Taking Steps for a High School in Glendale
By Alma Yanagui & Jorge Jimenez

The Utah Community Advocate Network (UCAN) aims to increase engagement in schools, to promote wellbeing, and pathways to higher education for families on the west side. They do this through collaborative partnerships with families, school staff and administrators, and other partners, with community members in leadership roles.

UCAN has spent the last year working with Glendale parents and students who would like to see a high school in their neighborhood. During this time, there have been many meetings and conversations at the Board of Education, with community councils, and with the SLCSD superintendent.

To illustrate their plea, the group is organizing a walk out from East High to Glendale Middle School. They invite decision-makers to join the walk that students take each day to and from school. The walk out will be on May 28 at 3:00 p.m., and all are invited to join it. Community members will also be taking names for their petition, and connecting with those interested in getting more involved. Please join this event to support better access to education for west side youth.

Cultivating Dialogue on Issues of Critical Importance
By Jake Erickson of Neighborhood House (from the Westside Coalition’s Annual Report)
Photos: Charlotte Fife-Jepperson

All six west side community councils expressed concern about homelessness to the Westside Coalition in 2023. To respond to this constituent feedback, 2nd Vice President Charlotte Fife-Jepperson was elected by the Coalition to organize an event that would identify potential solutions by bringing together those who suffer from homelessness, residents who feel its impacts, and organizations who work to address it.

Partnerships played a critical role in seeing the forum titled ‘Constructive Conversations About Homelessness’ play out. Salt Lake City’s Human Rights Commission, the University of Utah’s University Neighborhood Partners, and Living Room Conversations all joined forces with the WSC over the course of four months and nine planning sessions.

Each member of the 15+ planning committee was trained in the Living Room Conversations Format. These ‘hosts’ would serve as facilitators of guided discussions to moderate discourse between event participants in a friendly, humane manner.

Trained hosts served at eight different tables. Event attendees included west side residents, 17 members of the homeless community, and various tabling organizations who also participated in the moderated discussions. Importantly, each unhoused person was given one gift card of $100 to thank them for their attendance. The Homelessness Forum Planning Committee felt this gesture was vital to ensure the event was as inclusive as possible of people who suffer from homelessness.

With the feedback on homelessness collected in a variety of notes, the WSC is busy putting together a report on the forum. This report shall provide a model to the six community councils on how to best recreate similar events in the future.
UNP’s First Environmental Justice Partnership Manager & Resident Committee
By Sinia Maile & Kimberly Schmit

Since 2001, when UNP founder, Irene Fisher, began having conversations with west side residents, there was a call for support in facing the burden of pollution in their neighborhoods. It was becoming more known that the adverse effects of these toxins weigh heavier on the west side due to the excessive industrial activities and large-scale polluting projects in the area that result in bad air quality, high health risks, and poorer quality of life. In response, UNP has supported many partnerships in the area of environmental justice and education. Recent examples include partnering with the University of Utah’s Sustainability Office to convene residents to help shape the U’s Climate Action Plan, supporting Hartland Community 4 Youth and Families, and the Natural History Museum with A Climate of Hope, and providing connections for the U’s Sparc Lab’s project, Growing Educational Pathways for Food Sovereignty.

While these efforts have had positive impact, in 2023, with support from Salt Lake City’s Sustainability Department, UNP has been able to take action in a more comprehensive way. Specifically, funding from Salt Lake City Corp. has allowed for hiring of UNP’s first Environmental Justice Partnership Manager, and the creation of a nine-member Environmental Justice Resident Committee (EJRC). Together with staff from SLC’s Sustainability Office, the EJRC, is working to ensure that the strengths, vision and goals for west side SLC and West Valley City residents are included in Salt Lake City’s Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant and the Greater Salt Lake Area Clean Energy and Air Roadmap (CLEAR). The committee also comes together to move forward their own community environmental justice projects, and build partnerships with other community, university, and institutional partners. Look for more info about the EJRC in future UNP publications!

Leading this work is Sinia or “Nia” Maile, the new Environmental Justice Partnership Manager. Though her career has mostly been in criminal justice and youth advocacy, as a Tongan-American woman her intersectional identity has informed her view on how social and environmental justice are fueled by the same flame: the undervaluing, commodification, and exploitation in all forms of life and natural resources. As a native to West Valley City, she is able to see how climate change impacts of her local community mirror the challenges faced in her motherland of Tonga. Although these communities aren’t major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, they both are among the most vulnerable and face the heavier consequences that come with it. Nia hopes to be able to share her advocacy skills to amplify the voices have often not been heard and learn how to creatively engage the community in restoring the relationship with the people and their planet.

Partnership Brings Community to Museum for Reciprocal Learning
By Lisa Thompson & Lynne Zummo, Photo; Zubaidah Sadeq

On two Saturdays this winter, Hartland Community 4 Youth and Families (HC4YF) organized trips for over 200 community members to the Natural History Museum of Utah (NHMU). At NHMU, field trip participants enjoyed lunch and explored the museum, with many visiting the new exhibit A Climate of Hope. Opened in November 2023, A Climate of Hope aims to help visitors understand the profound impacts of the changing climate on Utah’s landscapes and people, while also fostering a sense of rational hope that Utahns can work toward a healthy, prosperous, low-carbon future. Not only did many HC4YF community members visit the exhibit, several also participated in research that is underway to understand visitors’ learning within the exhibit. To do so, families wore cameras and audio recorders to document their experience, while also answering survey questions.

