

Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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Calendar

Monday, December 4, 2017 11:30 a.m.—1:00 pm Media Influences Planning Committee Home of Carolyn Elam 215 Bobs Lane, Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Tuesday, December 12, 2017 Tuesday, January 9, 2018 10 a.m.-noon LWVSCC Board Meeting Santa Cruz County Bank 720 Front Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Tuesday, January 23, 2018 1:00—3:00 p.m. National Program Planning Home of Sandy Warren 150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Saturday, February 10, 2018 Noon—2:00 p.m. Changes to Proposition 13 Scotts Valley Library 251 Kings Village Rd, Scotts Valley, CA 95066 For RSVP and lunch information see article Free and open to the public.

Tuesday, February 13, 2018 10 a.m.-noon LWVSCC Board Meeting Santa Cruz County Bank 720 Front Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Thursday, March 8, 2018 1:00—3:00 p.m. Local Program Planning Home of Sandy Warren 150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

National Program Planning

Tuesday, January 23, 2018 1:00-3:00 p.m. 150 Scenic Street Santa Cruz, CA 95060

In the coming months, state and local Leagues across the US will have the opportunity to offer program planning input for the 2018-2020 biennium. Members will consider whether our national League will continue its focus on the Campaign for Making Democracy Work or if the LWV should examine another pressing national issue. The national program planning process will culminate in June with adoption of a program of education and action at Convention 2018 in Chicago, Illinois.

In addition to setting priorities, this is an opportunity to learn about the League's positions on issues at the national level. Every position held by the League has been developed through study and consensus, and those positions shape the League's actions and advocacy efforts. A brief summary of the national League's positions can be found online. For a more comprehensive look, download Impact on Issues 2016-2018 Edition.

This grassroots process ensures that the League's priorities and mission come from its members. All members and prospective members can attend the National Program Planning meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2018 at the home of Sandy Warren, 150 Scenic Street in Santa Cruz.



Media Influences Planning Committee

Interested in how media influences voters? In spring, 2018, the LWVSCC will present a program on the topic, and the next committee meeting to plan the event will be from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm on Monday, December 4 at the home of the committee chair, Caroline Elam, in Scotts Valley. The meeting is open to all interested members. Bring a brown-bag lunch and your ideas!

The address is 215 Bobs Lane in Scotts Valley. That's off Lockwood Lane near Graham Hill Road (look for the wooden street marker with reflectors). The house is located on a side branch of Bobs lane called Cougar Court. Turn at the yellow fire hydrant. There are several parking places nearby on Cougar Court or on Bobs Lane. For more details, contact Caroline Elam at caroline.elam@gmail.com or (310) 567-0915 (text OK).

—Caroline Elam, Committee Chair



President's Message



When communicating about the League of Women Voters in our community at other groups and public meetings, I am amazed at how little most well-informed people know about our program and what our local, state, and national Leagues are doing outside of voter service. We are known for our excellent presentations on the pros and cons of ballot measures and for registering

voters; the League is also associated with the suffragists and the fight for women's right to vote. While these are very valuable and important services, as we move closer to the exciting 100th Anniversary celebration of our founding in 1920, let's all try to be informed about our program, which has guided so much significant social, political, and legislative action for so many years. Our January 23 National Program Planning meeting will be a time to review where we have been and to look to the future. As we approach the big celebration in 2020, your continued membership and enthusiasm are key to bringing about positive change.

—Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

Proposition 13 and Beyond

Proposition 13, a law passed to protect homeowners, has been manipulated by large corporations to keep them from paying their fair share. Smart reform done right will help restore fairness while protecting homeowners (including owners of apartment buildings), renters and small businesses. Learn more about efforts to reform Proposition 13 and other key issues from LWVC President Helen Hutchison on Saturday, February 10, 2018 from noon to 2 p.m. at the Scotts Valley Library, 251 Kings Village Road in Scotts Valley. This free event is open to all. To reserve your place, email league@lwvscc.org.

