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UNLV College of Education Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter

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*** This newsletter is published twice a semester. The articles that appear in the newsletter are based on author interest and consist of both scholarly work and opinion pieces.

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INVITED GUEST COLUMN

FEATURED GUEST COLUMN

**SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS:
FINDING A VOICE**
by Steve McCafferty

**CONNECTING BOOKS AND
CULTURES: THE CORETTA SCOTT
KING AWARDS**
by Cyndi Giorgis, Jennifer Fabbi, Steve
Grubaugh and Frank Serafini

**RACISM IS ALIVE AND WELL IN
SCHOOLS**
by Porter Lee Troutman, Jr. and Nancy P.
Gallavan

SCIENCE FOR ALL
by Aimee Govett

VISITING BRITISH SCHOOLS
by Cynthia Herson and Aimee Lee Govett

**WARD AND JUNE CLEEVER ARE
DEAD**
by Kyle Higgins

The universe, which is not merely the stars and the moon and the planets, flowers, grass, and trees, but *other people*, has evolved no terms for your existence, has made no room for you....

James Baldwin

The Fire Next Time

Politicians love problems---particularly

those that can be solved quickly and garner a few minutes on the evening news. The 20th century ended with those in power paying little attention to the problems of inner-city youth. It appears that the problems of urban life are too repetitive and enduring to elicit much response or empathy from policy makers.

For more than a century, public institutions---settlement houses to schools to social agencies---have been expected to take care of the problems of children/youth in the ghettos with little financial assistance from local, state, or federal governments. And, they have been unable to do so. This has left urban areas with continuing dangers represented by gangs, poverty, crime, teenage parenthood, drugs, HIV, and AIDS. Politicians and the general public blame schools, police, and families for not keeping urban children/youth 'in line.' Often this blame comes with no understanding of the facts or the environments in which these children/youth live.

The reality is that most people in the United States, unless they live in an inner-city, have absolutely no idea about inner-city life or survival. We believe that everyone has lives similar to our own---the reality we carry in our heads is diametrically opposed to the reality of inner-city life.

As we, in the College of Education, teach educators who will work in urban environments, many in high poverty and high stress areas, it behooves us to learn as much as possible concerning those environments. Ward and June Cleaver, who still exist in our realities, are dead....it is time to learn some facts of another reality....and then remember,

"The more we know, the more we owe" (Rodriguez, p. 11, 1993).

1. Yearly in Los Angeles there are 237 homicides, 3,746 robberies, 5,621 burglaries, 675 sexual crimes, 3,374 felonious assaults, 6,044 drug crimes, and 2,412 weapon possession offenses committed by juveniles.
True False

2. Of the 23,000 juvenile first-offenders arrested in Los Angeles yearly, 57% go on to have adult arrest records.
True False

3. There are two new trends in Juvenile Court, more girls are committing violent crimes and they tend to come from privileged and solid families.

True False

4. The term juvenile delinquent is a legally mandated term.

True False

5. In juvenile court, being an abused child is grounds for dismissal of a case.

True False

6. A typical juvenile court judge hears between 50 to 60 cases a day---the average time per case being between 4 and 5 minutes.

True False

7. In the United States today guns can be shipped with no more security than soap powder-- resulting in a high theft rate of guns shipped legally.

True False

8. In California, possession of a concealed gun by a juvenile is a felony.

True False

9. Juvenile court was first conceived at the turn of the century to stop the imprisonment and execution of children alongside adults.

True False

10. A revolutionary program for juvenile offenders places them in a school in which they work with children with autism and results in a low recidivism rate for the offenders.

True False

11. Research indicates that a child's ability to avoid criminal behavior is locked in by the age of 16.

True False

12. In the United States, more money is spent per capita on prisons than on education.

True False

13. While juvenile crime overall has leveled off, juvenile violence and serious crimes are still climbing and remain far higher than a decade

ago.

True False

14. The prime crime years for juvenile offenders is between sixteen and nineteen.

True

False

15. Of the 250,000 gang members (900 different gang sets) in Los Angeles County, 60% will be dead or in prison by age twenty.

True False

16. In East L.A. and in inner-city Chicago (both areas with some of the nation's highest drop out rates), youth unemployment is around 75 percent.

True False

17. A ten-year old in Humbolt Park can make \$80 to \$100 a day as a lookout for local drug dealers.

True False

18. The oldest street gang in Los Angeles dates back to the 1970s.

True False

19. Public interest in gangs began in the 1970s.

True False

20. C.Y.A is a new rap group that writes particularly violent lyrics.

True False

21. The true experts on gangs are the gang members themselves.

True False

22. The average life expectancy of a member of a gang is nineteen years.

True False

23. When President Clinton signed the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act" (welfare reform) in 1996 he set adrift 13 million people, 8 million of which are children.

True False

24. Since 1970, inflation has eroded the purchasing power of the average welfare check

by 45%.

