

CPHE Newsletter, February, 2020

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH EQUITY

It is a mind-boggling time we are living in, begging for sanity, equity, and kindness. It is this urgency that drives adult and young leaders in CPHE to make their voices heard loud and clear. “Changing it up” was the theme of the CPHE Network meeting in Bronx, NY last summer and again in the CPHE trip to Montgomery to visit the Legacy Museum in November 2019. We are grateful to Mr. Jeremy Triblett for providing his leadership workshops at each event. Jeremy has become a key mentor for CPHE, with his knowledge, experience, wisdom, and charisma. He emphasized that “this is an intergenerational fight, not generation-to-generation, and we should take from and add to, and if we do it together, we will see the results.” While we can make no promises at this time, we continue to look for funding to support young community leaders. Please let us know about youth in your own communities who might like to join workshops in a specific area (environmental justice, policy work, leadership skills), or who might benefit from a site visit to another CPHE site. In the meantime, Onward! - The CPHE Team

CPHE Network Meeting 2019

With a focus on intergenerational unity and power, the 5th Annual CPHE National Network Meeting met in the Bronx, NY from June 21-22, 2019. The theme of the meeting was “Changing it Up,” and change was reflected in new members at the table, dynamic youth leadership, and the commitment to continue to learn from Cuba’s health and community engagement programs despite the obstacles created by the blockade and travel ban. Attending the meeting were over 40 youth and adult community leaders from CPHE sites including Milwaukee, Navajo Nation, New Orleans, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, Oakland and the Bronx. They gathered to learn

from—and be inspired by—each other’s work and to engage with community leaders from Claremont Village in the Bronx, one of the largest public housing developments in the country. Local sponsors were **Mr. Abraham Jones**, Director, **Claremont Community Center** and **Dr. Rosie Mills**, Director, **William Hodson Senior Center** (the oldest in the country).

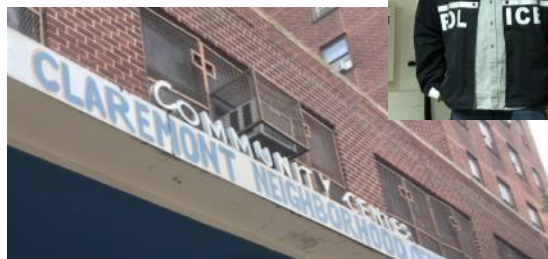
Jeremy Triblett



Mr. Abraham Jones, with neighborhood police officer, who spoke at CPHE meeting.



Dr. Rosie Mills, introducing *Movement Speaks* senior dancers



Thank you!

Bronx meeting (cont)

During the three day meeting, the group focused on a range of community issues and discussed strategies for strengthening intergenerational leadership to advance equity. Much of the first day was in small groups of 6-8 participants made up of representatives from different CPHE sites and different ages. Each person at the table was asked to describe one community issue/initiative they were involved in and outline the approaches taken to “change it up” –activities designed to lead to meaningful struc-

tural change. They discussed ways in which young leaders had been involved in these endeavors and how to foster more youth-centered community projects.

The meeting included an immersion day in Claremont Village, sponsored by community leaders, some of whom had been advocating for change for over 40 years. Public officials and members of the police force spoke about the major challenges in the area and how they were addressing them. **Bernard Smith** shared about his annual **Stop the Violence**

event. **Young Urban Ambassadors** spoke of the neighborhood work they are doing. Bronx community members provided a tour through the streets of one of the poorest Congressional districts in the country and saw examples of what grassroots community activism can create— projects initiated by Bronx CPHE members in public parks, a senior center, and two community centers. Meeting attendees put their notebooks down and joined a Tai Chi outdoor class in a park.



“In Cuba, watching Tai Chi in parks, I decided that when I got back to New York City, it was something that needed to be implemented into our community as well. It has paid off. I have seen stroke victims who have come in off balance are now balancing. Seniors are participating and youth are participating, and we are able to spread it throughout the community.” – Linda Kemp, Founder



Bronx Meeting (cont)

"I sit down to talk to these kids on the block, and they're good kids. They remind me of when I was growing up. So I asked them, "what do you need," and they said "jobs." So I took them down to try to get them jobs in the community. They filled out the application, and we're working on it."

-Police Officer, Claremont Neighborhood, The Bronx

"This not going to be done in a year, and not going to be done individually. This work is going to take all of us going at it for some years. And as long as I know that I have elders in the room who can show me the way and who can stand with me, I know that I am standing on strong shoulders."

