

LOS ANGELES CITY TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY

RESEARCH TEAM ON IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

Submitted by:

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The following recommendations are made to the Los Angeles City Council by this research team on Immigrant Families in Los Angeles:

1. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL ENCOURAGE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR LARGER DWELLINGS TO COUNTER RECENT CONSTRUCTION TRENDS OF DOWNSIZED UNITS TO EXPAND HOUSING AVAILABILITY TO LARGER HOUSEHOLDS.
2. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL CREATE A TASK FORCE TO INVESTIGATE LANDLORD ABUSE AND EXTENT OF OVERPAYMENT BY IMMIGRANTS.
3. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL OPPOSE LEGISLATION LIMITING THE AVAILABILITY OF ALL HOUSING TO IMMIGRANTS AND THAT IT SUPPORT AND CREATE LEGISLATION TO OFFER HOUSING TO ALL WHO NEED IT, REGARDLESS OF LEGAL STATUS OR FAMILY SIZE.
4. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF OVERCROWDING IN ITS SCHOOL SYSTEM BY LOBBYING IN FAVOR OF MORE AND LARGER FACILITIES AND SCHOOLS.
5. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL FUND THROUGH COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANTS, ORGANIZATIONS AIMED AT TEACHING ENGLISH TO IMMIGRANTS AND TO USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH THE LOS ANGELES SCHOOL BOARD TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF ESL CLASSES THROUGHOUT THIS CITY.
6. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL GUARANTEE AND INCREASE THE FUNDING OF SHELTERS FOR ABUSE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PARTICULAR THOSE AIMED AT ASSISTING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.
7. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL FUND THROUGH COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANTS, AGENCIES AIMED AT PROVIDING AND IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANTS.
8. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL CONTINUE AND INCREASE THE FUNDING OF PROGRAMS AIMED AT CURBING YOUTH GANG VIOLENCE AND DRUG ABUSE WITHIN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.
9. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL HIRE AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE CURRENT TRAINING OF LOS ANGELES POLICE OFFICERS IN DEALING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PARTICULARLY IN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.

INTRODUCTION:

In 1965, 297,000 legal immigrants were admitted into the United States. Twenty years later, in 1985, the Immigration and Naturalization Service processed and accepted 570,000 applicants, granting those individuals legal status in this country. These two figures represent a 92 percent increase of legal immigrants alone within this period of time.(1) These statistics, however, do not include the rising flow of undocumented people who have crossed land, water and sky in order to come to this country. At the time of the 1980 census, it had been estimated that over two million undocumented immigrants lived in the United States. "Of these, 55 percent were from Mexico. Latin America as a whole accounted for 77 percent. Asia accounted for about 10 percent, Europe and Canada 8.5 percent and the remainder of the world slightly over 4 percent."(2) Today, however, many census authorities feel that the actual census count is a low estimate of undocumented individuals in this country and that a more accurate estimation is closer to 4.7 million with the number growing by 200,000 a year.(3) The Census Bureau agrees with these figures. In total, the 1980 census counted over 14 million immigrants (legal and documented) in the United States, a record high.(4)

Based on the immigrant flows of the past twenty years - particularly those coming from Asia which increased by 1,180 percent since 1965 - demographer Leon Bouvier has written that if current immigration trends continue, "40 percent of Americans in the year 2080 will be immigrants who arrived in the United States after 1980, or their descendants. About 80 percent of these will be Hispanic, Caribbean, or Asian."(5)

What has been described as the "Fourth Wave" is the most recent of the four large-scale movements of immigrants to different parts to this country.(6) This last mass movement has greatly affected California most specifically, the City of Los Angeles. Mainly characterized by the influx of Latin Americans and Asians, "California is now absorbing more than one-quarter of the legal immigrants to the United States."(7) In the same vein, about half of all illegal immigrants live in California with Los Angeles County alone being the home of nearly one-third of the total number of undocumented in the United States.(8)

In September of 1984, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) released a draft report entitled Southern California: A Region In Transition: Scenarios of Future Immigration and Ethnicity, which examines the potential impacts that future immigration can have on the economic and social structures of this Region, particularly in Los Angeles County where over 80 percent of recent immigrant households have located.(9) Of greater importance, the SCAG report brings to light both the existing and future challenges and opportunities of immigration for Southern California and most specifically, the city of Los Angeles.

Called the "new Ellis Island" by Time magazine, Los Angeles City today receives 55 percent of the immigrants arriving to California. While Latinos are the single largest group in Los Angeles in terms of absolute numbers, the Asian/Pacific population has experienced the highest percentage increase in recent years (92 percent increase from 1970 to 1980). Besides these two groups, Los Angeles can boast to have immigrants from virtually all corners of the world. Some of the larger groups include immigrants from the Middle East (such as Iranians and Armenians) and Jews from the Soviet Union.

In addition to their diverse cultures and work skills, immigrants bring to our city their own systems of family structure. For example, Latino and Asian cultures both espouse and function under an "extended family structure" which differs significantly from the Western view of the the "nuclear family constellation" as the operating unit.

Given that immigrants make up a significant segment of this City's population and the number is expected to continue to increase, the focus of this report is the Immigrant form by experience. In specific, the emphasis is on how the City of Los Angeles, through its legislation and services, can facilitate the integration of immigrant families into the larger L.A. community, and support the recognition of immigrant families as positive contributors to our community.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

One of the most unique characteristics of the immigrant family experience, is the extended family structure. Within this system, family members are defined on a dynamic dimension which extends beyond that of the immediate family relation. For the immigrant, a family member may be a distant cousin, a god-child, an aunt, and even a friend. The extended family functions as a system of interrelations in which individuals, regardless of their familial association, interact with one another to create and maintain a household. Although immigrant families tend to have more children than the average American family, the immigrant household may on the average, include non-blood related members. "The figure of persons per household in Southern California was 2.73, while the figure of recent Hispanic and Asian immigrants was 4.65

and 3.83, respectively."(10) (see table V-5)

Rudimentary to the extended family concept, is its function as a support system. Faced with the cultural conflicts and language barriers that exist for the immigrant in his/her daily dealings with the larger, non-immigrant society, the extended family helps to maintain the social and psychological well-being of its members so that they can, in turn, participate and integrate into the larger community.

Today, as in the past, the extended family structure, cultural adjustments, and language barriers are key factors which affect and shape the immigrant family experience. These factors however, also affect the larger society as the immigrant family attempts to integrate it. In the case of Los Angeles, issues related to housing, education, public health and social services, significantly impact this city's immigrant community.

Therefore, in the process of adequately addressing these issues, one must examine the effects that policies, or any type of decisions, may have on the immigrant and his/her family. Local leaders, policy-makers, public and private agencies, must recognize the challenge and opportunities brought by immigrant families as immigrants continue to shape the present and future of the City of Los Angeles.

ISSUES

A. Housing

According to the Bureau of Census, approximately 83 percent (104,080 out of 125,900) of the recent immigrants settled in Los Angeles County.(11) Of these, one percent were black, 24 percent were non-Hispanic Whites, 32 percent Asian,

and 43 percent Hispanic.(12) Of all immigrant households with five or more persons per household, 86 percent were Hispanic and Asians.(13) (see table V-5)

The census also found that only 17 percent of recent immigrants to Los Angeles area were homeowners and the other 83 percent were renters. These figures were significantly different from the total number of non-immigrant owners and renters, 43 percent and 47 percent, respectively.(14)

Both of these factors, size of household and type of housing, have significantly impacted the immigrant family. In the 1984 SCAG report, researchers found that "359,480 out of 3,923,340 households sampled in 1980 lived in overcrowded conditions (more than 1.01 person per room)."(15) The report also found that "an overwhelming number of these households were non-White households - 83 percent. About 15 percent of all households living in over crowded housing were recent immigrants - mostly Hispanic and Asian - while this category made up only 3 percent of the region's households. Overall, 44 percent of the recent immigrant households were overcrowded compared with 8 percent for resident households (figure V4)."(16)

Hispanics were three times more likely to live in overcrowded conditions than the other minority groups, and 15 times more likely than Whites.(17)

In terms of payment for housing, 49 percent of all recent immigrants paid more than 30 percent of their income for shelter - an overpayment of almost twice that made by a long-term resident (27 percent).(18)

Neither the poor, nor the hungry, voluntarily choose to endure the conditions

of poverty or hunger. Likewise, immigrant families do not choose to live under over crowded conditions or to spend 30 percent of their income on shelter which more often than not, is in a state of unacceptable living condition. However, the laws of supply and demand, and exploitation, are more likely determinants of the conditions in which immigrants get to live.

