issue of East Palo Alto Today. Email us at [epatoday@aol.com](mailto:epatoday@aol.com)

### The Tookie Protocol For Peace A Local Street Peace Initiative Stanley "Tookie" Williams

◀ back Perpetual Peace Accord For Opposing Gangs forward ▶

Acknowledged here and now on this month \_\_\_\_\_, day \_\_\_\_\_, year \_\_\_\_\_, is a perpetual Peace Treaty between the warring parties: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

This word-of-honor agreement binds the aforementioned rival factions to put aside their differences: ideological, political, religious, philosophical, racial, economical, geographical, criminal, material, personal or collective retaliation, or any social reliance on violence or murder. This document is an oath of responsibility for the parties involved to co-exist in peace and reconciliation for the security of our communities, their residents and offspring.

Signatory: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatory: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Observing Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

If you think this Protocol for Peace would be useful to your group or one that you know, call Doug Fort at (650)924-0725.

Fort is the director of For Youth By Youth, a community organization which is a violence prevention agency in East Palo Alto.

Fort was one of three guests who discussed Crime and Community Values on the past edition of the TV show "Talking with Henrietta."



from left to right Carmen Zamora, Henrietta J. Burroughs, Doug Fort, and the Rev. Mary Frazier.

The show airs on Channel 27 Thursdays at 8 p.m., Fridays at 11:30 a.m. Saturdays at 1:30 p.m., Sundays at 5:00 p.m. and Mondays at 8 a.m. For information on the next show, and other local access shows, see page 23.

**WIRELESS IN EAST PALO**

continued from page 1

services for no more than \$20, and that the fee will remain constant-- if not decrease-- unlike services offered by for-profit companies. The program also plans to offer an upgraded service for an approximate fee of \$30.

Raven 21 also plans to supply its customers, free of charge, with the devices needed for a desktop computer or a laptop without a wireless card to connect to the network. In addition, Rogowski says the organization wants to help people transition off whatever services they may already have and provide customer service at a local location.

"A lot of people are still paying \$10 to \$20 a month for dial up, and we're going to be in that range, so I think it will encourage the latecomers to come on board," he said, "especially because it will have the feel of the community, in the sense that the frontline customer service will be someone in town who you go to to pick up your equipment."

Community Wireless wants to launch the Raven 21 network by initially connecting 20 churches and other nonprofits in the community, according to

Rogowski. From there, the network plans to expand to other similar organizations, as well as to residential homes and businesses.

Rogowski said the ultimate goal is to get every home and business in East Palo Alto connected to the Raven 21 network, regardless of economic constraints.

He said that over time the network will offer a third level of service for low-income customers, but that to make that feasible, "it's going to take some more money, either coming in from paying subscribers or donations," he said. "So there's going to be a phase in period before we can do everything we'd like to do."

"I think that in EPA, the services provided are limited, said Goro Mitchell, the Executive Director of the Community Development Institute. "A lot of these companies don't see communities like EPA as profitable."

Besides getting comprehensive service, Rogowski said users of the Raven 21 network will have the advantage of knowing their money is being put back into the community.

"If people are going to pay this money out every month for service, they can send it out to SBC headquar-

ters in Texas, or Comcast headquarters in Pennsylvania, or they can keep it in the community where the more money we bring in, the lower our prices are going to be," he said.

He estimated that the usage fees could be reduced once 3,000 to 4,000 households-- or about half the community-- were using the wireless network.

Rogowski seems committed to the wireless project for the longterm. "We're not here to make money, we're here to make a sustainable locally run broadband operator that can stick around for the duration," he said.

Some leaders in the community expect the city-wide WiFi to improve business in the area.

"There are all kinds of positive externalities related to connecting communities past the real overt ones like being able to use services, educating young folks and political empowerment through information exchange," Mitchell said.

"The community is a lot more attractive to businesses if they have more efficient and fast access to the Internet, so it's very relevant to the development of EPA."