Attendees may order a box lunch or bring their own lunch. To order lunch, send a check for \$15 per person to LWVSCC P.O. Box 1745, Capitola 95010 with your order. Indicate number of lunches being ordered, and your choice of turkey, roast beef, or vegetarian (gluten-free bread available on request). Please also include contact information. Lunch includes fruit salad and chips.

Learning to Look: Seeing Slavery in our Community

Deborah Pembrook's personal experience with human trafficking led her to become a leading voice in our community advocating to eliminate human trafficking and to support its victims. California, a "hotspot" for human trafficking, ranks first in the nation in calls made to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, with the bay area, including Santa Cruz County, leading the charge. Pembrook led the panel discussion on human trafficking at our October meeting in Santa Cruz.

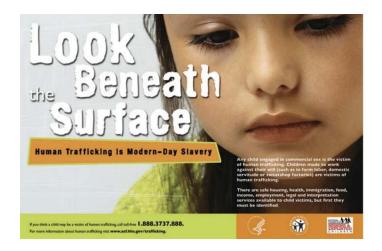
Human trafficking includes those trafficked for both labor (agriculture, domestic service, construction, and hospitality) and sex. According to a study done by the Urban Institute, labor trafficking victims experience force, fraud, and coercion, such as document fraud and withholding, extortion, sexual abuse, discrimination, psychological manipulation, torture, attempted murder, and violence and threats against family members. Many are paid less than the minimum wage or less than they were promised, or experienced other forms of civil labor exploitation, such as wage theft and illegal deductions.

The <u>Polaris Project</u>, a leader in the global fight to eradicate modern slavery, states that sex traffickers use violence, threats, lies, debt bondage, and other forms of coercion to compel adults and children to engage in commercial sex acts against their will. Under U.S. federal law, any minor under the age of 18 years induced into commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking—regardless of whether or not the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion. Sex trafficking occurs in a range of venues including fake massage businesses, via online ads or escort services, in residential brothels, on the street or at truck stops, or at hotels and motels.

Traffickers target vulnerable populations such as those in poverty, LGBTQ individuals, foster youth, immigrants, those who are homeless, and victims of domestic violence and other trauma.

Pembrook emphasized that the term prostitution should not be applied to victims of

human trafficking, that we don't have language to describe a person who is exploited for commercial sex. Using the language of the exploiter and describing what the victim has experienced as a crime deeply stigmatizes the victim. The word prostitution should not be applied to a person, especially not a child.



For a better look at this poster and more materials, go to www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/partnerships/look-beneath-the-surface

One of the problems with eliminating trafficking is that charges are difficult to investigate and prosecute. Victims may be too afraid of their abusers or too traumatized to testify. Often, perpetrators are charged with extortion, money laundering, or other charges just to interrupt the situation. The national human trafficking hotline is an important bridge between survivors and law enforcement, as many victims fear criminal charges.

Attorney Nancy Stephens spoke about the difficulty of prosecuting human trafficking offenders. In 1996, with the internet in its infancy, congress enacted the Communications Decency Act; Section 230 of the act attempts to protect internet companies from lawsuits for content posted or created by third parties. Although Congress intended for Section 230 to protect companies which try to filter content (but don't catch everything), that protection has been expanded by federal judges to provide a full immunity for online content, even if that content was encouraged by an online operator, and even if the website, in acting like a publisher, violated

another criminal statute. This loophole enables operators of online destinations for commercial sex, such as Backpage Corporation, to list children for sale with full immunity from liability. The film "I am Jane Doe" (available on Netflix) documents the plight of mothers of sex trafficking victims who tried to sue Backpage with little success.

Santa Cruz Police Detective Laurel Schonfield encouraged the community to be alert to signs of human trafficking and report them: "Please bother us," she quipped. You can report suspicious circumstances to law enforcement agencies on their non-emergency lines and let them make a decision on whether or not to intervene. Of course, in situations where someone is in immediate danger, call 911.



