

# Barrio de Langley Park

BLP IS A NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY ACTION LANGLEY PARK

Edited by Bill Hanna—Contact [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com)

ISSUE NUMBER 257, NOVEMBER 2012

## HEALTH CHECK 2012

We know that the health of Latino/a immigrants and oldtimers is not up to the norms of our country, and the reasons include access and status concerns. A needs assessment established that.

### HEALTH CHECK

Sunday, November 11, 12 noon to 3:30 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. Everything is free! Information: call 301 445-4508.

### PASS THE WORD!

Access calls for having insurance or the needed cash to pay for services, being able to get to an appropriate health professional, and communication challenges. Status concerns not only face those who are undocumented; they also are concerns of those with a green card or citizenship papers because

sometimes they are not guarantees of residence.

Surveys in the Langley Park area reveal that the heavy majority of residents have not seen a health professional (medical doctor, dentist, physical therapist, chiropractor, etc.) within the past two years. That's why one characteristic of Latinos is that they arrive at a health facility later than is best for treatment.

To fill the health gap, Action Langley Park and the Langley Park Community Center jointly organize two health fairs every year. In November, it is "Health Check" and in May it is a health fair as part of Langley Park Day.

This November, professionals will offer flu shots, check for high blood pressure and HIV, check for oral health (teeth and mouth), provide a wide range of health information, and much more.



### Quite a Storm!

The radio announcer stated that more than one million households were without power and that meant about four million people without power. But the number of injuries and deaths were only modest. Phew!

Trees were scattered over roads, some fell on cars, and even the BLP editor's driveway was blocked with a large tree. Plus low areas were flooded. Global warming is not fun!



## PURPLE LINE WILL SPARK NEIGHBORHOOD RENAISSANCE, OFFICIALS SAY

Our article title is a headline in the *Gazette's* 25 October edition. And in the article: "[Councilwoman] Harrison joined other government officials and business owners ... to ... envision new retail and housing along future stations and [to] stress that public-private partnerships are essential to pay for the 16-mile light rail link between Bethesda and New Carrollton and the economic growth around it."

Yes, if \$193 billion\* is found for completing the line and if the economy is in good shape by the time the Purple Line is nearing completion around 2020, there will be significant development around some or perhaps all of the stations. It is a



shame that few of those championing the renaissance seem to be considering the impact on the residents and businesses currently located around the proposed stations. There is no doubt that gentrification will take place, residents will be displaced, and some of the small "mom and pop" businesses will be pushed out. Will the communities be scattered? What provision is there to avoid community destruction?

Good planning would preserve what is around the stations and add to them; bad planning will displace them. The example of planning in the Langley Park area, that is, the Sector Plan, reveals that some key politicians and planners don't care about the current residents and businesses—or if they do care, the caring is secondary to other goals. We need better political decisions! We need better planning!\*\* But if some additional real estate and sales taxes are all that the decisionmakers care about, there will be a lot of cruel displacement—if the money is somehow found to build the Purple Line.

Let's get the Purple Line built but let's not have plans that lead to the massive displacement of current residents and businesses. Alas, the current budgets for transportation focus on maintenance, not new projects. So the first shovel may be a long way off.

\*Henry Kay, the Maryland Transit Administration's head of transit development, [has stated] that Purple Line construction costs have risen to \$2.2 billion. But Kay later said that the amount given was 'for legislative planning purposes' and that the state is still updating the cost projections." (*Post Local*, 25 October 2012)

\*\*A sketch for an alternative design for the Langley Park area that preserves the current housing yet accommodates up to one thousand new residential units was published in an earlier issue of Barrio de Langley Park. That is, it is possible.

# ALL THE NEWS YOU WANT AND MORE!

## 1. LATINO/AS—WHAT OTHERS THINK & DO

**Anti-Sentiment:** Most Americans express anti-Hispanic sentiment. In an AP survey done in 2011, 52% of non-Hispanic whites expressed anti-Hispanic attitudes. That figure rose to 57% in the implicit test. The percentages are almost the same for attitudes towards Blacks. The poll finds that racial prejudice is not limited to one group of partisans. Although Republicans were more likely than Democrats to express racial prejudice in the questions measuring explicit racism (79% among Republicans compared with 32% among Democrats), the implicit test found little difference between the two parties:



55% of Democrats and 64% of Republicans.

