

Women say it's 'Time for change' by getting involved, voting



By Cynthia Mendoza

At The Time For Change Foundation (TFC) that name isn't just a title, it's a way of life that is practiced every day by working for fundamental change for the betterment of the women and children the organization serves, and one of the ways they bring about change is by empowering their clients to get involved in civic affairs and vote. One of the many programs and services available to the women are weekly classes on a wide variety of topics geared at helping them to thrive and become self-sufficient; one of those classes is a leadership development class that amongst other things, teaches how to get involved in the civic process and the benefits it provides.

For the primary elections, TFC held focus groups in the Leadership Development class where the women took the lead in their discussions of the candidates, propositions, and how the duties of certain positions played a role in their lives.

"When I vote I feel responsible," said client Crystal Rodriguez. "I feel like I have to vote and tell others the importance of voting because there are still many people that are apathetic about it. I have to be a part of the process so others know they can have a say."

But beyond just getting registered to vote and voting, clients, many who have never voted before, are encouraged to get involved in their local PTAs (Parent Teacher Association) and to familiarize themselves with statewide issues as well.

Women are also encouraged to read newspapers and magazines, both hard copies and online and in general simply become aware of what's happening around them. Earlier this year they even took a trip to Sacramento where they came back energized and excited about getting more involved in civic life. In January the TFC participated in a voter outreach in partnership with the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters and at the Saturday, May 31 Community Festival at Perris Hill Park TFC clients had the opportunity to meet with candidates in local races.

Through the classes and outreach, 10 out of 12 women (clients) at Time For Change voted in the primaries on Tuesday, June 3. Those voting absentee took great pride and joy in making a trip to the Registrar of Voters to drop off their ballots, a first for some of them. You may view more photos on the TFC Facebook page at facebook.com/timeforchangeofd

“We want to teach all our women the importance of the civic process and getting involved in the democratic process,” said Vanessa Pérez, Civic Engagement Specialist for the Time For Change Foundation. “These women are being trained to take their proper role in the community. Seeing women who would barely speak up in class grab the microphone and demand change is inspiring and motivates me to work even harder to make a difference.”

For more information on The Time For Change Foundation and the programs and services they offer call (909) 886-2994 or visit their Facebook page (listed above).

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