

Days of Dialogue on Gun Violence Prevention

Zoom, November 9 & 10, 2021

Hosted by UCLA CCAS 174AX:

Restoring Civility: Understanding, Using,
and Resolving Conflict

Days of
Dialogue
The
First Step...



INSTITUTE FOR NON VIOLENCE IN LOS ANGELES

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION



BACKGROUND

DAYS OF DIALOGUE IS A
NONPROFIT, NONPARTISAN
ORGANIZATION WHOSE MISSION
IS TO BE A CATALYST IN THE
COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING
PROCESS BY CREATING
DIALOGUE ON SENSITIVE SOCIAL
ISSUES AMONG DIVERSE
COMMUNITY GROUPS.



DATES

TUESDAY, NOV. 9TH OR WEDNESDAY, NOV. 10TH
5:30 PM- 7:00 PM



REGISTRATION:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/CCAS174](https://bit.ly/ccas174)

CONTACT | SALGADOJONATHAN905@GMAIL.COM

Hosted by **CCAS 174 AX**



Institute for Nonviolence in Los Angeles
& Days of Dialogue **SERIES**

Dialogue Format



- Students and community members of all ages were recruited by participants of class 174AX. The topic of the discussion was "Gun Violence Prevention." Participants in the dialogue were encouraged to share their opinions and experiences with gun violence and issues surrounding guns, including mass shootings and police violence.
- The dialogue took place over two days on November 9th and 10th, 2021. On the first evening 14 facilitators and participants engaged in one dialogue. This dialogue had three facilitators and one scribe. On the second evening, 28 participants were introduced to the program, then split into two groups before rejoining at the end to go over takeaways. This dialogue had two facilitators and one scribe in each group. Participants discussed both the prepared questions, as well as their own ideas and concerns.

Dialogue Ground Rules



- Speak openly and honestly
- Listen carefully and respectfully to each person
- Explore differences respectfully and look for common ground Trust that the facilitator has the best interests of the group at heart
- Silence cell phones
- Be respectful of the opinions of others

Questions

Who are we? Introductions, Background, Ground Rules

1. What is your name, organization, affiliation, if any?

2. What are your expectations of today's dialogue?

Critical Questions

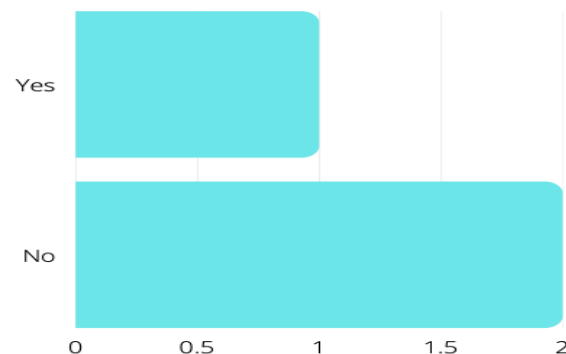
3. What has been the most direct impact of gun violence on you or people that you know?
4. How have video games and/or social media impacted your impression of guns and gun violence?
5. What are the most positive experiences, if any, have you or others in your community had involving law enforcement?
6. What are the most negative experiences, if any, have you or others in your community had with law enforcement?
7. How have school shootings and classroom shooting drill affected your feelings of safety?
8. What one important recommendation would you make to members of law enforcement to have the best possible relationship with your community?

Critical Questions (cont.)

9. The US has the highest rate of gun ownership in the world--by far. And it has the highest rate of homicides among advanced countries. What factors contributed to this? How did we get here?
10. During this period of elevated stress due to Covid-19, killings of unarmed black men and women, skyrocketing unemployment, and other events, what concerns might we have about easy access to firearms leading to increased cases of domestic violence and suicide?
11. What are the most important factors in the prevention of gun violence?
12. What are the most important things that you can do as an individual to prevent gun violence?
13. In order to make us all feel safer, what are the most important things that need to be done by society?
14. as a result of this dialogue- what have you learned- what you shared - what you heard - are there any actions that you would like to take or be involved with others in taking? If so, what are they?

