La Voz de Esperanza

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• We advocate for a wide variety of social, economic & environmental justice issues.
• Opinions expressed in La Voz are not necessarily those of the Esperanza Center.

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Articles due by the 8th of each month

Policy Statements
* We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.

* All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

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In this issue of La Voz we include ***The People's State of San Antonio Address***, speeches that were given on March 3rd by community members on the steps of City Hall. Mayor Taylor and the Council were invited to listen to these concerns on the same day she delivered her address to city government and business leaders. The issues addressed were a continuation of efforts to listen, connect and understand each other's experiences through storytelling circles—part of the US Dept of Arts & Culture People's State of the Union poetic address. We begin with Patricia Castillo's speech:

Listen Mayor Ivy Taylor and City Council Members: We have community-based visions of a city where families live in P.E.A.C.E. And receive all the police protection we pay for delivered in a most professional way.

We need you to listen, and hear what citizens' lives are like when riddled by violence inflicted from those who are supposed to love them, 44K calls to police in 2014 alone.

Is it the connection to peoples' experience that may require an appropriate response from you and city council members that you fear the most.....???

Try to understand others' experiences because no matter how much money we bring in through tourism, business, militarism and Fiesta.....

If families continue to be destroyed through family violence, child abuse, teen dating violence and elder domestic violence and human trafficking, your efforts to better our city will have only a minimal effect....

So Listen Mayor Ivy Taylor and City Council Members... Are You Listening???

Editor's Note: Also in this issue: a speech from the 25th Annual S.A. International Women's Day March & Rally by Nadine Saliba, a tribute to National Poetry Month and reading sources on Palestine. Submit articles and announcements for the May Voz by April 8th.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

A letter to La Voz (Dec 2014 | Jan 2015) proposes that "the entire human race (is) genetically predisposed to violence." I propose a more hopeful thought: Our violence is grounded not in our genes, our human nature, but only in our culture.

Evidence for this goes back to our racial beginnings as homo sapiens 200,000 years ago. Anthropologists tell us that our neolithic ancestors (50,000 to 10,000 years ago) experimenting with gardens and herding left evidence of many tools, but no weapons of war such as swords and shields. Theirs was a culture of tribal cooperation and solidarity that had enabled their survival from the beginning.

Only the advent of a plantation-sized agriculture brought the structural violence of armies, slavery and empire. In other words, brought us to our present "civilized" culture. Now, eight thousand years later that is where we get our violence. If it were true that we are predestined by our genetically determined human nature to be violent, then the work of Esperanza and La Voz is doomed to failure.

But, we of Esperanza, by our work and commitment, defy that proposition. We are betting our lives, money and time on the meaningfulness and power of determined, relentless cooperation and solidarity. It is this kind of dedication out of which new and just systems arise and replace our current culture of corruption and violence.

—Tom Keene | 2.20.2015

ATTENTION VOZ READERS: If you have a mailing address correction please send it to lavoz@esperanzacenter.org. If you want to be removed from the La Voz mailing list, for whatever reason, please let us know. La Voz is provided as a courtesy to people on the mailing list of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. **The subscription rate is $35 per year ($100 for institutions).** The cost of producing and mailing La Voz has substantially increased and we need your help to keep it afloat. To help, send in your subscriptions, sign up as a monthly donor, or send in a donation to the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Thank you. -GAR

VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.