



Youth United for Community Action

Dear YUCA Family and Friends,

Hello everyone! I wanted to begin by introducing myself. My name is Francisco Preciado and I've been with YUCA as a staff member for over a year and a half now. You may or may not already know, but Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) is a grassroots community organization that is run and led by young people of color which work towards achieving social and environmental justice in our community and beyond. While we are located and grounded in East Palo Alto, our work also extends to the greater Bay Area and most recently with our Youth Environmental Justice Network we are now collaborating with organizations in the Central Valley.

For the last year and a half we have been working intensely to support tenants being threatened with eviction by an unscrupulous landlord. In East Palo Alto, a long standing community member Artemio is being forced to decide whether he should pay an unjust rent increase, buy clothes for his son, or pay essential bills. As a tenant on a fixed income, he asks me, "Why am I being increased an unfair amount? Not only do they want \$150 more, but in all the time I've been here, they've never made one repair. I even had to replace the carpet on my own, so my son could breathe better." This is what's happening in our community; we are fighting to survive. This is one of the countless stories that I've heard and this is why I cannot stop fighting for what is just. Whenever I'm tired from no sleep, being in long meetings, and reading court documents, I remind myself of Artemio's struggle. I know that we cannot remain passive and wait for change to come while our community is being displaced. We must act now!

And acting now is exactly what we are doing. YUCA is currently engaged in three campaigns in our community; environmental justice and accountability, affordable housing and tenant advocacy, and economic justice. In addition to these campaigns we are also engaged in community base building through EPA Link, which brings together community members to discuss issues affecting East Palo Alto. At a regional level we are working with Bay Area and Central Valley organizations to create the first ever Community Toxics Report, which will detail the environmental and health conditions of our communities. And finally at a statewide level, we are connecting with various youth organizing organizations to create a statewide platform that will unite the youth movement with underlying principles of how to achieve social and environmental justice.

In this time of hope for change to build a better tomorrow, we must recognize the work that our young people are doing today. It is this work that will be instrumental in keeping our hope alive. And it is with this understanding that I ask you as my family and friend, to please support with whatever you can give. Whether it is \$5, \$20, \$100, or more, it is all needed in order for us to continue doing this work. If everyone contributes even the smallest amount, we will be able to create a sustainable organization that will harness our young people's passion to build that positive vision for our community, our nation, and our world.

Thank you so much for your time, your contribution, and your support in sustaining our organization.

Sincerely,

Francisco Preciado



Youth United for Community Action Fall Update 2008

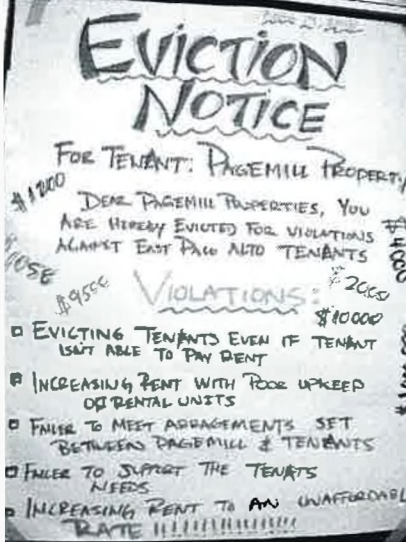


WE WILL NOT BE MOVED!!!!!!



"Baja la Renta" (lower the rent) and "3.2 is all we'll do" are chants that are uniting the community of East Palo Alto to fight against illegal rent increases by Woodland Park Management, also known as Page Mill Properties. Tenants like Arnold Hart, Angela Chiprez, Artemio Aboites, and Teresa Salazar have organized together in joining YUCA to implement the 1st of the Month Actions, in which tenants bring attention to their living conditions, personal circumstances, and hardships in their daily lives due to the rent increases. The tenants demand each time that Page Mill Properties hear their concerns, but continue to be ignored by the landlord. Every month there is a new activity that gets more creative each time it is done. Each 1st of the month action has had successful outcomes. One important outcome is the increase in number of tenants that have become involved in both the actions and campaign for affordable housing. As more and more tenants are engaged in this fight for tenant's rights, they are encouraging each other to take action and fight back by filing an individual rent adjustment petition, writing a letter to Page Mill, engaging in rallies, and attending the Tenant Association Meetings to organize against injustices in their homes.

