



CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONSORTIUM

FALL 2005



A USDA FOREST SERVICE PROGRAM

12TH ANNUAL MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT

BY ELVA PEREZ

The 12th Annual Making Spirits Bright event took place on December 3, 2005 at Susan B. Anthony Elementary in Fresno, CA. The Sierra National Forest has been a partner in this charity event for 12 consecutive years. This year, the event hosted 31 economically disadvantaged families, including families from the Fresno County EOC Sanctuary. The event included a magician, Hmong dancers, a choir and a visit from Santa.

Sierra National Forest (SNF) employees made a large contribution by taking time to cut down 31 trees, donating gifts for 15 families and volunteering throughout the event. Generation Green students (pictured at top right) were there to help decorate the trees and facility the night before and were there to help serve and clean on the day of the event.



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Blong Vang, CCC Asian Liaison, stated, "It was a heart warming experience to see the smiles on both the children and parents faces". The Fresno County EOC recognized the US Forest Service and other partners this year for their contributions. Michael Perez, Bill Brown, Wendy Reynoso and James Oftedal accepted the plaque on behalf of Sierra National Forest Employees (pictured at left).



JOIN US FOR 20TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL HMONG NEW YEAR IN FRESNO, CA

BY BAO VUE

The 20th Annual Fresno Hmong International New Year is being held in Fresno, CA at the Fresno Fairgrounds, December 26th through January 1st of 2006. The seven day long celebration is one of the largest Hmong New Year celebrations throughout the United States. This celebration attracts people from around the nation and overseas, including people from Laos, Thailand, France, and Australia.

The Central California Consortium (CCC) and Sierra National Forest Fire Prevention staff will once again staff an information booth at the event. Bao Vue and Blong Vang, CCC Asian Liaisons, have been organizing outreach efforts at the Hmong New Year for the past four years. Bao states, "We have been able to reach the Hmong community throughout the nation and we are teaching them about the Forest Service." Blong adds, "We are looking forward to educating the Hmong community on how to take care of our natural resources and informing them about Forest Service career opportunities as well".

Everyone is invited to attend this event, whether you would like to volunteer at the booth or simply enjoy the celebration. Admission for this event is three dollars and parking is five dollars. There will be plenty of authentic Hmong food for sale, live entertainment, and over 22,000 people a day. If you are interested in more information regarding this event, please contact the CCC and ask for Bao or Blong at (559) 297-0706 Ext. 4962.

USDA Forest Service

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



"This fall has been very exciting for the CCC. We celebrated our 7th annual Generation Green Banquet to congratulate the students' on their work at the California State Fair. CCC Staff members had the opportunity to attend the Forest Service's Women's Conference in Sacramento, CA. I was honored to receive an award from the Hmong community. We are once again staffing an informational booth at the Hmong International New Year. We look forward to continue working with our partners, building relationships and building on our success."

- James Oftedal
CCC Director



7TH ANNUAL GENERATION GREEN BANQUET

BY FABIAN GARCIA

On October 4th, 2005 Generation Green (GG) celebrated its annual Banquet in honor of the students who attended the California State Fair Leadership Camp and the parents who supported them in this endeavor. This year the banquet was used as a platform to appreciate the people who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to boost the success of the Leadership Camp by making the students feel at home away from home. Among these great mentors are the Sierra National Forest Fire Prevention staff, Pete Marquez, Midori Iwasaki, and Larry Iwasaki (lovingly referred to as 'coach') and Kimo Kimokeo.



Pete Marquez, retired from the California Department of Forestry (CDF), has always been very supportive of the GG students. He has demonstrated his support by making himself available to students who are shy or struggling with public speaking at Camp Smokey.

"Coach" and Midori Iwasaki have been strong and vital supporters of Generation Green at Camp Smokey. They volunteer every year as chaperones and drivers for almost the entire duration of the fair. Their support is invaluable since many students look to them for parental love and support. They truly have big hearts and are devoted to the development of the future leaders of America.

Kimo Kimokeo, Forest Service Liaison at UC Davis, and his wife Deborah have opened up their home to the GG students for the past three years. During the students day off, the Kimokeo's treated the students to a barbecue and pool party, where they shared the value of higher education, as well as UC Davis information.

During the banquet, the students showed their appreciation by spending a few minutes to publicly thank their parents, the Forest Service, and the school district for offering them this opportunity to build character and leadership. Reyna Flores is pictured above sharing her experience and appreciation for the leadership camp.

HMONG COMMUNITY AWARDS CCC DIRECTOR

BY LILY RAMOS



The 2nd Annual Recognition Ceremony took place on October 14, 2005. The award ceremony's theme was "Building Bridges for Two Worlds: Lessons Learned, Real Partnerships That Work". The ceremony was held to recognize organizations and individuals who have contributed to the Hmong community in the Central Valley. The ceremony was hosted by Associated Media, a marketing and media agency that operates weekly radio programs like "Hmong Community Radio" and promotes "Hmong Today".

CCC Director, James Oftedal received an award recognizing his dedication to work in the Hmong community. Jim stated, "It is an honor to work in the Hmong community. I am humbled to receive this award because I have a lot of respect for the Hmong community. I plan to continue working with the Hmong community to strengthen the relationship".