The results of past

efforts to increase East Palo Alto's connectivity would suggest this is true. For instance, the Small Business Development Initiative (SBDI), launched by the East Palo Alto Digital Village in 2001, helped create \$2.75 million worth of business for the area and 156 full- or part-time jobs by providing technology equipment and training resources to small business owners, according to Hewlett Packard, the founding corporate sponsor of Digital Village.

But many East Palo Alto residents can barely afford the basics, such as proper meals and rent - much less a computer. So why bother expending resources on getting citywide wireless access?

East Palo Alto City Manager Alvin James hopes to help bring portable computers to the city and expand the technology available at the library. Mitchell said there should be efforts to educate the community about what the Web has to offer.

"For example, I got online, and I fixed my dryer at home," Mitchell said. "I found information on how to fix it and what was wrong with it - it was a pulley - and went and replaced the

pulley and saved myself a couple hundred bucks. I think that a lot of folks in communities don't understand the usefulness of the Internet."

Rogowski said that East Palo Alto could be at least one of the first city's of meaningful size to have border-to-border WiFi.

"It's a big change for the city," Rogowski said. "We're trying to level the playing field a little bit, by bringing the other side of the freeway up to snuff."

Rogowski said that in order for Community Wireless to be self-sustainable, it would need to have at least 1000 users on the network. Until then, it has its initial grant of more than \$500,000 to get it started.

Community Wireless was borne from the dissolution of the Palo Alto Cable Co-op. When the Co-op was sold to AT&T in 2000, its board decided to use extra money from the sale to award community grants. Though Rogowski sat on the board himself, he wrote the grant for Community Wireless.

"I thought locally owned and operated broadband was very much in the spirit of locally owned and operated cable that founded the Co-op back in the eighties," he said.

**Vamos Wireless**

que estamos en el principio de la revolución de Internet móvil,"

Rogowski dijo que Raven 21 propone ofrecer un servicio básico mensual que cueste no más de \$20, y que este monto va a ser permanente si no se rebaja, no como los servicios ofrecen compañías de negocios. El programa también planea ofrecer servicios mejorados a un costo de \$30.

Raven 21 también planea suministrar a sus clientes, una tarjeta gratuitamente, y las partes que requieran las computadoras o laptops sin servicio inalámbrico para que las puedan conectar a la cadena. Además Rogowski dice que la organización quiere ayudar a las personas a cambiar de los servicios que tengan en la actualidad y que proveerán los servicios a la clientela local.

"Muchas personas están pagando \$10 y \$20 al mes por "discado", y vamos a estar dentro de estas posibilidades, es por eso que animamos a los que no se han inscrito," el dijo, "en particular porque estará en la comunidad local, es decir que el servicio primario para clientes estará con una persona ubicada en la comunidad de quien se puede recoger su equipo."

Dice Rogowski que Community Wireless quiere lanzar la cadena Raven 21 conectando inicialmente a 20

iglesias y otras organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro "nonprofits" en la comunidad para empezar desde aquí, la red planea expandirse a organizaciones similares, hogares residenciales y empresas.

Rogowski dijo que la meta final es que cada hogar y empresa en East Palo Alto esté conectada a la red Raven 21, sin restricción a limitaciones financieras.

El dijo que con tiempo la red ofrecerá un tercer nivel de servicio para clientes de bajos ingresos, pero para hacerlo, existe una posibilidad, "va a necesitar más dinero, de los suscriptores ya sea pagando o con donaciones," él dijo. "Pues va a tomar tiempo antes que podamos hacer todo que queremos hacer."

"Creo que en EPA, los servicios que ya se proveen son limitados, dijo Goro Mitchell, director ejecutivo del Instituto de Desarrollo de la Comunidad. "Muchas compañías no piensan que comunidades como EPA sean provechosas."

Además de recibir servicio completo, Rogowski dijo que la red Raven 21 es ventajosa para los usuarios sabiendo que su dinero quedará en la comunidad.

"Si las personas van a pagar al mes por el servicio, pueden enviar el dinero a la oficina central de SBC en Tejas, o la oficina central de

Comcast en Pennsylvania, o lo pueden mantener en la comunidad así que este dinero trae más dinero, y los precios van a estar mas bajos" el dijo.

