



Paradise Center for Tolerance and Nonviolence

PCTN's mission is to promote respect for differences and human rights, foster alternatives to violence, and advocate for a safe, hospitable, and harmonious community for all.

August 6, 2008

REPORT OF COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS & FINDINGS

Introduction

Over the past years, many individuals, including those that have requested our help, as well as public officials, school administrators, teachers, social workers, youth advocates, and some Ridge residents, have indicated that PCTN (Paradise Center for Tolerance and Nonviolence) is fulfilling a need. Until now we did not have the perspective of the wider community. We decided to develop a survey to gain a broader knowledge of the community, to get a clearer picture of opinions and experiences related to discrimination, and to determine what people on the Ridge know about PCTN. The plan was to use the results of the survey to evaluate our programs and services and to map the future of PCTN.

With a grant from The California Endowment, PCTN worked with Gary Bess Associates (GBA), a local applied research firm, to develop the survey. On February 7, 2008, the survey was mailed to 20,526 households in the 95969, 95967 and 95954 zip codes, including Paradise, Magalia, and Stirling City. The mailing list was obtained from the Center for Economic Development at California State University, Chico. Postage-free return mailing was provided. GBA analyzed the responses and submitted a report of findings to PCTN.

Survey Results

A total of 1,818 people responded, representing 8.9% of the survey recipients. According to marketing specialists, a 3% return is considered good for a large mailing of this kind. At least 40% of responses included written comments.

While more residents 60 years and older and slightly more people of color responded than mirror the actual demographics on the Ridge, the responses overall reflect a wide range of opinions. Respondents included an almost equal number of those who knew about PCTN and those that did not. These factors contribute to our confidence in the value of the survey's results, and tell us that we are a community that is interested and engaged in the issue of diversity and tolerance of our differences.

Support for a harmonious and accepting Ridge community is affirmed in the following results:

1. A majority (64.9%) of all respondents report that it is important to live in a diverse community.
2. A majority (56.6%) of respondents with minor children at home report that it is important to live in a diverse community.
3. Of those who responded to the statement that “The Ridge needs an organization like PCTN,” 68% said yes.

About Respondents

- ∞ Age: 58% of respondents were 60 years or older; 34% were between 40 and 59 years old and 8% were 39 years or younger. The mean (average) age of respondents was 62.4 years. The youngest was age 17 and the oldest was age 100.
- ∞ Race/ethnicity: Of the 1,760 respondents who identified their race/ethnicity: 87.5 % (1,540) answered White and 12.5 % (220) non-White.

About the Importance of living in a diverse community

- ∞ 51.4% answered “important” or “very important.”
- ∞ 13.5% answered “slightly important.”
- ∞ 27.1% answered “not important.”
- ∞ 8.1% answered “no opinion.”

Only 27.1% overall said diversity was “not important.” Furthermore, over half (56.5%) of respondents with children rated the importance of diversity on the Ridge as Important or Very Important. This is a key finding. Apparently these parents embrace the value of diversity while realizing that although our area is not reflective of either the California population mix or the national mix, their children must be able to participate fully in a diverse world to succeed as an adult in our country.

Perception of the Accepting Nature of the Ridge Community

We asked questions about our citizens’ perception of how accepting our community is toward different people. The survey specified many groups so that we could obtain information about a broad spectrum.

The Ridge community is accepting of:	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Agree & Strongly Agree	Don't Know
African-American/Black	37.2%	38.9%	23.9%
Asian-American	18.5%	55.5%	26.0%
Hispanic/Latino	21.7%	47.7%	24.3%
Native American	12.9%	60.4%	26.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	10.7%	57.4%	31.9%
Whites	0.6%	90.2%	10.2%
Senior Citizens	2%	88.4%	9.5%
People with Different Beliefs	21.2%	58.9%	19.8%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender	40.2%	30.3%	29.5%
People with Disabilities	9.5%	71.3%	19.2%

While respondents as a whole indicate that our community is accepting of most of our neighbors, some exceptions stand out. For example, African-Americans and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) individuals are perceived as being the least accepted groups on the Ridge.

- ∞ 37.2 % (or 633 people) responded that the Ridge is not accepting of Blacks.
- ∞ 40.2 % (or 680 people) responded that the Ridge is not accepting of LGBT individuals.

Personal attitudes toward racial/ethnic and diverse groups

A series of questions asked how the respondent felt about different groups in our community. Responses are displayed in the following table.

How do you feel towards:	Very Cool or Cool	Warm or Very Warm	Neither Cool Nor Warm
African-American	5.7 %	56.3 %	38.1 %
Asian-American	5.2 %	56.3 %	38.5 %
Hispanic/Latino	7.7 %	56. %	36.3 %
Native American	2.5 %	61.4 %	36.%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.3 %	59.6 %	31.3 %
White	.9 %	67.8 %	31.3 %
Senior Citizens	1.2 %	78.7 %	20 %
People with Different Beliefs	3.0 %	60.5 %	36.6 %
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender	19.4 %	41 %	39.6 %

We noted that many respondents chose a neutral point of view.

Respondents' attitudes toward racial/ethnic and diverse groups are generally favorable with the exception of LGBT individuals.

One might think that the responses about personal prejudice would match closely with the perception of prejudice in the community at large, but there were notable disparities between the two. For example, respondents generally seem to be saying that they don't think the community is as welcoming toward African Americans as it should be; however they are not personally biased toward African Americans.

