

## HEALTH HAPPENS IN YOUTH MEDIA

### School Discipline Legislation, School Lunch, Flooded Trailer Parks and More Election Coverage

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[Youth Media for Building Health Communities](#): Each week in the 14 BHC places, young people knit together experiences at school, at work, at home and in their neighborhoods to tell stories about how health happens.

Health Happens in  
**Schools**



Reid Continuation High School is the only school in Long Beach that officially practices restorative justice, a model of conflict management that zeroes in on the harm done, and seeks to repair or “restore” the damage. [Voicewaves](#) presents videos of conflict resolution workshops.

Student activists have fought for years against what they view as unjust school discipline practices, which often included costly “truancy” tickets for students who arrived late to school. Police issue truancy tickets to students all over Los Angeles, even on school property. Lateness could bring a \$250 ticket, an extra burden for low-income families. Read the [true tale of school ticketing](#) and [Boyle Heights Beat](#)’s story on the four new school reform bills signed by Governor Brown in September..

A poll of California parents and students provides an early measure of how the food of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, implemented at public schools this summer, is received by those that actually eat it. The majority said the meals are better now. They include more vegetable options, no trans fats, limits on calories and salt, and for the first time, emphasis on whole grains. Reactions and background on [South Kern Sol](#).

Two months into new federal nutrition guidelines for school meals, youth reporters from New America Media fanned out in high schools across California to interview their peers in the lunch line. They found wide variations in how students graded their new school meals. None of the meal programs earned an A, but the majority of students surveyed gave their schools passing grades. Read the highlights on [Coachella Unincorporated](#).

After struggling to get students to eat and like the new selections, LAUSD decided to have students vote on the entrees they would like added to their menu. Read the full story on [Boyle Heights Beat](#).

Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School in Sacramento prepares students who have dreams of becoming a doctor, a nurse, or other medical professional. Knowledge and training opportunities come from an array of first-tier and college-level science courses, and through partnerships with medical centers such as U.C. Davis. A [freshman’s first-person account](#) and full story on [Access Sacramento](#).

At 13 years old, Jane Carretero remembers a teacher telling her, “*I know kids like you: you’re going to mess up in life.*” In this provocative narrative, she talks candidly about the harsh experiences of high school. Photos and video on Fresno’s [The Know](#).

A new analysis of U.S. Department of Education data shows that American schools are becoming increasingly segregated. Youth Radio reporters examine the claim that diverse schools have lower dropout and subsequent crime rates, digging up an [amicus brief by police officers](#) and reporting on the [sociology of schools](#).

Alejandra Alarcon always thought her hard work and hunger for higher education would ensure that she would get enough financial aid to see her through college. But with cuts to scholarships for low-income students, things didn't go as expected and she had to reconsider her plans. Read her story on [Coachella Unincorporated](#).

The low expectations embodied in the remarks of a high school teacher, *"I don't know where you will be in the next ten years,"* taught one former student that he was a "DGK" (dirty ghetto kid). Now he has joined the Neighborhood News Correspondents, his first job. He talks about showing that teacher that a "DGK" can change his life on [Access Sacramento](#).



A young woman in Oakland has had opportunities to get a gun, but she says they don't make her feel safer. *"If I had a gun myself it would make me more likely to use it."* Listen on [Youth Radio](#).

Young people from the Urban Peace Movement in Oakland joined up with Oakland's Mayor for an anti-violence campaign. The billboards say *"Stop the killing, Start the healing,"* and show young people from Oakland holding photographs of loved ones lost to homicide. They are placed along key thoroughfares in East Oakland, where there is a high prevalence of gun violence. View the images on [Youth Radio](#).

A young man born with HIV reports on his experience at a summer camp for kids with HIV. *"There aren't many people I really trust, so I haven't told anyone about my HIV. The only people who know are my family, my doctors, and people at Camp Kindle."* Read his story on [The Know](#).