PRE-Survey*

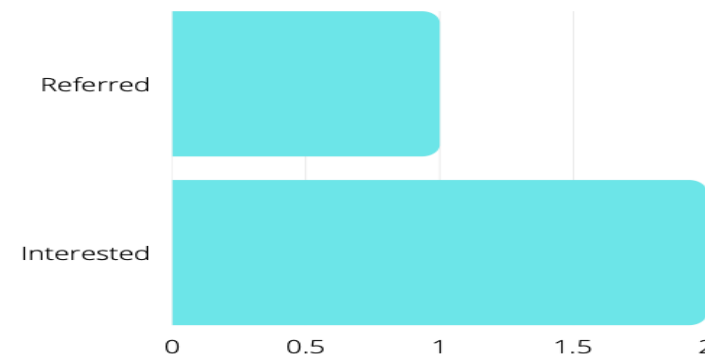
Have you and/or a loved one been impacted by gun violence?



What do you hope to learn from this topic?

Open answer. Two responses related to seeing perspectives of other individuals, one wanted to see both sides of the issue

Why are you interested in participating in this session?



Are there any specific questions/topics you would like to be discussed during the dialogue?

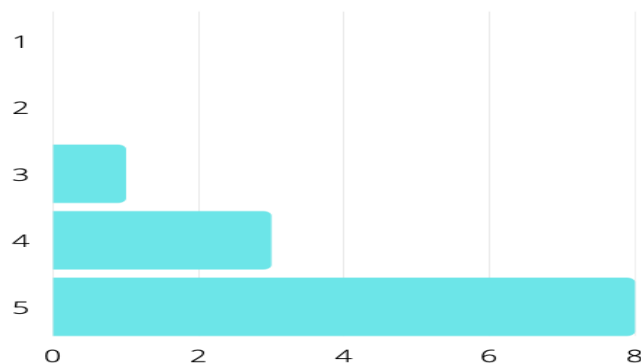
Open answer. Only one respondent, hoped to see vigilanted and police violence discussed

*Due to technical issues related to zoom, we did not receive complete responses. We have three responses across two days for the pre-survey, and 12 responses across two days for the post-survey

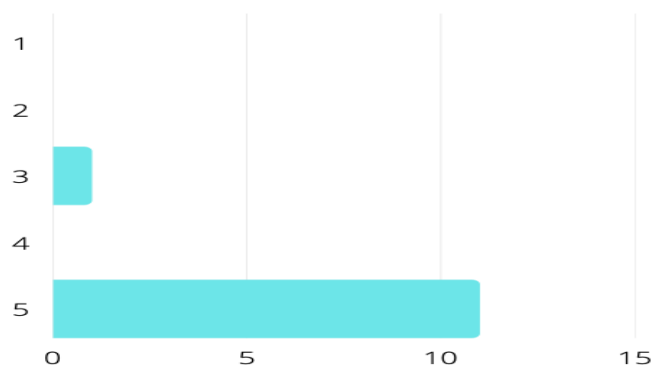
POST-Survey*

POST-Survey*

On a scale of 1 - 5, did you find the discussions to be meaningful? With 1 being a no, and 5 being a yes.



On a scale of 1 - 5, did you feel comfortable contributing to the conversation? With 1 being a not comfortable, and 5 being very comfortable.



Can you elaborate on the response you gave above?

Open answer. Responses varied. Night one common comment was more people would improve dialogue. Participants enjoyed hearing different perspectives and experiences, and said they would take their findings into their lives and work.

Can you elaborate on the response you gave above?

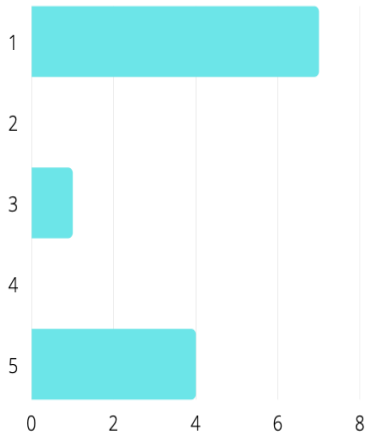
Open answer. Responses varied. Night One a common comment was more people would improve dialogue. Participants enjoyed hearing different perspectives and experiences, and said they would take their findings into their lives and work.

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POST-Survey*

POST-Survey (cont.)