In September and October tenants confronted Page Mill Properties head on in Palo Alto as they entered the double wooden doors requesting to meet with David Taran, the CEO of Page Mill Properties. Page Mill Properties has continuously expressed their willingness to meet tenants and community members, but our phone calls, emails, letters, and personal visits have all gone without response. As we have organized to combat Page Mill Properties unfair treatment of tenants and their families, the Rent Stabilization Board has been a staunch ally for tenants. The Rent Board has made a stance by affirming their belief in rent control. They have made changes to the Rules and Regulations of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) to clarify how certificate(s) of maximum legal rent(s) are calculated. Rent for tenants will now be calculated by adding the Annual General Adjustment Rate (AGA) to the lawfully paid rent of the prior year. This will hopefully prevent further rent increases well above the AGA. This year alone tenants have been increased two or three times, yet the living conditions inside their apartments remain the same.



Through our outreach efforts to tenants we have heard the same thing "Why am I being increased so much when the conditions in my apartment haven't changed at all?" Tenants have also told us that they don't mind paying the allowable legal rent increase, but they cannot afford to pay 20%, 40%, or 60% increases. Tenants have been increased as much as two to three times in the last year and are working hard to make ends meet. To bring to light the issues tenants are faced with, we published a tenant story book, detailing the lives and everyday experiences of families struggling to pay the high rent increases. Their current struggle is not just about affordable housing; it is about fighting for peace, dignity, and respect for people's livelihoods.



WELCOME



Dear YUCA Family, Friends, and First Time Readers,

We would like to thank you for reading our Fall 2008 Edition of Youth United for Community Action's Newsletter. There are several new exciting updates about our work in the last six months! You will hear about the consistent actions happening in our affordable housing campaign, including our 1st of the month actions. You will also read about our recent victories and award recognition. Our Youth Environmental Justice Network (YEJ) has now expanded to the Central Valley, where we are working to create the first ever community toxics report. We also collaborated with Silicon Valley De-Bug in San Jose to organize around and defeat Proposition 6. We hope that you enjoy everything that you read and that our work is as inspiring to you as it is to us. We hope to hear from you soon! Thank you very much and have a blessed day.



YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK EXPANDS: THE CENTRAL VALLEY CONNECTION



CLEAN WATER FOR ALL: AGUA LIMPIA PARA TODOS

This year in Youth Environmental Justice Network has been all about making connections. This past summer, Bay Area youth from East Palo Alto and San Francisco embarked on a weekend adventure to the Central Valley. Ever since the California Communities Against Toxics (CCAT) conference in 2007, youth participants in the network were able to connect not only to the issues, but to each other as well. We spent a day with the AGUA youth of the Community Water Center in Visalia and Kids Protecting our Planet (K-POP) in Kettleman City.

At each site, the youth were able to see environmental racism beyond their own communities. The youth of AGUA shared their stories and the negative effects of living with toxic water. Even though water is a human right, they are battling with the state and their local government for clean water. It is no coincidence that people are suffering from cancer, skin diseases, blindness, as well as mental health issues at a disproportionate rate in the Central Valley.

At K-POP, youth participated in a dialogue about the issues in Kettleman City with the ChemWaste toxic facility, and also regarding challenges and strengths with working against environmental racism. Youth were able to see similarities in tactics and approaches, as well as responses from the facilities to the communities. The discussion about



a chemical waste facility was not foreign to them because of the experiences in their own communities.

We finished the trip back in Visalia where we supported the Community Water Center with a press conference. This press conference was organized to give further exposure to the water issues in the Central Valley as well as to pressure the Governor to sign two bills that would help with the issues. YEJ youth spoke on camera as well as led chants at this event!

We are very excited to say that was only part one of the gathering exchange. At the end of October, Central Valley youth came up to the Bay Area and we were able to share our communities with them! Not only did we examine the issues in our communities, but we engaged in team-builder exercises, came up with a concrete plan to continuously communicate with each other, and finalized the plan for the Community Toxics Report! The Community Toxics Report will identify the environmental and health conditions of our communities. If you would like more information on the YEJ network, please check us out on www.youthunited.net.

NO ON PROP 6!!

