



## YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS at the Resource Center for Nonviolence

The Resource Center for Nonviolence is committed to developing the next generation of activists and empowering youth with skills in nonviolence. The primary responsibilities of two staff members and two long time interns are to work with young people. Sandino Gomez has directed the Youth Empowerment Program since 2005. Marciano Cruz founded *La Liga de la Comunidad* youth soccer league in 1995. Irene O'Connell co-founded the young adult group Project ReGeneration in 2011. Jacqueline Seydel has co-led Project ReGeneration since 2012.

Project ReGeneration is very successful in bringing youth into the Resource Center for Nonviolence and creating lasting creative relationships. Project ReGeneration (ReGen) strives to raise social consciousness, promote creative expression, and foster relevant inter-generational dialogue through the vehicles of art and community. Project ReGeneration organizes weekly support and planning meetings for female-identified and gender nonconforming individuals, monthly Open Mic nights giving a venue for personal

*Top left: Youth activities at the ML King, Jr. Celebration Weekend- the Power of Song for Social Change, January 2013. Right: Irene, Chris and Emma create the "Be the Change" painting of Gandhi, January, 2013.*



and political expression, quarterly workshops in applied nonviolence, and community collaborative art projects, Bike Power and D.I.Y/Self-sufficiency classes. ReGen helped organize Youth Day with the NAACP and Santa Cruz Community Coalition to Overcome Racism during the Martin Luther King celebrations in 2013. It included a live DJ, breakdancing, arts activities, and an LA rapper Abstract Rude offering hip-hop lessons and a performance. 2014's Youth Day featured a performance and workshop by

*Left & Right: Jacqueline Seydel displays and participants make peace flags during RCNV's collaboration with the Museum of Art and History, October, 2012.*



UCSC's Rainbow Theater. ReGen Open Mic nights are diverse, collaborative, ecologically focused events, using a people-powered microphone driven by a bicycle generator. ReGen collaborated with the Museum of Art and History (MAH) for First Friday participatory art and activism celebrations. 400 people at each

***Building for the Future - Resource Center for Nonviolence***

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\*Youth Piece v.4.27.14





*Abstract Rude, far right, leads a Hip Hop workshop during the MLK Celebration Weekend- the Power of Songs for Social Change, January, 2013. Right photo: Omar adds his feedback to a head, heart, and hands evaluation during the Explore (Y)our Social Justice Community Workshop, July, 2013.*



event took part in participatory art exercises to “discover nonviolence,” create peace flags, and “discover our social justice community.”

Sandino Gomez, Youth Empowerment Program coordinator, works with ReGen and also mentors and inspires young activists in high school and middle schools. He conducts Youth Activism Conversations with the Interact Clubs and the Gay-Straight Alliance at local schools. He supports the Brown Berets’ Bike Shack, speaks in classrooms, and meets one-on-one with young people seeking their way in a culture of violence and bullying. He also offers students alternatives to enlistment in the military.

The Youth Empowerment Program and ReGen organize and host nonviolent trainings with an emphasis on nonviolent community organizing, conflict resolution and communication, food sustainability and justice,

queer and gender rights and U.S. immigration policy. RCNV staff and Project Regeneration leaders focus on the academics of social change by hosting interns from the University of California, Santa Cruz, Cabrillo College, and California State University Monterey Bay. These students are introduced to nonviolent activism and work with ReGen and other RCNV programs.

Another significant figure in RCNV youth programming is longtime affiliate staff member Marciano Cruz, who joined RCNV in 1995. He has a strong background in gang, drug and violence prevention. He currently leads art, recreation, gardening, and soccer activities for children and youth.

The GI Rights Hotline is another RCNV program that works with young adults, focusing on those who are considering enlisting or currently in the military. Trained and experienced counselors respond to hotline calls on a rotating, 24-hour basis, responding to people experiencing problems in their military service, or seeking to leave the military. RCNV hosted the national GI Rights network annual conference in March, 2013.

RCNV’s facility also hosts young people participating in events organized by other groups, including Kids on Broadway, Indigenous Solidarity Network, Santa Cruz Community Coalition to Overcome Racism, and the Soquel Parent Education Nursery School Co-op. The use of the Resource Center by youth is growing because the 612 Ocean St. facility accommodates larger groups in its hall and community room, and because RCNV program staff give priority to engaging and inviting young people. A kitchen, and more hospitable and accessible spaces will allow stronger, more abundant relationships with young people to thrive.



*Irene O’Connell invites people to add nonviolence quotes to her painting of Gandhi during RCNV’s collaboration with the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, October, 2012.*