Alas, the attitudes of prejudice can lead to hate, and it is hate directed at President Obama that has fuelled some of the opposition to him. (Whether he deserves a second

term is a separate matter so long as the “deserves” is not driven by racial prejudice or hate.)

The AP surveys were conducted with researchers from Stanford University, the University of Michigan and NORC at the University of Chicago. What a sad comment on the culture of the USA.

**On the Front Pages:** Only 4% of the time is front page news about immigration and related matters written by (and credited to) Latino/as. Fully 95% were authored by others—almost all Euros. But immigration is not the only skewed subject; for instance, front page stories about foreign policy were written by Euros 93% of the time. The *Washington Post* carried not one Latino/a authored front page article during the time span covered! Surely who one is might introduce a bias into the material despite the authors’ commitment (if there is a commitment) to objectivity and fairness. We may need more journalistic diversity.

What about women’s issues? The same bias: males dominated the coverage of abortion, birth control, and Planned Parenthood. Our *Post* was as bad as the rest of the major newspapers. Women: What say you?

The data for this item are available at [www.4thestate.net](http://www.4thestate.net).

## 2. HEALTH

**Poverty:** According to the Census Bureau, more than one in four Latino families in the USA are currently facing food insecurity, while one in three Latino families with children suffers from the same, more than any other minority group in terms of poverty and hunger. Additionally, there are currently 13 million Latino individuals living in poverty. Food planning is clearly urgent.

**Smoking:** We know that smoking often leads to cancer and other illnesses that lead to a shortened lifespan. Alas, CDC reports that a recent study concludes that there has been a substantial increase in onscreen smoking in youth-rated cinema. Another study has found that exposure to pro-smoking messages is associated with future smoking risk among emerging adults. Conclusion: so-called youth cinema includes dan-



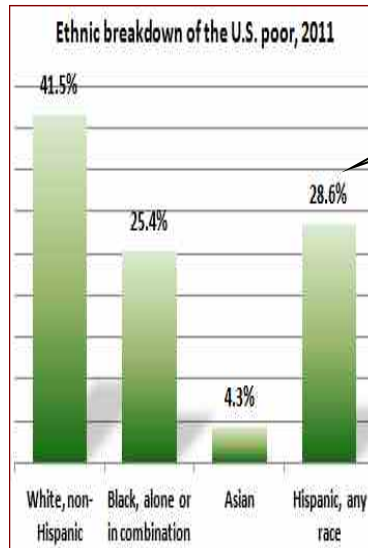
# INEQUALITY

For more than three decades, the gap between USA’s “haves” and the “have-nots” has been growing. The income and wealth of the rich few have soared, and the income and wealth of others have stagnated. This is, of course, a tragedy for the have-nots, but it also may have retarded our country’s economic growth.

“Income inequality has soared to the highest levels since the Great Depression, and the recession has done little to reverse the trend, with the top one percent of earners taking 93% of the income gains in the first full year of the recovery. The yawning gap between the haves and the have-nots—and the political questions that gap has raised about the plight of the middle class—has given rise to anti-Wall Street sentiment and animated the presidential campaign. Now, a growing body of economic research suggests that it might mean lower levels of economic growth and slower job creation in the years ahead, as well.

“‘Growth becomes more fragile’ in countries with high levels of inequality like the United States, said Jonathan D. Ostry of the International Monetary Fund, whose research suggests that the widening disparity since the 1980s might shorten the nation’s economic expansions by as much as a third.” (*NY Times* 17 October 2012)

It is not surprising that being at the lower level of the income spread, that is, being poor, is not a matter of equal non-opportunity. Rather, there



Latino/s are 16.4% of the US population.

are barriers to opportunity that are unequally distributed, e.g., parents’ education, the neighborhood, the school, and a bit of prejudice against people of color and immigrants. Note the graphic (left):

Of course, the key questions are: (1) Do we want our country to have these disparities? And (2) if we don’t want the disparities, what can we do to moderate the differences?