El estimó que pueden bajar las cuentas de uso cuando 3,000 o 4,000 hogares - o más o menos la mitad de la comunidad estén usando la "red inalámbrica."

Rogowski parece comprometido con el proyecto "inalámbrico" a largo plazo. "No estamos aquí para ganar dinero, estamos aquí para hacer crecer un operador local de banda amplia que pueda ser sostenido y que puede estar aquí a largo plazo," él dijo.

Algunos líderes de la comunidad esperan que la red Inalámbrica en toda la ciudad mejorara los negocios en el área.

"Hay muchos beneficios externos más que obvios cuando se conectan a las comunidades, por ejemplo la capacidad para usar servicios, el educar a los jóvenes, y el dar poder con el intercambio de información," dijo Mitchell. "La comunidad lucirá más atractiva para los negocios si tiene acceso eficiente y rápido al Internet, eso es muy relevante para el desarrollo de EPA."

El resultado de esfuerzos pasados, por aumentar el nivel de conexión al Internet sugiere que es verdad. Por ejemplo, la Iniciativa para el

desarrollo de Pequeños Negocios, presentado por East Palo Alto Digital Village, en 2001, ayudó a crear \$2.75 millón de dólares en negocios para el área y 156 trabajos de tiempo completo y medio tiempo en el camino, proporcionando equipos, tecnología y recursos de entrenamiento para propietarios de Pequeños Negocios, según la Hewlett Packard, corporación auspiciada de Digital Village.

Pero muchos residentes de East Palo Alto difícilmente tienen para lo básico, como comida y renta, mucho menos para una computadora. Por qué molestarse a mejorar los recursos para el acceso a la "Red-Inalámbrica" para la ciudad?

Alvin James, el manejador de la Ciudad de East Palo Alto espera que traigan computadoras portátiles a la ciudad, y mejoren la tecnología disponible en la biblioteca.

Mitchell dice que deben de hacer esfuerzos para educar a la comunidad acerca de lo que se ofrecen la Web.

"Por ejemplo, yo me metí al Internet, y arreglé mi secadora en casa," Mitchell dijo. "Yo encontré información en cómo arreglarla y cual era el problema, era una polea, y cuando la cambié, me ahorré más o menos doscientos dólares. Yo pienso que muchas personas de la comunidad no entienden

*continua a la pagina 1*

la utilidad del Internet."

Rogowski dijo que East Palo Alto puede ser una de las primeras ciudades de tamaño significativo que tiene una Red-Inalámbrica de frontera a frontera.

"Sería un gran cambio para la ciudad, estamos tratando de igualar un poco el terreno con el otro lado del Freeway trayendo un poco de su aroma" dijo Rogowski.

Rogowski dijo que para auto sostener a la Comunidad en la Red Inalámbrica se necesita por lo menos 1000 usuarios. Hasta entonces tenemos \$500,000 de subvención inicial para empezar.

Community Wireless (La Comunidad Inalámbrica) nació de la disolución de Palo Alto Cable Co-op. Cuando la cooperativa fue vendida a AT&T en el 2000, la Mesa de Directores decidió que usaría el dinero extra de la venta, para dar donativos a la comunidad.

Rogowski quien era miembro de la Mesa de Directores escribió el mismo la propuesta para el donativo para Community Wireless (Comunidad Inalámbrica) "Yo pensé que una banda amplia operada y mantenida en la zona era en el mismo espíritu de la cooperativa operada y mantenida en la zona durante los ochentas," el dijo.

Rogowski no participó en las conversaciones cuando la

# More Resources for East Palo Alto's Katrina Survivors

## Making A Difference

by **Nobantu Ankoanda**  
EPA Today Contributor

Another local organization is also working with the city's Katrina survivors. Mid Peninsula Emergency Katrina Coalition (MPEKC) began with Bob Hoover assisting three families from New Orleans. Bob was inspired by Earnestine Wooling who assisted with the work of coordinating the acquisition of food, money, housing and clothing for a family in San Francisco. Ms. Wooling did a tremendous job helping to stabilize a family with housing, clothes, and food. Eventually, two African American Churches came forward and adopted the family. Their needs from that point forward were taken on by these churches.