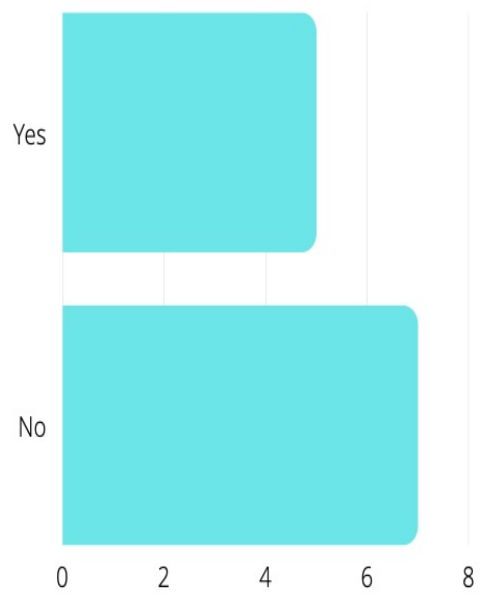
On a scale of 1-5, did you feel like you were being respected and listened to when sharing? With 1 being very respected and listened to, and 5 being not respected at all and not listened to.



Can you elaborate on the response you gave above?

Open answer. Responses varied. It seems that the phrasing of the question may have contributed to filling out the survey poorly, all respondents who marked five said they felt respected and listened to.

Did the virtual dialogue event impact/change your perspective on gun violence prevention?



Based on your answer to the previous question, please explain how your perspective was/was not impacted.

Open answer. Responses varied. Respondents who did not change their mind felt their views were not challenged during the dialogue, and those who changed their perspective did not come to an entirely new conclusion, they were mostly informed by others and revised their existing position.

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POST-Survey (cont.)

Any additional comments, questions, or concerns?

Open answer. Responses varied. Most responses were complimentary of the organizers or suggested wider promotion for the event.

(Optional) Do you have any ideas for future dialogue topics?

For this question we will record all responses: political polarization (two respondents), mental health services, gang violence, state sanctioned gun violence and imperialism, sexuality and sex education, healthcare and pharma, and ethnic studies in k-12

Comments 11/9

- What are your expectations for today's dialogue?

Leslie- wants to gain more knowledge about the topic and learn more from others. To be open- minded.

Jonathan S.- wants to be open-minded and hear others' opinions. Looking forward to that.

Jocelyn- Scared that since they all go to UCLA they want to engage more opinions.

Jack- how can we engage other ideas?

Leslie- let's respect each other's point of view. Decide

Jonathan G. in the chat- I don't think its necessary that we have to have a devil's advocate - we will have

some sort of differences in beliefs and opinions

Ely- this should be a space of comfortableness. It is a confidential space and what is said here will stay here.

Jesse- Jonathan G. would like to be addressed as Jesse to avoid confusion.

Comments 11/9 (cont.)

- What has been the most direct impact of gun violence for you personally or for your community or those you know?

Jonathan- Has a cousin who has been incarcerated for 20years.

Professor- There are many people trying to get rules to prevent guns from getting in the wrong peoples' hands. More guns than human beings, more guns than any other country by far

Valerie in the chat: Is this solely for the US or outside the US?

Professor- there are more guns in the US than there are people. We have the most guns in the world.

Valerie- pointed out the high amount of gun violence in Mexico. She thinks it makes sense because the US is the largest exporter. She got curious about whether it was just the US or other countries that's why she brought up that point

Leslie- Sees how their cousins play violent video games. Wonders why they don't play with other toys. It is being normalized for kids.

Jocelyn- The argument that video games lead to gun violence. Believes this is not the case. Social media is influential since young children can access it.

Sara- Agrees with Sara. On social media they say thoughts and prayers are the only thing we can do. Doesn't buy into video games increasing violence. Has played gun video games and is an advocate for anti-gun violence. There is a difference between video games and real life. Pro gun advocates twist that argument about the necessity of guns.

Jesse- I do not believe social media or video games make people more prone to gun violence. I do believe, however, that social media, or at least certain interactions over social media, can make violence more likely. To be more specific, I'd say that people are sometimes radicalized by what they see on social media, for example political extremism

Jack- can we speak to America's imperialism and guns at home?