However, measures can be taken to remedy and address the Housing issue and how, in specific, it can improve the lot of those most directly affected. The SCAG Report made the following observations and suggestions:

"The need for larger dwelling units is counter to recent trends which have down-sized units to cut costs and make housing affordable for today's predominantly smaller households. A housing issue for policy-makers may be how to expand housing unit sizes to accommodate larger minority households when they and immigrant households have significant overpayment and crowding problems. This issue may tend to concentrate in the geographic center of the region. The need for larger dwelling units at affordable prices may also suggest the need for greater emphasis on rehabilitation of older existing housing stock and less emphasis on new construction." (19)

Housing is a basic need for all types of families. For the immigrant family, the need to maintain the family together, under one roof, is elementary to its survival. One can easily incur from those statistics shown, that for immigrant families the family unit is a far greater loss than the loss in income or quality of housing.

Recommendations

1. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL ENCOURAGE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR LARGER DWELLINGS TO COUNTER RECENT CONSTRUCTION TRENDS OF DOWNSIZED UNITS TO EXPAND HOUSING AVAILABILITY TO LARGER HOUSEHOLDS (I.E. REHABILITATION OF OLDER EXISTING UNITS, HOUSING PRODUCTION PROGRAMS).

2. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL CREATE A TASK FORCE TO INVESTIGATE LANDLORD ABUSE AND EXTENT OF OVERPAYMENT BY IMMIGRANTS.

3. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL OPPOSE LEGISLATION LIMITING THE AVAILABILITY OF ALL HOUSING TO IMMIGRANTS AND THAT IT SUPPORT AND CREATE LEGISLATION TO OFFER HOUSING TO ALL WHO NEED IT, REGARDLESS OF LEGAL STATUS OR FAMILY SIZE.

B. Education

According to 1980 data, Los Angeles Unified School District was able to identify more than 80 different languages spoken within its student body.(20) Spanish, Asian languages, and Armenian are the most prominent languages spoken by students. Five percent of the total population is comprised of immigrant children.(21) Of these, 49.81 percent is Hispanic, 36.06 percent is Asian, 13.46 percent is non-Hispanic White, and .65 percent is Black.(22) Today, the Los Angeles public school system is comprised of 56 percent Latino and 8.2 percent Asian student population - many of whom are children of recent immigrants.(23)

As in the housing issue. "overcrowding in inner city, minority, dominated schools in Los Angeles contrasts with declining enrollments in outlying communities."(24) This city's unified school district is currently experiencing a rapid influx of immigrants, primarily of Hispanics. "Seventy-five schools with enrollments averaging 77 percent Hispanic operated year-round in 1982 to eliminate overcrowding, and other ten predominantly Hispanic schools were overcrowded despite year-round instruction."(25)

Adult education, is also an issue for the immigrant family. Although only 37 percent of the immigrant population has completed a secondary education, and

56 percent of recent adult immigrants (208,300) are not fluent in English, the demand for adult English education classes within the public educational system has reached an unprecedented high.(26) In a Los Angeles Times article (September 1986), it was reported that the Los Angeles Unified School District alone, turned away an estimated 40,000 adults from English as a second language (ESL) classes, twice the number it had rejected in 1985. At Belmont Community Adult School, 1500 people were turned away when the 7000 spaces for ESL students were filled. Evans Community Adult School had 300 people lined-up one morning, when only 50 openings for ESL classes remained available.(27)

Contrary to public opinion, immigrant families view education as a key to their occupational and social progress of their family members. For example, "Studies have shown nationwide, that Latino immigrants (usually the lowest in educational levels), are switching to English at about the same rate as German, Italian, and Polish immigrants that preceded them to the United States, and that the language shift is occurring faster among Hispanic origin youth than in previous eras. Nationwide data on reading scores have shown increased competence among Latino school children since 1975."(28)

The recent trend of immigrations coming from Asia has brought to the United States immigrants with the highest educational levels in this nation's history.(29)

In light of the recent passing of Proposition 63, a widely regarded anti-immigrant measure designed to reduce support of bilingual programs, both recent immigrants and their children are actively involved in the process of

integration. In a study conducted by McCarthy and Buciaga Valdez, they found that "nearly half of the permanent (Mexican) immigrants speak good English, and less than a quarter of them only speak Spanish...Most of the first generation native-born are bilingual, and more than 90 percent are proficient in English; more than half of the second-generation are monolingual English speakers. Thus the transition to English begins almost immediately and proceeds very rapidly."(30)

According to the SCAG Report, the following factors are current barriers in the educational process of immigrants:

1. a high level of overcrowding in inner city, minority dominated schools in Los Angeles which has contributed to a high drop out rate of 50 percent, particularly among students of Mexican origin;
2. a low number of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for both adults and students;
3. lack of sufficient funding of bilingual educational programs.(31)

Recommendations

1. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF OVERCROWDING IN ITS SCHOOL SYSTEM BY LOBBYING IN FAVOR OF MORE AND LARGER FACILITIES AND SCHOOLS.
2. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL SUPPORT ALL LEGISLATION IN FAVOR OF BILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.
3. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL FUND THROUGH COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANTS, ORGANIZATIONS AIMED AT TEACHING ENGLISH TO IMMIGRANTS AND TO USE IT INFLUENCE WITH THE LOS ANGELES SCHOOL BOARD TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF ESL CLASSES THROUGHOUT THIS CITY.

C. Adjustment Process and Human Services

The passing of the new immigration law, the overwhelming vote for Proposition 63 and the increasing numbers of racially motivated acts of violence are only a small mention of the realities which have isolated the immigrant community and deterred its participation and integration into society.

Whether under the guise of a federal law, the proclamation of a state's official language or a direct physical attack of an individual, cultural, and social isolation are additional uphill battles for the immigrant's adjustment process. This individual's struggle however, does have social repercussions which all members of society have to confront.

The challenge of coping with the pressures of a new culture, language, and political system is only one facet of the adjustment process for the immigrant family. Designed as a support system, immigrants extended family may more often than not, provide a limited degree of protection and support for that individual. Particularly when the pressures of any person's daily life are compounded by those brought by language barriers, discrimination, fear and persecution. This combination is likely to create a social physiological and psychological imbalance to the immigrant individual and other family members.

Inter-generational conflict, marital disharmony, domestic violence, and neglect of the elderly have become important concerns among the immigrant communities because increasing numbers of the immigrant families are experiencing difficulty in coping with the many economic and cultural demands in their new homeland.

Generally attributed to the language and cultural barriers, spouse abuse has become an important issue in both the Asian and Latino community. Every Woman's Shelter, a 5-year-old program aimed at helping Pacific-Asian Women, has housed almost 300 women and children each year - today, it can only provide for ten beds at a time.(32) Su Casa, a battered-women's program for Latinas, in 1986 served a total of 1,829 calls on a 24-hour bilingual hotline and 110 women and 172 children came to the shelter - 22.5 percent of the hotline calls and 36.5 percent of the sheltered women and children were undocumented.(33)

Like women of all races, immigrant mothers may want to leave their husbands, but often do not have either economic or cultural reasons or even the fear of deportation.(34) An additional reason, a lack of full recognition by both law enforcement and criminal practice system of domestic violence as a crime thus, reducing the level of trust for protection by immigration.(35)

Immigrants who came to this country as refugees and who had experienced much physical and emotional turmoil in their native countries as well as their migration, are prone to experience mental disorders such as clinical depression and "post-traumatic stress disorder." Traditional mental health services are, however, underutilized because of immigrant's lack of knowledge, available services, traditional views and taboos about mental health service utilization, and the lack of bilingual/bicultural mental health staff at most existing facilities. Within the County of Los Angeles, in Norwalk, there is the Metropolitan State Hospital which has the only existing program dedicated to keeping Latinos and Asian/Pacific mental patients. (36)

With motives such as protection from harassment and teasing by their schoolmates about their language proficiency or ethnic origin, some immigrant adolescents tend to bond with others in their own ethnic groups to gain acceptance or to intimidate others for self-protection. Some of these groups engage in delinquent or gang-related activities. With a 346 percent increase in reported racial incidents in Los Angeles in 1986 (37), it is also not surprising that most of the crimes involving undocumented aliens have been reported as gang-related.(38) The Community Youth Gang Service Project in East Los Angeles has been instrumental in curving the gang-related violence in Los Angeles.(39)

Spouse abuse, mental health, and gang-related violence are some of the few effects stemming from the lack of support which immigrant families encounter as they attempt to integrate the larger society. The results coming from the lack of support, insensitivity and violence against the immigrant groups unfortunately, affect us all.