With the assistance of Shanna Uhila, Mr. Hoover coordinated additional efforts in identifying the needs of other families and acquiring resources to meet their needs. He spent a tremendous amount of time

helping three families to negotiate the various bureaucracies they had to deal with.

An email was sent from Mr. Hoover around September 15th requesting help with the task of making phone calls to the agencies to find out what services and resources they offered and what the process was to acquire services and resources.

It was this type of advocacy that Bob felt was needed to save these families from dealing with people or agencies that could not help and speed up the process with the agencies that had the capacity.

As it became clearer that FEMA and the Red Cross and other Government related agencies were of little help to these families, Bob suggested that we organize local people and churches to deal with this situation. The biggest issue as he saw it was providing housing and utilities for 3 or 4 months until the families had employment and enough income to take care of all of their needs. He was confident that there were enough resources avail-

able to take care of food, clothes, and transportation needs on an emergency basis.

Bob sent an email out to his personal friends and family requesting \$20 a month to go toward this emergency fund and requesting churches to pledge a certain amount for a period of

three months. Checks started coming in from various churches, organizations and passionate individuals.

As a result of Bob's efforts, Mid Peninsula Emergency Katrina Coalition was born. Approximately ten churches from East Palo Alto and Palo Alto came together with non-profits, a news reporter, and community activists.

The coalition first began working with Bob to assist him with three families from New Orleans who had relocated to East Palo Alto. Currently the coalition is assisting over 20 families with housing, rent, utilities, groceries, gas, clothes, etc. in collaboration with Ecumenical Hunger Program and El Concilio Family Emergency Services.

In addition, New Sweet

Home Church (Pastor Albert Macklin) and Born Again Christian Center (Rev. Andre Harris) renovated the houses they owned for two families who were victims of the Katrina Hurricane. R. B. Jones, a long time activist was able to negotiate housing for another family through a local apartment complex owner.

The Katrina fund was set up with CDI, The Community Development Institute and donations are presently being accepted at its facility 321 Bell St, East Palo Alto, 94303. Committees were put together to address the intake process, housing, distribution of resources, as well as counseling at Sweet Home's Holistic Center.

The Ecumenical Hunger Program also set up a fund with the California Trust Bank in East Palo Alto after a very successful fundraiser to address the primary needs of Katrina victims as well as families who are homeless and unemployed.

Bob and members of MPEKC have reached out to the Office of Supervisor (San Mateo County) Rose Jacobs Gibson, Senator Anna Eshoo, Duane Bay former East Palo Alto Mayor/Council Member, Director of San Mateo Housing Authority, HUD, OICW, Free At Last, Social Security, Unemployment Office, San Mateo County

Human Services, Santa Clara County / C A D R E (Collaborative Agencies Disaster Relief Effort), Catholic Charities, and The People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Oversight Coalition (in Mississippi and New Orleans).

For more information, the following websites may be contacted: [www.katrinamidpen.org](http://www.katrinamidpen.org) (MPEKC) is <http://www.ehpcares.org> Ecumenical Hunger Program and [www.communitylaborunited.net](http://www.communitylaborunited.net) (People's Hurricane Relief Fund & Oversight Coalition)

**Nobantu Ankoanda** is a member of the Mid-Peninsula Emergency Katrina Coalition in East Palo Alto. Through her work with this organization she has become an unofficial case manager for over 15 individuals from San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Ms. Ankoanda has a BA in social work

### Editor's note

Ankoanda appeared as a guest on the latest installment of Other Voices, Peninsula Peace and Justice Center's monthly television program The show interviews several Katrina survivors and those who traveled to New Orleans to assist in the storm effort. For more information, see our television section on page 23.

