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Northern California Consortium Promotes Peace in the Bay Area

As part of a national partnership with PeacePartners, Inc.[™], member centers of the Northern California Neighborhood Networks Consortium (NCNNC) will be participating in violence-prevention workshops and trainings. Through this partnership, consortium member centers will join the growing number of community-based organizations and schools utilizing the anti-violence principles of the PeaceBuilders® Program.

Reducing Violence, Improving Communities

PeacePartners, Inc., is the facilitator of PeaceBuilders, a renowned anti-violence youth program that has transformed the climate of many organizations, making them peaceful, productive, and safe places for children, parents, staff, administrators, and the community. PeaceBuilders addresses risk factors, which predict violence, bullying, drugs, and tobacco usage, and other factors that can hinder a safe and positive environment where a Neighborhood Networks center exists. By recognizing these factors, the PeaceBuilders program can raise academic achievement, help develop positive social skills, and build character using simple, research-based tools. Studies have shown that participation in the PeaceBuilders program reduces aggression, promotes language skills, creates a sense of inclusion for special needs children, increases parenting skills, and fosters safer communities.

In September, the Neighborhood Networks National Partnership team met with Michelle Molina, president of PeacePartners, Inc.; Kate Young, board president of NCNNC; and Arturo Garcia and Jie Dong, member representatives of the consortium, to discuss partnership implementation plans. All who attended the initial meeting expressed enthusiasm about the newly formed partnership and the significant impact such a program will have on participating centers.

Meeting Specific Center Needs

As one piece of the partnership, PeaceBuilders Certified Trainers will provide participating centers with three 1-hour training sessions tailored to address the specific needs of the centers. The training sessions can accommodate as many participants as the host center would like to include, and the only requirement is that centers provide adequate space and participants. Additionally, after the initial training workshops, PeacePartners, Inc., staff will be available to assist with application of the program and to answer questions from Neighborhood Networks staff and volunteers.

Young echoes the sentiments of the consortium when she says, "We were all very excited to hear about PeacePartners, Inc., and the amazing program they have to offer our affordable housing communities. Personally, I am very excited about bringing this program to my properties. I am using it as a character education program in our afterschool program and adapting it for use at our senior

properties."

Emphasizing the importance of buy-in when executing a successful program, Young says, "It is crucial that we get buy-in from our agencies and all involved members of the team. In the case of our Neighborhood Networks centers, that means involvement from property managers, maintenance personnel, in addition to others who have frequent contact with residents."

Providing Insight and Team Building

Young hosted the first training within the consortium at her center in December. The group of 15 participants included service coordinators, activities leaders, property managers, and maintenance staff. Young was very pleased with the workshop, "The best part of the workshop was when they covered conflict resolution and tools for diffusing anger. This workshop gave us all great insight into the thinking of children and their emotions." Further highlighting the community-building goals of this partnership, Young notes that the training served as a team-building exercise for her staff as well.

The consortium is currently identifying host centers, and trainings are scheduled for the fall and winter. This partnership promises to be a useful learning experience for Northern California Neighborhood Networks Consortium members.

For more information about the Northern California Neighborhood Networks Consortium, please contact:

Kate Young
Northern California Neighborhood Networks Consortium, Board President
Palo Alto Housing Corporation
Oak Court Apartments Office
845 Ramona Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301
E-mail: kyoung@paloaltohousingcorp.org
Phone: (650) 326-0111

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20410
Telephone: (202) 708-1112 [Find the address of a HUD office near you](#)