

CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Presentation Of Certificates Of Recognition To Participants In The Lodi Breakthrough Project

MEETING DATE: June 20, 2001

PREPARED BY: City Clerk

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That Mayor Nakanishi present Certificates of Recognition to participants in the Lodi Breakthrough Project.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Mayor has been requested to present Certificates of Recognition to participants in the Lodi Breakthrough Project. The Breakthrough Project's vision is, "A community that is free of bigotry, racism, prejudice, and intolerance by celebrating our diversity through communication, education and responding to acts of intolerance." Recently it sponsored an essay contest at the high schools with the theme of "Celebrating Diversity in School and Community: Reality or Goal?" Mr. Art Raab and Dr. Norman King will be at the meeting to speak on this worthwhile project and to introduce the winners of the essay contest.

FUNDING: None required.


Susan J. Blackston
City Clerk

SJB/JMP

APPROVED: _____
H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager

To: Dave Hurley, Vice Principal, Bear Creek High School
From: Art Raab, Lodi Breakthrough Project
Re: Breakthrough Essay Contest mentioned by Dr. Norman King

The Breakthrough Project is sponsoring an essay contest at each of the L.U.S.D. comprehensive high schools. It would be appreciated if you could facilitate having this announced to the appropriate classes (English classes?) at Bear Creek.

Topic: "Celebrating Diversity in Lodi: Reality or Goal?"
Length: 500 – 1000 typewritten words

Description: If embracing diversity means to recognize and respect each and every individual, ensure for them a real voice in the community, and offer them a real opportunity to prosper, do we really do all of these in Lodi? Or, is embracing and celebrating diversity something we should work toward? If it is still a goal, what steps should we take to get there?

Deadline: May 29, 2001 (The Tuesday after the Memorial Day Holiday)
Please turn in all essays to _____

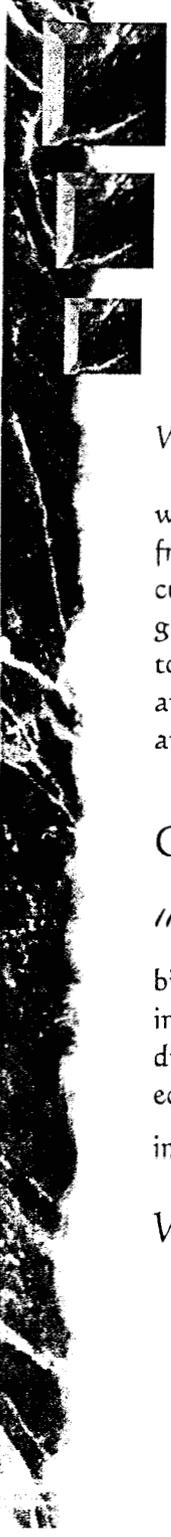
Scholarship prizes: first place: \$100.
 second place: \$75.
 third place \$50.

Awards Presentation Ceremony:

Thursday, June 7, 2001
7:00 – 9:00 PM
Lodi Public Library, C.M. "Bud" Sullivan Room
Reading of prize winning essays and refreshments

*Special note: certificates to first place winners will be
presented at the Lodi City Council Meeting
on Wednesday, June 20th*

Further information: Art Raab, 368-4718



THE BREAKTHROUGH PROJECT

What do we want to do?

Because our project believes we must act intentionally to develop friendships with people of all races, cultures, and ethnicity, we offer guidance and educational programs to break through prejudicial barriers and respond promptly to hate crimes and acts of intolerance.

Our Vision:

"A community that is free of bigotry, racism, prejudice, and intolerance by celebrating our diversity through communication, education and responding to acts of intolerance."

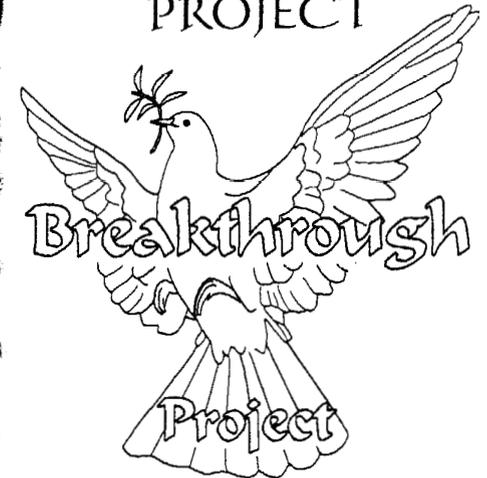
What can you do?
Join us!

