



Supervisor Keith Carson

District 5 News and Updates

Release Date: April 27, 2011



1221 Oak St., Ste 536
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel. 510-272-6695
Fax 510-271-5151
dist5@acgov.org

The Fifth District includes the cities of Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and West Oakland, North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, and portions of the Fruitvale, Manzanita and Dimond District neighborhoods.

Ancestry Project Connects Youth to Family Heritage

“My grandmother will never let me in her attic,” McClymonds High School student Michael Lewis declared as he listened to a presentation about where to find documents to start researching his family history. “She keeps the key on a chain around her neck!”

So began a journey into the past that has brought forth unexpected challenges and deep personal rewards for Michael and other Bay Area youth taking part in the Family Journeys Ancestry Project.

It all started with a vision for a project that would extend beyond Black History Month to strengthen family and community ties through the study of family history. The project kicked off with a panel discussion in February about the Great Migration of Blacks out of the South and the contributions of those migrants to the Bay Area economy and culture.

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson initiated the project with the help of volunteers from the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California. Every week since February, staff from Supervisor Carson’s office and volunteers from the Society have met with youth from McClymonds High School in West Oakland and Beyond Emancipation, a program for former foster care youth in Alameda County. Recently they introduced the program to a group of African American young men at the Berkeley Technology Academy.

“I kept on hearing elders in the community say that the younger generations seem disconnected from a sense of family history, that knowledge of your roots and your heritage,”



Genealogical Society member Felicia Addison (above) and Supervisor Carson’s staff member Reginald James (below) assist youth in doing research at the Mormon Temple Family History Center in Oakland.

Ancestry Project...continued on page 3

Free Home Weatherization Program

Renters or homeowners that meet income requirements can have their homes or apartments weatherized to improve energy efficiency for **FREE**.



The County Community Development Agency received funds to weatherize homes in Alameda County. Note: The program excludes Albany, Berkeley and Emeryville, cities with a separate weatherization program and funding.

Who is eligible? Alameda County residents (except those in Albany, Berkeley and Emeryville) living in 1-4 owner occupied or rental units that meet weatherization program eligibility criteria. Click here for the application: http://www.keithcarson.org/WX_Application.pdf

Click here for more information: http://www.keithcarson.org/WX_information_11.pdf

For Further Information Contact:

**County of Alameda, Community Development Agency,
Neighborhood Preservation & Sustainability (NPS) Department**
224 W. Winton Avenue, Suite 205
Hayward, CA 94544
Phone number: 510-670-6125
Fax Number: 510-670-6431

FIVE STAR NIGHT

A Benefit for Alameda County Meals on Wheels

Friday, May 6
Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Oakland

Enjoy delicious local food and exciting
auction items!

Alameda County Meals on Wheels is a collaboration of the six Meals on Wheels programs in Alameda County that provide warm, home delivered meals to over 2,200 seniors each delivery day. Many of the seniors served live alone or are recovering from illness, and the nutritious meals and daily companionship keep these seniors living independently and with dignity in their own homes.

For more information and tickets, visit:

<http://www.feedingseniors.org/fivestar2011>

Youth News

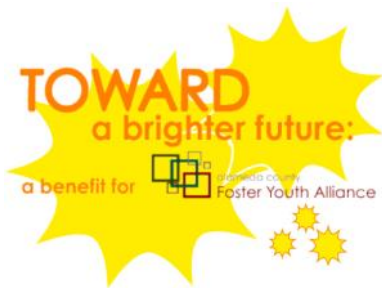
May 11: Share your success stories with former foster youth

The Oakland-based Alameda County Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) is hosting a Career Night on May 11. ILSP is putting out a call for professionals to attend and tell young people about your life’s journey and share your lessons for success.

Statistics related to former foster care are startling. Nearly 50 percent of foster care youth never graduate from high school, and after emancipation, over half of emancipated foster youth become homeless and often remain unemployed for years. But mentoring and interactions to positive adult figures can help youth transition into successful and powerful adults.

“Help us prepare our youth for their future,” said Cornisha Williams of ILSP. “It takes a village and it starts with you.”

Career Night takes place from 5-8 pm at the ILSP Building at 675 Hegenberger Road. For more information about participating in the event, contact Cornisha Williams at cornishaw.ilsp@gmail.com or call (510)667-7646.



On May 3, 2011, the Foster Youth Alliance will honor their community of supporters at a major fundraising event to kick off National Foster Care Month. **Toward a Brighter Future** will be a celebration of all that FYA has done, a declaration of all that we hope for, and an affirmation of the community’s commitment to the thousands of current and former foster youth in our county. For more information about tickets and how to support FYA, please visit:

http://fosteryouthalliance.org/?page_id=5874

Kaiser High School Summer Jobs

Kaiser Permanente is looking for youth ages 15-20 years old for the LAUNCH (Learn About Unlimited new Careers in Health Care) High School Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), the Oakland Post reports. To apply, youth under 18 must have a work permit, valid photo ID and proof to work in the US. For more information, contact: Calvin McFarlane, Youth Workforce Programs Northern California Region, Kaiser Permanente, 1950 Franklin St., 1st Floor., Oakland, CA 94612, (510)987-4871, or email calvin.mcfarlane@kp.org



KAISER PERMANENTE®



East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO) 15th Annual Affordable Housing Week

May 6-15, 2011

EBHO 27th Anniversary Celebration
Friday, May 2
Oakland Asian Cultural Center

<http://www.ebho.org/>

Caregiving and Wellness Forum on Healthy Aging

Friday May 20, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
West Oakland Senior Center

FREE event!

Learn about how to care for elders with Alzheimer’s and tools for advocacy.