Confessions of a soda lover, in the midst of being converted to a water drinker. Richmond youth comedian and video artist William Haynes adds his two cents to the RYSE Center and Richmond Pulse series on the soda wars. *"I love soda. I am a soda buff. That was until I did a little bit of research."* Watch his video on [Richmond Pulse](#).

In Boyle Heights, the median age is 25 years old, one of the lowest in the city of Los Angeles, which makes addressing the issue of domestic violence extremely crucial. *"According to the most recent statistics from the Department of Justice, women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest per capita rates of intimate violence."* Read about domestic violence prevention on [Boyle Heights Beat](#).

This summer, the California Supreme Court ruled unusually long sentences for juveniles unconstitutional. With mandatory minimums for youth still in effect from Proposition 21, what is deemed "unusually long" nowadays? *"The idea that kids can change isn't new -- the juvenile justice system was founded on that idea way back in the day. But in the late 1980s, rising rates of gang violence caused many states to toughen up on youth crime."* Youth Radio talks to an adult who spent time in California's youth penitentiary, and to lawyers on both sides of the debate about the fairness of piling on "enhancements" to put kids away for longer. Listen to the story on [Youth Radio](#), and read [letters and communiques](#) sent from prison.

Nick Vang was told he needed to do 40 hours of community service or face jail. While initially he scoffed, now he feels grateful that the people at George Sims Community Center helped him to adapt to a work environment. *"The staff at George Sims were great, supportive people. I got to know most of them and they helped get me back on*

track.” Read his story on [Access Sacramento](#).



In October, ten students from Del Norte visited the San Francisco Bay Area. They toured community based organizations, met youth media producers and shared life experiences with youth organizers. In the midst of this, they also toured downtown Oakland, taking photographs, and produced a [blog site to document their observations](#).

The AJA Project, a youth photography training program, asked students at Monroe Clark Middle School to physically describe the different streets in their town. Then the students went to photograph those same streets. [Speak City Heights](#) published their interactive map linking to the images of all the specific places they photographed, and a video for a more personal narrative about growing up on unsafe streets.

After two accidents within a year of her getting a driver’s license, Rayana Godfrey wondered whether she was missing out on the better form of transportation — walking. She says she’s never felt more free. *“Though walking takes longer, it’s definitely less stressful.”* Listen on [Youth Radio](#).

Urban Tilth, the organization at the forefront of Richmond growing healthy foods movement, participated in a community event where people shared personal health-related stories, stories that the Cornerstone Theater Company is now taking and turning into a short play. *“Now that I’m older and understand health issues better, I feel a sense of responsibility to educate other young people and adults so that they can learn from my experiences.”* Read about the community’s vision for a healthy future, on [Richmond Pulse](#).

Seeds of community activism are dropping into a teenager in Merced as she promotes a new perspective on so-called “ghetto” neighborhoods in town. *“It saddens me that these places are no longer used or wanted. I want our community to look as nice, friendly and active as possible!”* She imagines parks and storefronts where there are empty lots and abandoned properties, to transform the negative image of the city into a lively one. Read her reflection on [We’Ced](#).

Environmentalists and urban planners have an ambitious plan to transform a rail yard into a ribbon of green connecting Boyle Heights to downtown L.A. *“More and more people are realizing that things that we turned our backs on, like the L.A. River, are really the front door.”* A park with cutting edge design is an exciting prospect for Boyle Heights residents, a population of almost 90,000 and fewer than 10 parks. The Union Pacific train company, however, has no plans to sell the rail yard to allow this project. Read more on [Boyle Heights Beat](#).

A September storm weathered by other neighborhoods was a crisis for trailer park residents, who found themselves stranded without power or water. Families in Duroville, a trailer park in Mecca, have been assisted by volunteers from the Red Cross and Salvation Army, but communication is a challenge with no electricity. [Coachella Unincorporated](#) has the full story and photos, as well as reports on [residents’ grievances](#) with the Red Cross’s temporary shelter for Coachella residents, which was set up without water for cooking, drinking and hygiene purposes and then quickly dismantled. *“I am not aware that the people staying there had any notice before they were awoken and asked to leave.”*

A smart and savvy strategy for decreasing gun violence in Long Beach, Summer Night Lights operates healthy social activities at night in parks with high rates of gang activity. *“As the night grew on, you almost forgot the neighborhood’s violent history.”* Read more on [Voicewaves](#).

