

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONSORTIUM

RO CENTENNIAL CONGRESS

BY LILY RAMOS

On November 5-6, 2004 the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region held a Regional Centennial Forum in Sacramento, CA to commemorate a century of service. It was held to provide a forum for discussion regarding the agencies' past, present, and future. The forum reviewed the first 100 years of the Forest Service, seeking to identify current and future challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for the future, as well as recognize accomplishments to date. Central California Consortium (CCC) staff attended the forum, along with fellow Forest Service employees, public interest group representatives, and the public.

CCC program director, James Oftedal, served as a panel speaker for the session (*pictured, top right*) entitled, "Meeting the needs of a culturally diverse society". During the session, Oftedal stressed the need to diversify the agencies' workforce. He shared some the CCC's accomplishments and stated, "By creating partnerships with non-profit



organizations, colleges and universities, and community based organizations, we have strengthened our efforts in providing jobs to underserved youth of our community. As an agency, we must reach out to communities and work to build strong *relationships* built on trust, instead of simply partnerships".

As testimony to the CCC's strong relationship with the community, partners were present to show support for the CCC and provide recommendations on how to better serve communities. Community leaders included Victor P. Lopez, Mayor of Orange Cove; Roy Rodriguez, Orange Cove City Council Member; and Ben Vue, Hmong community entrepreneur. Mayor Lopez (*pictured, top left*) and Ben Vue suggested creating larger camp grounds for Hispanic and Hmong families and emphasized the importance of having the agency reflect the community. They both recommended hiring multicultural and bilingual forest rangers, who can communicate with Hispanic and Hmong families. Both Lopez and Vue showed their appreciation for the CCC and the positive impact it has had on the Hispanic and Hmong community in the central valley. After the session, people took the opportunity to network. Pictured at the bottom left (*left to right*) is Ben Vue; Rick Alexander, Acting Director of Public Affairs; and Bao Vue, CCC Asian Liaison.

The Washington Office Centennial Congress will be held in Washington, DC, January 4-6, 2005. As testimony to the success of the CCC, four of its student participants will be traveling to DC; 2 as region 5 delegates and 2 as youth panelists. Martha Maciel, Public Affairs Specialist, and Bao Vue, CCC Asian Liaison, have been selected as Region 5 delegates. Alyse Charley, Reedley High School student, and Alba Mercado, College of the Sequoias student, will serve as youth panelists in Washington DC. Additionally, CCC Director and Centennial Congress Youth Panel Committee member, James Oftedal, has been selected to serve as the youth moderator for the Washington DC event.



USDA Forest Service



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This quarter has been really exciting. We have been able to help build a bridge between the community and the Forest Service by having the communities' needs heard at the Regional Office Centennial Congress. It's been rewarding to see our youth benefit from leadership opportunities like the State Fair. We celebrated our 6th Annual Leadership Banquet to recognize students for their hard work and parents for their continued support. The CCC and Generation Green club served as a great team, helping those less fortunate in the Making Spirits Bright' charity event. We were excited to celebrate the new year outreaching at the Fresno Hmong International New Year celebration. As this new year begins, it is the CCC's goal to continue educating the Forest Service on underserved communities; educating the community on natural resource issues; empowering students through leadership opportunities; and helping to diversify the Forest Service.

- James Oftedal
CCC Director



GENERATION GREEN BANQUET 2004

BY LILY RAMOS



On October 7, 2004 the Central California Consortium (CCC) hosted the 6th Annual Generation Green (GG) Leadership Camp banquet. The banquet recognized the GG students' work at the Sacramento State Fair from August 20 - September 6, 2004.

Each year juniors and sophomores throughout central California apply to participate in the GG Leadership Camp, where students educate the public on conservation, natural resources, and fire safety. For many of

the students this was their first "real" work experience, outside of working in the fields. The students were selected from Reedley, Roosevelt, Parlier, Kingsburg, and Duncan Polytechnical High School.

As testimony of it's support to the CCC, Reedley High School (RHS) has hosted and catered the GG Banquet for the past 6 years. RHS Principal, John Campbell, welcomed everyone and thanked parents encouraging their students to participate.

CCC Director, James Oftedal, praised the students for their work and introduced the Masters of Ceremony, Ricardo Cortez and Marisela Gonzalez. Student groups made presentations on their assigned topic in English, Spanish and Hmong. Group presentations covered topics such as the responsibility of serving as crew leaders and teaching children to dial 9-1-1.

Pictured above: Francisco Andaluz, State Fair participant, gets interviewed by Channel 21 during the GG banquet.

MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT 2004

BY LILY RAMOS

On December 5, 2004 the Central California Consortium (CCC) and Forest Service employees helped to decorate the 11th Annual Making Spirits Bright charity event, which was held at Webster Elementary in Fresno, CA.

On December 4, 2004, the day before the event, the CCC and Generation Green (GG) club members helped to decorate the selected elementary school. After working hard to get all the trees decorated and walls decorated, they gathered at a nearby pizza parlor to celebrate their accomplishment and discuss the importance of giving back to those in need.

