



**JUNTOS Steering Committee Meeting**  
**April 22, 2009**  
**Española Valley High School**

**Vision:** "JUNTOS, a youth-driven initiative to create a new future through unity, by embracing and valuing all people, communities, and cultures."

Time Started: 6:00

Time Ended: 8:00

Facilitator(s): Dulce Avita and Jolene Duran

In Attendance: Erwin Rivera (A), Cassandra Casias (E), Ashley Duran (E), Shenice Marquez (E), Dulce Avita (E), Jackie Avita (E), Tatiana Espinoza (E), Tania Espinoza (E), Claudia Espinoza (E), Ali Hamrayu, (L), Ben Schilling (L), Sierra Argo (A), Diane Toups (A), Lori Heimdahl Gibson (A), Jolene Duran (E), Francisco Simbana (A), Leandra Gallegos (E), Mr Lapcevic (A), Peggy Pendergast (A), Jenn Hanson Bartram (A)

**ACTION ITEMS GENERATED:**

| <u>Item:</u>                          | <u>Person:</u> | <u>Date Completed:</u> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Roster and forms for the Youth Summit | Jenn and Lori  |                        |

**Greetings and Introductions:**

Erwin – There are internship opportunities serving in the legislature. JUNTOS is now developed enough for a memorial legislature pass for a JUNTOS Day at the legislature for next year.

**Review Minutes** of last SC Meeting – March 16, 2009 at LAHS

Dulce read action items only. Minutes accepted.

**Student Exchange:** Dulce will not be able to attend. Brandon will go to school on Monday only.

Diane – All is not set yet, but it looks like Kayla and Maneesha will be hosting five EVHS girls. We will meet at 2:00 at the LAHS parking lot with all parents in attendance, and then we will be going to Peggy's house for a light snack.

**Youth Summit brainstorming:**

- Jenn and Lori will work on a roster with t-shirt sizes, addresses, parents' names and contact info., and parent's need to sign releases.
- Only 60 people are able to attend. We will send a packet of information and a post card in the summer to remind the people who have signed up. Need to recruit BEFORE school is out!
- Joe Zamora, Liz DeWitt Vigil will be the facilitators. Speakers? Art project? We have to start the ball rolling on it.
- Recruiting – yes, someone brand new can go to the summit. No pre-existing time with JUNTOS, although JUNTOS youth will have first opportunity if we have more than 45 youth apply.
- Erwin – RHP (Regenerate History Project) He will be available to present if we would like. Voting was unanimous to have Erwin present at the Youth Summit.
- Dr. Estefen Royal-Glavez - State historian
- Claudia – volunteered to make a presentation during the summit on Ecuador.
- Erwin – His two daughters offer an envisioning workshop for the year 2020. To get young people to look at their future. State historian. Get ideas from them.

- Children Youth and Family Division (CYFD) – Monica Stevens Cordova works with a planning committee we may want to be in contact with for the Summit.
- Lori suggested that we need to have a minimum of 2 meetings in May and 3 meetings in June.
- First Summit planning meeting is Monday, May the 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 at LAHS Speech Theater.
- Second Summit planning meeting is Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at EVHS in the conference room.
- May 30<sup>th</sup> birthday party for Dulce. Everyone is invited.

### **Authentic Dialogue:**

Lori explained what authentic dialogue means and the importance of it at each meeting. One of the first events JUNTOS sponsored was a workshop on race, racism and white privilege. Johanna Eager from Minneapolis facilitated the workshop (the content of the workshop is on the website, [www.losalamosjjab.com/juntos](http://www.losalamosjjab.com/juntos)). Johanna said that authentic dialogue is critical for this work. You can “rub elbows,” but there are big issues that are preventing the communities from getting along. We have to go in and address the tough issues. It takes great courage to talk about the real issues. Authentic dialogue is talking and listening about an experience with racism or something that we’ve observed or perceived. It’s one of our commitments to talk about the tough issues with the intent to reach a better understanding.

Michael – The most powerful tools you have are to develop your identities and your voices.