[For more information about the caregiving forum click here](#)

Sponsored by Supervisor Keith Carson, The Alzheimer’s Association, Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, UC Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Center and West Oakland Senior Center

10th Annual Malcolm X JazzArts Festival

Saturday, May 21, 2011, 11 AM – 7 PM
San Antonio Park

18th Avenue and Foothill Blvd., Oakland

Come visit Supervisor Carson’s table, meet our staff and learn about County services for you and your family!

Ancestry project...continued from page 1

Supervisor Carson explained. “A few years ago I had the chance to look into my family history and it gave me a deeper appreciation for what my parents and grandparents went through in their journey out of the South. I wanted youth in Alameda County to have that same chance to connect with a deeper sense of who we are.”

The adults have been guiding the youth through a strange new world of pedigree charts, handwritten census records, yellowing obituaries and military draft cards. Each document presents a clue leading the youth farther back into their own family history. The group has already taken one trip to the Family History Center at the Mormon Temple in Oakland and is planning another trip for early May.

At first, most approached the project with a degree of trepidation. Like Michael, many youth assumed their relatives would be reluctant to open up the attic and talk about the past. And some adults have been reticent to shine a light on uncomfortable truths and tightly guarded family secrets.

“You have to be creative,” says Nicka Smith, who has been researching her ancestors for the past few years. “Sometimes you have to be a little nosy to get the information you need.” Felicia Addison, a fellow Genealogical Society member, agrees. “The thing is not to give up,” she told the youth. “It is your birthright and this is your journey. You deserve to know.”

Some participants from Beyond Emancipation have lost touch with siblings or parents while in the system. Their main goal for the project is to rekindle those lost connections. And some of the school-aged youth are facing similar issues. The absence of biological fathers in the daily lives of some of the Berkeley Tech students colors their feelings about family and belonging. Teacher Lamont Snaer works with the young men on self esteem and emotional health through journaling and in-class discussions. The ancestry project was a logical extension of that curriculum, Snaer said, and he was excited to bring the project to his class.

With the help of supportive adult mentors and the Genealogical Society members, the youth have gotten up the nerve to make that first phone call to an auntie or grandparent. And some have been pleasantly surprised.



Volunteer Nicka Smith presents a slideshow about her family's history to former foster care youth.

Michael’s grandmother ended up handing over the keys to the attic. Together, she and Michael found a treasure trove of obituaries and birth certificates. Now his grandmother won’t stop telling him family stories. A few weeks after his trip to the attic, Michael and his classmates shared family photos they had unearthed in their research. Laughter filled the room as he showed a photograph of himself at the age of four posing with his father and uncle.

Carolann Perales, a participant in the Beyond Emancipation program, has found relatives on the 1860 census and has become so hooked on the research that she is tracing her family roots all the way back to England.

“I don’t think of myself as just coming from the Lower Bottoms [a neighborhood in West Oakland] anymore,” said Tyisha Stills, a spirited 9th grader in the Culture Keepers program. “I am bigger than that.” When starting the online research, she recalled: “At first I was scared. And then I started typing names in the computer and I was on fire. I learned my great-grandmother was from Louisiana!”



Culture Keepers youth listen to a presentation about tracing family history and interviewing relatives.



Michael Lewis (foreground) and fellow Culture Keepers youth present the ancestry project to the McClymonds School community.



Reginald James from Supervisor Carson’s office shows the youth at Beyond Emancipation how to use a Flip camera to video tape interviews with family members.

The Family Journeys Ancestry Project will continue through the month of May and will culminate in an event in early June showcasing the stories, pictures and video interviews collected by the youth. For more information about the project, please visit www.keithcarson.org or call (510) 272-6695.



Oakland City Councilmember Pat Kernighan, Mayor Jean Quan, Supervisor Keith Carson and community volunteers worked at the Morcom Rose Garden off Grand Ave. in Oakland during the City's Earth Day celebration.



Supervisor Caron's staff person Hannah Greene and volunteers from Friends of Sausal Creek and Student Conservation Association alumni cleared out invasive species in Sausal Creek during Earth Day activities.



Free Compost!

Alameda County Public Works is proud to offer free compost to non-profit organizations for community improvement projects such as community and school gardens! The Public Works Department keeps a running list of interested organizations and as the compost becomes available they make arrangements to have it delivered to the community groups. Please contact Amy Shrago at (510) 272-6685 or Amy.Shrago@acgov.org in Supervisor Carson's office to have your organization added to the list.

EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES 2011

**Plan Bay Area/
YouChoose Bay Area workshop**

**Thursday May 19, 2011
5:30 pm—8:30 pm
David Brower Center
2150 Allston Way, Berkeley**

You are invited to participate as our region begins a public discussion on how to accommodate future growth. Plan Bay Area is a joint effort to create a prosperous, sustainable future by producing an integrated land-use/transportation plan looking forward to 2040.

<http://www.onebayarea.org>



Supervisor Carson's staff joined employees from Clark Construction and students from the Athenian School in a Rebuilding Together Oakland project to rehabilitate the home of a senior citizen in West Oakland.



Addressing the Behavioral Health Needs of the LGBTQI2S Community

**May 13, 2011
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
First Unitarian Church
685 14th St., Oakland, CA 94612**

Keynote speaker:
**Greg Louganis
Olympic Champion**

[http://www.keithcarson.org/
ACBHCS_PRIDE_May2011.pdf](http://www.keithcarson.org/ACBHCS_PRIDE_May2011.pdf)



<http://www.rtoakland.org/>

Subscribe to our News and Updates!

[http://www.acgov.org/form_app/board/
district5/involved.jsp](http://www.acgov.org/form_app/board/district5/involved.jsp)

**For more information visit:
www.KeithCarson.org**