Community Action

- 1/19/1998 First Celebration of Unity in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday with a non-denominational service of faith.
- 1/18/1999 Second Annual Celebration of Unity on Martin Luther King Day.
- 4/5/1999 immediate supportive response to hate crime perpetrated on Hispanic family in Galt.
- 9/23/1999 immediate supportive response to hate crime defacing the multi-cultural mural of the California Camiceria Deli in Lodi.
- 12/2-3/1999 20 members and supporters of Breakthrough Project attend the Museum of Tolerance in LA.
- 1/17/2000 Third Annual Celebration of Unity on Martin Luther King Day.

Breakthrough Project-
P.O. Box 2352
Lodi, Ca 95241-2352

THE BREAKTHROUGH PROJECT



Breaking through prejudicial barriers by developing relationships and educational programs.

Breaking through the walls of intolerance.

Providing support to victims of hate crimes.



Come Join Us and Make a Difference In Lodi!

The Breakthrough Project formed the week after the January 30, 1998 cross burning on the lawn of Lodi's Tokay High School. Local newspapers printed our manifesto:

"On Feb. 5, 1998 community leaders met as concerned parents and citizens of Lodi to discuss the moral implications of the recent cross burning at Tokay High School. We are men and women from a diversity of colors, faiths and beliefs.

Our message is simple: Malignant seeds of intolerance will find only barren soil in a united Lodi. 'Livable, Lovable Lodi?' Unless Lodi is livable and lovable for all, it is not livable or lovable for any.

Please stand with us and say no to prejudice and racism wherever and whenever you encounter it."

Our mission is to:

- Create a community that celebrates its diversity and works to eliminate all forms of social oppression, racism, and bigotry.
- Encourage communication, understanding, and cooperation among all community members.

Our purpose is to:

- coordinate with city government and law enforcement regarding hate crimes;
- provide aid and support to victims of hate crimes;
- provide prompt and proportionate community responses to hate crimes and acts of intolerance;
- provide educational programs for the community that promote acceptance and tolerance;
- seek individual, corporate and governmental funding for our efforts;
- develop and maintain links to other organizations working to eliminate racism and bigotry.

Breakthrough Project Working Committees:

Response Team & Community Assistance is responsible to quickly provide aid and support to victims of hate crimes, coordinate with city government and law enforcement regarding hate crimes, and organize a prompt and proportionate community response to hate crimes.

Community Education is responsible to promote acceptance and tolerance, and to promote a community response to acts of racial, ethnic and religious intolerance and other acts of social oppression.

Community Fund Raising / Networking is responsible for seeking individual, corporate and governmental funding for the efforts of the corporation and the standing task forces; and for establishing relationships and maintaining communication with other organizations having a similar purpose.

COPY

1st place

Sean McNary

Bear Creek High School

Scholarship Essay

17 May 2001

RECEIVED

JUN 22 2001

City Clerk
City of Lodi

Steps to Achieve the Goal of Diversity

Ever since the founding of this great nation, the United States has been the melting pot of the world. America was founded by immigrants who wished to escape their life in the Old World and start anew in a new world: America. Unfortunately, these very same immigrants brought overseas the same prejudices and fears they were trying to escape from. The prejudices that affect America also affect the Lodi/Stockton community. In order to achieve the goal of diversity, the Lodi/Stockton community needs to hold a special in-school diversity day, a community diversity festival, and voter education classes.

Last year, an ugly picture of man's prejudices was found at a basketball game between Bear Creek High and Lodi High. During the high school basketball game at Lodi, students and parents shouted racial slurs at Bear Creek's basketball team. This incident is a prime example of our community's lack of cultural awareness. Students and parents shouted racial slurs because of a basketball game, a simple competition between two schools that is supposed to be fun. A special in-school diversity day would go far in solving this problem. For one day a year, students would learn about other cultures and how to respect cultural differences. Just because two people are different, that does not mean they cannot get along. People can coexist if they exhibit a little tolerance and understanding. This special school day would try to teach students this idea through presentations and seminars.

In the movie "Remember the Titans", which is based on a true story, a high school football team in the South during the 1970s is forced to integrate. At first the athletes do not get along, they stick together in their own racial groups. However, as the team gets to know each other and socialize, they learn to get along and use their diversity as a strength. The Titans go on to place second among high school football teams in the nation. Lodi and Stockton can learn to use its diversity as a strength just as the Titans did by holding a community diversity festival. Using the Asparagus Festival as an example, our

community can organize a festival centered around a multi-ethnic food fair. While eating, the attendants can also listen to different kinds of cultural music, watch dances and plays, and learn about other cultures. This festival would teach the community about all its different cultures. With this knowledge, our community will perhaps realize diversity is an asset and will only make us stronger.