Forest Service staff served food and translated for Hmong and Spanish speaking families. Forest Service staff donated and distributed gifts and decorated Christmas trees for each of the needy families. Sue Exline, Public Affairs Specialist, and Bao Vue, CCC Asian Community Liaison, helped unload gifts donated by SO employees for needy families (*see picture above*). During the traditional Christmas style meal, local entertainment was provided and included traditional Hmong and Mexican dancing.

CCC director, James Oftedal, stated, "The Forest Service once again came together to help make 'Making Spirits Bright' a success. Everyone made a difference; whether it was in donating gifts, cutting down trees, helping decorate, translating for families, or serving food. I am especially proud of the Generation Green Club members for their willingness to volunteer year after year." (Pictures continue on page 3)



MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT 2004 (continued from page 2)



Pictures: A - Hmong traditional dancer from Webster Elementary School at Making Spirits Bright. B - Michael Perez, SO Acting Civil Rights Officer, helps serve food to needy families and volunteers. C - Generation Green (GG) club members serve as volunteers and help fold programs for the charity event, along with GG club Co-Advisor, Wendy Reynoso.

HMONG NEW YEAR

BY BAO VUE

The Fresno Hmong International New Year celebration was held December 26, 2004 through January 1, 2005 at the Fresno Fairgrounds in Fresno, CA. The Fresno New Year celebration brought Hmong people from throughout the world together to celebrate the New Year. People from around the nation and overseas attended, including people from Laos, Thailand, France, and Australia. It is important to note that Fresno has the largest Hmong population, with over 30,000 Hmong people.

The Sierra National Forest Service (SNF) Fire Prevention Team



and the SNF Supervisor's Office (SO) staff, held an information booth throughout the Fresno Hmong New Year. The SNF team answered the public's questions and provided valuable information on recreation, job opportunities, and campfire permits. CCC Asian Community Liaisons, Bao Vue and Blong Vang helped organize the Forest Service's information booth and also served as Hmong translators.

Bao Vue stated, "Our team did a wonderful job in reaching out to the Hmong community. The staff was friendly and accessible, so many people were able to learn about the Forest Service and it's mission of 'caring for the land and serving the people'." Blong Vang added, "I think the community sensed that we wanted to be there and help them better understand the Forest Service. The fact that we were able to communicate in the Hmong language really helped us break the ice."



Pictures: 1- Ladies dressed in traditional Hmong clothes. 2 - Forest Service staff outreaches at Hmong New Year (left to right): Bill Sanders, Fire Prevention Officer; Blong Vang, CCC Asian Liaison; and Her Vang, Fresno State student volunteer. 3 - Forest Service staff outreaches at Hmong New Year (left to right): Gayle Pearce, SO External Auditor; Maria Herrera, CCC Accounting Technician; Brian Grossman, Wildland Firefighter Apprentice; and Martha Maciel, SO Public Affairs Specialist.

GENERATION GREEN CLUB OFFICERS AT REEDLEY HIGH SCHOOL

BY WENDY REYNOSO



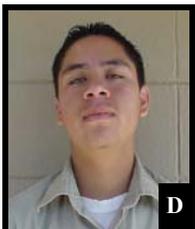
A. Marisela Gonzalez, 12th grade Reedley High School. As Club President, she represents the Generation Green club and runs all club meetings. Marisela states, "My goal as President is to provide more extracurricular activities for students. These experiences will help them gain valuable experiences, which will help them throughout their lives."



B. Ricardo Cortes, 12th grade Reedley High School. As Vice President, he assists the President in some of her duties and will take the president's responsibilities in the event that the president cannot fulfill her term. Ricardo states, "I want to get more members involved in club events and help increase male participation."



C. Leticia Aguilar, 12th grade Reedley High School. As Treasurer, she is in charge of all financial responsibilities. Leticia says, "I want to provide more funding for members to go on field trips. I will help by assisting to organize successful club fundraisers."



D. Rogelio Abraham, 11th grade Reedley High School. As Activities Director, he develops committees for all activities and club events. Rogelio says, "I like my position because I get to meet new people and network."



E. Cecilia Rodriguez, 12th grade Reedley High School. As Secretary, she maintains all written articles and prepares the agenda for Generation Green meetings. Cecilia states, "I want to get more involved in club activities and learn how to take proper notes for college."



F. Luis Abraham, 12th grade Reedley High School. As Sergeant of Arms, he maintains order in all Generation Green meetings. Luis states, "I'm excited about this position because I want to give back to the club. Generation Green has helped me improve my public speaking skills and I am thankful."

G. Gabriela Lemus, 12th grade Reedley High School. As Sergeant of Arms, she is responsible for keeping order and ensuring that meetings run properly. Gabriela states, "Generation Green is a unique club, I want to engage more students in being part of the club."

H. Norma Solorzano, 10th grade Reedley High School. As Freshmen/Sophomore Representative, she represents the underclassmen at club meetings. Norma states, "Generation Green has helped me overcome my shyness and taking this role is helping me interact with other students."



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The CCC is a minority outreach and recruitment program funded by the USDA Forest Service, serving the San Joaquin Valley. Since its inception in 1997, the CCC has placed over 400 minority and women both regionally and nationally.

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