Recommendations

1. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL GUARANTEE AND INCREASE THE FUNDING OF SHELTERS FOR ABUSE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PARTICULAR THOSE AIMED AT ASSISTING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.
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CONCLUSION

Since the birth of this nation, the United States has experienced four major waves of immigration. Of these, the last has made the City of Los Angeles a major point of entry for a great number and variety of people. The "Fourth Wave" has brought to our city not only different cultures, languages and traditions, but it has also brought new challenges and opportunities. Los Angeles has always had a rich immigrant history and tradition, today, however, as residents and leaders, we need to look within our own selves and realize who we are and how this city came about. There is a Mexican saying which states that "Without a past, you have no future". It would be unlikely that no person in this country, much less this city, could not find that he or she is either an immigrant or a descendant of an immigrant. Likewise, the City of Los Angeles has its immigrant roots.

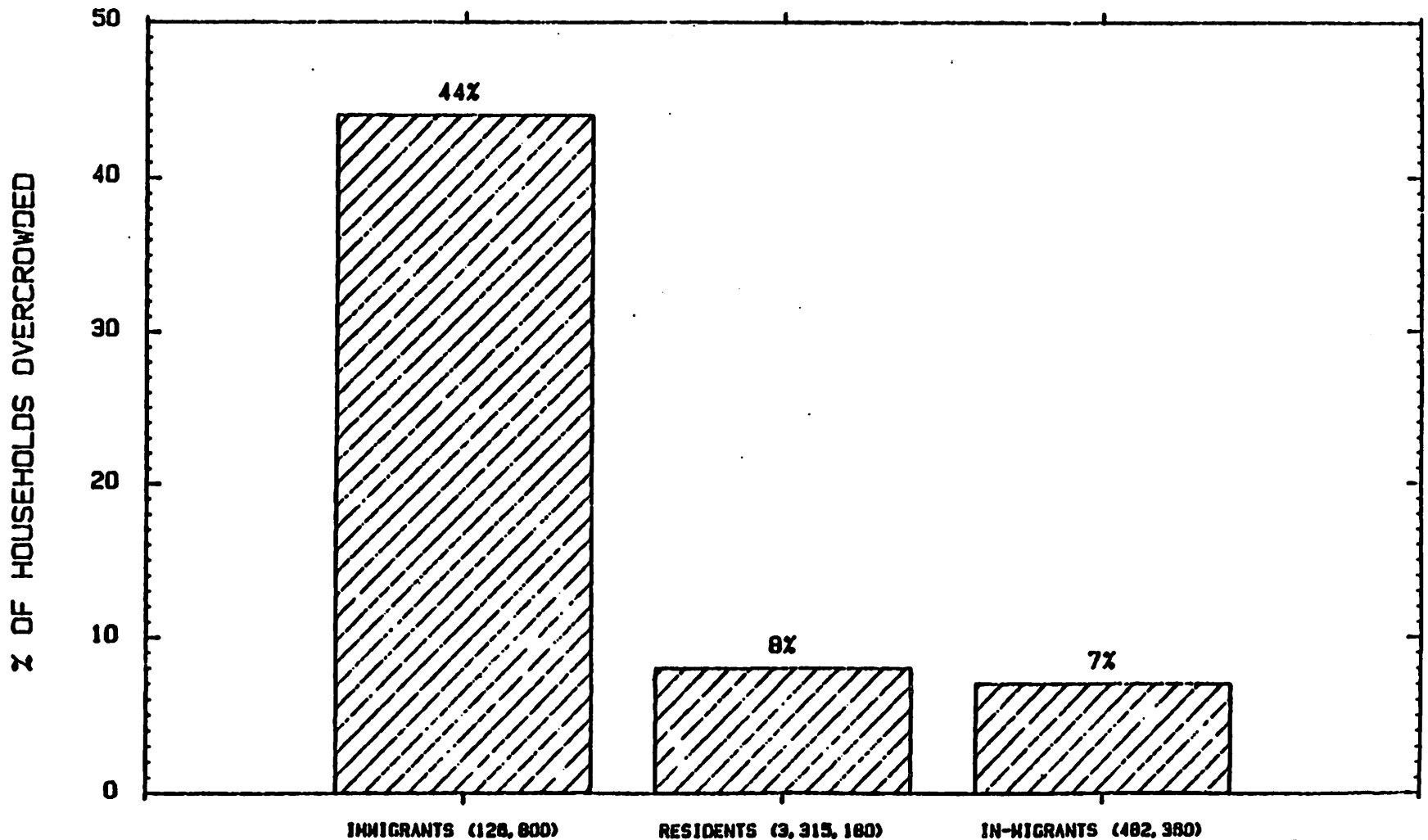
Today's immigrant families constitute a significant portion of this city's population and thus, in their attempt to integrate the larger, non-immigrant society, they appear in our schools, our neighborhoods and use our social services. However, "they" also constitute the beginning of our future as a city and as a nation. This is how the City of Los Angeles became the "New Ellis Island".

Immigrants contribute to this city's future with their work skills, their knowledge and with their potentials. It would be to Los Angeles' advantage to confront the issues head-on. To provide better housing, to increase the number of English classes, and to help facilitate the process of integration for immigrants so that they can more fully participate and contribute in the future of this City.

Figure V-4

PERCENT OVERCROWDED HOUSEHOLDS - SCAG REGION, 1980

IMMIGRANTS, RESIDENTS, IN-MIGRANTS



Numbers in parentheses refer to total households in each category.

1980 Census, controlling for 1975 residence.

TABLE V-5

Percent Distribution of Large Households by Ethnicity, 1980

	% Immigrant Large HHs	% Total Immigrant HHs	% Large HHs in Region	% Total HHs in Region
NH White	14	24	43	69
Hispanic	51	43	40	17
Black	0	1	10	9
Asian	35	32	7	5
Total % (HHs) (%)	100% 32,800 (26)	100% 125,800 (100)	100% 578,340 (14)	100% 4,175,300 (100)

ENDNOTES

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LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY
RESEARCH TEAM ON SENIORS ISSUES

Submitted by:

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June 1, 1987

LOS ANGELES CITY TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY 1

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LOS ANGELES CITY TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge our debt in preparing this report to the many people who gave us their time and knowledge in discussions of needs of the elderly and their families in the Los Angeles area. Not all of their concerns and recommendations could be covered in this report, but we hope that we have, with their help, reflected the importance of some of the more pressing issues.

In particular we would like to thank our expert witnesses for their testimony which was, in all cases, thorough, considered and to the point. Our thanks to June Dunbar, Los Angeles County Commissioner on the Status of Women; Foster Grandparent Ruth Young Henry; Eva I. Tarwid, former Director of the Foster Grandparent Program and Volunteer Center of Los Angeles; G. Jay Westbrook, seniors advocate and Center Fellow, UCLA/USC Long Term Care Gerontology Center; and Janet Witkin, Executive Director of Alternative Living for the Aging.

We would also like to thank the many people, whose faces may remain unknown to us, who provided so much information and encouragement in telephone interviews and in the materials they sent us on their programs or areas of concern. They include the following, in addition to the witnesses named above:

Employment for seniors: Pat Rostker, Placement Service for Older Workers
Vicki Flowman, L.A. Council on Careers for Older Americans
Staff of the Second Careers Program

Foster Grandparent Program: Faye Pinkett, Leslie Burnett, Foster Grandparent

Housing and Transportation: Dennis Jackson, Director, Los Angeles Area Agency on Aging

Holly Azari, Director, Senior Citizen Multipurpose Center, (North Hollywood)
Stanley Treitel, for the Montecito Hotel senior housing project
Victor Regnier, USC Andrus Gerontology Center
Ralph Osborne, Minister, Hollywood Presbyterian Church

Respite Care: Larry Pipes, Beverly Enterprises

Our sincere appreciation and gratitude to all of these dedicated people—and our apologies to any names we may have failed to recall!