## Esperanza en la Comunidad

fund fue apoyado por la Sociedad Cultural de East Palo Alto, Ecumenical Hunger Program, y California Bank & Trust. El concierto conto con la actuación de Joan Baez,

la famosa cantante de folk, las estrellas de jazz Tuck y Patti, y artistas locales que incluyeron Los Pacheco All Stars, la banda jazz de la Escuela Menlo-Atherton, Isaac Stevenson,

Potential, y el Conjunto de Wobogo Jazz.

Con las donaciones recaudadas durante el concierto y los boletos vendidos ganaron \$11,000 aproximadamente.

continua a la pagina 1

Lo recaudado del concierto esta en un fondo especial en California Bank & Trust de East Palo Alto. Los que quieran donar al fondo pueden enviar sus donaciones a

Ecumenical Hunger Program a 2411 Pulgas, East Palo Alto, CA 94303 o a California Bank & Trust a 1735 E. Bayshore Road East Palo Alto, CA 94303. Señale que la donación es para "Katrina Survivors.

## Going Wireless

board discussions about the proposal to avoid a conflict of interest, but the grant for Community Wireless was one of about three dozen funded, he said.

Rogowski envisions 40 to 50 transmitting devices on light poles across town. City Manager Alvin James

said that once the county formally transfers the lighting district, as well as a storm draining district and the transaction of a small parcel of land, the city and Community Wireless must determine the number of devices needed and the proper way to install them.

Once the city has nego-

tiated the terms of use for the light poles with Community Wireless, it will no longer be involved in the implementation of the network. The city governments of Cupertino, Mountain View and other local communities have similar arm's length agreements with for-profit companies to establish wire-

less access.

Mitchell said he has been working with Digital Village to evaluate the process through which Community Wireless has worked to establish the network, in order to present it as a model for other communities to follow.

continued from page 20

Rogowski concurred that Raven 21 should be used as an example for other communities. "The reason this is being done is because the community is underserved, and it's not the only underserved community out there," he said.

## Vamos Wireless

mesa de Directores discutió la propuesta, para evitar el conflicto de interés, pero la donación para Community Gíreles (la Comunidad Inalámbrica) era una de tres docenas presentadas, dijo él.

Rogowski imagina 40 o 50 aparatos transmitiendo en los postes de luz de la ciudad. El Manejador de la ciudad, Alvin James, dijo que cuando el condado transfiera oficialmente al

distrito el alumbrado, así como el distrito de los canales de drenaje para las tormentas, y la transacción de un pequeño terreno, la ciudad y Community Wireless (la Comunidad Inalámbrica), van a decidir cuantos aparatos se necesitan y la manera de instalarlos.

Una vez que ciudad negocie los términos del uso de los postes de luz con Community Gíreles (la

Comunidad Inalámbrica), la Ciudad no se involucrará en la implementación de la red. Los gobiernos de las ciudades de Cupertino, Mountain View y otras comunidades locales tienen acuerdos tentativos con compañías "Sin animo de Lucro" para crear acceso inalámbrico.

Mitchell dijo que ha estado trabajando con Digital Village, para evaluar el proceso que la Comunidad

Inalámbrica ha usado para crear la red, para presentar un modelo a seguir, para otras comunidades.

Rogowski coincide en que Raven 21 podría ser usado como un ejemplo para otras comunidades. "La razón por la que esto esta ocurriendo es porque esta comunidad está desatendida, y existen mas comunidades desatendidas," el dijo.

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# Arts & Entertainment

## An Outstanding Local Jazz Ensemble

Staff Writer  
East Palo Alto Today

Nozipo Wobogo, Jazz vocalist for the Wobogo Jazz Ensemble and niece of the late jazz diva Betty Carter, hails from Oakland CA.

She is the daughter of the late John Hill and Helen



Nozipo and Vulindlela Wobogo - two members of the Wobogo Jazz Ensemble

Strauther. She has been singing in the San Francisco

Bay Area for over thirty years and has recorded with

the late Suliman Rogee as a bassist/vocalist and as a featured vocalist with WJE on the Frontliners label.