YUCA joined forces with our brothers and sisters in the South Bay/San Jose area in order to come up with a collective strategy in order to defeat Proposition 6. This proposition would have tried youth as young as 14 as adults, expand "gang-related" felonies and lengthen sentences, deny bail to undocumented immigrants charged with certain felonies, and force entire families out of Section 8 housing if a background check was not passed. It would have also taken away billions of dollars from the much needed funding that goes towards education, health, and California's social services. We organized grassroots style through text messages, myspace, rallies, canvassing, registering people to vote, and going door to door in order to let people know that this proposition needed to be defeated. And on November 4th, Prop 6 was defeated by a landslide!



THANK YOU... THANK YOU...
We want to thank the following people and organizations who have supported YUCA with their time and money in the last six months:

Organizations, Individuals, & Volunteers

•Ada Ocampo • Adrian Avila • Adrian Marquez • Agustin Cervantes • Alex Tom • Alexandra Salgado • Alexis Alfaro • Alexis Fields • Amekia Sims • Ana Elizabeth • Araceli Gaona • Arnold Hart • Artemio Aboites • Asian Pacific Environmental Network • Asian Immigrant Women Advocates • Association of Funding Professionals-Golden Gate Chapter • Atziry Gutierrez • Baltazar Mendoza • Bernardo Huerta • Berta Guillen • Bianca Rodriguez • Bobby Butler • Bobby Julian • Bradley Angel • C & D Gielow • Californians for Justice • California Fund for Youth Organizing • Carlos Romero • Carmen Ochoa • Cecil Reeves • Center for Environmental Health • Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment • Charles King • Cheryl Smothers-Harris • Chinese Progressive Association • Christina Rodriguez • Christine Solari • Communities for a Better Environment • Connie Shahid • Consortium for Housing and Asset Management • Costco; Redwood City • Court Skinner • Critical Resistance • Daniel Callohan • Data Center • Donald Smothers • Douglas Fort • East Palo Alto Boxing Club • Earth Island Institute • Eden Diaz • Edgar Chavez • Elda Lilia Gaona • Eliza Smith • Enrique Alfaro • Ernesto Garcia • Ester Tavera • Fernando Castillo • For Youth by Youth • Francisco Cendejas • Free at Last • Gila River Alliance for a Clean Environment • Goro Mitchell • Great America • Greenaction for Environmental Justice and Health • Human Impact Partners • Hobeos Palo Alto • Homies Organizing the Mission to Empower Youth • Isaias Espinoza • Ivan Jimenez • James Chitty • Jeffrey Garcia • Jidenna Mobisson • Jose Galvan • Julio Alfaro • Kaori Tsnkada • Katrina Ellis • Keisha Evans • Laura Martinez • Le Tim Ly • Liliana Deanda • Lisa Llanos • Literacy for Environmental Justice • Lorraine Holmes • Los Hermanos de Stanford • Los Voluntarios • Luis Landeros • Margarita and Francisco Preciado • Marina Latu • Marlo Custodio • Mary Ann Ruiz • Melissa Kamura • Melissa Morales • Michael Francois • Milan Wiley • Monica Henestroza • Monica P. Regan • Movement Strategy Center • Nadinne Cruz • Nayeli Preciado • Northern California Grantmakers • Nydia Cardenas • Ora Johnson • Pastor Andre Harris • Patricia Finau • Pedro Chavez • People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights • Pete & Keisha Evans • Peninsula Interfaith Action • Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action • Prodigy Press • Rafael Garcia • Raging Grannies • Rainbow Grocery • Raj Jayadev • Randy Ashford • Roselyn Thomas • Saundra Webster • Sergio Rosas • Shareika Robinson • Sharon Smith • Silicon Valley De-Bug • Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition • South Bay Coalition to Defeat Proposition 6 • Stanford MEChA • Sundiata Acoli • Teresa Salazar • Timmy Lu • Turner Group Insurance Agency • Vicki Smothers • Victor Marquez • Wardell Bartlett • William Webster • Winnie Latu • Women's Earth Alliance • WorldCentric • Youth Community Services • Youth Together

Foundations

•Akonadi Foundation • California Endowment Foundation • California Wellness Foundation • Cricket Island Foundation • David and Lucille Packard Foundation • Edward Hazen Foundation • Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing • Grove Family Foundation • Hill-Snowdon Foundation • Jewish Fund for Justice • San Francisco Foundation • Silicon Valley Community Foundation • Surdna Foundation • Van Loben Sels/ Rembe Rock Foundation • William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

