

The Peace Drum Project

Elder's Stories - 2007

This year's project was funded by the: Alice Willard Dorr Foundation, Clipper Ship Charitable Foundation, Janey Fund, Stride Rite Foundation, and Linda F. Zuker Memorial Youth Fund, and by the contributions of many generous individuals and businesses. CAI is also supported in part by CommunityWorks and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a State Agency.

Introduction

Each year we look forward to our meetings and activities with the elders who share their stories, thoughts, humor, wisdom, understanding, and encouragement with the *Peace Drum Project's* teen participants. The experience of getting to know these wonderful elders and hearing their stories has been truly rewarding. We know that we have only scratched the surface of their stories in this process, but we hope that introducing them to you will enrich your lives as it has ours. These stories are filled with wisdom and life experience that young people today can learn from and honor. In spite of the differences between eras, the teens learn that many hopes, dreams, *and* obstacles remain constant across generations. Learning first hand that others have faced similar challenges — and have overcome them — gives power to their own hopes and dreams.

We are delighted with the respectful way in which the teens conducted their interviews, and by how the elders were willing to share their very personal experiences and knowledge with our young people. This bridge across the generations reduces isolation and builds new connections between youth, families, and elders that strengthen our whole community. We look forward to continuing this process for many more years.

This year we offer special thanks to Lucia Rodriguez-Sweeney for transcribing and translating the stories of the Spanish-speaking elders. We also thank Cynthia Jimenez, Resident Services Coordinator at Julia Martin House, Nancy Escoto, Resident Services Coordinator at Nate Smith House, and Julia Martin of Bromley Heath, Community Activist and grandmother, for their help in locating elders who wanted to take part in the project this year.

We dedicate these stories to the memory of Charles M. Holley (1937-2006,) CAI co-founder, and inspiration behind The Peace Drum Project. He is greatly missed by all the teens and graduates, elders, artists, and others who knew and worked with him over the years

Susan E. Porter, Director
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Carmen Cintron (Español)
Entrevistada por Patricia Mata

“Naci el día 9 de junio en 1939. Me llamo Carmen aquí, pero en Puerto Rico me dicen Alma porque mi tía me lo puso cuando yo naci. Me crie en un campo que era muy chévere, caliente todo el tiempo, pero se pone un poco frio cuando lleguen las Navidades. Me crie con mi familia grande, con mis abuelitos, tíos y tías. Tengo tres hermanos y una hermana. Ellos son: José, Wilfredo, y Héctor y una que murió. Le doy gracias a mi familia por darme una buena educación. Nunca fui a la escuela. Mi padre se murió y vinieron mis abuelos, pero ellos nunca me mandaron a la escuela. Cuando era joven me gustaba cocinar, cocer, lavar y limpiar casa. Mi trabajo favorito era planchar. Mis primas y yo nos reuníamos juntas para planchar. Tenía unas amigas buenas. Había muchos muchachos y muchachas en el lugar donde me crie y para divertirnos nos poníamos música para bailar y disfrutar. Yo jugaba con mis amiguitos y mi hermana. Me encantaba ver las películas de la época. También me gustaba ver televisión, especialmente el cómico *Chavo del ocho*. Quería estudiar cuando era jovencita pero porque mis padres nunca me mandaron, pues no lo logre. Desde niña siempre quería a pasar mi vida ayudando a la gente mayor. Mi favorita música eran los aquellos boleros de antes. Ahora me gusta pasar el tiempo viendo las telenovelas. A veces me gusta ver los deportes. Mi temporada favorita es el verano porque uno puede salir a los parques y disfrutar de la naturaleza. He vivido una vida humilde y lamento haber perdido la oportunidad para estudiar, pero una aprende a superar los retos de la vida y disfrutar lo que hay.”

Carmen Cintron (English)
Interviewed by Patricia Mata

“I was born June 9th in 1939. I am called Carmen here, but In Puerto Rico I was called Alma because my aunt gave me that name when I was born. I was raised in the country, a hot, fantastic place. It was hot all of the time except during Christmas when it becomes a little chilly. I was raised with a large family, with my grandparent, aunts, and uncles. I had three brothers and a sister. My brothers were: Jose, Wilfredo, and Hector, and a sister that died. I never went to school. When my father died, my grandparents came, but they never sent me to school. I give thanks to my family for giving me a good upbringing. When I was young I liked to cook, sew, wash, and clean house. My favorite work was ironing. My cousins and I would get together to do the ironing. I had good friends. There were many boys and girls where I lived and to have fun we would put on music, dance and have fun. I played with my friends and my sister. I loved watching the films of the period. I also like watching television, especially the funny *Chavo del Ocho*. I wanted to study when I was young but my family never sent me to school, so I never accomplished that. Since I was young I always wanted to help older people.

My favorite music in those times was the boleros. Now I like to watch the soap operas. Sometimes I like to watch sports. My favorite season is the summertime because one can go out and enjoy nature. I have lived a humble life and I lament never having had the opportunity to study, but one learns to overcome the challenges of life and enjoy what there is.”