Sacramento’s job resource centers offer opportunities to learn and improve your chances of landing a job, and most of them are free. La Familia Counseling Center gives out a handbook called “How to survive a layoff.” Good thing for Ghandy Chavez because, as he tells us, finding a job is not easy — and he knows because he’s tried. On [Access Sacramento](#).

Eastern Coachella Valley farmworkers, though economically vital, are largely unrepresented in politics and live in mobile home communities that lack basic infrastructure and access to clean water. *“According to Pueblo Unido, the Eastern Coachella Valley farm worker labor force has generated over \$430,000,000 in revenue per year over the past decade, making them key contributors to both local and regional agriculture system.”* Residents, leaders, organizations, and officials gathered on October 4 to discuss these and other key issues of rural communities at the Rural Forum on Sustainable Communities in Thermal, Ca. Details on [Coachella Unincorporated](#).

Long Beach has been applauded following construction of more than 130 miles of bike lanes downtown. While more affluent parts of the city celebrate safer routes for non-car transportation, residents in poorer neighborhoods won’t be seeing improvements to their bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure until 2014. Ironically, *“in Long Beach’s poorer neighborhoods, where residents bike or walk not just for health or leisurely reasons, but for lack of a car, biking remains well, not so friendly.”* Read the story on [Voicewaves](#).



#### ELECTION SPECIAL COVERAGE

Youth in Richmond weigh in on Measure N – the sweetened beverage tax on the November ballot. The city is a trailblazer in proposing bold policies to prevent and combat obesity and diabetes. Read more on [Richmond Pulse](#).

Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack has been trying to disown an email in which she referred jokingly to parts of Coachella as a “third world toilet.” Youth reporters have some words for her on [Coachella Unincorporated](#).

While Barack Obama and Mitt Romney spar before the nation, in Coachella Dr. Raul Ruiz and Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack (R) faced off during the 36th District Congressional Debate. Resident viewers observed tone and content, and respond, on [Coachella Unincorporated](#).

Hoping to help voters make decisions that support a healthy Long Beach, Khmer Girls In Action created a voter guide. Find details about measures they support, and check out the video they produced for the Long Beach Living Wage Campaign, on [Voicewaves](#).

An 18 year-old freshman at Fresno Pacific University suddenly realizes she’d like to vote, but didn’t know how or where to register or even where to vote. While it shouldn’t be difficult to find this information, she says, young voters who want change will have to educate themselves about voting: *“If you give up before you try why expect to get the results you want?”* Her story is on [The Know](#).

The Educational Testing Service conducted a study showing 39 percent of high school dropouts do not vote in their next presidential election. [Youth Radio](#) visited two Bay Area schools to find out how civic education might impact young people’s political engagement, especially in an election year.

Teachers and administrators in Long Beach support Propositions 30 and 38, which would each raise taxes to fund schools in California, but they worry that voters will choose one or the other, dividing the “yes” vote. Reporters and educational leaders break down the proposals, and discuss what’s at stake, on [Voicewaves](#).

Lavonte Thompson, age 14, stood outside of the Fox Theater when the President came to Oakland. The youngest volunteer at his local Obama For America office, Lavonte talks about why he spends his time volunteering for the President’s reelection on [Youth Radio](#).



**This wouldn’t be a newsletter of youth voices if everything they said fit neatly into our agenda. On that note...** A new video featuring young people in Richmond speaking their minds about family’s support — or lack thereof — for different styles of dress, friends, and sexuality, on the [RYSE Center’s YouTube channel](#).

Visit <http://ymbhc.wordpress.com/> for more youth perspectives on community health.