Community Action
Issue 6, Spring 2024

The New Look of AB1000
What became of this important bill?

Liberty Hill Toxic Tour
Why Funding EJ in the Inland Region is a Safe Bet.

Green Thumbs Up: Urban Gardening Class
CCAEJ Cultivating Community Resilience
From the Executive Director
Reflecting on a Remarkable Quarter
Page 3

Liberty Hill Toxic Tour
Unveiling a New Era of Environmental Advocacy
Page 4

Growing Together:
Cultivating Urban Gardens
Page 08

Voter Registration:
Making an Impact at Local High Schools
Page 10

AB 1000 Updates
A Transition to a Warehouse Working Group
Page 6

Highway Expansion
Why the CTC Continues to Make the Wrong Choices
Page 12

The City of Fontana VS. PPOSBC
And the Moratorium of Health Centers
Page 11

Unveiling Environmental Racism
Discussing The Plight of the Inland Valley
Page 14
From the Executive Director

Ana Gonzalez - Executive Director
The Center For Community Action and Environmental Justice

As we navigate through the challenges and triumphs of environmental justice in the Inland Valley, I am pleased to update you on our ongoing efforts here at the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ). One of our primary battles this year has been our continued advocacy against the proliferation of warehouse and its detrimental impact on our communities. The persistence of this issue underscores the critical need for collective action. We will not waver in our dedication to safeguarding the health and well-being of our residents.

Additionally, we are focusing heavily on the newly established state Warehouse Working Group. This collaborative effort is instrumental in addressing the complex issues surrounding warehouse development and its effects on our neighborhoods. Together, we are advocating for policies that protect sensitive receptors from the harmful impacts of these facilities. At this juncture, we are on the cusp of a significant milestone: ensuring a crucial bill is signed by the governor to regulate the proximity of warehouses to sensitive receptors. Your support is vital in this endeavor. I encourage each of you to stand with us and lend your voice to this cause. Your involvement can make all the difference.

Joining our membership program is one of the easiest and most impactful ways to support our mission. By becoming a member of CCAEJ, you contribute directly to our efforts in advancing environmental justice and fostering healthier communities. Visit www.ccaej.org or contact us at (951) 543-1739 / admin@ccaej.org to become a member today. Let’s make a meaningful impact together!
Liberty Hill Toxic Tour
Piercing the Veil of Pollution for Inland Valley Funding

The Liberty Hill Environmental Justice (EJ) Toxic Tour, co-hosted by the Environment + Justice Donor Circle and NextGen Giving Circle, was a pivotal event for the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ). As part of our ongoing mission to empower communities and advocate for healthier environments, this tour offered donor activists a profound look into the severe environmental injustices faced by residents of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Known for having the worst ozone pollution in the country, these areas are at the frontline of the fight against the harmful impacts of warehousing, goods movement, and diesel trucking.

The tour took participants through neighborhoods overshadowed by massive warehouses and crisscrossed by incessant diesel truck traffic, which contributes significantly to air pollution and associated health problems like asthma and other respiratory issues. At each stop, local organizers and community leaders provided compelling testimonies and data, illustrating the stark realities of living amidst such pollution. They shared stories of daily life under the constant barrage of diesel fumes and the ongoing struggle for cleaner air and safer environments.
One of the tour’s highlights was a visit to a local school where students and teachers discussed the direct effects of poor air quality on their health and learning conditions. This interaction underscored the importance of our advocacy work and the need for robust policy changes to protect vulnerable populations. Additionally, the tour shed light on the systemic nature of these environmental injustices, revealing how low-income and minority communities disproportionately bear the brunt of industrial pollution.

Through this eye-opening experience, attendees gained a deeper appreciation for the critical work being done by CCAEJ and our partners. It reinforced the urgency of our efforts to push for stricter regulations on diesel emissions and the establishment of green zones to mitigate pollution. The tour not only educated donors about the gravity of the situation but also inspired many to become more actively involved in supporting environmental justice initiatives.

The Liberty Hill EJ Toxic Tour was a powerful reminder of the interconnectedness of environmental health and social justice. It emphasized the need for continued collaboration between donors, activists, and community members to create sustainable and equitable solutions.
By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator  CCAEJ

Over the past year, the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) has diligently spearheaded the authorship of Assembly Bill 1000 (AB 1000). This legislative initiative is designed to establish increased separation between warehousing activities and sensitive receptors, both within the inland region and throughout California. CCAEJ has actively engaged in multiple trips to Sacramento, advocating for the passage of this bill despite encountering various obstacles, including the presence of alternative bills that undermine the foundational principles of these crucial initiatives. Despite these challenges, CCAEJ maintains confidence in its ability to navigate these hurdles and propel AB 1000 towards effecting positive change within our community.