TEAM MEMBERS AND BIOGRAPHY

Elisabeth O. Clark, Ph.D., received her doctorate in Psychology from New York University, where she worked in geriatric research, particularly with older patients suffering from Alzheimer Disease and depression. At UCLA she coordinated a Family Study of Alzheimer Type Dementia and was funded by NIMH for her research on computerized tests of memory and logic for elderly patients. She initiated support groups for caregivers of Alzheimer patients and has been concerned with the lack of respite care for family members. At present she is working with a program designed to improve smoking cessation rates for predominantly older cancer patients at UCLA.

Elaine Siegel, M.S.W., is a licensed clinical social worker in private practice and is on the clinical staff of Family Service of Santa Monica. She is experienced in working with individuals, families and groups in psychotherapy and counseling. A specialist in the issues and concerns of foster home placement and adoption, she worked for five years at Vista del Mar Child Care Service with all

members of the adoption triad. This included home studies, pregnancy counseling, placement, reunions, and groups of pre- and post-adoptive parents. She did individual and group counseling, case management and advocacy with the elderly at the Freda Mohr Multipurpose Center for Senior Citizens and the Pico Robertson Store Front for Seniors.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Los Angeles City Council support and coordinate the efforts of several agencies, including the L.A. Council on Careers for Older Americans, the L.A. County Commission on the Status of Women, the Second Careers Program and Placement Service for Older Workers, in promoting increased employment opportunities for our older citizens, and that the City encourage its departments to hire older workers.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Los Angeles City Council support efforts to achieve:
1. adequate health care and continuation of pensions for older women who frequently lose health insurance and any part of a pension plan with death or divorce of spouse; 2. pay equity and employment for all women, particularly older women and 3. more equitable post-divorce distribution of income for older women.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Los Angeles City Council support additional Foster Grandparent programs in the greater Los Angeles area and explore the possibility of joint sponsorship with the Los Angeles Area Agency on Aging or other organizations. A possible location might be an existing senior multipurpose center.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Los Angeles City Council explore existing and planned Latch-Key programs for afterschool care for children to determine ways of reserving some staff positions for eligible older people, with the dual aims of increasing the financial security for these older aides and the intergenerational contacts for both children and adults.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Los Angeles City Council publicize the urgent need for respite care for the growing number of family members who are caregivers for chronically-ill elderly cared for in the home. IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the City determine the need among its employees for respite and then promote benefit programs that would permit leaves or other assistance, e.g. senior day care, short-term foster, or home health care programs, for caregivers of the elderly. This program could initially be tested for city employees and serve as a prototype for corporations located in the Los Angeles area.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Los Angeles City Council support the efforts and recognize the contribution of the Alternative Living for the Aging for its role in promoting economical housing solutions, including shared housing and roommate matching services, for older people in the Los Angeles area, and that the City seek out funding sources and/or provide low-cost loans to expand the amount of group and shared housing available in our City.

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General overview of the area with summary of issues

Our society, as well as those of all western countries, is aging. In the United States today approximately one of every nine persons is elderly, and that number is growing, with the fastest growth among those 80 and older. Moreover, these

oldest Americans are predominantly women, many of whom need supportive services—physical or financial—and may not have family members who can provide assistance. Those family members who provide care may find themselves stressed financially and emotionally by what is required of them. This is particularly true as more women, the traditional caregivers, must necessarily seek employment outside the home.

Many older people need assistance in securing adequate housing, transportation, and employment that can lift them above the poverty level. By contrast, many older American men and women are in excellent health, financially secure, and searching for meaningful ways to spend newly-acquired leisure years in a society which tends to cast off older workers. These citizens may be searching for volunteer or remunerated work.

Thus there appear to be two broad economic categories of older people, both of whom are well-represented in the Los Angeles area. In this report for the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity, we shall mainly consider the needs of the less-advantaged group, although it should be remembered that the same issues often exist in different form for more affluent elderly.

There are at least three issues of importance to the elderly that are not addressed in this report. In brief, the first area is transportation, where various resource persons have suggested expansion of transportation services available through the Senior Multipurpose Centers, development of a centralized volunteer car service that might be coordinated through existing church and synagogue programs by a hired staff person, with the aim of helping older people with errands and social/recreational outings, and expansion of such services as the West Hollywood Fairfax Trolley in other areas of Los Angeles.

A second area is that of elder abuse, where training of Los Angeles Police Department officers, including detection of abuse and apprising abused elders of rights and services is needed along with development of shelters or other protective services. The third, areas of concern to older homosexuals, with and without partners, includes issues such as treatment in nursing and convalescent homes and hospitals, rights of surviving partner to funeral and property arrangements, visitation rights as immediate family in Intensive Care Units and issues of privacy. While we were not able to cover these issues in detail, we trust that the second and third will be covered by other teams on this Task Force and that the first will be treated with the priority it merits by the Department on Aging and/or by a consortium of church, synagogue and other non-profit groups..

Employment for seniors

Many older workers with skills desperately needed by corporate and government organizations are underemployed or unemployed, or are encouraged to retire while still capable of years of productive work. While there has been recent growth of programs designed to help the older worker, further steps are needed to promote meaningful employment for thousands of Los Angeles area seniors.

There are programs in operation that demonstrate the need for employment services for seniors. During one twelve-month period, 2500 people sought help from the six Los Angeles County offices of the Placement Service for Older Workers. Of these 2500, a thousand were ineligible by criterion of income, which enforces an upper limit of \$2500 for six months to qualify for services. Of the 1500 applicants who were served, 600 were placed on jobs: 70% part-time; 30% full-time with an average earnings of \$5.17 an hour (Pat Rostker, personal

communication, 1987).

The City and the City Council could help the plight of older people in need of employment in several ways. Within the City itself, there is a need to look at its employment-related policies. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the City encourage older persons to apply for positions; encourage supervisors to utilize more fully their older workers on the job; teach techniques for adapting the skills of older employees to project requirements; and assure that Affirmative Action programs include an emphasis on age.

There are several other ways in which the City could publicize and support older workers. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that:

1. The City take part in the national Employ the Older Worker Week each March by increasing public awareness and honoring its older workers in every City department.
2. The City Area Agency on Aging be asked to emphasize potential employment of older caregivers in Long Term Care programs and positions.
3. The City Commission on the Status of Women have a specially designated older woman representative;
4. The Private Industry Council of the Los Angeles City Jobs Training Program Act (JTPA) have a specially designated older worker representative to assure that money allocated for the age 55 and over group be properly utilized.

The Job Club is one program funded by the JTPA and administered by the Los Angeles Council on Careers for Older Americans (LACCOA) that merits attention and increased support. The Job Club is an intensive employment search program for mature people looking for full- or part-time employment. Job Club, which is located in Burbank, helps participants develop skills for finding employment in a short period of time and has demonstrated a remarkable success rate. Since inception in October, 1985 over 200 people have completed training which is provided by LACCOA staff. At present there are insufficient funds to expand the program to other areas of the City despite interest. Nor are there funds to permit LACCOA staff to follow up on client success or maintain statistics on the success of their network of referral sources, although they estimate that of the four to five hundred calls each month approximately 200 are placed in positions (Yicki Plowman, Los Angeles Council on Careers).

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council recognize by proclamation the achievements of the Job Club and that it sponsor or co-sponsor with other organizations the creation of Job Clubs in other parts of the City. Funding would expand the professional job search classes, provide money for publicity both to workers and potential employers, and permit on-going contact with Job Club participants.

Economic issues for older women

While policy and societal changes are frequently portrayed as affecting all older Americans equally, there are additional issues, or a shift in the focus, that are particular to older women. Although increasing numbers of women are gaining some measure of financial independence with employment outside the home, large numbers of older women have remained in the traditional role of homemaker

Most of these women outlive their husbands who have been their sole means of support. The average age at which women become widows is fifty-six. Unless they are disabled, they are ineligible for any form of governmental support until they reach sixty-two for Social Security or sixty-five for SSI. With their husbands' deaths they often lose claim to pensions and nearly always lose

medical insurance coverage until age 65 at which point Medi-Cal will pay only a portion of medical costs. There are four million women over the age of forty who have no medical coverage. It is safe to assume that medical costs will increase as these older people become more frail or infirm. As a result of these conditions, many older women are plunged into poverty, often losing their homes and other possessions.

When eligible for Social Security, older retired women, who are more likely to live alone, receive an average of \$399 monthly, compared to \$521 for retired men. Since women also earn only 58 cents to every dollar a man makes--and only 44 cents if the woman is over forty--retired women will also have lower savings and other investments to supplement Social Security. Only twenty per cent of all working women are covered by private or government pensions. All of these inequities together have produced an impoverished 'subclass' of elderly women (Scientific American article, 198).