Experiences of discrimination, bullying or hate-motivated behavior

Thirteen percent (13.4 %) or 240 of the 1,795 respondents answered that they or a family member had been discriminated against or been the victim of bullying or hate-motivated behavior in this community. They described the experiences as:

- ∞ “Related to age” – 79 respondents. This response cannot solely be related to discrimination against seniors because 29 occurrences happened at school. Of the remainder, 26 occurred at a business, 12 at an outdoor location, and 24 at home/residence.
- ∞ “Related to race/ethnicity” – 65 respondents. Locations: 24 at school, 23 at a business, 17 at an outdoor location, and 11 at home/residence.
- ∞ “Related to religion”-- 41 respondents. Locations: 11 at school, 11 at a business, 2 at an outdoor location, and 14 at home/residence.
- ∞ “Related to sexual orientation” – 27 respondents. Locations: 8 at school, 13 at a business, 7 at an outdoor location, and 7 at home/residence.
- ∞ “Related to disability” – 49 respondents. Locations: 18 at school, 19 at a business, 10 at an outdoor location, and 9 at home/residence.

(Some respondents selected more than one choice.)

Six percent (6.3 %) or 114 of the 1,795 respondents answered that they knew someone outside of their family who had been discriminated against or bullied.

Comments from Respondents

We received many positive comments about PCTN and the need for programs like ours. Hearing supportive words like “keep on” and “every community needs a program like PCTN”, is gratifying.

There were also negative comments, some toward PCTN and some toward minority groups. PCTN will learn from all comments, whether positive or negative.

We join with all the respondents who expressed their love for the Ridge as well as those who recognize that things could be better in the schools and in the community. We heard that more education about diversity is good, and that experience of diversity is even better.

Key Findings

The Ridge is a good place to live, with far fewer problems than many places. The survey indicates that racism and discrimination are in no way rampant on the Ridge. As such, one might say, “So what’s the big deal?” It is a big deal to the members of our community who reported three hundred fifty-four (354) experiences related to prejudice. Regardless of whether you look at this number as large or small, the fact is that any amount of hate or bias-motivated behavior is unacceptable in a hospitable community. And given the small population of people of color on the Ridge, sixty-five (65) respondents reporting bad experiences related to race/ethnicity is cause for concern.

Often, negative stereotypes (in many cases handed down from generation to generation) are not understood to be harmful. After all, everybody has some prejudice. In our view, prejudice and discrimination are as poisonous to a community as second hand smoke is to the health of a house full of children. The medical community tells us that the physical consequences of hate-motivated behavior reflect the classic harmful effects of severe stress. Mental health also suffers. Youth are especially vulnerable to long-term negative effects.

The key findings that PCTN will respond to are:

- ∞ 64.9% of all survey respondents and 56.5% of respondents with children believe it is important to live in a diverse community.
- ∞ 37.2 % reported that the Ridge is not accepting of Blacks, and 40.2 % felt that the Ridge is not accepting of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender,) individuals.
- ∞ At least 240 respondents said either they or someone they knew had been discriminated against or were a victim of bullying or hate-motivated behavior.
- ∞ 55% of the respondents had prior knowledge of PCTN. Of these, more than half considered the organization’s activities, programs and services to be “*helpful in ensuring a safe and hospitable community for everyone.*” 45% had not previously heard of PCTN.
- ∞ A vast majority of respondents (68%) who answered #13, “The Ridge needs an organization like PCTN,” agreed with the statement even if they had not heard of us previously.

What's Next

While the Ridge is a wonderful place to live and raise children for most of us, some residents (and potential newcomers) may not experience the same welcoming reception. The Ridge does not demographically mirror our state or our country, and because of this, our children do not directly experience the richness and benefits of a diverse community.

PCTN has its mandate. *Our mission is to promote respect for differences and human rights, foster alternatives to violence, and advocate for a safe, hospitable, and harmonious community for all.* We will use the results of the community survey as a roadmap to refine and retool our programs. For the sake of the children and the community at large, we shall seek funding to:

- I. Enhance and expand the STARS (Safety, Tolerance, And Respect Superstars) after school bullying-prevention program and collaborate with one or more organizations/churches to expand our summer day camp. PCTN conducts youth programs that give our children a sense of the value of inclusiveness and the destructive nature of discrimination, and help them learn to appreciate and interact with all kinds of people. We do so because it is the right thing to do, but also because someday many of our youth will leave the Ridge either to go to college or work elsewhere, and we want to ensure that they will be successful in any community.
- II. Conduct three Educational Forums a year on topics related to PCTN's mission, and continue annual community events such as the Unity in Diversity Festival and the Martin Luther King Day Commemoration to raise awareness and show support for the value of diversity.
- III. Continue to provide support to anyone who has been targeted by prejudice or hate-motivated behavior through our Victim Support and Advocacy Program.
- IV. Collaborate with the Paradise Police Department and Sheriff's Office to ensure prompt removal of hate graffiti.
- V. Collaborate on community projects that further PCTN's mission and respond to the survey's findings, for example, the formation of a community taskforce to set protocols for how law enforcement, schools, and the community will respond to incidences of bias-motivated behavior.
- VI. Expand outreach and awareness of PCTN's services and energize participation in our programs.

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