For a better look at this poster and more materials, go to www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/partnerships/look-beneath-the-surface

Signs of human trafficking include massage businesses where people come and go quickly, businesses open at odd hours, high turnover, tired workers who may live where they work, someone who has obviously been beaten up or is in distress, or children selling goods. Look for someone controlling where a person lives, their use of cell phones, their physical movements from place to place. Keep in mind that children may be trafficked, so watch for children behaving as though they are afraid of a controlling adult. Many victims feel invisible and ignored. Take the time to

notice something wrong, and trust your gut if something seems off.

The program finished with a presentation from the Santa Cruz Dress a Girl Around the World program, an organization that provides dresses for vulnerable girls everywhere. Having a new dress makes girls less susceptible to harm because it shows that someone is caring for her and raises her dignity and self-esteem. Each dress sports a Dressa-Girl label on the front to show that she is watched by an organization. The Santa Cruz group has distributed 14,000 dresses in 44 countries in the last 4 ½ years.

—Pam Newbury, VOTER Editor

Resources

National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-373-7888

TTY: 711

Monarch Services

Monarch Services offers immediate crisis response, including emergency shelter, support, and counseling, to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through their 24-hour crisis line.

24-Hour Bilingual Crisis line Línea de crisis disponible 24 horas 1-888-900-4232

Dress a Girl Around the World www.dressagirlaroundtheworld.com

Office on Trafficking in Persons www.acf.hhs.gov/otip

(An office of the administration for Children and Families (US Department of Health and Human Services)

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip

Posters:

www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/partnerships/look-beneath-the-surface

Lighting a Dark Circle Searching for Equity in Juvenile Justice

The experiences of our county's youth in the justice system highlighted the discussion of the panel at our November meeting. Panelists included moderator Sarah Emmert, director of community organizing at United Way of Santa Cruz County; Fernando Giraldo, Santa Cruz County probation chief; Julie Burr, Youth Violence Prevention Taskforce coordinator; Irene O'Connell, program manager for FoodWhat?!; and two youth representatives, Lissette Castillo and George Ramirez.

Fernando Giraldo gave an overview of changes in Santa Cruz County's probation department since 1996, when they housed 70 juveniles in a detention center with a capacity of 42: they were over capacity every day. At that point they faced a choice of expanding the facility or finding a better alternative to the typical model of juvenile detention that sees suppression, custody, and control as necessary to public safety. At the crossroads, Santa Cruz decided to radically transform their system and embark on a journey of justice reform. The department took the position that unnecessary detention is harmful, and that they would reduce recidivism and increase public safety by building the life skills and competencies of the youth they serve.

I always tell people that we should be working our way out of this, this is what we should do to have a safe community. I'll find something else to do.

Then-CAO (County Administrative Officer)
Susan Mauriello (now retired) brought in John
Rhoades to head the probation department. He
had been connected with the Annie E. Casey
Foundation (an organization focused on
improving the well-being of American children)
and brought with him a tool kit with strategies for
juvenile detention reform that emphasized
accurate use of data and focused on alternatives to
detention. Strategies included implementation of

an objective detention risk-assessment instrument to determine who can be safely released; hiring staff from the community that reflected the population being served; focus on reducing racial and ethnic disparities; and maintaining a balanced approach to working with law enforcement, schools, and the community. The foundation of this change is a system-of-care model driven by six essential values:

- Preserving families by keeping children in their homes with their families whenever possible.
- Collaboration among primary child-serving agencies to provide a coordinated, goaldirected system of care.
- Placing children in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs when out-of-home placement is necessary.
- Children benefit most from mental health services provided in their natural environments, where they live and learn.
- Family involvement and participation is an integral part of assessment, evaluation, and treatment.
- Culturally relevant and competent service delivery.



Fernando Giraldo, Santa Cruz County probation chief

"What we wanted to do was decrease the number of youth unnecessarily or inappropriately detained, reduce the number of youth who fail to reappear in court pending adjudication," Giraldo

said. They used the savings from not building a new juvenile hall and decreasing reliance on out-of-home placement and other facilities and redirected that money to hire more probation staff for easier-to-manage caseloads and, together with community partners, to develop services for those on probation such as the Azteca Soccer Program, the Luna

George R Sarah Emmert

Left to right: Irene O'Connell, George Ramirez, and Sarah Emmert.