This research and the HC4YF visits to the museum are supported by a collaborative project led in partnership by UNP, HC4YF, and NHMU. The overarching goal of the project is to build new knowledge about how to communicate and foster learning around the daunting issue of climate change across the many, diverse communities of Salt Lake City. Studying visitors at the new exhibit is one way the team aims to reach this goal. Another key piece involves the newly established Climate Community Board, composed of young adult leaders from across the west side. In addition to ongoing work to create and launch new ways of teaching and learning about the climate, board members facilitated the HC4YF trips to the museum, welcoming visitors and helping them connect with A Climate of Hope, as well as other exhibits and resources in the museum. As part of this project, HC4YF plans to lead several more trips to the museum in the coming months. Talk to Coach Juan to join!
Breathe 4 Trees Takes Root
By Nancy Drozdek, Photo: Freda Sauni

Breathe 4 Trees started as a project in a WLI Fundamentals class by four women of color who care deeply for the environment, culture, family, and diverse community. We saw that the class gave us a great opportunity to help our community in the best way possible while tackling climate change. Our objective is to plant trees on the west side. Often we find ourselves traveling to the east side to bask in their beautiful parks and we couldn’t understand why we have so few mature trees to provide shade while we watch our children and grandchildren play outside. Our community loves the outdoors and our cultural values are entwined with the land and the environment. Yet we on the west side are vulnerable to some of the most dangerous pollutants due to the multi-lane highways and numerous industrial plants on the west side. This is a health problem mainly for our elderly and young children.

We aim to educate, inspire, and care for the health and wellbeing of people here on the west side, while beautifying and creating green spaces in our backyards. The name itself Breathe 4 Trees works both ways. If we take care of the land, the land will take care of us. It’s a network essential to our survival. We have to be stewards of the land one tree at a time. In turn, the trees we plant, will clean the air we breathe, provide shade, shelter, and protection for us to live for generations. We recently got our first break with help from UNP with partners Tree Utah and the U. We applied and became proud recipients of a grant from Nature and Human Health Utah. We are so excited and eager to work and make this happen this fall. What makes Breathe 4 Trees and our partners so unique, is that we are able to take our diverse mixture of cultures—including our indigenous Native American, Latino, Asian, African-American, European, and Pacific Islander community on the west side and plant trees together with the blessings of our elders present in storytelling, with young children observing and making memories to last.

In Hawaii, we say “Hele mai E komo mai” which means, “Come, let’s get together as a community!” We invite all to our first planting in the fall. See you there!

American Latin Teachers Association
By Ennio Cardozo

Utah nonprofit American Latin Teachers Association (ALTA) opened in 2022. Primarily made up of teachers and social workers from Venezuela, it started after two of its founders obtained their teaching licenses. They wanted to create a foundation dedicated to informing, advising, and guiding Latino teachers and professionals on the processes and requirements to be able to teach in K-12 schools in the United States. These teachers faced barriers such as the management and learning of the English language, acculturation, migratory grief, lack of knowledge of the licensing process, and understanding how the school system works here. This experience informed their decision to support professionally qualified Latino migrants to be able to practice their professions, and promote the enculturation and labor integration of Latino teachers into K-12 schools in the U.S. They also seek to offer alternatives to the migratory grief and risk factors that may threaten emotional, mental, and physical health experience of this immigrant population.

With the belief that Latino teachers can contribute to the construction of an inclusive and tolerant society in the face of contemporary migrations, ALTA has given around ten face-to-face and online training workshops with an average of one hundred participants for each. Attendees have been from many states, including Utah, Florida, and Texas. They have also mentored approximately fifty licensed people who are currently teaching in states across the country. ALTA has also advised non-education professionals to obtain temporary teacher licenses and have guided on the SB-35 Act in Utah that promotes licensing for foreign professionals in areas such as dentistry, architecture, psychology, nursing, administration, and many other areas vital to the development of communities in Utah.

To contact ALTA, you can reach president, Ennio Cardozo at 385-285-9073 or secretary, Mariflor Medina at 801-577-9548. You can also contact ALTA through the Instagram account @americanita or visit at the UNP Hartland Partnership Center by appointment.
Upcoming Events

**Utah Community Advocate School Walk Out Event**
- **May 28** - 3 p.m. East High School to Glendale Middle School

**Partners in the Park**
- **June 11** - Jordan Park, 6 - 8 p.m.
- **June 25** - Riverside Park, 6 - 8 p.m.
- **July 9** - Parkway Park, 6 - 8 p.m.
- **July 30** - Northwest Community & Recreation Center, 6 - 8 p.m.
- **August 23** - Centennial Park with Healthy Start West Valley, 4 - 8 p.m.

Front feature image again celebrates the extraordinary public art by Bill Louis (Bilts Louis Art). This mural features the late community leader and activist, Margarita Satini (1970-2020), and is located in the “Og-woi People’s Orchard and Garden” in Rose Park. If you aren’t yet familiar with this community collective garden, be sure to take some time to learn about it at og-woi.org

Newsletter design and editing by Jewel Morgan.