



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Race Matters conference looks at youth, public policy and race

ALBUQUERQUE— Adolescents of color are twice as likely to be incarcerated as their white counterparts who commit the same crimes. Native American children are three times more likely to end up in foster care than white children who face similar abuse. More than two-thirds of the teens suffering from AIDS are African American and Latino.

The statistics are disturbing, but they pale when compared to the reasons for them: racial profiling, income inequality, cultural incompetence, and statutory discretion, to name but a few. The fact is – institutionalized racism continues to plague this country. The question is – what are we prepared to do in order to correct it?

The way public policies disproportionately effect youth of color is the subject of a day-long conference, **Race Matters**, on **Tuesday, May 16**, presented by New Mexico Voices for Children, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Albuquerque Human Rights Office, and the NM Human Rights Coalition.

Expert speakers will discuss racial disparity in three main areas: child welfare, juvenile justice and reproductive health care. Then panels of teens, each led by a moderator, will further dissect these issues. Conference participant will be asked to craft public policy recommendations. New Mexico Voices for Children will then take these recommendations to our lawmakers when interim committees meet this summer and fall, and pursue them into the next legislative session.

Some conference highlights:

Keynote speakers:

Susan Taylor Batten, Senior Associate with the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF),
“Introduction to Race Matters.”

Gretchen Test, Program Associate with AECF, “Racial Disparities in Child Welfare: What We Know and What We Can Do.”

Raquel Mariscal, Senior Associate with AECF, “The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative: Reducing Racial/Ethnic Disparities,”

Barbara Sugland, Executive Director of the Center for Applied Research and Technical Assistance, “Down to the Bone: Racism, Disparities and Teen Sexual Health.”

Afternoon tracks:

“Race and Media” with presenter Andrea Quijada
“Child Welfare” youth panel with moderator Judge Tommy Jewel
“Juvenile Profiling” youth panel with moderator Enrique Cardiel
“Youth Access to Behavioral Health Care” youth panel with moderator Aaron Carr
“Adolescent Reproductive Health” youth panel with moderator Thomas Scharmen

Pre-conference interview possibilities:

Kay Monaco, JD, Executive Director, New Mexico Voices for Children (NMVC)
Sara Beth Koplik, PhD, Kids Count Program Director, NMVC
Aaron Carr, 4 Youth Program Director, NMVC
Susan Batten, AECF (by phone)

Call Sharon Kayne (505-244-9505, ext. 30 or 505-401-8709) to set up an interview with these or other conference speakers or moderators.

What: Race Matters Conference

Why: To examine through a racial lens how public policies impact young people

When: Tuesday, May 16, 8am to 3:30pm

Where: UNM Continuing Education Conference Center, 1634 University NE (at Indian School) in Albuquerque

Who: Sponsored by New Mexico Voices for Children, a nonprofit advocacy organization, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Albuquerque Human Rights Office, and the NM Human Rights Coalition

How Much: \$75, includes lunch. CEUs (college credit) available. Group rates available. Credit cards, checks and POs accepted. To register, call 505-244-9505 ext. 10, or visit www.nmvoices.org. Space is limited!

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a progressive nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico’s children, families and communities.
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