Evening Center, day-treatment programs, and other support services for youth and their families.

Since 1996, juvenile bookings have decreased by 66%. The number of youth on probation has dropped by nearly 50%. Rates of juvenile felony misdemeanors have decreased by 75% since 1996. The average daily population of youth in detention actually dropped from 33 to 15. Since 2006 referrals to probation have dropped 56%. "That's good," says Giraldo, "We don't want more business. ... I always tell people that we should be working our way out of this, this is what we should do to have a safe community. I'll find something else to do."

You're trapped, you don't feel like you're ever going to get out.

"So as a system, we've been intentional about not using detention as a primary instrument for public safety. We've build a system that is based on evidence that detention is harmful and should be the last resort, and that caring, loving, compassionate community can have great results for our most vulnerable youth." Giraldo said. He now proudly leads a probation department that has been recognized by the Annie E. Casey Foundation as a national model site for the juvenile detention alternatives initiative since 2000, "We still have lots of work to do: we're not a perfect site; a model site doesn't mean perfect site."

Asked about challenges faced in the juvenile justice system, youth representative George Ramirez said, "First challenge is your attitude, the way you approach people..., you have to approach them with respect and honor and treat them right." He began by hating the rules, but realized that that was the only way to get out, and worked through the difficult task of learning how to do something he didn't like. He also struggled with the restriction of staying in his room, "You're trapped, you don't feel like you're ever going to get out."

Once on probation, he was offered many opportunities, but was determined to be self-reliant and make it on his own to earn his self-esteem. He did attend some programs, such as anger management and art sessions. While he hates the system, he now understands that "it's part of life. There's laws, rules. You have to follow them, but, you're not going to follow the rules, there's going to be consequences to your actions."

Rameriz works at FoodWhat?! and has had a good experience working on the farm and meeting new people. Currently a student at Sequoia High School, he plans to attend Cabrillo College and is interested in electronics; he wants to be an engineer. "System was scary," Ramirez said, "felt good to get out." Now he's focused on succeeding and making good choices in the future.

Youth representative Lissette Castillo grew up without the love and support of her parents, her father was never really around and her mother struggled with addiction. With things not going well at home, she was picked on at school. Being a very loving person, she would try to be nice, but people just knocked her down. "I guess I got bitter and got cold," she said, "I started hanging around with the wrong people, people that didn't care. I just started falling into the wrong steps."

When first on probation, Castillo wasn't used to the structure, "When they first came in, it was kind of hard, and I didn't want to follow the rules or go through with it. But I started to get to know the probation people and everybody's really nice. It was really hard, when you feel alone and you feel there's no way to see the light, you just bundle yourself in a dark circle. I'm really happy I got to be a part of probation, because without them I probably would have ended up, not somewhere terrible, but probably would have gone through more things or would have got myself in more trouble. They really took the time to understand me and to hear me out. They were there and supporting me. If I ever needed somebody, I knew I could talk to my probation officer or my teachers. They made me feel comfortable."

If you have parents, you know, love 'em. It could be hard without them.

The system provided Castillo many opportunities to meet new people who became positive role models and advocates in her life. Castillo's probation officer provided structure, help with problems, and help finding a job. Another counselor, Gail, helped empower her and motivate her to be herself, do good, and have a better life. The Luna Evening Center helped expand her horizons beyond Watsonville. Now 18 and off probation, she still has support from her social worker and is working at Del Pueblo Market in Watsonville.

Castillo says, while she used to be on probation, "probation doesn't justly represent who I am. It was just some stuff I was in at the moment." She credits the experience with helping

to get her life on the right track, in spite of what she lacked from her family. She advises other youth on probation that have family: "If you have parents, you know, love 'em. It could be hard without them."



Julie Barr (left) looks on as Lissette Castillo speaks.

