CCEJ’s 2021-22

Youth Leadership Menu of Services

Building Bridges for Youth

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The California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ) is a human relations organization dedicated to eliminating bias, bigotry, racism, and other forms of oppression through education, conflict resolution, and advocacy.

Our Impact

Building Bridges for Youth is CCEJ’s youth-centered team that provides experiential and interactive training and learning experiences to youth and adults focused on Anti-Oppression Education and Leadership Development. During the 2020-2021 school year, we served over 1,500 youth through partnerships with schools, organizations, and community groups.

Our Approach

CCEJ integrates a “Head, Heart and Hand” approach in all of our work. We believe that opportunities for learning and growth exist at every point of conflict, interaction and sharing. Dialogue is central to our process. It can be difficult and uncomfortable, and requires vulnerability, courage and openness to unpack the issues we explore. We integrate anti-oppression education (common language, definitions, terminology, concepts) with experiential activities and dialogue (personal story telling, circle practice, courageous conversations). We approach our partnerships with the recognition that all of us hold powerful knowledge and experiences that can be activated in the service of challenging oppression.

Our pedagogical approach centers on the use and uplifting of personal stories and experiences for the purposes of learning. Throughout our trainings and programs, CCEJ staff are intentional about utilizing trauma informed and restorative practices in our approach. We look to leverage strong relationships in training spaces to encourage risk taking, honesty and curiosity.

COVID-19 Updates

For the safety of our community, all of our current services are virtual using Zoom until further notice. Please note: Building Bridges for Youth is planning for an in-person Camp in Spring 2022. For online programming, participants can expect content via slides, group dialogues and interactions using the chat and breakout room features. We continue to monitor public health recommendations and update our policies & procedures accordingly.
Program Details

Training contracts are created as part of a consultation with CCEJ. Pricing and suggested session combinations vary by partner. Workshops can be combined into customized dialogue series of varying lengths and can include affinity groups where appropriate.

Session duration will vary based on goals, activities, and other factors. At minimum, CCEJ requires **two hours per training session**. CCEJ will recommend training hours designed to provide enough time to meet training goals effectively and safely.

Trainers are chosen based on specific contract requirements and availability. CCEJ is not able to accommodate specific trainer requests in all circumstances. **Generally, a 1:18 trainer to participant ratio is used. However, some trainings require more or less facilitators at CCEJ’s discretion.** Contact CCEJ to discuss your specific needs: info@cacej.org

Testimonials

“I recommend every person has the opportunity to go through the CCEJ training because not only were our 2 teachers incredibly fun and engaging, but the entire curriculum worked to educate us and make us more socially aware of the current injustices going on and how we can foster change. I felt as if I had a voice and I had the platform to both speak and listen.” - Conscious Classrooms Student

“I would say that this training was very enlightening and educational. It was a great way to learn about the root causes of racism and BLM, making me feel inspired to want to take action. It gave us the opportunity to listen to others and share our experiences in a comfortable atmosphere.” - Conscious Classrooms Student

“Building Bridges Camp is an opportunity to educate yourself on the experiences of people from various backgrounds. It has provided me with so much wisdom and inspiration to do good in my community.” - Building Bridges Camper

Billing Process

CCEJ invoices partners on a regular basis as services are utilized. Staff maintain logs of services used, which can be shared with partners upon request. Partners will commit to a specific and reasonable amount of Technical Assistance when contracting with CCEJ and agree to be charged for the full amount of TA time requested. Hours are not transferable beyond the length of specific contracted services. Please notify CCEJ of specific requirements you have regarding billing/payment of contracts beforehand.
Building Bridges© Camp is a unique weekend experience, held in the mountains of San Bernardino. Diverse groups of 9th - 12th grade students learn self-awareness, build mutual respect and learn to value differences. Students participate in interactive exercises and dialogue sessions that increase their understanding of oppression, and of their own power to help create social justice in their schools and communities.

At Building Bridges Camp, we will have opportunities to think critically about the conflicts, social divisions, discrimination, and oppression in our communities and country. At Camp, we will create a community of honesty, self-awareness, and respect through risk taking and dialogue. In this community, we will practice valuing all people in all of their identities. We will take what we have learned here back down the hill and become advocates in our everyday lives.

Building Bridges currently offers two camps:

Racial Justice Camp - Students explore racial identity, confront the ways Racism divides us, and build alliances for advocacy.

Gender Justice Camp - Students explore gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation; confront the ways Cisgenderism, Sexism, and Heterosexism divides us; and build alliances for advocacy.

Building Bridges Camper Testimonials:

“It was a safe space to be able to share your thoughts and feelings about your race and identity with people that will listen to you. It is also a great place to not only reflect, but to learn from other people’s experiences and interact with people of other identities.”