What plans are there for equalizing the educational opportunities of the less-well-off? Equalizing health care? As a start, the word “access” is key: access for all to quality education and health care. Partly, the problem is unequal resources among jurisdictions; for instance, the lower property tax base in Prince George’s County means fewer dollars per pupil in the public schools. The state and federal governments help a bit with equal access, but equality is still in the distant future.

## THE HOUSING MARKET: SOFT IN P.G. COUNTY

The housing market in the Washington Metropolitan area has done well over the past several years as the economy slowly recovers from the Great Recession. But not in PG County, where houses are selling for about 54% of their peak pre-recession price. The slow regional economic recovery of African-Americans and Latinos is probably a factor. Might the county’s negative reputation—not well earned despite JJ—be one too?



gerous messages. Shame on that segment of the film industry. And all of us by word and example should give smoking a negative frame.

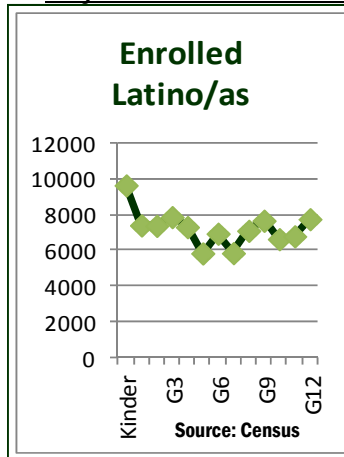
**CPR:** Studies indicate that Latinos are 30% less likely to receive CPR in the case of an emergency than Euros due to a lack of knowledge on how to perform the procedure. So the message is more than clear: We need much more instruction on CPR in the Langley Park area and many other areas. But there is more troubling news: In a study conducted by the *New England Journal of Medicine*, there is a 55% chance that a bystander will perform CPR on a cardiac arrest victim, a chance that decreases by 35% if they find themselves in a predominantly Latino neighborhood. Ethnic enclaves need CPR instructors.

### 3. SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

**Tests and Cheating:** With the emphasis on standardized test scores, plus the rating of teachers based upon such scores, the temptations to cheat must be enormous. Perhaps every school system has secrets. Here's a report from a California school system:

"The third-grader had good news: She was doing great on her standardized tests, she proudly told a teacher at the school. How did she know? the instructor asked. 'My teacher points out the answers that I need to correct,' she said. With that, the fate of Westside Elementary in Thermal was sealed. State officials have stripped Westside and 22 other schools of a key state ranking for cheating, other misconduct or mistakes in administering the standardized tests given last spring. The offenses ranged from failing to cover bulletin boards to more overt improprieties, including helping students correct mistakes or preparing them with actual test questions." (*LA Times*, 28 October 2012) Should we only blame the teacher who was led into temptation?

**Why Enrollment Fluctuation?** As the graphic (left) shows, the Latino/a school enrollment in Maryland has varied considerably by grade. For kindergarten in 2010, the total enrollee figure was 9,638, but in the 5th and 7th grades, the numbers dipped to under 6,000. Could it be that young teens are sent to their heritage country for a few years? (Thought to be vulnerable years?) Is it strangely variable couple "activity"? What are other possible explanations for the variation?



**County Residents' Education:** Howard County has the highest percentage of residents with B.A. or equivalent degrees (40.0%), and Montgomery County is highest with Ph.D.s or equivalent (6.1%). Prince George's County's degree achievements are above the USA figures, but in our well-educated metro area its residents do not do comparatively well. Its figures are B.A.=17.9% and Ph.D.=1.7%. Why such low percentages? The percentages of poor and working class families are powerful factors, as are the modest employment opportunities for the well-educated. Perhaps the schools have to take a bit of the blame, and the lack of mentoring and tutoring doesn't help. Maybe more alliances such as the one between the University of Maryland and Northwestern High School

would encourage more students not to drop out and to think of college as part of their life courses. Let's do it!