Recently, the Majority Leader of Ameritas, Eloise Gomez Reyes, hosted an Environmental Justice (EJ) round table, specifically focusing on the intricacies of AB 1000. This session served as a platform to address concerns among diverse stakeholders, fostering collaborative efforts to enhance the cleanliness and health of our region. Such events exemplify the commitment of CCAEJ to creating a more equitable living environment for underserved and underrepresented communities that often find themselves overlooked in the legislative process.
In a recent update from Sacramento, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas has withdrawn both AB 1000 and AB 1748, opting for a collaborative approach to create a new bill through compromise. This move is seen as a positive stride towards environmental justice, addressing the pressing issue of warehouses encroaching on sensitive areas. Despite this progress, vigilance is crucial, considering the potential resistance from influential industries. The community must stand united, actively participating in the working group to voice concerns about the crisis posed by warehouses near homes, schools, and other vulnerable receptors in the inland region. In alignment with our mission to nurture hope, CCAEJ aspires to inspire local leaders, emphasizing the paramount importance of the work being undertaken.
We are thrilled to share the success and inspiration from our recent six-week urban gardening class hosted in collaboration with Farmer Randy Bekendam of Amy’s Farm. This transformative experience not only cultivated a garden but also sowed seeds of understanding, empowerment, and community resilience.

The journey began with an essential foundation: grasping the concepts of food apartheid, food scarcity, and their intersection with Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. Together, we explored why it’s crucial to address these issues through community-based solutions and what sustainable communities can look like when we take proactive steps. Over the first few weeks, we delved into the challenges faced by our neighborhoods, where access to fresh, healthy food is often limited. We learned about the systemic inequalities that perpetuate food deserts and the urgent need for localized, sustainable food production.

With this knowledge as our compass, we rolled up our sleeves and put theory into practice. Led by Farmer Randy from Amy’s Farm, our community embarked on a collective mission to establish a vibrant urban garden. Under Farmer Randy’s guidance, we planted an array of crops—each step a collaborative effort involving eager community helpers. The diversity of crops symbolized the richness of our shared commitment to food justice. From nurturing seedlings to tending to growing plants, every member of our class played a vital role in cultivating a thriving garden that promises to bear fruit—literally and metaphorically.
What’s truly remarkable about this initiative is its ongoing nature. Our garden is not merely a project but a living testament to our collective dedication. We invite everyone to continue tending to the garden, nurturing it with care and pride. Moreover, we encourage each household to consider starting their own urban gardens, transforming neighborhoods one backyard at a time. The impact of this experience has been profound. Our participants left feeling inspired, grateful, and empowered by the tangible difference they’ve made. We witnessed not only the growth of plants but also the growth of a community committed to positive change.

As we move forward, let us carry this momentum into every aspect of our lives. Together, we can cultivate healthier, more sustainable communities where everyone has access to nutritious food and the opportunity to thrive. Thank you to all who joined us on this remarkable journey. Let’s continue to sow the seeds of change and nurture our shared vision of environmental justice.
At the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ), we believe the future lies in the hands of our youth. This belief recently led us to Etiwanda High School, where we conducted an inspiring voter registration presentation. Our goal was simple yet profound: to empower and educate the younger generation on their crucial role in shaping our collective future through voting.

Voting is more than a civic duty; it’s a tool for change. The decisions made by elected officials directly impact our daily lives, especially in marginalized communities. Yet, young voices, particularly within Latino communities, are significantly underrepresented in the electoral process. This absence limits our influence and perpetuates environmental injustices that disproportionately affect us.

Our neighborhoods often bear the brunt of industrial activities and suffer from weak environmental regulations. Issues like air pollution, inadequate access to clean water, and toxic waste disposal hit Latino communities hardest. Without active participation in local elections, our ability to advocate for change is compromised. For CCAEJ, environmental justice is a fundamental right, and we are committed to empowering individuals to exercise their civic duties.

During our visit, we were met with enthusiasm from the students. We highlighted how their votes can drive tangible change and the importance of electing officials who prioritize environmental justice. By registering to vote, young people gain a voice in decisions that will shape the environmental landscape for years to come. Imagine a future where our representatives champion clean air, safe drinking water, and sustainable development—policies that benefit our communities. This vision is within reach, but it depends on our collective action at the ballot box.
In recent developments concerning Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties (PPOSBC) and the City of Fontana, it has become evident that the city’s actions are raising significant concerns regarding equitable access to healthcare services in our community.

The City of Fontana recently defended its controversial moratorium on building permits, claiming it does not hinder Planned Parenthood or any healthcare provider from lawfully offering services. However, PPOSBC’s response challenges this assertion, stating that many of the city’s claims directly contradict communications previously received from city officials.

PPOSBC has been navigating a challenging path toward establishing a vital healthcare facility in Fontana, investing substantial time and resources in compliance with the city’s requirements. It is disheartening to learn that after extensive preparations, including over a year of effort and significant financial investment, Planned Parenthood is now being told to seek alternative locations within the city.