When our founding fathers set about to create our government, they wanted most citizens to have a voice in government. A government by the people, for the people. Citizens were given a voice in government in the form of the vote. If a citizen does not know how to exercise his vote, then he drastically lowers his voice and becomes ignored. New citizens who come from other countries often do not exercise their vote because they are not familiar with voting or do not realize the importance of it. A free voter class should be created to educate everyone who does not know or forgets the significance of voting. This class would empower people by educating them on their rights and giving them a bigger voice in government. Majorities are often created when a minority does not raise its voice. By empowering most people to vote, our government will diversify.

A counter argument against diversity might say we can educate people on diversity, but we cannot force people to like each other. Celebrating diversity is not forcing people to like each other. Diversity is about acknowledging everyone is different and respecting that. You can respect someone without liking him. The goal of diversity is not to get everyone to like each other, but to promote understanding so we can eliminate discrimination and racial prejudice.

The Lodi/Stockton community can achieve the goal of diversity if a few steps are taken. The first step is a special in-school day that teaches students about other cultures. Also, a community diversity festival could promote understanding between races through food and other activities. If created, a voter education class could teach citizens the power in expressing their voice through voting. Diversity is not about everyone liking each other. It is about respecting everyone's cultural differences. If the citizens of our community band together, diversity can be an achievable goal.

2nd place

Januel Mercado

Bear Creek High School

Scholarship Essay

18 May 2001

RECEIVED

JUN 22 2001

City Clerk
City of Lodi

Harnessing and Applying the Power of Diversity

Diversity is a term that contains multiple definitions. These definitions vary from one individual to another. However, just having a personal viewpoint of the concept of diversity is not enough to create an effective impact for the benefit of society. People must learn to respect one another's perspective of diversity. Respect may be a key to understanding, and understanding, a key to establishing relationships that may clarify as well as bring to life the purpose of diversity. Diversity is accepted in Stockton, yet diversity is not fully acknowledged. Fully acknowledging the meaning of diversity can eventually be achieved by applying the term's many definitions to class lessons in school districts, and by establishing more events, clubs, or workshops that look beyond cultural diversity.

Bear Creek High School is an example of a place that contains diversity in the environment. Although diversity exists among the faculty and students, they do not understand the concept completely. The majority of those who attend Bear Creek fail to look beyond cultural diversity. This failure occurs because many people do not realize that cultural diversity is defined by so much more than skin color and ethnicity.

Cultural diversity includes almost everything that a human being can value: food, behavior, clothing, religion, personal goals and thoughts, etc. By conveying the message that cultural diversity is manifested through many things materialistic and non-materialistic, diversity can be celebrated to a higher degree that is more understandable and perhaps, more relatable.

Teachers should express tremendous efforts to apply knowledge about diversity during class lessons to help students develop a better understanding for diversity in their schools as well as their community. Knowledge acquired in school accompanies students throughout life and continues to expand

with new places and individuals. Therefore, knowledge about cultural diversity learned gradually will be a great influence on one's community.

Although high schools like Bear Creek have events celebrating diversity, such as International week, students and faculty are just limited to seeing cultural performances. Multicultural events should involve more than a food festival and a rally with performances. Such events should include more in-depth methods of expanding and celebrating diversity that occur in the classrooms, and not just the school gym. Clubs also should occasionally integrate with other clubs to conduct activities, while at the same time exchanging cultural knowledge. Workshops should be offered to create discussions about diversity and as a way for individuals to explain their personal perspectives and opinions of diversity in their school and community.

People may disagree with applying diversity teachings into the lessons of a class, implying that forcing such education upon people will not work because such a subject can be sensitive and people have to be open to share opinions in order to gain beneficial knowledge. Discrimination is usually due to "fear of the unknown," therefore educating people about cultural diversity would widen horizons and would be helping over all. Also the content exposed to students in any class may be sensitive and considered "forcing education" anyway.

Recognizing the definition of diversity beyond superficiality is realized through more cultural activities that go beyond the basic simple events, clubs and workshops. Emphasizing knowledge about diversity in classrooms gives greater chances of students sharing knowledge out in their own communities, thus expanding the concept of diversity and making it more understandable and acceptable to people. Establishing workshops allow opinions to be addressed and possible ideas to be developed for the progress of diversity. Clubs working together provide great influence for communities by displaying that diversity causes unity, and with unity, change can occur. Diversity is a powerful tool; when society as a whole learns how it works, diversity can be used to fix the most complex of problems.