**What's Wrong with Males, Middle Schools?** Looking at standardized math and reading test scores for the county's 6th and 7th grade, we find that males perform well behind females, and there is a significant drop from 6th to 7th grade. It's worth adding that the scores in the 8th grade are even worse! What are the causes of these serious male and middle school problems? Is being macho what constitutes "success" for males? Are females favored? Are the middle schools scenes of classroom post-puberty chaos? PGCPs should come up with answers and corrective action.

PG County Scores: Advanced + Proficient				
A&P Scores	Math-6	Read-6	Math-7	Read-7
PG	76%	79%	61%	71%
PG Males	74%	76%	58%	64%
PG Females	80%	83%	64%	78%

### 4. THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

Every neighborhood needs places where people meet, interact, learn, and more. "Our public spaces—from our parks to our markets to our streets—are where we learn about each other, and take part in the interactions, exchanges, and rituals that together comprise local culture." (*Sustainable Cities Collective*, 29 October 2012)



The importance of place led to the founding of Langley Park Day. And the loss of places is why the forced removal of food vendors along the streets of Langley Park was so wrong-headed, so destructive of community. At many of the food trucks and sidewalk tables, neighborhood residents gathered, sometimes to eat but more so to talk, explore, share. They were, in the words of Ray Oldenburg, "third places." Let's hope that someday the county decisionmakers will come to realize how anti-community their decision was. (And let's hope that the decisionmakers didn't realize the harm they were imposing on Langley Park and similar areas in the county.)

### 5. IMMIGRANTS

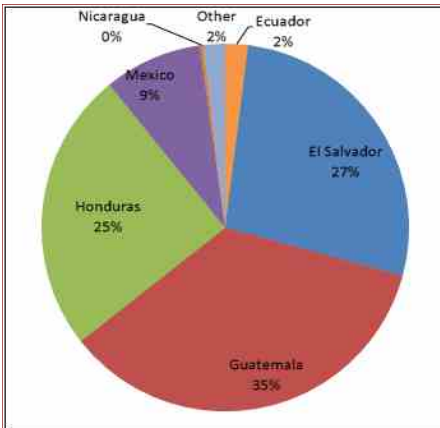
**Dreams = Political Theater:** "It's all political theater," said a twenty-something woman who came to the USA from Mexico without papers when she was 6. She added: "For me, at this point, applying for deferred action would be like accepting that theater, and I can't do that." The lukewarm responses by the woman and other Dream activists follow months of openly stating "undocumented and unafraid." Now the young activists have to decide whether the piece of cake is worth biting into when the rest of the cake (including legalization and a path to citizenship) is not offered. There is evidence that President Obama would have pushed for a comprehensive immigration reform except for the t-party right-wing opposition in the House of Representatives—opposition that made such reform politically impossible.

**Foreign Born:** The foreign-born population in Prince George's County is 19.4%; that's higher than the figure for Maryland, 13.2%. The Census figure for Langley Park is 68.3%, certainly an undercount. Let's hope many of the foreign born have papers and will become citizens as soon as possible so that they can help to shape the future of their neighborhoods, their county, state, and nation.

# THE LOST BOYS & GIRLS OF CENTRAL AMERICA

*There certainly are many tragedies in this world. One of them is the flight of children from areas of war and gang violence. The Women's Refugee Commission decided to study the situation, and below we reprint a small portion of the Executive Summary. We wonder if all of these desperate children deserve to be refugees or asylees, and whether the US government will give them legal standing. The law seems to say "yes."*

Beginning as early as October 2011, an unprecedented increase in the number of unaccompanied alien children (UACs) from the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras began migrating to the United States. During the first six months of fiscal year 2012, U.S. immigration agents apprehended almost double the number of children apprehended in previous years. The Department of Health and Human Service's (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the agency tasked with the care and custody of these children, had a record number of 10,005 in its care by April 2012.



