

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

"NEW WORLD OF EMERGING CULTURES"

SAN DIEGO, CA

NOVEMBER 2 AND 3 - 1990

Close to 500 people participated in a the "New Worlds of Emerging Cultures" Conference held in San Diego on Friday night, November 2nd and all day Saturday, November 3rd.

The purpose of the overall conference was to celebrate cultural diversity in San Diego and highlight the Americans All program as it has been conducted by 50 teachers in the San Diego schools.

AMERICANS ALL BRINGS COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND GROUPS TOGETHER WITH THE "FAMILY FRIENDSHIP QUILT".

The Friday Evening Reception was a community outreach event which focused around the creation of a 9 X 36 foot Family Friendship Quilt composed of over 315 eleven inch patches decorated by families and community groups. Each patch represents a family, organization or individual. The patches tell a a story about the background, values and concerns of each creator. Together, they tell the story of many people coming together, each with a unique perspective, and personality to create a colorful, rich and unique community of people symbolized by the quilt.

The Family Friendship Quilt is awesome in its size, diversity of ideas and its beauty. One cannot look at it without being aware of the high degree of family and community involvement that went into it. The organizations, families and individuals who contributed to the making of the quilt by creating patches and donating money or time are listed on the attached pink sheet. This list did not included everyone because people were still completing patches on the last day.

The quilt centerpiece is a specially designed logo symbolizing friendship with other people, with all forms of life and with the earth. showing adults, children and animals with hands joined around a tree with the earth as their background.

The Family Friendship Quilt was partially assembled with the help of young women attending the Lindsay Summit school which is a teen parenting program. The mothers and mothers-to-be

in this school worked on the quilt between feedings and diaper changes. This part of the quilt project was covered

by the San Diego Tribune with a story and a picture on the front cover of the Metro Section. The project was also highlighted in the Tribune's Neil Morgan column.

FRIDAY EVENING - 5:30 - 8:00 P.M. - A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

The Friday night celebration and quilt presentation opened with the reading of the a Proclamation from the Mayor of San Diego, which gave recognition to Americans All as making a significant contribution to intercultural understanding and harmony in San Diego - a highly diverse and ethnically balanced city. The proclamation heralded the work of the Americans All program in the City Schools and the teachers who are building self-esteem, encouraging an appreciation of heritage and family history and teaching about the "peopling of America" through the history of migration and immigration - both voluntary and forced - which has built our country and continues to create our multi-cultural society.

Supervisor Bilbray also made a proclamation and gave recognition to the Americans All program in the San Diego City Schools.

The evening featured an array of hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and entertainment by children from Gompers School, the Japanese School and the San Diego Girl's Club. During the first hour of the evening while adults people were mingling, the Paper Folders of San Diego had a table where children gathered and learned to create Origami birds and animals.

A presentation by Dr. Catherine Yi-yu Cho Woo, professor of Chinese at San Diego State, artist and writer, created a change of pace with Dr. Woo's quiet and deliberate manner. Holding a ceramic mask of her features, she began speaking to a hushed audience. Then, coming from behind her mask, she shared stories of her life and some of her beautiful poetry. Copies of her poetry, written in both English and Chinese were distributed to the guests.

Close to 400 hundred adults and children participated in the Friday evening festivities. The evening was truly a celebration of cultural diversity with the colorful Family Friendship quilt, children of the Japanese school all in traditional costume, Greek bazooki music, the Origami table, and the people of San Diego coming together to acknowledge the work of Americans All in the San Diego City Schools.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 3 - 8:30 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.
HIGHLIGHTING AMERICANS ALL - A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE
SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS.

On Saturday, approximately 75 teachers, teacher education students, presenters and exhibitors gathered from 8:30 a.m. until close to 4:00 p.m. to learn of Americans All and highlight the way the program has been used in San Diego classrooms.

EXHIBITORS DISPLAY MATERIALS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE TEACHERS

Participants entered the conference rooms to find 15 exciting and colorful exhibits by cultural groups and by businesses that provide multicultural education materials. The displays were outstanding. The Russian Refugee Program from the Jewish Community Center included highly valuable art pieces from Russia. Mrs. Diem from the Vietnamese P.T.A. had an exquisite exhibit of musical instruments, art pieces and handcrafts, Real Characters (performing puppets) featured their puppets and video examples of some of their works, Anti-Defamation League provided free appointment calendars.

The exhibit by the Japanese School featured Origami and had self portraits which each student had drawn. Kidz International, Lakeshore Inc., Spanish Books Inc., and World Book had an abundance of materials to supplement the Americans All curriculum materials. Other exhibits highlighted community organizations who work with families and children to meet needs of specific and diverse groups: The Girls Club of San Diego, Image (a support organization for multicultural families), the Logan Heights Health Center and Sunkisses and Habitats for Humanity.