"Healing is central to our work. without healing we can't really have another conversation," said Irene O'Connell on her work with FoodWhat?! "If someone is still in the midst of their cycle of unhealthy behaviors due to trauma and emotional impact there's no way to hold down a steady job or succeed financially." She describes FoodWhat?! as a unique youth empowerment and food justice organization that uses food farming and agriculture as a vehicle for youth empowerment. "It's a space to step out of a limited world view of identifying with past traumas or past mistakes. We are in the soil, we're cooking, we're eating together, and through all of the many varied components of FoodWhat?! there's a certain magic that happens where, at the end of the program, our crew feels like family and also provides economic stability and community that a lot of young people don't feel elsewhere," O'Connell said.

Healing, O'Connell says, looks different for each individual; they have to find their own source of healing and discover what tools they already have. At FoodWhat?! "we don't say, 'OK, now you're empowered.' We say, 'what do you need, what are you wanting to work on for yourself?'

and really allow for young people to identify for themselves what that is." Then staff comes in full force with support to provide that circle of space that that person needs to heal. "Supporting youth with getting jobs and going to school is important," O'Connell said, "but if they're still in the cycle of unhealthy relationships with other people or substances, it's going to be very difficult to succeed in other avenues of life, so healing is central."

We are in the soil, we're cooking, we're eating together, and through all of the many varied components of FoodWhat?! there's a certain magic that happens where, at the end of the program, our crew feels like family

Now in their tenth year, FoodWhat?! has been based in north county alternative education schools. In the past year, they became an independent non-profit and have replicated their program to south county. A recent surge in demand has challenged them to find a way to expand while still maintaining the depth of their program: "We want to keep our programming deep and personal and meaningful to each youth we serve, but still respond to this demand of people really wanting to be part of our program."

Julie Burr was on a trajectory leading her towards the practical choice of a career in business. After her father's homicide in 2010, Burr saw that the impacts of violence ripple through the entire community, so she changed course and got a degree in public health. Working with the Youth Violence Prevention Taskforce (YVPT) allows her to address violence from a public health perspective. The taskforce takes a public health approach to look at what affects youth, their families, and their neighborhoods to understand the root causes of violence and the social determinants that impact their lives. YVPT was created to fill the need for better alignment and coordination of violence prevention efforts across the county.

Project Thrive, a sub-project of the YVPT, seeks to address gaps in how the community is supporting and serving young men of color ages 16

to 24 and their families that live in the cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz and the Live Oak community. Key to this effort is training educators, health workers, community organizations, and law enforcement on how to create trauma-informed systems of care. Trauma-informed care recognizes the neurological, biological, psychological, and social effects of trauma, shifting the focus from "what's wrong with you" to "what happened to you?"

In October, Project Thrive held a conference in Santa Cruz that trained 200 service providers in the trauma-informed system of care. Recently, funding from the Department of Justice has been renewed through 2020, and more trainings are planned. Along with this, Project Thrive has mental health liaisons that work directly with law enforcement in the Watsonville Police Department, the Santa Cruz PD, and the County Sherriff's office. Plans are in the works for a forum on cultural responsivity in organizations and a restorative justice forum next spring.

When the discussion turned to the higher rate of incarceration of some cultural and ethnic groups in our county, unfortunately, all the panelists agreed that this was true. Giraldo referenced recent data: of the 20 youths in detention, 80% were Latino or youth of color. As with the national trend, while fewer youth are coming to the attention of the juvenile justice system, racial disparities have increased. Of youth currently on probation, 73% are Latino, 61% from the 95076 (the zip code for Watsonville). "It's one of the most stubborn problems that we face," said Giraldo, "and it's true of the adult system as well."

Some of the problems are related to how schools discipline, known as "the school-to-prison pipeline," this includes zero tolerance policies for expulsion that result in youth involvement with the justice system.

...of the 20 youths in detention, 80% were Latino or youth of color

O'Connell went over the historical roots of the overrepresentation of people of color in our incarceration system in the 1800s, when policing

became institutionalized and political pressure pushed police to respond more punitively to communities of color. Lack of economic opportunity in Watsonville forces young people to look for sub-legal and illegal income sources. The housing crisis also plays a role, as does the political imaginary of the people on decision-making

...the notion of being color blind just doesn't fly because that stops the conversation

boards who get to say who gets policed and what laws get enforced on whom.