My biggest takeaway from camp was that there is no specific answer of how to be an ally. I learned that everyone in my affinity group wants to actively become a better person. Nobody is perfect but the first step is always acknowledgment. Once you have done that, you then can grow. Ultimately, I want to spend my life striving to make those around me feel valid, safe, and know that they are loved and will be given space if they need so.”
How does Building Bridges Camp help schools?
Students leave camp energized to challenge discrimination in every part of their lives. Students return to school ready to dialogue with their peers, take stands against harmful actions, and build communities of inclusion. CCEJ also provides follow-up programs including monthly Youth Council meetings, in-class Conscious Classrooms units, and Building Bridges Clubs site visits and support. Students can also return as Youth Leaders the following school year after attending the Summer Youth Leadership Institute. Camp is just the beginning.

How does CCEJ create a safe camp?
CCEJ professional staff attend and coordinate camp throughout the entire weekend, and background checked volunteer staff participate and lead Building Bridges. Adult Staff are from diverse professional backgrounds and may include administrators, teachers, classified school employees, & staff from community-based agencies. A nurse is on site 24/7, and physicians at a nearby hospital handle medical emergencies. In the event of an emergency, CCEJ staff will coordinate transportation to the nearest hospital.

In the current health crisis, CCEJ is taking steps to keep youth and adults safe and well. CCEJ Staff and Camp Volunteers are all required to be vaccinated. For more information on safety protocols, please contact CCEJ Staff.

What are housing and meals like?
Each camp is held at professionally-managed camp facilities located in the San Bernardino Mountains. Lodging is in heated cabins equipped with beds, storage and restrooms. Meals are served three times a day and snacks are provided each evening.

How much does it cost?
The full cost of participation for each student is $500. However, CCEJ fundraises extensively to reduce that cost to $110 per student. CCEJ can also provide transportation to and from the camp for an additional $30 fee per student. Staff and Youth Leaders from schools are never charged.

For more information or to sign up for Building Bridges Camp, contact Sarah Rana at srana@cacej.org today!
Conscious Classrooms: Education for Justice is a set of learning opportunities for students, teachers, administrators, and staff to empower young people to build knowledge of social inequities in the world and develop skills to transform their schools and communities to be more inclusive and just. Through experiential, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) grounded in Restorative Justice Practices, Conscious Classrooms creates opportunities for school communities to come together and engage in topics such as Race and Ethnicity in the United States, LGBTQIA+ History and Justice, Gender Norms and Expectations, and Immigration among others.

Conscious Classrooms utilizes Common Core and California standards - aligned curricula to engage students on a variety of human relations and social justice issues with the purpose of cultivating empathy for self and others. Students will get the opportunity to reflect and learn about healthy communication, conflict resolution, and celebrating differences among their communities. Conscious Classrooms is available online via Zoom and in-person when return to in-person programming.

Conscious Classrooms Student Testimonials:

“This program sincerely cares about the students, appreciates their inputs, and somehow motivates them to make themselves vulnerable. To elaborate, being vulnerable is a great thing since you can resonate with others and lift a weight off your shoulders.” - 8th Grader

“I will use what I learned to continue to educate myself on certain topics and make sure to try and normalize gender pronouns so no one has to feel outing. I will make sure to help others feel welcomed and accepted within a community.” - 9th Grader

“Throughout this whole experience I have felt an overwhelming feeling of warmth and safety. I love the type of activities we did and then also the outcome of them. I feel like bringing this program to our school was such an amazing idea. It made me happy to know that our school went to this type of effort for us. I hope they continue this program because it’s life changing and eye opening.” - 11th Grader

For more information or to sign up for Conscious Classrooms, contact Tobías Vasquez at tvasquez@cacej.org today!
Conscious Classrooms Units

Belonging in the “United” States (Immigration) – How do we decide who belongs in the U.S.? Students will get the chance to learn about the various reasons why people from around the world migrate to the United States. Space and time for dialogue will be provided for students to make personal connections around issues of migration; such as debunking immigration myths and cultivating compassion for immigrant communities and neighbors.

CommUNITY Over Violence (Gang Violence) – Why do gangs and gang violence exist? How are we understanding the root causes that lead to gangs and gang violence in the first place? In this unit students can engage in activities and dialogue examining the social and political dynamics that propagate gang violence. Students will be able to dissect poetry and song lyrics to connect issues of poverty and racism to the topics at hand.

Gender IDentity and ME (Gender Norms and Expectations) – In this unit we begin to scratch the surface of the concept of the gender binary, and the expectations and norms that come along with it. What do folks mean when they say “toxic masculinity?” What does it mean to be non-binary? Students will be invited to reflect and dialogue on the gendered dynamics they see in their lives, and how to practice respect and honor differences in gender identity and expression.