- Jeremy Triblett, Jeremy Triblett, LLC

Everyone got out of their chairs and moved with seniors during a *Movement Speaks* workshop from the **William Hodson Senior Center** -- another project inspired by **Dr. Mills** on her visit to Cuba. The group was then treated to a dance program by a young members of **Direction For Our Youth (DFOY)**, a community organization directed by **Mr. Clyde Thompson**.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the national CPHE meeting was hearing from the young leaders about their challenges and ideas. After first participating in a workshop with **Jeremy Triblett**, they presented to the larger group.

The Navajo Nation youth discussed their efforts to provide safe spaces to address social isolation and to promote healing. Youth from Albuquerque spoke about the impact of substance abuse on their families and communities. An exercise with the entire group to help participants reflect on different leadership styles. The mandate to focus on youth involvement in CPHE was a direct result of our discussions at the CPHE National Network Meeting in 2017, and we made it happen!

The reality of the times we are living in was never far from our minds during our meeting—the challenges faced by Cuba due to our government's



Young Urban Ambassadors

Movement Speaks workshop



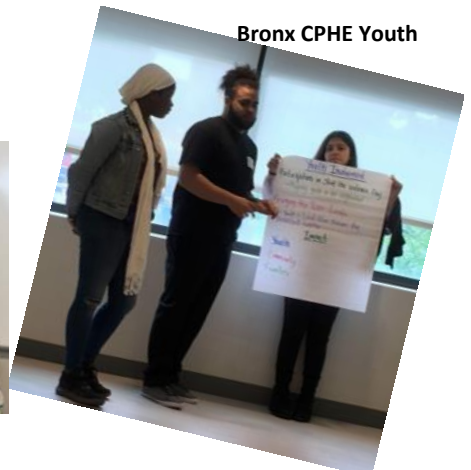
DFOY Youth dance exhibition

tightening economic and travel restrictions, and the impact on CPHE communities due to lack of investment in schools, health care, public transportation and affordable housing. MEDICC, too, faces the challenge of continued funding to support the CPHE. However, CPHE sites are committed to continue to be agents of change, applying lessons learned from Cuba trips to their own conditions and to support youth leaders and celebrate our victories, large and small.

CPHE Youth presenting their work at the CPHE Network Meeting



Fernando Ortega, Albuquerque CPHE



Bronx CPHE Youth

The Equal Justice Initiative, Montgomery, Alabama

In November 2019, twenty young community leaders and their CPHE mentors from Bronx, Navajo Nation, Albuquerque, and Milwaukee participated in a trip to Montgomery, AL, the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement, to visit the Equal Justice Initiative's new Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice.



These sites portray graphically and in detail our US history of slavery, lynching, and other brutal violence to African-Americans, making stark connections between these historical events and today's racial injustices. Located on the grounds of a slave warehouse, and blocks away from the city square where slaves were auctioned, the Legacy Museum juxtaposes the dialogues of slaves in captivity from the 17th and 18th centuries with dialogues of Black people in prison today and tells the history of everything in between. After the long fight to legalize slavery, a groundless drug war was invented to find an excuse to imprison Black people and use them for free labor, and this is where we stand today. We also learned about EJI's efforts to defend and advocate for individuals experiencing injustice

in the US.

"The legal instruments that abolished racialized chattel slavery in America did nothing to address the narrative of racial hierarchy that sustained enslavement, nor did they establish a national commitment to racial equality. For that reason, we believe that slavery did not end: it evolved...The era of racial terror fostered the racialization of criminality. African Americans are saddled with a presumption of guilt and dangerousness that makes them vulnerable to biased policing and wrongful arrest and conviction...We are now in an era of mass incarceration that is inextricably linked to our history of racial injustice." - **Brian Stevenson, ED of The Equal Justice Initiative**

Montgomery (cont)

John Stoner was lynched in Doss, Louisiana, in 1909 for suing the white man who killed his cow.

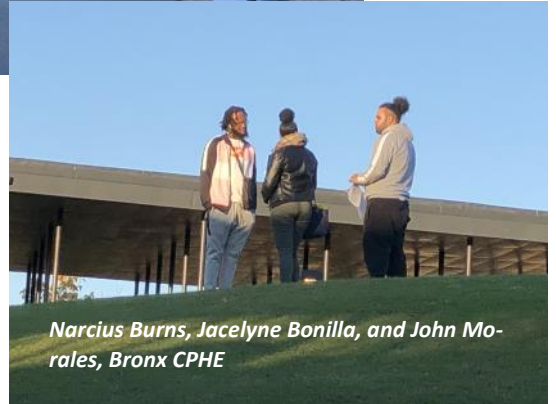


John Morales, Bronx CPHE Youth, and Xiuy Soto, Albuquerque CPHE Youth, at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice

Robert Morton was lynched in Rockfield, Kentucky, in 1897 for writing a note to a white woman.