True False

25. The typical welfare recipient is white. **True False**

26. The average number of children per welfare household is five.

True False

27. The typical welfare Mother works on average 1.7 jobs with 44% holding two or more jobs.

True False

28. The typical unwed Mother in the United States is an Anglo woman in her twenties.

True False

29. Welfare, as we know it today, began in 1934 with the Social Security Act.

True False

30. The prime cause of poverty in American families is the financial abandonment of children, mostly by absent fathers.

True False

31. The U.S. 'poverty line' was created in the early 1960s by Mollie Orshansky using data from 1955 and it has been the official measure of poverty ever since.

True False

32. The United States is the only highly industrialized democracy in the world, except South Africa, that does not have universal health coverage.

True False

33. Thirty-seven million Americans have no health coverage.

True False

34. It takes, on average nationwide, an hourly wage of \$8.89 to afford a one-bedroom apartment.

True False

35. Almost 30% of the American workforce works for less than \$8.00 an hour.

True False

36. According to the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act, employers are not required to pay "tipped employees" (e.g., restaurant servers), more than \$2.13 an hour in direct wages.

True False

37. Nearly 20% of all homeless people are employed in full-or part-time jobs.

True False

38. The number of persons holding two or more jobs in the United States is 7.8 million.

True False

39. In the United States, maids, private household workers, and servants earn a median income of \$400 a week.

True False

40. Due to the steady decline in the number of affordable apartments nationwide, more and more people living in poverty live in motels.

True False

41. Rent must be less than 30% of one's monthly income to be considered affordable, however in the United States people living in poverty spend more than 50% of their monthly income on rent.

True False

42. The Economic Policy Institute recently reviewed dozens of studies of what constitutes a "living wage" in the United States and came up with an average figure of \$30,000 a year for a family of one adult and two children.

True False

43. Sixty percent of American workers earn more than \$14.00 an hour.

True False

44. Political power in the United States is concentrated in the top 20% of wage earners.

True False

45. Across the United States, food banks report a 72% increase in the demand for food, homeless shelters are running at full capacity (and turning people away), the number of families living in extreme poverty (defined as

less than 50% of the federal poverty line) has tripled, 67% of people requesting food from food banks have jobs, 24,000 people with HIV or AIDS are homeless, and the violence in the inner-cities continues.

True False

Answers

1. True; 2. False (57% never commit another crime, 27% get arrested one or two more times and end their criminal careers, 16% become chronic offenders; 3. True; 4. True; 5. False; 6. True; 7. True; 8. False (Possession of switchblades, daggers, brass knuckles are felonies. Possession of a gun is a misdemeanor because the California legislature has refused to buck the gun lobby. Guns are the weapon of choice in juvenile homicides and assaults.); 9. True; 10. True (The Rosewood School's special program confers profound responsibilities on youth unaccustomed to being trusted to do anything. They are responsible for feeding, bathing, and working with children with autism and children who are in wheelchairs.); 11. False (A child's ability to avoid criminal behavior is locked in by the age of six, nine at the latest, making the crucial turning point third grade.); 12. True; 13. True; 14. True; 15. True (Statistics provided by the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Unified School Police Department.); 16. True; 17. True; 18. False (The oldest street gang dates back to the 1930s and was Mexican American. It was the cholo homeboy who first walked the walk and talked the talk (Bing, 1993). It was the Mexican American pachuco who initiated the emblematic tattoos, the hand signs, and the writing of legends on walls.); 19. False (Recent public interest in gangs began in 1998-1989 when members of opposing sets faced off outside a theater in Westwood, CA and a young woman waiting in line to see a movie was shot in the head. It took the violence moving out of the ghetto to get public attention---when, in reality, the violence has been in the ghetto for years.); 20. False (C.Y.A. is the California Youth Authority--not a camp, but a juvenile prison with a school attached. Every boy assigned to C.Y.A. is given, by the judge who hears his case, a number of points he must earn before he can be released. A kid can need as many as 9,000 or as few as 4,000.); 21. True; 22. True; 23. True;

24. True (In 1970, the average monthly welfare check was \$676 in 1993 dollars. By 1993, it had shrunk to \$373. Even a family receiving maximum benefits earns just 42% of the federal poverty line. The typical family of three receiving welfare and food stamps averages \$8,000 a year---well below the poverty line.); 25. True (38.3% are Anglo, 36.6% are African American, 18.5% are Hispanic American); 26. False (The average number per household is 1.9 children.); 27. True; 28. True; 29. True; 30. True (According to the U.S. Census, only half of the divorced women entitled to child support actually receive full payment. One-quarter get sporadic or partial payments; one-quarter get nothing. And, nearly 3 million women request child support, but never receive a court-ordered award.); 31. True (The poverty line has been updated to compensate for monetary inflation, but the basic formula has not changed, even though the proportion of income American families spend on basics has changed radically.); 32. True; 33. True; 34. True (According to the National Coalition of the Homeless, the odds against a typical welfare recipient landing a job at this wage are 97 to 1.); 35. True (The poorest 10% of American workers earn \$6.05 an hour and low wage earners earn \$7.35 an hour.); 36. True; 37. True; 38. True (About two-thirds work one job full-time and the other part-time. Only a heroic 4% of men and 2% of women work two full-time jobs simultaneously.); 39. False (They earn a median income of \$223 a week.); 40. True; 41. True (A recent national survey reported that the majority of the families living in poverty indicated problems paying rent and utility bills.); 42. True (This amounts to a wage of at least \$14 an hour.); 43. False (About 60% earn less than \$14.00 an hour.); 44. True (James Fallow in "The Invisible Poor" (*New York Times Magazine*, March 19, 2000) says that this 20% of the population suffers from the blindness of the affluent. They do not share space or services with those who live in poverty---out of sight, out of mind. This generates a conspiracy of silence on the subject of poverty and the people who live in it. 45. True.