3rd place tie

Ashley Allen
Bear Creek High School

Scholarship Essay

17 May 2001

RECEIVED

JUN 22 2001

City Clerk
City of Lodi

"I have a dream that one day my four little children will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." This powerful statement made by Martin Luther King Jr. represents the ultimate goal every city, state, and nation should strive for: racial tolerance. Unfortunately, the total acceptance, and also celebration of diversity in our human race is a far off goal. Still, there are steps to be taken immediately in Stockton and Lodi to further achieve this goal. Two steps that will enable the citizens of Stockton and Lodi to more fully embrace diversity are the extension of history curriculums to include a variety of races and the inception of various community cultural festivals to encourage awareness and appreciation.

One step necessary in order to "recognize and respect each and every individual" is to develop a more well-rounded history curriculum in all grade levels. Over the last few years the curriculum has increased greatly in schools all over the country. This extended education has led to a more tolerant attitude among students. Still, a further extension is needed as many cultures are mentioned casually or not at all. The Vietnamese and Indian cultures are examples of this neglect and have not been given their rightful place in American history as they are not given a place in American classrooms. Education is a vital key to embracing diversity and must start now.

The creation of new community festivals geared towards recognizing and celebrating various cultures is another step to helping our cities embrace the diversity so apparent in them. Once all members of the community, old and young alike, are able to enjoy themselves while celebrating and learning about another ethnicity, we will have increased tolerance toward that ethnicity. People must be able to see that other cultures are not alien but beautiful, and they should have fun doing so. The problem with the few festivals we have now is that they are not widely advertised and thus are poorly attended. Excitement must be stirred up among every citizen towards other cultures so that we can each embrace the diversity around us.

Two steps that will help Stockton and Lodi embrace diversity are the extension of history curriculums to include left-out nationalities, and the creation of city-wide festivals celebrating each culture present in our city, however populous or not. To me, embracing diversity is rejoicing in similarities and respecting differences. The education as to these similarities and differences must begin in the schools but should continue out to the community through entertaining festivals. If these steps are taken thoroughly and effectively, we will see a marked improvement in the acceptance of others whether of our ethnicity or not. And that is the ultimate goal.

3rd place tie

Jason Aguinaldo

Bear Creek High School

Scholarship Essay

17 May 2001

RECEIVED

JUN 22 2001

City Clerk
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Appreciating Diversity

There is a verse from a song called "Shining Through" that goes, "We're all the same color when you turn off the light." In Stockton, Bear Creek High School is known to have a diverse population of students, both ethnically and religiously. However, the school has not truly taken all the steps necessary to work towards the goal of recognizing, embracing, and celebrating its diversity. Teaching students about other racial backgrounds and experiences through the Link Crew Leadership program, expanding history class curriculum to include more ethnic groups, and incorporating quotations originating from other countries in the daily announcement lessons will bring Bear Creek towards the goal of truly embracing the diversity that is present.

The Link Crew Leadership program provides workshops that gives freshman the skills they will need to get through high school and beyond. The lessons tend to focus on working with peers and utilizing teamwork, but rarely emphasize the cultural aspect. The Link Crew team should integrate lessons about the ignorance of racism and inform the freshman of the racial prejudice that particular ethnic groups had to endure in the past, and remind them that people today are still experiencing that same prejudice. By arming the freshman with knowledge of the alienation individuals feel in the face of racism, they will be able to respect and understand those that are different.

The next step Bear Creek should take is to expand the content of its history classes. Students need to be taught that being American does not mean they have to be of white or European decent—every nationality contributed to the American culture. Although there is some diversity of the historical content, often the authors of textbooks are biased and tend to be single-sided in certain issues concerning various races throughout history. A student should read all point of views of an event in history—for example, the Japanese point of view during WWII—and they will appreciate the fact that they live in a country where all the stories and experiences of every race coexist with one another.

Finally, the last step Bear Creek should make is incorporating more quotations that come from other countries in the Daily Bulletin. Every morning, students should be hearing on the loud speakers various proverbs and quotations that explain an aspect of another culture, such as morals. By expanding the use of quotations from American-only sources to the world beyond, students will realize that different cultures often have different ways of expressing the same idea.

With the yearly spring tradition that celebrates diversity, known as International Week, many students might think that the school is already doing its best to embrace diversity. However, saying that International Week is good enough for embracing diversity is essentially saying that for the rest of the year, diversity does not deserve to be embraced. Diversity should be embraced throughout the entire school year and not only for a week.

Essentially, in order to embrace diversity for the entire school year, Bear Creek should provide lessons that teach the youngest “next generation” of freshman about racism, expand the content of its history classes, and provide daily quotations that teach students about different cultural aspects. Despite the steps Bear Creek needs to take to reach the goal of embracing diversity, it does not mean that Bear Creek is a school full of ignorant people. With each day that passes, the population of Bear Creek is slowly reaching the true American dream: life, liberty, and justice for all.