Seven black people were lynched near Screamer, Alabama, in 1888 for drinking from a white man's well.

George Hawkins, Carrie Diamond, Eliza Talbot and Nelson Talbot were among dozens lynched during the Tulsa Massacre in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921.



Narcisus Burns, Jacelyne Bonilla, and John Morales, Bronx CPHE

This experience was life-changing for CPHE participants. During the three days, **Jeremy Triblett** facilitated two half-day workshops for the young community leaders, themed "Standing on the Backs of Our Ancestors." The workshops helped process the intense experience in Montgomery, and youth learned to identify and develop techniques to address micro-aggressions, not be a bystander, be a better leader, and build community cohesion between and among CPHE communities.

John Hosteem, CPHE Navajo Nation, joining an exercise during youth leadership training



CPHE Youth sharing their work with CPHE leaders (below)



(left to right) Xiuy Soto, Albuquerque CPHE Youth, Tierra Edison, Navajo Nation CPHE Youth; John Morales, Bronx CPHE Youth; Tyzeria Barney, Milwaukee CPHE Youth; Xavier Jones, Milwaukee CPHE Youth; Brianna Monge, Albuquerque CPHE Youth; Narcisus Burns, Bronx CPHE Youth; and Josiah Anderson, Navajo Nation CPHE Youth in Montgomery



Mural outside of the Legacy Museum in Montgomery

“I want to help the individuals in my community understand there’s more to life than the negativity we face on a daily basis ..So basically I want to bring back an activity upping my youth confidence & helping them understand **THEY CAN DO WHAT EVER THEY PUT THEIR MINDS TO** ...This trip opened my ears to peace, showed my eyes serenity & gave me a feeling that I never felt before.” – **Narcus Burns, Young Leader, Bronx CPHE**

There were a lot of similarities between us - especially me and the guys from New York. I talked to a lot of people about the everyday problems I was facing and received a lot of love along with a lot of advice on how to handle situations. I feel like on this trip I uncovered a little more about myself, it really gave me something to think about.” **Xavier Jones, Young Leader, Milwaukee CPHE**

“I found it so valuable being with Latino, African-American and Native American youth around my age from different places in the country. Although the Legacy Museum is about slavery of black people, there is a commonality among us. The movements of struggle that different oppressed people have led has been long, and inspires me to advocate for people, their rights, and to give them their voice back.” -**Brianna Monge, young leader, Albuquerque CPHE.**

MANY thanks to COPE, our CPHE partner organization in Navajo Nation, for making this opportunity possible.

And if you can, try to visit The Equal Justice Initiative yourselves. And/or read the book, *Just Mercy*, and see the film of the same name, which just won best picture at the NAACP Image Award ceremony.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WAKING IN HAVANA BOOK TOUR

During a book tour in February of this year, **Elena Schwolsky** promoted her recently published book, *Waking in Havana*. She shared her memoir at bookstores, classes and community gatherings in Boulder and Denver, CO, Oakland and SF, CA, Santa Fe and Albuquerque, NM and Tuscon, AZ. Elena is a public health nurse, activist, community health educator and writer who is a long-time member of CPHE-Bronx. She spent a decade as a pediatric nurse at the height of the AIDS epidemic. She has trained AIDS educators in Cuba and Tanzania and currently teaches community health workers in diverse urban neighborhoods in New York City.

In *Waking in Havana*, Elena tells of her experience joining hundreds of other young Americans on a work brigade in Cuba in 1972. The Cuban revolution was young, and so were they. Cuba represented hope and the power to change. Twenty years later, she is drawn back to this forbidden island, yearning to move out of grief following the death of her husband from AIDS and feeling burned out after spending ten years as a nurse on the frontlines of the epidemic. She takes readers along with her through her humorous attempts to navigate this very different culture—through the leafy tranquility of the controversial

AIDS Sanatorium and into the lives of the resilient, opinionated, and passionate Cubans who become her family and help her to heal.

To book an author talk, subscribe to the [Waking in Havana](#) blog, or receive information about upcoming events, contact: www.elenaschwolsky.com and wakinginhavana@gmail.com.