Therefore, we are including specific recommendations to improve the quality of life for older women, and indeed for all of our future elderly women. Specifically:

1. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council promote the skills of older women to the business community, with the aim of increasing awareness of older women's eligibility for other than minimum wage child care and clerical positions. IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the City promote hiring of older women in City government positions.

2. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the city press efforts at all levels of government and private industry to institute pay equity, which bases wages on skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. As retirement benefits and pensions are based on level of earnings, older women, who earn less than men or younger women, are especially affected by pay inequity.

3. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City join other groups in lobbying for changes in divorce laws and division of marital property. The effect of joint property statutes has been a dramatic increase in impoverished women, often middle-aged or older and unemployed.

4. IT IS RECOMMENDED that affordable housing for older women be developed and promoted by the City and State. Homes such as the Evangeline and Clark House are available in Los Angeles for younger women and can serve as models. IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the City assist organizations such as Alternative Living for the Aging in publicizing, gaining acceptance for and expanding programs for shared housing or roommate-matching for older women.

5. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City use its influence to lobby State and Federal lawmakers and insurance carriers who do business with governmental agencies to effect a change in the definition of 'Family' with the express aim of allowing adult children or siblings to cover older parents and siblings on their group insurance plans. IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the City Council express support for the endeavors of the National Women's Health Network and the Older Women's League to have mammography covered by Medicare.

Implementation of these five recommendations would measurably improve the quality of life for older women and for their concerned family members.

Foster Grandparent programs

The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) was initiated in August 1965, and in 1971 the program was transferred to ACTION, the federal agency which grew from the idea of helping people help themselves. The purpose of the Foster Grandparent Program is to create meaningful part-time volunteer opportunities for older persons with limited income in providing supportive, person-to-person services to children with special or exceptional needs who can benefit from a stable relationship with caring adults.

As stipulated in Section Section 9543, Chapter 8 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, the functions and goals of the program shall be:

1. To provide benefits and meaningful service opportunities to low-income persons 60 years of age and older;
2. To serve children 20 years of age and under, who have special needs and are deprived of normal relationships with adults;
3. To provide services to, but not limited to:
 - a. Premature and failure-to-thrive babies, abused, neglected, battered and chronically ill children in hospitals.
 - b. Autistic children, children with cerebral palsy, and mentally retarded children placed in institutions for the developmentally disabled.
 - c. Physically handicapped, mentally disabled, emotionally disturbed, and developmentally disabled children, and children who are socially and culturally deprived in school settings and child care centers.
 - d. Dependent, neglected children, mentally disabled children, emotionally disturbed or physically handicapped children, and battered and abused children in residential settings.
 - e. Delinquent children and adolescents in correctional institutions.

Funding: The majority of the funding for an FGP is available from ACTION grants that cover project development and operation. Approximately 10-20% of funding must come from city, county, combined city and county or other suitable private or nonprofit organizations that participate in the FGP (F. Pinkett, E. Tarwid, personal communication and testimony and California Welfare and Institution Code, Section 8). The sponsor's contribution pays administrative costs for the program. Application is made to the Department of Aging to enter into a memorandum of agreement with ACTION on establishing and/or expanding an FGP. Standards for program establishment are specified under Public Law 93-113, as amended.

Eligibility and benefits: Any senior adult who is sixty years of age or older and who has insufficient income, as determined by the department, is eligible to participate. These seniors must be physically and mentally able to serve, no longer participating in the regular work force and willing to accept supervision. Each foster grandparent (FG) shall be required to participate four hours a day, five days a week, or a total of twenty hours per week.

Expenses for transportation to and from home and the place of service are provided. Transportation in schoolbuses or other transportation may be made available. Each FG must be provided one free meal during each day in which the FG renders services. Accident insurance, an annual physical examination and a nontaxable hourly stipend are provided for each FG. If more than one family member chooses to participate in the program, only one may receive the stipend.

Need and Current Status: The need for more FGPs has been assessed and established. For both FGPs currently operating in the Los Angeles area, there is a considerable waiting list, but directors are limited by the funding

currently allocated (E. Farwid testimony, 1987; F. Pinkett, personal communication). In an average year the Volunteer Center Program, sponsored in large part by United Way funding, provides more than 57,000 hours of attention and service to some 300 children. The Pepperdine University program currently has 140 FGs each serving for twenty hours a week at a total of seven sites. No recruitment is necessary, as word of mouth brings regular requests for participation.

It is not possible to estimate the savings in future human potential that the FGP makes possible nor the potential financial drain on public and private resources that program alleviates. The support, affection and role-modeling that FGs provide to underserved children with special or exceptional needs is invaluable in helping them become productive, contributing, responsible adults and citizens. The elderly population is a rich resource for these children, and at the same time the program provides a sense of well-being, self-worth and productivity that enhances the quality of life for foster grandparents. The stipend FGs receive can make a difference in maintaining independence, self-esteem and good health. More FGPs are needed and wanted, and there are other groups of children, notably troubled, delinquent youths, that could be well-served by this program.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council urge the City of Los Angeles to become a participant in sponsoring and supporting additional FGPs in several areas of greater Los Angeles. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the City Council urge other eligible agencies at the County or non-profit level to serve as co-sponsors with the City or to initiate FGPs under their own sponsorship.

IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the City Council exert its influence to insure implementation of Assembly Bill No. 211 to provide for a Foster Grandparent Delinquent Childrens' Counseling Program. As of January 7, 1987, this bill was approved but appropriation was not. Under this program qualified Foster Grandparents would provide counseling and guidance to children under 18 who have been charged with or convicted of an offense equivalent to a misdemeanor.

IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the City Council recognize by proclamation the contributions of existing Foster Grandparent Programs and the many senior volunteers who have given so much time, love and care to our young children as Foster Grandparents.

Latchkey programs and intergenerational contact

The California Legislature has passed legislation that provides afterschool care for some of the thousands of public school children whose parents are employed outside of the home and are unavailable at school dismissal, frequently resulting in children at home or elsewhere without proper supervision. Under legislative provisions, 'latchkey' children can receive care and some assistance with homework and activities at a variety of sites such as community buildings in public parks. Funding is available for salaries for aides who care for the children. Often these aides are young people themselves, who may serve as role models but inadequate skills for handling their charges in some situations.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council explore the possibility of developing a policy of reserving one aide or more senior position at each latchkey site for an older person. Such a utilization of the knowledge and experience of older adults would be beneficial for latchkey children and aides, promote increased positive intergenerational contact and respect, and provide meaningful and

useful employment for older persons.

At present there are many older crossing guards employed by Los Angeles schools.

Some of them might prefer to work more closely with schoolchildren instead of, or in addition to, their guard work. Similarly, people who have not been accommodated within the Foster Grandparent Programs described above might be eligible and interested in an afterschool position with children. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council consider incorporation of some of the eligibility and duty requirements of the Foster Grandparent Program into any formulation of positions for seniors within existing or proposed Latchkey programs.

It would be relevant to examine programs currently operating in New York City and on Long Island that combine at one site programs for pre-schooler daycare and adult daycare. These programs have been helpful in alleviating feelings of loneliness, isolation and uselessness among the older adults who find community with the young children meaningful and enjoyable. Similarly, the children have loving, accessible older adults to help with their development and care and to provide attachment figures for them during hours that their parents are working.

These formal programs closely resemble earlier forms of agrarian American families where older generations aided with child rearing and care while younger adults worked in the fields or shops. As American families have become more separated from older family members by migration from rural to urban areas, often for employment, many young children and older adults have become virtual strangers to each other. This condition may be responsible in part for the increase in violence against the elderly, often by youths or teenage gangs, since older people may be perceived as not belonging to the family unit.

Intergenerational programs such as the Foster Grandparent Program or the proposed inclusion of senior workers in Latchkey Programs can do a great deal to provide an increased sense of "Community as Family," with different age groups working and sharing together. IT IS RECOMMENDED, therefore, that the City Council explore all positive measures for promoting intergenerational contact and understanding.

Respite Care

As the number and proportion of older persons in our society increase, so do the numbers requiring some form of home care to help them cope with long-term chronic illnesses. Current government and health insurance policies do not provide reimbursement nor much aid for in-home care. Thus the burdens of care fall primarily on spouses, siblings and children of the elderly. Many of the caregivers are also aging and may find their own future physical and financial health compromised by the often-arduous routines of caregiving.

