This summer KGA staff and two of our members had the opportunity to travel to Miami, Florida to attend Sistersong’s 2011 National Conference, “Let’s Talk About Sex: Love, Legislation and Leadership.” Youth members Amanda and Sada spent 3 days in Miami soaking up the sun and engaging in dialogue about reproductive justice. At the end of their trip Sada and Amanda took time to reflect and write about what they learned…

“I learned that sexual liberation can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people, but to me its freedom to express your love, in whatever manner makes most sense to you, to whomever you love & not care about judgment. It’s freeing your spirit from the body you’re in & just love unconditionally. I also learned that reproductive justice isn’t just sex-ed classes, it’s about you & your body, doing what you think is best for your body regardless of your skin color, sexual orientation, or what you choose to identify as. It’s the right to get any information when needed to make healthy decisions.”

- Amanda

What I learned about Reproductive Justice was that you have control of your body and have pride… I learned you should never settle for less. I say that because your body is your body. You can do whatever you want to do with it. No one should ever judge you. You’re beautiful.”

- Sada

Starting in January 2010, KGA members collected surveys from about 500 peers as part of our Participatory Action Research (PAR). That summer KGA partnered with UCLA to analyze the results, recording Khmer experiences and organizing them into tangible facts that can be used to identify community needs and build momentum for change. Our preliminary research results revealed injustices in the areas of Reproductive Justice, Immigrant & Refugee Rights, and Health & Safety.*

(Continues on page 2)

* To see our preliminary research results please visit www.kgalb.org

**Youth at the C.O.R.E.**

Creating Opportunities & Resources for Empowerment

“There’s not just one issue that’s impacting youth,” said KGA community organizer Ashley Uyeda, “There are multiple issues intersecting at once, and so how do we think about them wholly?” The answer to that question is KGA’s youth wellness platform, which addresses gender, racial, and economic disparities uncovered by our Participatory Action Research.

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**Youth at the C.O.R.E.**

Creating Opportunities & Resources for Empowerment

**Youth Wellness Platform**

1. We want culturally relevant education that reflects our community’s history, diversity, and strengths (this includes ethnic studies, history, language, food, dance)

2. We want an encouraging & positive college and career prep environment for all students.

3. We want to be treated with dignity and respect in schools & in our community regardless of our age, race/ethnicity, or immigration status

4. We want comprehensive information and free access to services in our community about our bodies, genders, sexualities, relationships & reproductive health regardless of our age, sex, gender, or sexual orientation

5. We want all families to be able to live sustainably with access to economic opportunities, education, affordable housing, and healthcare

**Highlights in Leadership & Organizing**

**KJP: Khmer Justice Program**

*Created & distributed PSA on Khmer Youth Survey Results*

*Launched Listening Campaign with a Survey Results Parl at Poly H.S. with over 100 youth attending*

*Led Listening Campaign and hosted 3 listening sessions engaging over 50 youth residents & 8 youth organizations in Long Beach*

**YLP: Youth Leadership Program**

*In the spring semester 20 core leaders planned for a club chapter in Poly High School*

*The club will launch in the fall semester when school starts. This will be an opportunity for YLP to lead the club, talk about our campaign, and recruit members into KGA!*

**YWEP: Young Women’s Empowerment Program**

*Shifted to a 15-week program that is run twice a year, with new members each fall and spring*

*Incorporated Wellness Days like yoga, dance, and self-defense lessons into the program*

*Wrote poetry, reflections, and created art for the first 2 issues of the YWEP ‘Zine*
In our 2011 Summer Organizing Institute, KGA members and staff used those results along with feedback from community listening sessions held in the spring to create a five-point platform for our upcoming youth wellness campaign, YOUth at the C.O.R.E (Creating Opportunities & Resources for Empowerment).

The creation of the platform was a collaborative effort between KGA staff and youth who created 5 planks for the platform by pairing core issues with solutions identified by the community. For example, our research showed that half of youth (48%) believe that the only way to prevent pregnancy is to not have sex, while the other half disagree. Solutions that the community identified for this problem include schools offering comprehensive sex education classes and having clinics on campus where young people can access free and private reproductive healthcare. The resulting plank of our platform is the demand for comprehensive information and access to services in our community about our bodies, genders, sexualities, relationships and reproductive health regardless of age, sex, gender, or sexual orientation.

The platform not only addresses intersecting issues within the Khmer community, it also involves issues that affect all young people in Long Beach. “It is putting youth in the center of attention and getting what we want and need to change in our community,” said KGA youth Brittany Sibounheuang about the platform.

The youth wellness campaign will launch this fall, along with the publishing of a full report on our Participatory Action Research. We will garner support for our platform from youth, allies, community stakeholders and policymakers who want a healthy and empowering environment that puts young people at the core of decision-making.

**Organizations**

**Asian Pacific American Legal Center**
**API Equality**

**Chinese Progressive Association**
**Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council**

**United Cambodian Community**
**SEIU Local 721, CLC Commercial Visual Communications**

**American Asian Drug Abuse Program, Inc.**
**Californians for Justice**

**Office of Assemblyman Warren Furutani**
**UCI Department of Asian American Studies**

**UCLA Asian American Studies Center**

**Foundations**

**Penny Family Fund**
**Josephine S. Guminber Foundation**
**Dwight Stuart Youth Fund**
**Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy**
**Public Corporation for the Arts Foundation of Northern CA, Inc.**

**Asian Pacific Community Fund.**
**California Fund for Youth Organizing**
**Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing**
**Women’s Foundation**
**Weingart Foundation**

**Third Wave Foundation**
**The California Endowment**

**Highlights**

**YMCA: Young Men’s Empowerment Program**

Piloted 1st boys program in the Spring! 16 young men engaged in training and discussion on masculinity, sexism, gender roles, homophobia and struggles growing up in Long Beach.

**LIFE: Learning to Impact for Empowerment**

16 Seniors graduated from Poly, Wilson, & Millikan Highschool from our boys and girls programming

All seniors will be attending college in the fall at either Long Beach City College, Orange Community College, Cerritos Community College, San Diego State University, CSU Long Beach, San Jose State, or Soka University

**Parents & Alumni Network**

Conducted our 1st Alumni social gathering! It was a time to reconnect, share stories and update our alumni about KGA’s work.

Engaged parents in our work through our parent orientation and focus groups, which helped us assess their needs and interest in our work.

**BHCLB: Building Healthy Communities Long Beach**

Successfully launched youth committee this summer with 17 multiracial youth from across Long Beach.

Shout outs to youth organizing working group organizations who have been attending our regular meetings! CFJ, Centro CHA, Boys & Girls Club, EM3, YMCA, LB CAP, CCC, KGA

**Staff Spotlight**

Justine Calma is the new program coordinator for KGA’s Young Womyn’s Empowerment Program. She was an intern with KGA through Public Allies Los Angeles, an Americorps program that provides individuals with personal and professional development and training to lead in the nonprofit sector. She loves building power and sisterhood with other young women, and believes that community organizing can lead to a just and healthy world with self-determination for all people. Justine is also a writer with a degree in journalism and works on communications for KGA.

**Thank YOU!**

Join KGA as we engage our state legislatures & local elected officials about the importance of youth wellness in Long Beach!