THE LITTLEST VICTIMS OF POOR QUALITY CHILDCARE
by Nancy M. Sileo

In the wake of welfare reform, many low-income families have entered the workforce and are challenged by the need to arrange, pay for, and sustain quality childcare for their young children. Infant and toddler childcare is particularly scarce in most low-income communities and is **very** expensive. Even with the increased availability of childcare subsidies, many low-income families face difficulties paying for care. Further, although the quality of childcare can be a critical influence on the well being of infants and toddlers, finding good quality infant and toddler childcare that can be especially challenging for low-income families.

Poverty and the Working Poor in Nevada

Clark County qualifies as a high-need community based on part (b) of the statutory definition of a high-need community: "a political subdivision of a State that is among the 10 percent of political subdivisions of the State having the greatest numbers of those children." (Section 2151(e)(9)(B) of the ESEA.). Over seventy percent (79,947) of children living in poverty in Nevada, live in Clark County (2001 Nevada KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK, 2001; CCSD, Title I Statistics, 2002). Based on the statutory definition, "'low-income family' means a family with an income below the poverty line for the most recent fiscal year for which satisfactory data are available." (Section 2151(e)(9)(C) of the ESEA.) Thirty-seven percent of Nevada's children under the age of 18 are classified as low-income (2001 Nevada KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK, 2001).

Barriers to Quality Childcare

Low-income families with infants and toddlers face significant childcare challenges. The Zero to Three Organization (Zero to Three, 2002) identified seven barriers to finding and maintaining good-quality childcare. These barriers include:

- The supply of infant-toddler care is insufficient. Many parents face long waiting lists because few infant-toddler slots are available. Regulated infant-toddler care—which is more likely to be of high quality—is especially scarce in low-income neighborhoods. It is also

scarce for families who need part-time care and families who need care during nontraditional work hours, as well as for infants and toddlers with special needs and those who are sick.

- Most infant-toddler care is not of good quality. Research has shown that a large proportion of childcare for infants and toddlers is not of good quality. Low-income families in particular may have limited choices in childcare providers because of the cost or location constraints. As a result they tend to rely on poorer-quality childcare arrangements.
- Infant-toddler care is expensive. The high cost of this type of care affects low-income families disproportionately. They often pay a higher proportion of their income for childcare than higher-income families. Many low-income families without state and federal childcare subsidies cannot afford to pay for regulated childcare.
- Accessing and maintaining state and federal childcare subsidies are difficult. Funding for state childcare subsidies is insufficient to serve all eligible families. As a result states prioritize families to determine which ones will receive assistance.
- Information about the availability and quality of infant-toddler care is lacking. State face constraints in providing adequate consumer information to parents, and low-income families who are not linked to the welfare system may find access to information especially difficult. Families lack adequate information about the availability and quality of specific childcare arrangements. Further, language barriers prevent some families from accessing consumer information.
- Transportation to childcare can be difficult to arrange, because infant-toddler childcare is in especially short supply in neighborhoods where low-

income families live, many need transportation to care. Transportation can be severe for families in rural areas, where public transportation may not be available, and for parents who work late shifts and need transportation after public transit stops running.

NAEYC Accreditation

Accreditation is a powerful tool for raising the quality of early childhood education. It provides a process through which early childhood professionals and families can evaluate programs, compare them with professional standards, strengthen the program, and demonstrate commitment to ongoing evaluation and improvement. The purpose of NAEYC Accreditation is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs in the United States. NAEYC-accredited programs demonstrate a commitment to high quality programs for young children and their families.

We need to do a better of providing quality childcare to infants, toddlers, and young children in Nevada, especially to those from low-income families. Under NRS 432A, the Bureau of Services for Childcare is responsible for licensing, monitoring, and providing technical assistance to facilities caring for five or more children, to reduce the risk of harm to children in care outside of their own homes. There are over 400 licensed childcare providers and an unknown number of unlicensed childcare facilities in Nevada. Unfortunately, of the 400+ childcare facilities in Nevada, **only 13 (3.25%)** are accredited by NAEYC.

These 13 NAEYC accredited facilities are scattered throughout the State. Some of the accredited facilities provide care for infants and toddlers while others do not. Several but not all of the facilities accept Equal Opportunity Board vouchers (subsidies). Action must be taken to ensure quality childcare for all infants, toddlers, and young children. To express your concerns about licensed and accredited infant and toddler childcare facilities in Nevada, contact the Division of Child and Family Services, Bureau of Services for Childcare at 775-684-4400.