Most of the children who have been apprehended as part of this influx are from three countries in Central America: Guatemala (35%), El Salvador (27%) and Honduras (25%). See graphic. The majority of the children the WRC interviewed said that their flight northward had

been necessitated by the dramatic and recent increases in violence and poverty in their home countries. The WRC's independent research on the conditions in these countries corroborated the children's reports. These increasingly desperate conditions reflect the culmination of several longstanding trends in Central America, including rising crime, systemic state corruption and entrenched economic inequality.

Children from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador cited the growing influence of youth gangs and drug cartels as their primary reason for leaving. Not only are they subject to violent attacks by the gangs, they explained, they are also targeted by police, who assume out of hand that all children are gang-affiliated. Girls also face gender-based violence, as rape becomes increasingly a tool of control. Children from Guatemala cited rising poverty, poor harvests and continuing unemployment as reasons for migrating. Almost all of the children's migration arose out of longstanding, complex problems in their home countries – problems that have no easy or short-term solutions.

**COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY:** This organization holds free legal advice clinics in Langley Park five days a week at the police satellite office, 8011 New Hampshire Avenue in the Langley Park Plaza. Monday, Wednesday and Friday is for family law matters (start: 9 a.m.). Tuesday it is for employment law/unpaid wages (start: 7:15 a.m.); and Thursday it is for foreclosure matters (start: 9 a.m.). Yes, these clinics are free, so those who have a problem that might be legal, take advantage. Client telephone: 240.391.6370.

## WHAT & WHEN



Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that are called to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to [actionlangleypark@yahoo.com](mailto:actionlangleypark@yahoo.com).

### 2012

**Nov 17 et cetera—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution** at St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a regular event on the third Saturday of the month. For information, call 301 434-4646.

**Nov 6—Vote!!!!** Check <http://www.aclu.org/voting-rights/know-your-voting-rights-maryland> for all the details. There are lots of important votes: for President, for in-state tuition for undocumented young people, plus gambling, marriage equality, and more. Citizen? If yes, vote!

**Nov 7—Last Crossroads Farmers' Market** of the year, 2:30-6:30 p.m. at 7676 New Hampshire Ave. Fruits, vegetables, flowers, more!

**Nov 7—International Populations Network**, 6-8:30 p.m. at PGCC Community Room C (2nd Floor). RSVP to [internationalcenter@pgcc.edu](mailto:internationalcenter@pgcc.edu)

**Nov 11—Health Check 2012 in the LP Community Center** noon to 3:30 p.m. There will be a wide range of health screenings plus information and counseling. Is your heart okay? Are you infected with HIV? How's your lung strength? Your oral health? Et cetera! Everything is free. Medical professionals welcome to add to the event's team of professionals.

**Health Fair**

**Nov 16, Dec 21—Capital Area Foodbank** at Langley Park Community Center, 11 a.m. One share of food per household. Bring your own bags.

**Nov 17—Annual Pottery Sale** at Langley Park Community Center, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Many professional potters contribute to this event.

### 2013

**May 5—Langley Park Day**, a festival of music, dance, food, information, and especially health (there's a big health fair included as part of the event). The whole world is invited!!! Everything is free except purchases of foods or crafts. Time: Noon to 4 p.m. Volunteer doctors, nurses, dancers, musicians, clowns, and guides will participate; other volunteers are all welcome. Residents: come one, come all!



### PROGRAMS AT THE LANGLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

- **Kinder Craft and Story:** This program is offered Tuesday and Thursday mornings starting at 10:30 a.m.
  - **Computer Skills** for adults, both beginning and intermediate.
  - **Ballet, Tap & Tumbling:** pre-school and elementary.
  - **Plus Karate, modern dance, free astro-photography** for teens, ESOL, Spanish, Zumba, ceramic for adults and children, mis quince program for young women, basketball leagues, etc!
- For information, call the Center at 301 445-4508 or stop by 1500 Merrimac Drive in Langley Park.