TEACHER PRESENTATIONS: APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING ABOUT THE "PEOPLING OF AMERICA" WITH THE AMERICANS ALL CURRICULUM.

On Saturday Morning six presentations were made by teachers using the Americans All program. Presentations were made consecutively which gave all conference participants a chance to hear each of them.

Joanne Hickey - 2nd and 3rd grade - Fremont Elementary

Ms. Hickey shared poems and stories by the children. These stories came from stories read to the children about people from different countries who came to America. After hearing the story, the children put themselves in the place of one of the stories characters and told how they felt as a newcomer to America.

Karen Toyohara - 3rd grade - Hancock Elementary

Ms. Toyohara showed the video "Coming to America" about Ellis Island and the people who came through there to become American citizens. She had an exquisite exhibit of dioramas and other art productions of the children learned from the Americans All materials.

Rick Kaylor - Kroc Middle School

Mr. Kaylor started his presentation with a little test about well known christmas traditions and had each participant write where we thought the tradition came from (the Christmas tree, mistletoe, etc.). The correct answers were surprising and opened the doors to looking at the things that we think of as part of our "American culture" to discover that who we are and what we are as a people is the result of a widely diverse people from all over the world coming together.

Angela Morrisey - 4th and 5th - Paradise Hills Elementary

Ms. Morrisey made a brief presentation highlighting three of the stories that had been particularly helpful in supplementing the Americans All materials. She then shared poetry and stories by the children inspired by these stories and the Americans All curriculum.

Gloria Bannister - Americans All Coordinator, Chicago, Ill.

Ms. Bannister shared with the group the extreme difference between the Chicago schools and San Diego schools. In Chicago, she pointed out, the schools are highly segregated. People from diverse groups live separate from one another and don't have the truly multicultural experience that San Diego children are fortunate to have. She featured the creation and production of the Americans All song written especially for the Americans All program. A video of children learning and singing the song was extremely enjoyable.

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS: SPECIAL HELPS AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

1. A SPECIAL RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

Peter Oliver and Jim Rust of REAL CHARACTERS showed a video field trip to the bakery and discussed the use of puppets as a teaching resource to enhance children's learning. They elicited suggestions and input from the audience.

2. PARENT INVOLVEMENT - WHAT HELPS AND WHAT PREVENTS INVOLVEMENT AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND PARENT GROUPS:

Helen Kaminsky - Russian Refugee Program - Jewish Community Center

Ms. Kaminsky, herself an immigrant who came to America 10 years ago, spoke about the great difference in the life of American children from Russian children, especially Jewish children. In Russia, excelling was the only road to a full education. Russian Jewish children had to be better than the others in order to be allowed to go to college. Russian parents place a high value on learning, excellence and achievement and want their children to be pushed to accomplish their best.

Mr. Buonhong Khammarath - Counselor to Cambodian and Laotian families at the United Pan Asian Community.

Many of the Asian people who come here can't speak English. Some had no opportunity for education in their own country. He told of getting notices from the schools which said, "We need your help". He couldn't imagine what possible thing he could have to offer the schools. These new citizens have grown up with a high respect for authority. They expect the schools to do all the teaching and don't see themselves as having anything to contribute to their children's school experience. He recommended bringing parents in to translate to parents who can't speak English so that communication with parents can be improved.

Leonard - from Image, a support group for multicultural families.

He spoke of the organization Image and the kind of support they offer to families with interracial marriages. He spoke of some of the difficulties which parents and their children encounter and ways they can help each other and that teachers can help.

Vickie Montoya - Parent and active P.T.A. member

Ms. Montoya spoke of the importance to her and other Hispanic parents of good communication between the parents and the schools. She strongly recommended that all teachers make sure that the P.T.A. resource book be handed out to all children. This book is an excellent support for parents when they need assistance with a problem concerning their children.

Khalada Salaam-Alaji - Headmistress - Community Preparatory School

Ms. Salaam spoke about the special needs of African American children which prompted her and other parents to establish this private school. She spoke about their concern for teaching values, discipline, and for building self esteem in each child. In the Preparatory School, a high degree of parent involvement is required and she believes all parents should be actively involved in their children's education.

3. TEACHER SUPPORT - CATHY GOLDSTEIN - TECHNOLOGIES FOR CREATION

Cathy gave a brief and excellent presentation of ways that teachers can support themselves by creating their own experience through positive intention.

CLOSING:

The day, which was long and packed with the above presentations, ideas and resources, ended with a brief congratulations and good-byes by Gail Christopher, National Co-Director of Americans All. Gail shared with the group her pleasure and excitement in seeing the wonderful results of the Americans All program in San Diego.

Melanie Lococo, who planned and implemented all aspects of the Conferences ended with thank-yous to all who participated.

CONCLUSIONS