

Association of Raza Educators (A.R.E.)
Conference Bulletin No. 3
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Breaking out of the Parameters Imposed upon Us by an unjust Educational System

Organizing towards the Annual Association of Raza Educators (A.R.E.) continues to move forward. Hundreds of teachers, students, and parents, as well as social justice activists are expected to attend. Organized under the theme of "Striving for True Praxis to reclaim Public Education", already over 200 people have registered.

The conference, which is to be held on May 15, 2010, in San Diego, CA (Lincoln High School), will consist of workshops on a multitude of areas related to education. There will also be cultural presentations, as well as tables of information and literature from dozens of organizations will be on display. The keynote speakers of the conference will be the historian and one of the founders of Chicano Studies, Rodolfo Acuña; hip-hop artist/journalist and Green Party 2008 Vice Presidential Candidate, Rosa Clemente; and survivor of the brutal military overthrow of the President Allende of Chile and today UCSD professor and social justice activist, Cecilia Ubilla.

Finding ways to impact and transform public education

Founded in 1994, A.R.E. has become the leading progressive association of Raza (Latino) teachers and education workers in the United States. The A.R.E. conferences themselves have become "mobile institutions" which promote the unity of critical pedagogy, organization, and direct action, as a response to the growing oppression and wretchedness facing the great majority of Raza communities. Past A.R.E. conferences have brought together thousands of the most progressive, radical, and analytical educators to discuss, dialogue, and struggle, around the goal of finding ways to positively impact and transform the education and learning that is taking place in public schools.

The A.R.E. conferences serve as spaces of unity for those who are struggling for the advancement of a critical pedagogy (the process of teaching and learning) based on justice, democracy, and equality, and one that is committed to empowering and transforming society. Conferences are gatherings struggling to create a liberating educational practice that counters the hegemonic imposed pedagogy that oppress and stifle the intellectual development of whole nations, women, and workers. The conferences aim to advance (through the workshops and dialogue) the practice of a pedagogy that will remake the world and its current social relationships where a few control all the wealth, while the great majority live in misery and poverty.

The critical pedagogy which the A.R.E. conferences promote –not only "questions" the status quo, but most importantly– calls for learners to organize and take action to liberate themselves. It is an education based on those ideas that we find in Antonio Gramsci (Italian philosopher and fighter for worker's rights), Karl Marx (German Philosopher and

political theoretician), and Paulo Freire (Brazilian-Raza educator and influential theorist of critical pedagogy),

Schools must become sites of democratic struggle

The A.R.E. conference's goals are not limited to just "enlightening" those attending to new ideas, but to move them to forming "core groups of teacher-activists", who in turned will form broad "progressive associations", which will eventually lead to a "mass movement of teachers" joining other sectors of society in a struggle for total change here in the United States and around the world.

The building of this movement, A.R.E. believes, will require that today's schools become sites of democratic struggle and centers for social justice organizers. This will necessitate that we uphold and give legitimacy to grassroots educators and intellectuals –the workers and community leaders. These people's leaders have a wealth of knowledge and hold in their experience many of the answers and solutions to ending the problems facing Raza communities and other minorities: poverty, violence, ignorance, drug abuse, gentrification, and environmental injustice. As Educators we know that only by learning from the experiences of the workers and the community, can we provide an education that is relevant to the lives of our students and build upon the knowledge that they bring into our classrooms.

A.R.E. calls on all educators to break out of the parameters imposed upon us by an unjust educational system. Freeing ourselves from the chains of an oppression-centered education is what the A.R.E. conferences are all about. Join on this journey towards liberation; attend this year's A.R.E. conference.