In-kind Donations

•Barry and Jackie Schmidt-Posner • Born Again Christian Center • Costco; Mountain View, Redwood City • Drew Health Center • MidPeninsula Community Media Center • Safeway; Los Altos, Menlo Park, Mountain View • Second Harvest Food Bank

Workshops

• County of San Mateo • De Anza College Institute for Civic and Community Engagement • East Palo Alto Mural Arts Project • Haas Center for Public Service • Pacific School of Religion • Safeway; Los Altos, Menlo Park, Mountain View

Keeping An Eye On Romic

Highlighted by the closure of the ROMIC facility in October 2007, this year has been quite a successful year in our campaign work; pushing for environmental justice and accountability. East Palo Alto has made great strides by kicking this polluter out of town. On the other hand, our fight is not over. The factor that distinguishes a true campaign victory is seeing it through to the end. Almost a year following the news that Romic was closing its doors, it is the actions of the Community Advisory Group that will determine the future of the ROMIC site.

The CAG is a group of community members from East Palo Alto, that is not resting until every inch of soil and every drop of groundwater beneath ROMIC is cleaned. YUCA started the CAG in order to oversee the USEPA as it attempts to clean up the contaminated Romic site. The CAG is a project of YUCA and the Environmental Justice Group (EJG) intended to provide a community voice to the cleanup phase of the closed facility. YUCA members have been reaching out to community members from around the town to finish the process of cleaning up after these fools.

After long deliberation, on July 28th the USEPA finally decided on its remedy plan for the ROMIC site. They settled on a remedy called cheese, whey and molasses; a mixture that they will inject into the ground causing the breakdown of toxic chemicals. In order to oversee this process, the CAG will be researching these methods, reading project status reports and communicating with the USEPA. The CAG is still recruiting community members committed to holding ROMIC accountable and protecting our community health. At YUCA we know that it's not over until Romic is a thoroughly remediated site. Until that happens, we will continue to keep an eye on Romic.



LEADERSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZING

RECENT RECOGNITION!

In the last few months YUCA has been recognized for our community organizing work, specifically for our recent victory in shutting down Romic.

Top 10 Youth Activism Victories:
Wiretap and Teaching Tolerance Magazines

Crissy Field Center's 2008 Community Heroes Award

National Philanthropy Day 2008: Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award

Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition Community Partner Award

Mid Peninsula Community Center Video Award



DEDICATION TO FROILAN CHAN-LIONGCO

On behalf of all the YUCA family, staff, and youth, we give our deepest condolences to Froilan's family. Froilan was an ex-employee of Romic who suffered 2nd and 3rd degree burns due to Romic's health and safety violations. We have always seen Froilan as a member of the YUCA family and will remember him as such. The Romic campaign work was never only about shutting Romic down; it was about building community, creating family, and ensuring that our future generations would be able to live, work, and play in a community that was not contaminated by a toxic waste facility. Through our relationship with Froilan, we did just that. He was always at the rallies, meetings, and YUCA gatherings. He was always making us laugh and had such great positive energy in spite of difficult moments. Froilan's positivity was contagious and he always encouraged us to remain optimistic. He was open, warm, and willing to share his story with anyone who would listen. He was a man full of persistence, dedication, and love. We will miss him, but he will remain in our hearts and will be remembered every day. For our work together, our times of tribulation, times of joy and sadness, we pay respect to Froilan Chan-Liongco.

(December 6, 1942-September 15, 2008)



STAFF

Anna Turner, FIRE Coordinator
Annie Loya, Director
Charisse Domingo, Associate Director
Francisco Preciado, Higher Learning Coordinator
James Turner, Administrative Coordinator
Kalonji Nzinga, Higher Learning Coordinator
Miriam Cruz Asst. Higher Learning Coordinator
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Bianca Rodriguez
Brenda Naranjo
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De'Antay Williams
Elizabeth Garcia
Flavio Garcia
Ovier Mariscal
Shantal Medrano
Thomas Williams

HIGHER LEARNING MEMBERS

Adrian Mendez
Aylet Torres

Youth United
a project of the Tides Center
2135 Clarke Avenue
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
Phone: (650)322-9165
Fax: (650)322-1820
Email: info@youthunited.net
Website: www.youthunited.net



Youth United for Community Action (YUCA)

2135 Clarke Avenue
East Palo Alto, CA 94303