Nozipo sings in the classic jazz tradition of such influences as Carmen McRae, Sarah Vaughn, Dinah Washington, Ella Fitzgerald and Betty Carter.

Vulindlela Wobogo, Pianist and arranger-composer for WJE also hails from Oakland CA. He is the son of the late New Orleans born pianist Joseph Red Cayou and the

late vocalist Marion Cooke-Cayou.

His piano style exhibits influences of Bud Powell, Tommy Flanagan, Barry Harris, Red Garland, Ahmad Jamal Herbie Hancock and McCoy Tyner.

His vocal accompanist style is influenced by Jimmy Jones and Ellis Larkin. He is most well known for his original 'We're Gonna Celebrate Kwanzaa' and his mentorship of jazz giant Pharoah Sanders.

## Popular Places: Back A Yard Grill

By Dining Connoisseur  
Nobantu Ankoanda

There is a new cuisine in town which features the best Caribbean food you have ever tasted. If you enjoy good food you just can't go there one time. I was first introduced to Back A Yard by a former student who told me he had eaten the best salmon ever in his life at this place called Back A Yard. I thought to myself, humm. Well, then his mother confirmed it, I said to myself humm. Finally, I found my way over to this place. I have a hard time staying away from Back A Yard. I go there at least twice a week for lunch or dinner. I had been looking for a place to go get a healthy meal without having to drive to Palo Alto. If you haven't tried their food you've got to go and taste their delicious food at your next opportunity. They do have the best

grilled jerked salmon I have ever tasted. If you like Caribbean food it's the place to go. If you are a vegetarian, its heaven. It is a family run restaurant with food mainly to go, however, there are tables and chairs if you're hungry and can't wait until you get home.

**Type of Cuisine:** Caribbean and American Cuisines with Vegetarian Choices, featuring authentically prepared food using seasonal ingredients and the freshest seafood and meat. Chef Robert possesses the flair to recreate classic dishes with a home-style taste, since, the opening of Back A Yard Grill, customers are wowed by the Chefs daily creations.

Chef Robert Simpson has worked in many facets of the food and hospitality Industry. He received his formal culinary training at the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, New York and was Captain, Mentor and Manager of the Jamaican

Culinary team on different occasions. His American culinary career took him to Chicago, where he worked at David Burke's Park Avenue Cafe and later the banquet chef of the Drake Hotel for three years. He also served as the executive chef of the exquisite Swissotel Chicago. Prior to opening Back A Yard Caribbean American Grill of Menlo Park, CA., chef Robert served as the executive chef of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Burlingame, California. Here, in Menlo Park, Chef Robert delights a Diverse Community with his Caribbean and Continental cuisine.

**Services:** Limited Service restaurant offers take out and catering for all occasions, provided 7 days per week.

**Ambience:** Walls are painted in forest green and natural rust, walls are decorated with painting featuring simplistic life-

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650.323.4244

#### Restaurant Hours

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Fri. 11am-9pm  
Sat. 11am -8pm  
Closed On Sunday  
[www.backayard.net](http://www.backayard.net)



tystyle of the Caribbean houses and beaches. Counter is designed from green zinc that wraps around the restaurant; this gives a Caribbean Tiki Bar

Feel.  
**Prices:** Items are moderately priced from \$1.50-\$12.95. The grill also has a catering service.