Costs for home care are lower for all but the sickest elderly and can promote greater dignity and quality of life than being institutionalized. Hospitals are adopting cost-containment policies in the form of DRG's--Diagnostic Related Groups--which release patients 'quicker and sicker' than in the past, producing complex and time-consuming regimens that home caregivers of the elderly must follow.

At the same time that our elderly population is increasing, families are changing, too, with fewer children born to older parents. There is an analogous growth in 'non-traditional' families, such as single and divorced parents with children or non-married couples without children. This will mean that future

elderly will have fewer family resources to rely on for caregiving and that future caregivers will have a smaller pool of other relatives to share the tasks, further increasing the burden.

Women are attaining a more prominent place in the labor force, with approximately seventy per cent of women between 35 and 44 and sixty per cent between 45 and 54 currently employed. Many women, who are the traditional caregivers for both their own and their husbands' parents, will be faced with the triple dilemma of caring for late-life children and aging parents while trying to maintain a career—or give up their employment, leading to personal frustration and financial loss for their families (E. Brody, 198x).

Families already provide some eighty to ninety per cent of care for the elderly (Westbrook, 1987) and cannot do more. What they need is respite for themselves to permit renewed energy and enthusiasm for the tasks of caregiving. Such respite is in very limited supply in the Los Angeles area. We therefore recommend that the City assess the need for and help develop and implement programs for providing temporary respite for individuals caring for an older person. Specifically :

1. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council recognize by proclamation those existing respite programs which are of high quality and address the needs of caregivers.
2. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City survey all city employees to determine how many are providing care for an older individual, the nature and level of care required, and caregiver needs or suggestions for temporary respite.
3. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City promote existing and developing support groups for caregivers. These groups provide information on specific conditions and illnesses, as well as community resources for their charges, while serving as a forum for sharing feelings with other caregivers.
4. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City use its influence to lobby State and Federal agencies for increased aid designated for home care and the development of local Day Care centers for frail elderly. Legislative efforts should include formulas for tax incentives for developers and large corporations that promote respite benefits or provide space for Day Care centers for elderly.
5. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City develop and distribute training guides, available in several languages, to enable both volunteer and paid workers in delivering respite care.
6. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council sponsor or develop Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to publicize existing and future respite services in the City and that these PSAs be formulated in several languages and be placed to reach various cultural and ethnic groups in the City.
7. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City work with the County of Los Angeles in supporting and implementing the County Master Plan for Respite Care Services.

Shared housing and other housing alternatives for seniors

The topic of housing for seniors is in reality several issues 'housed' under a single heading, for there is no one solution possible. Here are a few of the variants on senior housing needs and problems:

1. An elderly family whose children no longer live with them may own and live in a home that is too large and costly to maintain.
2. An elderly widow or widower may live alone in the same circumstances.
3. Young or middle-aged children may move in with elderly parent(s) or have parent(s) move in with them, creating crowding and conflict.
4. Seniors in apartments may find that the landlord is converting the building to condominiums, raising the rent above a level affordable, or moving everyone out to renovate or replace the building.
5. If a senior seeks to share an apartment, the landlord may ask for a rent increase, although there was no decrease when the spouse died.

Solutions to some of the above situations can be formulated. There is a program at the state level that permits seniors to take loans against the value of their home. However, problems of upkeep and maintenance require more creative community-level programs with the goal of maintaining seniors in their homes. IT IS RECOMMENDED that organizations such as Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), trade unions and youth groups such as Scout and church groups be encouraged to donate time or provide services at a reduced cost to seniors: electrician, plumbing and contractors' unions could be tapped for low-cost repairs and painting, perhaps with the incentive of a tax deduction for time donated; the CCC and other groups could aid with shopping, yard maintenance or clearing of brush as needed.

Incentive programs could provide additional or more appropriate housing for single and/or frail elderly. IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City develop or extend home loan programs available from banks to provide low-interest loans for families adapting their home, e.g. by adding a room and bath to accommodate an older relative.

In apartment buildings, older renters may be unaware that they must be paid a relocation fee or that there are other rights they may have concerning a forced relocation. The City Council should increase awareness by publishing or encouraging publication by another organization of a brochure on relocation regulations for distribution in senior newsletters or multipurpose centers. The City might institute incentives to landlords as a means of discouraging relocation for older tenants without suitable, affordable replacement. The City Council should pass a resolution that rents may not be raised should a senior need or choose to share an apartment. IT IS RECOMMENDED that within the City government an ombudsman's office be established for senior grievances regarding housing matters.

The City Council should commend programs that seek to increase affordable housing alternatives for the elderly and take steps to support additional organizations and facilities. IT IS RECOMMENDED that Alternative Living for the Aging and its Director, Janet Witkin, be commended for their excellent programs which include: a Roommate Matching Service that has served over 2000 people, Co-op Houses where older people become a true family, sharing chores and community, and Shared Apartment Communities where seniors have their own apartments with shared community and kitchen space. These innovative programs should be developed in many areas of the city.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council, or other appropriate city agencies, in consultation with Alternative Living for The Aging:

1. Utilize its influence to lobby organizations and corporations to provide additional funding for outreach and publications promoting shared housing concepts.

2. Provide a citywide newsletter on senior services and events to be distributed at Senior Multipurpose Centers and nutrition sites and that the newsletter promote the concepts of shared and communal housing and apprise seniors of their rights and services in housing matters.

3. That the City sponsor information and referral training workshops to acquaint workers from multiple agencies and organizations with existing programs, e.g. Alternative Living for the Aging, and other resources, in order to increase awareness of and provide guidelines for program development and dissemination of information to the clientele they serve.

4. That the City provide or help secure grants and low-interest loans for additional apartment communities such as those developed by Alternative Living for the Aging.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council urge the Los Angeles Police Force to increase patrols in areas known to have large concentrations of elderly so as to provide greater security and protection. In addition to increased patrols, seniors should be asked about other security needs.

If the above recommendations are implemented, the considerable number of housing-related problems seniors experience could be ameliorated.

LOS ANGELES CITY TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY

RESEARCH TEAM ON MEDIA

Submitted by:

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MAY 20, 1987

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Michael S. Jones, a sociology student at California State University at Northridge, who conducted much of the research for this team and whose edited report is included in this final report

Karen L. Ishizuka is an independent film producer/screenwriter; Director of Development for the Pacifica Foundation, a national network of non-commercial radio stations and services; community activist; friend; wife and tired but proud mother of two.

Her film, **FOOLS' DANCE**, a dramatic comedy on old age and death, won three national awards, was broadcast nationally and in Europe and is used in gerontological training throughout the country. Her latest film, **CONVERSATIONS: BEFORE THE WAR/AFTER THE WAR** is currently being used in the effort for Japanese American redress/reparations for wrongful internment during WWII. She is also Project Director of the **BICENTENNIAL EDITION OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS RADIO EDUCATION PROJECT**, a series of thirteen radio documentaries on contemporary constitutional issues sponsored by the Pacifica Foundation and the National ACLU.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

BECAUSE:

- 1) commercial television is a powerful and influential force in our society;
- 2) diversity of ethnicity, age, disability, class and lifestyle, though improved, is still lacking in quantity and/or quality; and
- 3) the television networks are located in Los Angeles . . .

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

The City of Los Angeles take a more active and responsible role in:

- 1) **promoting media literacy for the citizens and children of Los Angeles by**
 - a) encouraging the development and implementation of media education curriculum in elementary, secondary and college level schools;
 - b) encouraging family and social services to be aware of media connections - eg: heavy advertising of junk foods and sweets and child hyperactivity - by sponsoring conferences and providing resource materials
- 2) **promoting the positive use of commercial television by**
 - a) more city use of television in the form of public service announcements (PSA's) to promote health, social and cultural services;
 - b) recognizing and encouraging positive use of television by educators and service providers
- 3) **promoting family diversity and social responsibility in commercial television by**
 - a) encouraging by recognition, works of exceptional quality which address diversity;
 - b) criticizing works that demean or devalue diversity by insensitive or absense of portrayal;
 - c) encouraging by legislation, networks to hire more diverse staff in positions of authority;
 - d) offering city resources as consultants to further accurate depiction of issues or portrayals of diversity

REPORT

Overview

The recommendations of this report are based on three major assumptions: 1) that media, specifically commercial television, is a powerful and pervasive force in our society; 2) that portrayal of diversity as defined and discussed by the Task Force (variable family groups such as single-parent families, foster families, unmarried couples, gay or lesbian couples, families with senior or disabled members or families of color), although improved, is still lacking in quantity and/or quality on commercial television; and 3) that as the city of origin of most television shows, the City of Los Angeles should take a more active and responsible roles. This report will summarize the first two assumptions and present the recommendations in detail. A conclusion indicates that network television audiences are diminishing in light of advent of VCR's and cable television which leads into Chris Uszler's report on cable television

The Power and Pervasiveness of Television

This topic has been and continues to be the subject of much thought, discussion, research and study. Colloquially, we think and talk about it in everyday conversation and concern. Academically, it has become a legitimate area of study in the social sciences and even in the fields of medicine and jurisprudence. Professionally, it has become an integral part of the mass media machinery.

