

## UUJEC Co-Sponsors Conference on Education

On September 10<sup>th</sup> Ventura Stories, co-sponsored by UUJEC, held a conference targeting to raise awareness and motivate participants to support increased funding for education in California. The conference in Ventura County CA. featured participants sharing stories of their own educational experience and experts explaining the current state of education in California as well as the history of funding.

Participants were seated around tables with individuals from different ages, ethnicities and socio-economic status exchanging stories. The stories they exchanged about their schooling highlighted how funding and support for education has changed since the mid 1960's. State financial support for education today was as much as 50% lower than 30 years ago. It also made clear inequity in funding among ethnic groups and subsequently, inequity in opportunity.



Experts talked about outcomes and results in education. Surprisingly, despite lower funding, graduation rates have gone up and drop-out rates have gone down. These improvements though, did not hide the fact that California educational system has declined in ranking from being a leader during the 1970's to one of the worst performing systems in the USA today.

At the end of the session, participants started taking action. They wrote 49 postcards to local elected officials urging them to support more funding for schooling. Advocates for educational ballot initiatives in California such as Prop 51, Prop55 and Prop 58 explained the need for these efforts to succeed. Participants left with a greater knowledge of how to make funding for education more stable and equitable.

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