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Cultural Brokers Provide Support For Families

It's a first for the Black Child Legacy Campaign, and Margo Santana hopes that there will be many, many more.

As a "Cultural Broker," for Black Child Legacy Campaign (BCLC) — which is working to reduce deaths of Sacramento's African American children — Ms. Santana just helped assist with the adoption of a child from the foster care system.

The family that went through the process completed all the necessary programs for the adoption such as parenting, adoption, drug awareness, crisis, and trauma classes

by ANTONIO R. HARVEY
OBSERVER Staff Writer

to meet the requirements. All Ms. Santana needed was the judge's consent.

Ms. Santana said the judge just asked for one last thing.

"The judge said 'just get a house.' We found a house," she said.

Ms. Santana works under the BCLC's "Cultural Brokers," program, which allows her as a community member to navigate county systems effectively for families that don't understand the language of the courts or Child Protective Services.

Ms. Santana is a Cultural Broker for the Del Paso Heights and North Sacramento Section working under the guidance of the Roberts Family Development Center (RFDC). Cultural Brokers are much needed because they know the community and the mindset of individuals from the community.

Margo Santana is a Cultural Broker for the Black Child Legacy Campaign.

OBSERVER Photos by
ANTONIO R. HARVEY

"When children are removed from the home by CPS, we attend court to hear what the judge recommendation is, grasp what he says, and then start following up with the families so the children can reunite with their families back at home," Ms. Santana said.

"According to some of the families that I have, some of them have been stuck or they don't understand the language of CPS. But we know how to assist (the families) in their language. We can show them that this is what the courts what you to do in order for your kids to return back home," she added.

The BCLC and Sierra Health Foundation created a Community Leadership Roundtable, CLR, which includes the Cultural Brokers. Sierra Health Foundation put up a grant to fund the project.

DEL PASO HEIGHTS-
NORTH SACRAMENTO

RFDC's Tina Roberts threw a celebration for families in Del Paso Heights and North Sacramento.

The CLR is a group of volunteer members who live or work in Sacramento County and represent the seven focus neighborhoods identified in the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths strategic and implementation plans.

CLR members are liaisons between the Steering Committee and the community, and are responsible for relaying information and bringing forth concerns and questions.

In addition, CLR Members serve on one of three strategic, identified teams:

• Cultural Brokers –

Working with community members to navigate county systems effectively.

• Quality Assessment – Working with The Center staff to do conduct quality assessment site visits to help our Community Incubator Lead sites work at the highest level.

• Community First Responders – Providing community members in crisis with immediate needs.

Tina Roberts, co-founder of the RFDC and BCLC project director Ray Green recently had a Celebration of Family event at the Greater Sacramento Urban League office in Del Paso Heights. Ms. Santana was there with some of the children that have been affected by her work.

"I've been working in this community of Del Paso Heights for many years," Ms. Santana said. "Anytime a family needed me, they would call me. I don't care what it is. I'd

just go and assist. It's just a love for me. I love helping people and working in my community. We are working on dropping the level and getting some things down by 2020."

The Black Child Legacy Campaign is the community-driven movement established by the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths, which is working to reduce deaths of African American children by 10 percent to 20 percent by 2020 in Sacramento County. African American children die at twice the rate of any other ethnicity in the county.

Cultural Brokers must complete 40 hours of training before getting an instant classification. Based on how the BCLC is organized to bring down those disturbing numbers, the Cultural Broker is absolutely one of the integral components in meeting its goals.

"African Americans make up 42 percent of the foster care system, but only consist of 12 percent of the general population," Green said of the importance of the Cultural Brokers. "It's great when you train community leaders to understand systems and able to mitigate some of those systems that have negative impacts on a lot of families is a blessing."

State Lottery To Fastrack Checks

The California Lottery has launched a new pilot program that will streamline its claims process to send players their winnings faster. The new claims process is currently being tested at the Lottery's Sacramento District Office only.

This program is available to lottery players who submit winning tickets of $1,000 and below. Take note! The claim form must be error-free and the tickets cannot be damaged

or altered in any way.

Here's how the pilot program will work: Winners visit the Sacramento District office, located at 4106 East Commerce Way, to submit a winner claim form.

That form must be error-free – meaning all information must be legible, all information must be entered into the correct boxes, the form must be correctly signed and the original draw or Scratchers tickets must be attached.

Once the error-free claim is submitted, it will be sent to the State Controller's Office (SCO) for review. Upon approval, the SCO will then mail a check to the winner. The entire process should only take about seven business days!

The goal of this pilot is to allow the California Lottery to eventually print same-day "live" checks for all amounts of $1,000 or less at every one of our nine district offices in California.

INSIDE THE WHIRL