Twenty years ago it was easier to write about the influence of television because it was not such a pervasive part of our culture. The pervasiveness of television is documented by the following statistics provided by Jay Westbrook, Media Coordinator for the American Society on Aging in his testimony for the Task Force: 96% of all households have a television; each TV is on an average of 6.5 hours/day; there are almost 1,110 stations on the air not including cable stations; approximately 80% of all households receive 7 or more stations; and although there are only 8,760 hours in a year there are 5.5 million hours of programming broadcast yearly.

Current discussions and analyses of television take on many forms, all of which attest to its power. Many deal with television vis a vis its social value. Television has the power to: inform and misinform; create good attitudes and bad attitudes; to confirm and negate self-image. For better and/or for worse, television provides companionship to the lonely, especially the elderly; and a basis for shared experiences, witness the devoted nature of soap operas fans. Television shows do have more social content today than before and depending on how they're handled, can

have positive or negative consequences.

Consultants stress that co-viewing - a parent watching television with their children - is crucial to television's educational or destructive nature. A parent's perspective can clarify misunderstanding, correct negative or stereotypical portrayal and can continue discussion of the issue raised after the show is over. "Although the mass media are powerful influences on young children, parents have even greater power." (Judith Myers-Wallis, "Media's Message Can Fool Kids", *Media & Values*, Spring 1986; taped interviews with Dr. Rene Cohen, child psychologist; Dr. Jack Wetter, psychological consultant to television shows and Nicholas Van Dyke, National Council on Television & Families.)

Nicholas Van Dyke, of the National Council on Television and Families feels there are many positive trends in television for the family. He points out that in our mobile, transitory community, people identify more with television families and for many, TV families become their surrogate families. He feels people get a sense of comfort seeing others go through what they go through and the humorous ways of problem-solving on sit-coms can provide positive models of conflict resolution for real families. He stresses that the fundamentals of loyalty, trust, affection and sense of humour that are portrayed by TV families are more important than depictions of different family configurations. (taped interview)

Other analyses deals with who television depicts and how eg: minorities, women, older people and social class. This will be summarized in the next section.

Another area concentrates on television as a marketing device designed to deliver viewers to advertisers. Mass media shaped around commercial interests must obviously appeal to the largest possible audience. Program content is thereby dictated to avoid risk and controversy. As an NBC Vice President of Broadcast Standards indicated, "We have to be very careful that we do not shock a large group of people when we come as guests into their homes. There is a puritanical streak in this country (that) doesn't change." (David Grumwald, "Network Nexus: TV's Guardians of Taste", *Popular Culture: Mirror of American Life*, 1977). Program content is also dictacted towards those who have the power to consume. And thereby against what broadcast researchers consider "non-viable demographic groups" - the elderly, very young children and certain minorities who don't have economic power. Although television has great potential to educate young children, when the ultimate goal of children's programming is to sell toys, candy and cereal, the educational potential is not being served. (Berth Hague, "Audience for Sale", *Media & Values*, Spring 1986)

Yet another more philosophical but nonetheless critical area of study is the long-term effects of television as a medium; the impact of television on the unconscious. Where television could

once be considered a toy, an "entertainment", it has now greatly expanded its reach and impact. It has become, by way of massive social participation, a significant portion of the reality itself. It is obvious that television has come to represent the "outside world" to the individual and is the viewers instant connection to it. It is less obvious is that "television acts upon the unconscious of the viewer not as an appliance or a plaything, but as a consciousness." Its seamless format and fluid nature takes on the lineaments of consciousness. And because it represents reality as being simpler than reality, it could be argued that we attribute a higher reality status to television than we do to life itself. If the television serves as surrogate living, does this undermine the viewer's existential base, his/her awareness of self? What is the consequence of prolonged passivity, susceptibility to power? (Sven Birkerts, "Television: the Medium in the Mass Age, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 1984?)

Because of all these reasons and many more that are not articulated in this report, television is uniquely powerful. As media consumers, we must 1) become conscious of this power and effect of media on our lives and 2) learn how to "read" the media, how to decipher its messages and images. Therefore IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES TAKE A MORE ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN PROMOTING MEDIA LITERACY FOR ITS CITIZENS AND CHILDREN. This can be done in many ways of which the following are offered:

1. **To encourage the development and implementation of a media education curriculum through the school system - elementary, junior high, high school and adult.** Just as children learn to read words in print, they need also to learn to read the ~~power~~ audio-visual images of today's mass media and the subtle influence of new technological innovations. No longer can such a program be considered a "luxury curriculum". The Media Action Research Center (M.A.R.C.), 475 Riverside Dr., #1370, NY, NY 10115 offers comprehensive packages of media awareness programs and materials. They publish Media & Values, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034, a quarterly review of media issues and trends, a copy of which Sr. Elizabeth Thomen distributed to Task Force Members when she testified. M.A.R.C. also offers "Television Awareness Training", an eight-unit course for teachers and parents. The Washington Association for Television and Children (WATCH), P.O. Box 5656, Washington, DC 20016, developed a WATCH Critical Viewing Guide to help pre-school and elementary children learn about media. The National Council for Families and Television, 20 Nassau St., #200, Princeton, NJ 08542 publishes a quarterly called Television and Families featuring research and industry reports. The following groups can provide educational materials. Action for Children's Television, 41 Austin St., Newtonville, MA 02160;

National Telemedia Council, 120 E. Wilson St., Madison, WI 53703; National Coalition on Television Violence, P.O. Box 647, Decatur, IL 62521.

2: Encourage family and social service systems to be aware of the media connection particularly in dysfunctional home situations. One reason children may be undernourished could be because advertising popularizes junk food and sweets; what can be done to educate the family grocery shopper about the persuasion techniques aimed directly at the family pocketbook? The key, according to Sr. Elizabeth Thoman, is to educate "influence leaders" - family counselors, social workers, scout and youth leaders, libraries - by holding conferences and workshops, providing resource materials such as those mentioned in the first recommendation or commissioning the development of a "media awareness checklist" as part of the ongoing social service process.

IT IS ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE AND RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN PROMOTING THE POSITIVE USE OF COMMERCIAL TELEVISION. This can be done in many ways of which the following are offered.

1. Encourage and develop more Public Service Announcements (PSA's) about health, social and cultural services available in the City and make sure those PSA's are placed in and around shows which are watched by the populations for whom the services are meant. PSA's are usually placed late at night and seen less than if they were placed in prime time. Even a small number seen at prime time would reach thousands more than they would in the middle of the night.

2. Recognize and encourage positive use of television by educators and service providers. CBS Broadcast Group has come out with their first "Television Worth Teaching Awards" to recognize and honor educators who used commercial television to enrich the education of their students. Each of the awardees received a \$1,000 savings bond and video production equipment to be used at their schools. One of the four winners was a Los Angeles high school teacher Milton Goldmans from Hamilton HS, who uses popular sitcoms with a Telecaption machine to teach reading. Just as something exciting is going to happen, he turns the sound down which forces the students to read what's going on. ("TV Becomes a Teach Tool in English Class", *L.A. Times*, May 19, 1987). Mr. Goldman should be recognized by the City of Los Angeles for his work and recent award. CBS Broadcast Group should be recognized for developing the award.

Diversity in Television Still Needs Improvement in Quantity and Quality

Despite some improvement, portrayal of diversity as defined and discussed by the Task Force - variable family groups such as single-parent families, foster families, unmarried couples,

gay or lesbian couples, families with senior or disabled members or families of color - with the exception of older people, is still lacking in quantity and/or accuracy on commercial television. This is of special concern if a 1980 study finding the heavy television viewer is more likely to be female, relatively uneducated poor and a minority is still true. (Marilyn Jackson-Beeck and Jeff Sobal, "The Social World of Heavy Television Viewers", *Journal of Broadcasting*, Winter 1980).