Moreover, PPOSBC has highlighted the selective nature of the moratorium’s application, as evidenced by exemptions granted to other businesses and property owners. This targeted approach raises serious questions about the impact of such decisions on the accessibility of healthcare services, particularly for low-income residents who rely on organizations like Planned Parenthood for critical reproductive health services.

The potential benefits of the proposed Planned Parenthood health center in Fontana cannot be understated. It would have served as a vital resource, providing essential services such as cancer screenings, birth control, and abortion care to thousands of Fontana residents each month. In light of these developments, we urge all Fontana residents to engage in advocacy efforts aimed at ensuring equitable access to healthcare. Your voice matters in advocating for the rights of all individuals to affordable and accessible healthcare services.
Highway Expansion
Why the CTC Continues to Make the Wrong Choices

By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator  CCAEJ

As the Communications Coordinator for the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ), I am compelled to address the deeply flawed I-15 freeway expansion project. Despite the long-held belief that expanding freeways alleviates traffic congestion, modern evidence suggests otherwise. This phenomenon, known as “induced demand,” indicates that increasing road capacity encourages more driving, which in turn leads to more traffic. A recent IEEE report highlights this issue starkly in Riverside County, where highway infrastructure growth has significantly outpaced population increases, yet traffic congestion has surged by an alarming 200%.

This freeway expansion has profound implications for our environmental justice (EJ) communities. It will disproportionately burden these underserved neighborhoods, predominantly communities of color, with heightened levels of air pollution and noise. These communities already face significant environmental and health disparities, and additional pollution from increased traffic will exacerbate these issues, leading to more respiratory and cardiovascular problems.

Moreover, this project is at odds with California’s climate goals. The state has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable transportation solutions. Expanding freeways directly contradicts these objectives by encouraging more car use and emissions, undermining efforts
to combat climate change.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) must critically evaluate this flawed system of addressing congestion. Instead of repeating past mistakes, it should invest in more sustainable and equitable transportation solutions, such as public transit, biking infrastructure, and pedestrian-friendly urban planning. These alternatives can reduce traffic, improve air quality, and promote healthier, more livable communities.

In conclusion, the I-15 freeway expansion is a step in the wrong direction. It not only fails to solve traffic problems but also harms the most vulnerable among us and derails our climate goals. It is imperative that we shift our focus to smarter, more inclusive transportation planning that prioritizes the well-being of all Californians.
By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator  CCAEJ

As the Communications Coordinator for the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ), I witnessed a profound event at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) that exposed the enduring legacy of environmental racism on the Indigenous people of the Inland Valley region in Southern California. Led by our organizing coordinator Joaquin and executive director Ana Gonzalez, the panel discussion delved into the historical injustices that have marginalized and exploited these communities, relegating them to the status of a disposable labor force.

The narrative of the Inland Valley region is one marred by centuries of exploitation and dispossession. From the forced labor of Indigenous peoples as indentured servants to the backbreaking toil endured by immigrant workers in citrus groves, the region has long served as a crucible of labor exploitation and racial oppression. Today, these same communities find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty and marginalization, relegated to the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder.

The proliferation of warehouses and distribution centers in the region has only exacerbated the plight of these marginalized communities. Forced to toil in low-wage, precarious jobs with little to no job security or benefits, residents of the Inland Valley region are subjected to the whims of profit-driven corporations who prioritize their bottom line over the well-being of their workers. This exploitation is compounded by the environmental burdens borne by these communities, as they are forced to breathe polluted air and contend with the constant onslaught of truck traffic and industrial emissions.
The panel discussion at UCR served as a poignant reminder of the resilience and resistance of the Indland Valley region. Despite the immense challenges they face, these communities refuse to be silenced or erased. Through grassroots organizing and community mobilization, they are fighting back against the forces of environmental injustice and economic exploitation, demanding dignity, respect, and a seat at the table.

As we reflect on the injustices endured by the Indigenous people of the Indland Valley region, let us recommit ourselves to the struggle for justice. Let us stand in solidarity with these communities as they continue their fight for dignity, equity, and self-determination. Together, we can dismantle the structures of oppression that perpetuate environmental racism and build a future where all communities can thrive, free from exploitation and discrimination.
The Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) is a progressive equity-based organization that embodies hope, unites pueblos y pueblos, to create intersectional solutions that transform communities “to bring people together to improve their social and natural environment.” Utilizing the lens of environmental health, we achieve regenerative change by developing resilient BIPOC intergenerational leadership, through the power of community base-building. Through strategic campaigns, we cultivate inclusive self-sustaining neighborhoods, where everyone can live, work, play, and thrive.

@ccaej_  @ccaej  @ccaej

ccaej.org