[Walking in Havana](#) is available wherever books are sold.



WALNUT WAY'S WELLNESS COMMONS IN MILWAUKEE

CPHE partner organization in the Lindsay Heights neighborhood of Milwaukee, **Walnut Way Conservation Corp**, is finishing a decade-long

\$3 million “Wellness Commons” this summer. Executive Director **Antonio Butts** stated that they are focusing on three pillars for this project: Wellness, Work, and Wealth. He says, “To be well, you need access to wellness practitioners. To work,

you need access to employers. To build wealth, you need pathways that will get you there.” This new building at the center of Lindsay Heights will be a hub for other non-profits.



DR. ROSIE MILLS PRESENTS AT *MEDICC REVIEW* EVENT

Dr. Rosie Mills, CEO of the William Hodson Community Center in The Bronx and long time CPHE leader, was invited to speak at the *MEDICC* launching of its special issue of *MEDICC Review: Global South Contributions to Universal Health: The Case of Cuba*. Held at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice in New York, representatives of medical associations, foundations, hospitals, clinics, health equity organizations, and community groups attended— including Cuba’s Ambassador to the UN; Cuba’s Ambassador to the US; and Cuban Foreign Minister. Speaking to attendees, Dr. Mills noted that “the Cuban model has inspired our communities to innovate for better health. Cuba has proved that so much can be accomplished by using available resources, and working together to educate, invigorate and encourage better health and equity!”

GLOBAL2LOCAL

In September 2019, **CPHE Director Diane Appelbaum** was invited to be part of a panel to develop an implementation guide on “Global lessons for US primary care.” The working group of 25 national health and academic leaders also included **Dr. Sonya Shin**, CPHE Navajo Nation member and former director of COPE. This project was initiated and led by the Seattle based organization, Global2Local, and funded by The Commonwealth Fund. During several teleconferences and an on-site meeting, Diane and Sonya shared experiences and outcomes of CPHE with others in the group, and helped develop guidelines for communities seeking to learn from other countries. The final implementation guide will be published and available later this year.

NEW ORLEANS OPEN MIC

On the 3rd Wednesday of every month, CPHE partner in New Orleans, **Ashé Cultural Arts Center**, hosts a New Orleans Youth Open Mic (NOYOM), for to youth in the Greater New Orleans area. It provides opportunity for young people to share their writing and experiences with their peers, and to support one another in their artistic endeavors. NOYOM is a collective of Greater New Orleans-area youth, poets, educators, and activists whose mission is to provide enriching youth literary experience, create safe spaces for youth expression, elevate youth voices, and cultivate a sustainable literary culture for the next generation.

CPHE thanks The Christopher Reynolds Foundation for its continued support!

UP FOR RE-ELECTION!

Javier Martinez, CPHE Albuquerque, who has been New Mexico State Representative for District 11 since 2015, is up for reelection. Javier is running on the priorities to build economic prosperity and opportunity, strengthen public education systems, increase access to healthcare, and develop clean and sustainable energy sources. Javier serves as Executive Director of the Partnership for Community Action, a community-based organization that works to build healthy communities.

CPHE BRONX CELEBRATES

300 people turned out for the annual **Stop the Violence** event, hosted by its founder, **Mr. Bernard Smith**. **Directions For Our Youth (DFOY)** offered Urban Hydroponic Farming, Health and Fitness exercise sessions, dance classes and performances, arts-n-crafts, and STEM workshops, and registered 350 youth to participate in the NYC Summer Youth Employment program. The **Claremont Neighborhood Center** sponsored community health forums, created a work site for 35 youth, and enrolled over 190 youth into their summer camps. The **Bronx Documentary Center, Bringing the Peace**, and Claremont Neighborhood Center collaborated on an event called “Peace and Unity.”

Also, CPHE partners in the **Department of Family Medicine at the Bronx Healthcare System** are currently focusing on voter registration and a bicycling program.

NAVAJO NATION YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



Bluff Elementary School student working in community garden

As part of CPHE’s Empowering Youth for Lasting Change program, and with support from the Christopher Reynolds Foundation, MEDICC provided start-up funds to Navajo Nation CPHE for several youth projects inspired by Cuba, including community gardens, the Red Mesa High School Media Team, the Trash to Art project, and training workshops. We are happy to renew this grant for another year!

For further information on CPHE:
dappebaum@mediccglobal.org

www.medicc.org