The following is a summary of findings.

In the 1950s, minorities were almost totally absent from television often at sponsor insistence. The civil rights movement in the 1960s paved the way for a few blacks in featured roles but Hispanics, Asian Americans and American Indians were still nonexistent. It also provided strength to these groups to speak out against media stereotypes and advocate for more and positive portrayal. The 1970s saw more minorities, in the form of blacks, in situation comedies and a host of studies on minorities and television were conducted. (eg: *Minorities & the Media*, A Ford Foundation Report, 1974; *Window Dressing on the set: Women & Minorities in Television*, A Report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977; *A Formula for Change, The Report of the Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting*, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1978; *Window Dressing on the Set: An Update*, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979; *Women & Minorities in Television Drama 1969-1978*, SAG-Annenberg Study). In the 1980s, although there are rarely blatant stereotypes or racist contexts and there are more minorities seen, the world according to television is still unproportionately white in comparison to the population.

Women and girls have also always been underrepresented. Research from the 1950s to the present document that while females comprise over 50 percent of the population, they consistently constitute between 25 and 30 percent of film/television roles. Despite gains over the past decade, the latest Screen Actors Guild statistics indicate that women are still woefully underrepresented and a recent study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. reported that women are still too frequently cast as "housewives, secretaries and damsels in distress". The Los Angeles City commission on the Status of Women held two days of public hearings on the issue in March 1987. Attention is drawn to the fact that the testimony will be published in a report which will be submitted to the Los Angeles City Council by the end of this year and that the hearings are part of large educational effort the Commission will be undertaking nationally. This is the first step of Project Image, a joint effort of the Commission and the Interguild Women's Caucus with the assistance of Women in Film and will be followed by the development of a videotape and educational materials. (*Window Dressing on the Set: Ar*

Update, January 1979; "Hearings on Women in Media Open" L.A. Times, March 25, 1987.)

Michael Jones, the student intern to this Research Team, indicated in his report that there are many discrepancies between television families and family demographics: (no notes available)

On Television

- 100% of single mother families are middle class or higher
- 80% of black children are upper-middle class or higher
- 66% of all children live with one parent, step-parents or guardians
- more than 50% of all TV children live with their fathers who experience no (economic) difficulty raising them

In Real Life

- 69% of all families headed by women are poor
- 50% of all black children live in poverty
- 90% of all children live with both natural parents
- 90% of all children in single parent homes live with their mothers whose average income is less than \$9,000

These statistics also imply that lower-class and blue collar families are under-represented. A 1981 study showed that not only is the depiction of poverty avoided; in terms of quality, television presents a glamorized vision of economic deprivation that omits or minimizes hardship, idealizes the supposed benefits of a meager existence (ie: wholesome and moral living), and depicts the affluent as amoral. The study concluded that the potential for indoctrination inherent in television should be of concern to leaders in education and labor. (Christopher Gould, Dagmar C. Stern and Timothy Dow Adams, "TV's Distorted Vision of Poverty", *Communication Quarterly*, Fall 1981.)

Although not as well documented, (which is a statment in itself) family members who are gay or lesbian or disabled are also woefully absent. There are isolated programs that depict homosexuals or the disabled and oftentimes simply their presence is a positive force in the world of TV where so many groups are conspicuous by their absence. However, the fact remains that there is still not enough representation nor of the quality one would hope for.

A final word on the underrepresentation of diversity in television is the underemployment of these same groups behind the camera. In March 1987 lawmakers and union representatives charged that the Federal Communications Commission has failed to enforce its affirmative action guidelines and said new legislation is needed to insure that women and minorities (and, I would add, disabled and older people) are more fairly represented in the broadcast industry.

Statistics show that in 1986, women held 37.4% of all commercial broadcast jobs and 42.5% in public broadcasting, up from 35% and 39.5% respectively in 1982. Even worse, employment for minorities increased from 15.1% to 16% in commercial broadcasting and 14.8% to 15.7% in public broadcasting over the same period of time. ("Lawmakers Say FCC Lags in Affirmative Action", *L.A. Times*, March 26, 1987; Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Policy Development and Planning Report, February 1987.) Also the tradition of last hired, first fired means that minorities and women have even more difficulties catching up. This was experienced here in Los Angeles this year when KNBC laid off so many of its staff. Legislation to require broadcasters to hire more women and minorities has been introduced by Rep. Cardiss Collins (D-III.)

Such improvement in employment is not only crucial for its own sake, it is a critical ingredient in getting more diversity in television broadcasting. If network executives, producers, directors and writers were more diverse, because the medium is so instinctive and far from regulated, there would automatically be more diversity on the screen. The producer of the hit series "Family Ties" illustrated how a producer's own background and values gets onto the screen. He said that he goes with his instinct and asks himself what what he as a father would like to see on television and that he's never done a show his own children can't watch. (taped interview)

Because 1) what improvement there has been in depiction of diversity on television has been due to diligent and persistent advocacy, watchdogging and public awareness, and 2) because there is still much room for improvement in quantity and quality of depiction, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES TAKE A MORE ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN PROMOTING FAMILY DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN COMMERCIAL TELEVISION.

This can be done in a variety of ways including the following:

1. Encourage works of exceptional quality which address family diversity by issuing proclamations by the City Council. Especially in what has been dubbed "the vast wasteland", those shows that are socially responsible deserve recognition and such recognition will also encourage other similar programs. Such action is preceded by organizations such as the NAACP, the Asian Pacific American Artists and the former Alliance for Gay and Lesbians in the Entertainment Industry which provide annual recognition awards as part of their commitment to improving diversity in the media.

2. Criticize works that demean or devalue diversity by insensitive, inaccurate or absense of portrayal. This is the flip side of encouraging positive works. A prime example involves Councilman Mike Woo himself who, immediately after seeing the film

"Year of the Dragon", began making a series of calls to Asian American community leaders to discuss what was and could be done about the racist film. This led to a press conference to denounce the movie which in turn led to a series of meetings between Woo and the head of MGM/UA, the film's distributor which led to a disclaimer to the film. Such intervention on the part of Councilman Woo was applauded by individuals and organizations who fought against the racist and sexist film and should be conducted with more regularity by all city officials.

3. Encourage networks to hire more diverse staff in positions of authority.

The City of Los Angeles is encouraged to conduct on a city level what Rep. Cordiss of Illinois is doing on a national level - to mandate broadcast entities to comply with FCC affirmative action guidelines. As Rep. Charles A. Hayes (D-III.) said, because the FCC and the Reagan Administration have not supported affirmative action in the broadcast industry, legislative action is needed to remedy the lack of leadership.

4. Offer city resources as consultants to further accurate depiction of family diversity and related issues. Most TV shows hire consultants anyway. The City employs a wealth of experts in many fields who can act as consultants. For example, professionals in the Adult and Child Protective Services know their fields and can review a script or discuss an idea that involves issues of children or the elderly.

Conclusion: The Future

In the last ten years, the three network's share of the viewing audience has declined from 90 percent to 76 percent. Although a matter of contention, it is theorized that this drop has nothing to do with the quality or content of television but is based in pure economics. Advertisers fear that "quality audiences" (i.e. affluent, well educated and between 25 and 45 years of age) are falling off and thus not worth pursuing with high-priced TV ads. To the advertiser those viewers are bankable, ready to lay out cash for the high priced items advertised. However, they are the same people who are likely to own video-cassette recorders and pay for cable-TV programming - which are the growing threat to network television and the wave of the future. In the 1980s cable penetrated urban areas with upscale viewers. A 1986 study by Merrill Lynch predicts that videocassettes will eventually overtake network television as the nation's top entertainment medium and cut network viewing time down to as little as 45 percent. ("TV: The Vanishing Viewer", *Newsweek*, May 18, 1987; "VCR's Create Video Variety", *Media & Values*, Spring 1986).

Despite this decline however, television remains powerful, ~~and~~ pervasive and a force to contend with. Moreover, the decline is attributed to upper class viewers making the majority of

viewers more strikingly female, poor, less educated and minority. This in itself has many possible implications.

For the reasons summerized in this report, Councilmen Woo, the City Council and the City of Los Angeles in general are strongly urged to consider and take action on the recommendations contained herein.