Queering OURstory (LGBTQIA+ History and Justice) – Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the resiliency and injustices faced by the LGBTQIA+ community. Through experiential activities, students will be able to begin unpacking the ways that various identities are given value (or not) in society. Historical accounts of multiple sexual and gender identities and experiences will be explored to further contextualize the contemporary space that the LGBTQIA+ community takes in our current culture.

Voices for Change (Empathy for Myself) – Students are invited to nurture their sense of social and emotional well-being by participating in activities that foster awareness of communication, conflict, and self-care. Poetry, role play, scenario, and discussion activities can be utilized to spark introspection and encourage students to cultivate their own emotional wellness practices.

From Bystander to Ally (Empathy for Others) – Hand in hand with social and emotional learning, this unit aims to support students in developing their social awareness and investment in their peer community. Students will get the chance to reflect on their own experiences with exclusion and interpersonal conflict, as well as brainstorm ways to restoratively resolve conflict.

“Human connection is the first step towards sparking change. I loved being able to just talk, and connect with my classmates, and understand how we can come together to foster accepting and respectful communities.” - 12th Grade Student
Conscious Classrooms Units

Who Am I? Who Are We? (Race and Ethnicity in the U.S.) – How do we understand racial, ethnic, and national identity in our society? How are the origins of these concepts and labels connected to what we know as racism today? In this unit, students can begin to unpack the history and process of racialization in the United States, and how that impacts their daily lives. Students will be encouraged and shown how to honor and respect the racial and ethnic diversity in their communities.

Finding Care and Joy in Self – What makes us special and unique? How can emotions help us understand what we need? What are ways that we can practice building joy and peace for ourselves even in challenging times? This workshop is a love letter to ourselves. Through reflective practices, group experiential activities, community dialogue and exploration of self-care, this workshop will help students identify self-care tools they can use in times of stress and anxiety, support them in navigating communication and conflict, and help them identify ways in which they can return to their own gifts and passions as resiliency practices.

Looking Back to Move Forward – How have social justice leaders historically navigated times of struggle? What can we learn about resiliency from social justice movements of the past? This workshop will utilize knowledge of freedom fighters of the past as a way to identify practices that will help to ground us in uncertain times. Through experiential learning, discussion groups, and reflective practices, students will begin to identify ways that they can apply learnings from the past, to live a stronger present, and help build a better future.

Quarantining the “Other” – How do ISMs show up in times of panic? How do mainstream narratives harm our communities? How have stereotypes and racist, sexist and homophobic tropes been used historically to continue to subjugate our most marginalized communities? What can we learn from the past to ensure that we never let this happen again? This workshop will explore ways in which historical moments of panic have created narratives that further marginalize our most vulnerable communities. Students in this workshop will work to connect the past to the present moment, and identify ways that we can practice solidarity and allyship as a way of protesting these problematic narratives.

Racial Justice In These Times: Antiracism and the BLM Movement – The Black Lives Matter uprisings of June 2020 are moments in history that undoubtedly changed our social and political landscape forever. What are the lessons that we can proactively take away from this and how are we continuing to do the work on our own? In this series students are encouraged to reflect on these lessons from our recent history and apply them to their daily lives. Students will get the chance to engage in reflective identity-work, historical dialogue, and more in order to continue the legacy of antiracist work BLM has inspired in society.
Building Bridges for *Your* Youth!

Customized Youth Leadership Workshops

In addition to our core programs, Building Bridges for Youth can create customized Youth Leadership Workshops for your organization’s youth that support young people in discussing social justice topics including, but not limited to:

- Stereotype, Prejudice, Discrimination
- Racial Justice
- Gender Justice
- Intersectionality
- Conflict
- Peer Leadership
- Advocacy
- Interfaith Dialogue

Sample Customized Youth Leadership Workshops with Sample Objectives:

**Equity and Inclusion in Healthcare**
- To investigate our personal biases and how these may shape the way we approach healthcare workplaces.
- To learn about Cultural Humility and identify ways to practice Equity and Inclusion in the medical field.

**Leading Toward Equity and Inclusion**
- To share aspects of my identity and hear how my identity is similar to and different from others.
- To make a commitment to taking personal responsibility in transforming my community.

Affinity Group Dialogues for Youth

Interested in creating a space for youth of shared identities and/or experiences to dialogue with one another? Building Bridges for Youth can facilitate Youth Affinity Groups to explore conversations on identities, experiences, oppression, or other topics of interest to your youth.

When we use Affinity Groups, participants explore justice topics deeply and authentically while honoring the differences in our experiences and action steps based on our identities. Affinity Groups are guided by facilitators of specific identities, leading to increased costs depending on the demographics of the cohort.