Diane – I have to say that when Maurice was talking at the very end of the last meeting about social justice and some intense things, Nat and I talked, and we were very uncomfortable with what he was sharing. It felt as though it wasn’t about sharing. It didn’t feel right. I was very uncomfortable.

Tania – I didn’t understand.

Michael – He was talking about not losing our cultures here in the United States. Everything gets homogenized. It’s important to keep your culture.

Ashley – It did seem pretty uncomfortable. It didn’t feel like it was uniting us.

Cassandra – It seemed like it was more about Mexican culture, not all cultures.

Lori – Maurice also came to the Adult Meeting and had some criticisms of JUNTOS activities. I asked him if I could meet with him. When we met, I asked him if he was angry, because it seemed like it at the last two meetings. He said that he wasn’t angry, and explained that he grew up in Chicago and experienced great racism and prejudice. He admitted he hasn’t worked through all his own personal stuff. He also feels an urgency about the situations in Rio Arriba County. . .the high drop out rates, etc. I told him that some of the people at the last SC meeting were uncomfortable with the content and tone of his presentation. I felt really good about our talk.

Michael – Nathana Bird and Maurice are very active – social activists. The discomfort should have been brought out that night.

Diane – It was not the place then. It wasn’t the appropriate time. And we were out of time.

Sierra - There are many emotions. I’m a bit confused, though, because what he said really speaks to me and what I’m interested in. I am so inspired with all of you. A question I have is, when is the time to talk about the tough stuff. When is it safe?

Francisco – We need to ask the young leaders about their direct experiences and then go from there. I was born in Ecuador. I am 100% Indian. I came here 33 years ago with no English. I didn't lose my culture, but I felt isolated a lot of times and wanted to cry. I learned to deal with it by remembering what is inside of me. . . who I am. I speak 4 languages, but the most important thing is the feeling inside. How does it affect you? America is a melting pot, but coming here is shocking. People are more receptive when you just tell your story rather than forcing them to accept you.

Sierra – In order for it to be safe, we use non-violent communication, like “I feel.”

Diane – “I” messages. Not a monologue, but a dialogue.

Dulce – When I came here, I didn't express myself very well, until JUNTOS. I really wanted to cry when I told my story. “Mojada” is what they called me. I got very angry, and they started running.

Michael – We are the torch. JUNTOS is the vanguard for bridging these gaps and differences. Many of our own communities speak about us. We have to build up our skin. That is part of making our identity.

Jolene – I recently had a bad experience at the post office. I applied early for Cornell and when I picked up the acceptance letter, the guy at the post office asked, “How does a girl from Española get into Cornell?” I didn't say anything. I just left and cried.

Lori – There will come a day when a comment like that will not bother you. . .inside yourself, you will be strong, like Francisco said.

Peggy – There is reverse discrimination, too. I was married to a man from Mora. The grocery store was filled with a lot of older people from Mora. They would not talk with me until they found out who I was married to; someone from their community and culture.

We had a discussion of a possible event on May 30. More information will be forthcoming.

Sierra – **YMCA job opportunities for the summer.** Earth Service Corps - 11-17 ages - environmental awareness and cross cultural awareness – a lot of outdoor projects – photography, plant trees, bowling - starting this summer in Española, too. Dates are June 1st through Aug 7<sup>th</sup>. For 14 yrs and up, we hire 9 youth from Española to do more trail and water shed work at \$9/hour, 36 hours a week, and we need 21 year and older youth leaders at \$11/hour. Yes Corp – volunteer group and pay a small fee 14-25, \$9/hour, leader positions 21 and up, \$11/hour. Transportation is provided from Española and the work is outside of Los Alamos.

**Russia Trip** Update - LASSCI (Los Alamos/Sarov Sister City Initiative) is fund-raising - the girls are getting there own spending money, and their church will sponsor a breakfast.

Lori – We want the 3 youth going to Russia to do a presentation at the Youth Summit.

Youth Summit Meeting will be May 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at the LAHS Speech Theater.

Notes by Jenn Bartram, [viewfinderm@yahoo.com](mailto:viewfinderm@yahoo.com)