James Oftedal is pictured above receiving the award from Hmong community leaders including Ben Vue, whom is the General Manager of Associated Media.

FOREST SERVICE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

BY WENDY REYNOSO

The 2005 Forest Service Women's Conference was held on October 25-27 in Sacramento, CA. The conference focused on positive change and transition, which was in line with its theme: "Meeting the Challenge of Change Together". Forest Service employees from both regional and national levels had the opportunity to network, gain new knowledge and skills, and explore new interests. Personal coaching sessions were available to all participants whom seek assistance in personal and professional development.

Central California Consortium (CCC) staff members Lily Ramos, Araceli Herrera, and Wendy Reynoso were privileged to attend the conference. "The Women's Conference is a great opportunity to connect with other Forest Service employees, attend professional development sessions, and listen to inspirational speakers", said Lily Ramos, CCC Newsletter Editor. "Through the Women's Conference Information Expo, our staff was able to inform potential Forest Service employers about the CCC and encourage them to consider hiring our student interns," said Araceli Herrera, CCC Human Resources Assistant.

The conference also featured motivational speakers including Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers and renowned civil rights activist. Dolores Huerta encouraged everyone to make positive choices in their lives and to get involved in making a difference.

Pictured at right (top) is CCC staff and interns with Dolores Huerta. Pictured at right (bottom) is Araceli Herrera, CCC Human Resources Assistant and Martha Maciel, Public Affairs Specialist, while staffing the CCC booth at the conference information expo.



CCC DIRECTOR SPEAKS AT UC BERKELEY

BY FABIAN GARCIA

On November 3rd, UC Berkeley School of Law: Boalt Hall Center for Social Justice hosted a 3-day symposium entitled "*The New Face of California: The Great Central Valley*". The symposium was designed to bring attention to the issues facing the valley today that will eventually play a significant role in the future progress or possible deterioration of the Central Valley. Among the issues brought to the forefront were '*Environmental Justice & Health*', '*Labor, Employment, & Labor Organizing*', '*Economic Development & Land Use*', and '*Education*'. Many community leaders, nonprofit members, labor & youth organizers, University professors, and attorneys from throughout the Central Valley attended the symposium.

CCC Director, James Oftedal, spoke at "The Great Central Valley" pre-conference workshop in order to encourage law students to attend the conference to come. He informed the law students of the incessant social justice issues that continue to plague the valley today, particularly those facing the rural farming communities. Oftedal stated, "I encourage you all to attend the symposium to learn about the issues faced in the Central Valley and how you can be a part of the solution. I look forward to seeing you all there".

During the conference CCC Director, James Oftedal, sat on a panel discussing '*Labor & Employment*'. He spoke of the CCC's efforts to train, prepare, and mentor young Hispanic and Hmong students into fulfilling careers, and emphasized the lack of accessible positive role models for many of these rural underserved youth. Oftedal states, "I am proud to have been a part of this conference. I am confident that great partnerships will be formed in order to help address the issues faced in the Central Valley".

The conference included such inspirational speakers as UFW co-founder Dolores Huerta, former Assemblywoman Sara Reyes, and the first Latino to serve on the California Supreme Court as an associate justice, Professor Cruz Reynoso.

To conclude the conference, a majority of the participants committed to continue with these issues in what would be known as the Central Valley Initiative, creating a network of professionals and community members that would be proactive in fighting for social justice in the valley, rather reacting to injustices that force the communities to organize. For more information about the symposium which took place, please go to: <http://www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/csj/symposia/centralvalley/index.html>

GOOD LUCK WENDY

The Central California Consortium (CCC) would like to congratulate Wendy Reynoso (pictured at right) on her acceptance to St. Johns University in New York, NY. We are sad to see her go, but wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Wendy has worked for the CCC as the Environmental Education Assistant for over two years. She has done a great job in co-advising the Generation Green students at Reedley High School, conducting after school environmental education programs at various local elementary schools, and coordinating the 3rd Annual Great Outdoors event at Grizzlies Stadium. The entire CCC staff wishes her the best!



UPCOMING EVENTS

- 12/26/05 - 1/1/06 Hmong International New Year in Fresno, CA - CCC staff and SNF Fire Prevention will staff an informational booth.
- 1/4/05 CCC Director to Speak at the Orange Cove Women's Club -James Oftedal will share information on the Forest Service and CCC.
- 1/10/05 Fire ROP Student-Parent Meeting at Reedley High School
- 1/18/05 CCC Director Serves on Stewardship Council External Advisory Panel
- 1/26/05 Cal Poly San Luis Obispo - Winter Job Fair
- 2/16/05 California State University, Fresno - Internship Fair
- 3/16-19/05 Hmong National Development Conference in Minneapolis, MN

SUPERVISORS

Looking for student interns?

If you are a supervisor and looking to hire interns please contact Elva Perez, Job Placement Coordinator, at (559) 297-0706 Ext. 4962 or eperez@fs.fed.us

www.fs.fed.us/r5/sierra/cc_consorrtium



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Forestry,
Engineering,
Business,
...And More**



CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONSORTIUM



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.

For more information:

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