Possible Affinity Groups:
- Racial Affinity Groups
- Gender Identity Affinity Groups
- Sexual Orientation Affinity Groups
- Age or Grade Level Affinity Groups
- Religious Identity Affinity Groups

Your school site or organization might already have some form of these affinity groups that you might want to engage more deeply. Some examples:
- Black Student Unions, Latinx Clubs, Asian/Pacific Islander Student Associations
- Gender & Sexuality Alliances, LGBTQIA+ Clubs
- Grade level groups
Customized Adult Allyship in Action Workshops

Building Bridges for Youth supports adults in becoming adult allies to youth through dialogues and trainings on Adultism. If you are interested in strengthening your skills and knowledge to better show up for young people, check out our workshops on Adult Allyship in Action. These trainings are customizable and are tailored to each group’s needs.

Understanding and Challenging Adultism – This introductory workshop provides adults an opportunity to learn about the concept of Adultism. Adults will reflect on the ways Adultism shows up and how it impacts their ability to work with young people.

Building Youth-Adult Partnerships – In this follow-up workshop, adults will strategize ways to show up in stronger partnership to young people. Emerging adult allies will share commitments to uplifting and supporting youth, creating a plan of action.

Technical Assistance & Coaching Services

Cost accrued per hour per CCEJ staff

- **Consulting Services:** CCEJ offers consulting expertise for curriculum development, site specific implementation design, workshop or dialogue planning and curricula, design of trauma sensitive, anti-oppressive assessments, troubleshooting, and presentation design.

- **Custom Trainings:** CCEJ’s seasoned trainers and curricula authors will design and facilitate a training based on your site’s specific needs and areas of skills improvement. This training is billed based on hours of training and hours of design prep at a ratio of four hours of preparation for every one training hour.

- **Coaching for Youth:** Direct small group coaching for young people designed to address challenges and opportunities that arise in youth leadership development, identity formation, self-care and community care, or other topics is available in-person and through online modalities.

- **Facilitation & Circlekeeping:** Experienced CCEJ staff are available to facilitate meetings, dialogues, or community building circles for teams and committees through responsive agenda design based on site needs and strategic planning framing. Dialogues and circles can be used to explore issues, navigate conflict, and strengthen relationships and community in a time of high stress and social isolation.
Our Training Team

**KATHLEAH C. PAGDILAO, MA** *(Pronouns: She/Her/Siya)*
DIRECTOR, BUILDING BRIDGES FOR YOUTH
Kathleah Consul Pagdilao leads programming for social justice youth leadership development and anti-oppression education for adults. She has been designing, coordinating, and facilitating critical dialogues for over six years and supporting volunteers in their heart work at CCEJ. A proud daughter to immigrants, Kathleah brings a collaborative spirit to her work with schools, workplaces, and organizations. She is grateful to work at CCEJ where she finds deep meaning in helping young people and adults feel seen, heard, and valued. A loyal and introverted Aquarius, Kathleah is a compassionate facilitator who enjoys connecting over shared stories, experiences, and laughter.

**SARAH RANA** *(Pronouns: She/Her/Hers)*
BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM COORDINATOR—RESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP
Sarah Rana is the Building Bridges Program Coordinator for Residential Leadership, where she oversees Building Bridges camps and helps support CCEJ youth programs and trainings. Sarah has served as a nonprofit professional and volunteer in Oklahoma and California for over a decade working with schools, faith organizations, and with community members to provide skills to become positive change agents in their communities.

**TOBÍAS PABLO VASQUEZ** *(Pronouns: They/Them/He/Him)*
BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM COORDINATOR—SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
Tobías Pablo Vasquez is a self-identified Brown, Queer, ChicanaX Community Organizer and Educator born in Anaheim, California with substantial lived experiences in Southern California and the East Bay. As the Program Coordinator for School Leadership, Tobías supports youth in their social justice education and leadership through the Conscious Classrooms and Building Bridges Clubs Alliance programs at CCEJ. This entails curating educational spaces for students to dialogue and organize for just school climates, where all students can thrive. They work to build intergenerational bridges in school communities where marginalized youth feel inspired to share their stories and advocate for justice.

**DANIEL E. SOLÍS, MA** *(Pronouns: He/Him/His)*
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Daniel has worked locally and nationwide in anti-oppression training and organizational change design for over 15 years, supporting schools, workplaces, healthcare providers, nonprofits and communities build their power and readiness to enact changes for justice. Daniel is the proud product of social justice youth leadership programs, having attended NCCJ Los Angeles’ Brotherhood-Sisterhood Camp, the Salvadoran American Leadership and Educational Fund’s Civic Leadership Program, and been a Gay-Straight Alliance club leader in high school. Daniel’s writing has appeared in Readings for Social Justice - Second Edition /Third Edition, and IMANIMAN: Poets Writing in the Anzaldúan Borderlands.

To discuss the needs of your specific site or to contract CCEJ for training or coaching services, please reach out to Kathleah Pagdilao at kpagdilao@cacej.org or call (562) 435-8184.