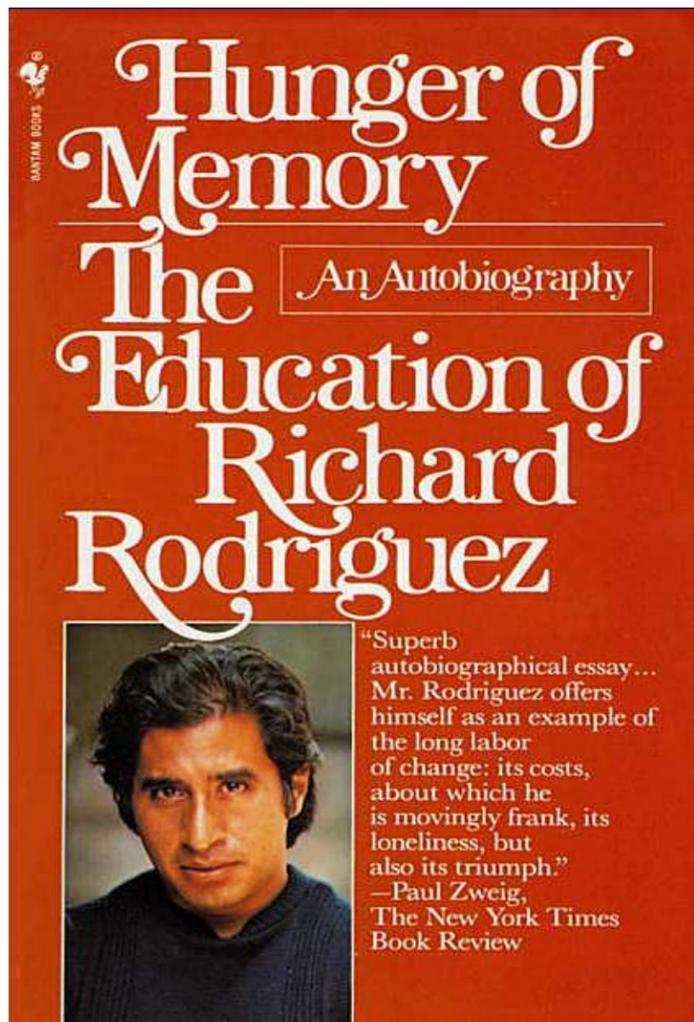
## Book Review: Hunger of Memory

By Lindsey Turner  
The Eastside Panther Staff

The junior class moaned and groaned when literature teacher Amy Reilly announced that the book they were about to read, "Hunger of Memory," written by Mexican-American Richard Rodriguez, would express the author's opinion that affirmative action should not exist.

Filled with stirring remarks and mind-boggling opinions, this book is an autobiography and illustration of Rodriguez's life-changing decision to become completely assimilated into the mainstream American society. His approach to writing the book, in terms of language and evidence, shows him to be a traitor of his culture and minorities in the United States.

The book starts off with Rodriguez's experiences as a young, Spanish-speaking Latino in a white-dominated society. Compelled by the desire for their children to grow up successful, his parents forced Rodriguez and his siblings to stop speaking in



Spanish in their house; kicking off Rodriguez's journey down the road to assimilation.

Ultimately, Rodriguez

decided he had to give up his language and adopt the white culture in order to be successful in America.

As the book continues,

Rodriguez not only decides to assimilate, but he also criticizes those who choose not to do the same. He believes that to become educated, minorities must give up their original culture. For example, he believes it's best to define yourself only as a student and not have your linguistic abilities be what determines your success.

Rodriguez demonstrates his arrogance by criticizing those who are not like him instead of proving himself to be a well-educated man who has a difference in opinion of how to be successful.

He disagrees with incoming minority college students who were also minorities who decided to maintain their cultural values. He says they are ultimately giving up their opportunity to become successful.

I agree that American culture is dominated by Caucasians, and, to an extent, we all have to give up a part of our culture. Success is a powerful thing to achieve and it involves making sacrifices regarding many different beliefs and lifestyles; but you do not have to give up all of your

culture to achieve your goals and become successful.

In spite of all this, I still recommend "Hunger of Memory" because it challenges the reader's opinions about things like race and social hierarchies. It shows the reader that there are people in situations similar to theirs who think differently and make different choices.

If you do pick up this book, I would urge you not to be too quick to judge the author. He says some powerful and bewildering things. Take to heart things that he says and use his ideas to test and refine those beliefs that you so strongly hold. Take into account the things he says because they are just as valuable as those whose opinions we agree with. Who knows, the book might cause your views to alter in mind-boggling and breathless ways.

This article first appeared in **The Eastside Panther**, the student newspaper of Eastside College Preparatory School.