



MY SUMMER AT CARECEN:

WHAT I LEARNED, WHAT I EARNED, AND WHAT I
GAVE.

By Jessica E Cubias

CARECEN

(Central American Resource Center)

- The mission of CARECEN is to empower Central Americans by defending human & civil rights, working for social and economic justice.
- The vision of CARECEN is for the Los Angeles region to become a place where Central Americans and other communities can live in peace, with dignity, & enjoy economic well-being, social justice, & political empowerment.

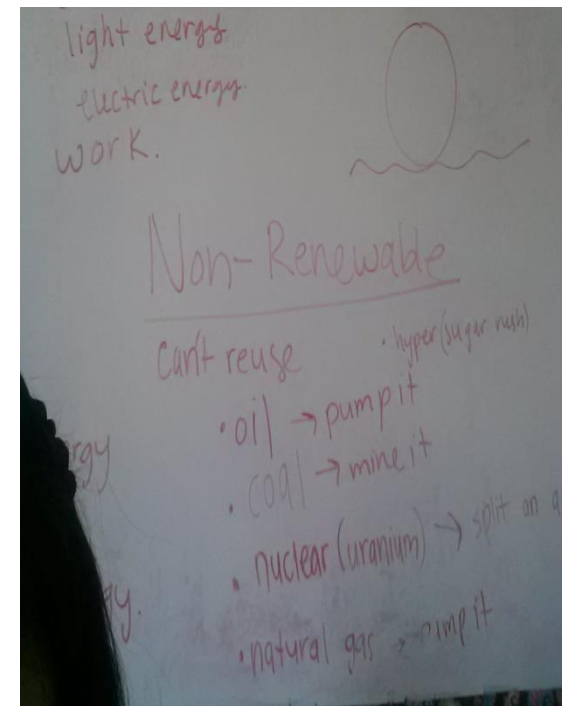


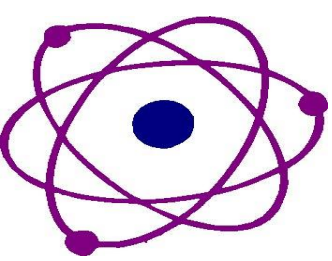


CARECEN SUMMER PROGRAM!

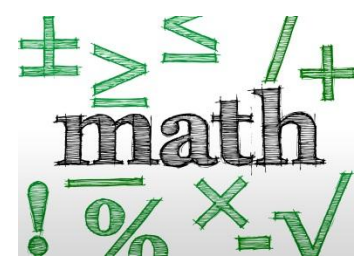


Interning at CARECEN has been a very fun experience; since day one there hasn't been a day they don't have something for us to do. They wasted no time throwing us in with the kids on the first day. Throughout the summer program I worked with the 6th graders in the areas of science and engineering. It was stressful coming up with fun, innovative projects for the kids to do every week.





What's the problem?



- The summer program's goal was to help the students in areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math (STEAM) to prepare the students for the upcoming year.
- Evaluating the student's performance was important. (test in the beginning and the end)
- Comparing the beginning and end test results left me wondering why some students improved dramatically and why some students score dropped drastically.

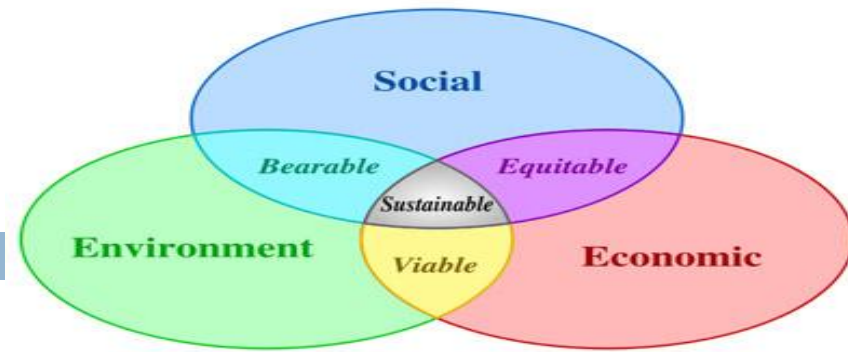


What Factors in the Community Affect the Students' Performance?

- During my research I found many factors that can contribute to student's performances in school/test.
- Poverty/Lack of resources: Not having access to tutoring services or afterschool programs. Lack of teaching staff to help, lack of access to AP tests, SAT prep etc.
- Family/Culture: This can go either way (good or bad) Family & Culture play a big role in a student's performance. Parents can push for their child to work hard in school or can ask for help in taking care of their siblings, which is very common. Culture may not always approve of furthering your education.
- Government/LAUSD: With a history of low performing schools, LAUSD may play a big role in the way students perform. Lack of funding to the schools, overpopulated schools, overcrowded schools etc.
- Students: The student themselves may feel overwhelmed or forgotten and that may affect their performance as well.

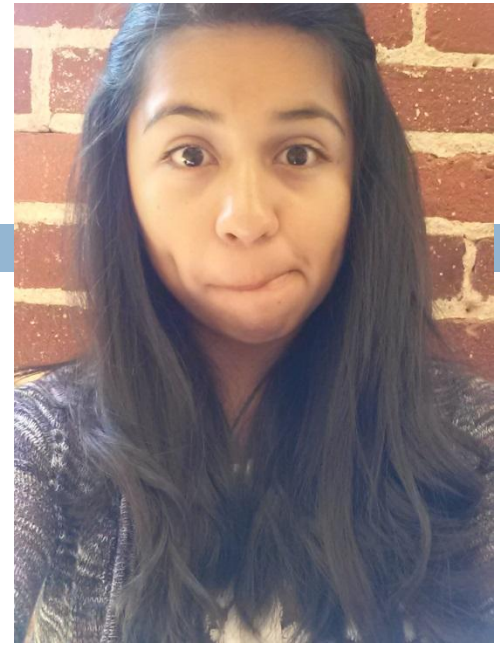


SUSTAINABILITY?



- I feel that any sustainable change that can happen would take more than 8 weeks to implement.
- I don't necessarily feel we made a long lasting impact on CARECEN & the community (I hope we did! 😊) but we did give some advice to improve their summer program.
- I feel that the advice we gave them, if implemented can better their program and can make their evaluations truly reflect their hard labor.
- How to make the test taking more efficient, test evaluation template, creating a list of the facilitator's name, email & cellphone to better the communication, etc.

What I learned at CARECEN



Interning at CARECEN was a very gratifying experience. I learned a lot about myself and most importantly, about the community.

- I feel much more at ease speaking in public.
- Always be organized and don't leave everything for the last minute.
- Don't take things too seriously. (don't take things too hard)
- RAISE your voice.
- Be flexible. "wing it"

- First and foremost, there are so many things we are not aware of that are happening literally a couple of miles away from UCLA.
- LA's very diverse population makes it much more easier to be tolerable towards others.
- Immigrant communities face a lot of social determinants of health like poverty, etc.
- ACTIVISM is NOT bad.



Reciprocity... was there any?

- I learned a lot from CARECEN. It was a very interesting, fun, and unique experience. I learned a lot about myself and the community and it was great seeing in person the things we learned in the cluster. I gained a lot of wonderful new skills and I learned that being ACTIVE in the community is a great way to give back. I learned that there is so much injustice and that we can't just sit back and be silent because if we stay silent we are agreeing with the injustice.
- I hope I was able to help CARCEN and its summer program (even by a little). I hope the tips I offered and organizing helps improve the summer program for next year.