While our county has been doing a lot to support youth, the goals of caring for neglected youth conflict with the role of responding to delinquency. We are moving in the right direction, becoming better informed and seeing the big picture as we dig to the root of where violence comes from. At the heart, said O'Connell, "it comes from pain, especially if we look at our political landscape of our nation right now."

Burr spoke to the "trauma suffered by communities of color purely based on the world that we live in, the everyday inequities in people's lives." We need to recognize the role that trauma plays in people's lives and actions, then find the root causes and address those factors.

Giraldo recognized that race is an uncomfortable conversation for many folks, but it's a necessary first step to unpack what's really going on at the intersection of race and the criminal justice system. He pointed out that many claim to be "color blind", but, he said, "As a person of color, a Latino, color is all around me, it's all I ever see, so it's an affront to people of color to say that you're color blind, because we're not. When I look around at folks in leadership positions. that's what I'm always looking for: someone that looks like me... the notion of being color blind just doesn't fly because that stops the conversation."

To ameliorate this inequity, Burr's YVPT works to ensure that organizations are culturally responsive and are continuing to have difficult conversations around race, building our learning and understanding of one another. Using data, we can show the need to use trauma-informed systems

to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community and to change the ways in which points of contact are made with youth across the county.

Giraldo said that it starts with hiring staff that reflects the community you serve, which allows better communication, development of a rapport, and breaking down barriers to ease fear and build trust. It's key for staff to have life experience that brings compassion and understanding.

Youth who were being remanded to custody for probation violations were primarily Latino youth who had technical violations: rule breaking. Giraldo asked, "How do you respond to someone who doesn't follow a court-order that has 110 things to do that no adult could do?" Understanding this led to restructuring of court orders and objective decision making about when a parole violation has happened. They now have a graduated response to violations that helps reduce the problem.

We need to recognize the role that trauma plays in people's lives and actions, then find the root causes and address those factors.

Kayla Kumar of Barrios Unidos spoke from the audience about the front-end of the criminal justice system, and referenced statistics putting our county as number 12 in the state for rates of felony arrests of youth, and third for Latino youth. She asked the panel how to address that issue.

Giraldo spoke to the mistrust in the Latino community, that they see law enforcement and run, then get chased, leading to their arrest. He thought this issue could be taken up by the criminal justice council.

Burr said that strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the community was one of three top priorities identified by their task force. To address this, several workshops have been held around the county this year to bring together law enforcement and community leaders to address those issues and discuss what actions could be taken to move from dialog to real change in the community. She sees this as a pilot testing and hopes to continue it as a county-wide effort.

The panel finished with a discussion of how the community can help. Irene O'Connell brought up the housing crisis, suggesting that those with an extra room in their house consider renting it at a reasonable rate to a young person. She also pointed out the difficulty south-county families have in traveling to juvenile hall, where there is no direct bus line, and suggested setting up a system to offer rides to families so they can visit their children. Business owners help by providing entrylevel jobs. "Holding conversations like this is powerful," she said, "There is a big concerted effort in this county to support our young people, but there's still work to be done."

Julie Burr encouraged people to join the YVPT, or just bring your neighbors together and talk about the issue, building connections and community support, really talking about the hard issues around race and inequity.

Look at data, said Fernando Giraldo, and not just the headlines, look at unbiased research. "Be informed," he said, "be open to hearing different perspectives, particularly the youth perspective."

—Pam Newbury, VOTER Editor

To view a <u>video of the event</u>, go to lwvscc.org/videos.

This free, public event was sponsored by the LWVSCC and United Way Santa Cruz County



Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members. Send your check payable to League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745. \$65 Individual annual membership \$100.00 Two members in a household \$30.00 Student membership Contribution \$ Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible. To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWV Education Fund. Name Address City State ZIP

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.