Comments 11/9 (cont.)

- Personal experience with law enforcement- how does it relate to gun violence?

Prof- Police may not have been the best responders in those situations. In one case, the police responded to a mentally ill person that the community knew. The police believed him to be a threat and when he was tackled he did try to get his gun. He was killed. Have to ask if police were necessary at all? They should not be responding to mental health calls. Had both very positive experiences with the police and had not personally had negative experiences. But has heard of very negative experiences with the criminal justice

Jocelyn- Used to work at a center in Downtown LA. Worked with people who had addiction and mental health problems. Had several visitors who had social worker backgrounds. They were shoved to the front and the police were inefficient. Nothing happens. Comes from an immigrant background so has a fear of police and with school shootings their perception of law enforcement is tainted. Not the best resource to depend on. In response to the question about American imperialism (sorry for the late response, you don't have to read this aloud), I'd say the effect would be indirect: it is the aftereffects of American imperialism, in certain nations, being things like widespread poverty and corruption, that contribute more to gun violence than imperialism itself. I'm not saying that that alone is the reason for said poverty and corruption, but I think it's a major contributor. and to respond to Professor Thomas, I agree, and I would like to know your opinion on distributing police responsibilities to other groups, like mental health workers and medical services

Valerie- agrees with Jesse in the chat. Wants to distribute police responsibilities, prioritize mental health services and other resources are needed so we do not have to rely on the police

Prof- there was huge resistance on the part of those who wanted those jobs. They wanted to be paid for the services they were providing even if it wasn't helping the community. The police were hesitant to refer matters to others. The attorneys were trained to go into the courtroom and were skeptical of having volunteers come in even though they met training requirements. Found the same thing for schools and disciplinarians. They are reluctant to do referrals to those who could do it more quickly than the criminal justice system. It takes police an hour to show up, but mediators are there and ready to respond. It is going to require a movement that we insist. That we not just expand police departments. It is catchy to say defund the police.

Comments 11/9 (cont.)

- How have school shootings and classroom shooting drills affected your feelings of safety?

Sara- I think the psychology of it is more traumatizing. Would have nightmares of active shooters because of so many drills. In high school they would constantly think of exits. Not normal for teenagers to think about. Brought it up in a college interview. If we're old enough to experience, then we're old enough to talk about it. Still unpacking that they had to experience that.

Jonathan- School shootings have frightened friends to actually attend school. I know a friend who avoids in person classes and always signs up for online classes. Scared coming back in person that something could happen.

Jocelyn- So used to gun violence. Has forgotten about how many experiences they have. Had 2 people shot down the street from them. There was a professor who was shot by a student. Feels desensitized to do anything.

Prof- while we did not do drills when I was in school. The research says that they are few in number compared to one on one gun violence. The larger numbers of people gathering together concerns me more than it ever did. Thinking about the kind of schools I want my grandchildren to attend. No reason why we should have this dread and fear of being in public spaces and that weapons could take someone's life. I'm so sorry to hear that someone has had nightmares. We've accepted the reality that this will go on in the country. But we don't have to accept that.

Comments 11/9 (cont.)

- We know the US has the highest rate of gun ownership in the world. And it has the highest rate of homicides. What factors contributed to this? How did we get here?

Jack- Can we touch on the Constitution and the right to own a gun.

Jocelyn- I see the US as an independent society. Compared to Japan who has a more collective mindset and they have a much lower rate. It is the me ideology and this is my right to bear arms. I see that as a main factor for not wanting to give it up whereas in other countries it's a privilege.

Prof- the country sees it as a right to have guns and how many we want. Suicides are the primary use of guns. It's fascinating. People who don't have access to guns don't use them as much to resolve problems. We want access because we believe it's our right to have access. There are things going on that are unseen to get guns to young people. This has to be organized and it's not random. I remember there was national legislation. Only recently has that changed and I hope we learn more about what seems random. Shedding light on the factors involved will help us address these problems.

Jesse- I'd say that its a mix of cultural, economic, and political factors. culturally, we're a very, as Jocelyn said, independent and individualist society - we're encouraged to take things into our own hands, and in the last few decades those ideas have been very emphasized with regard to gun rights its like a status symbol, to own a gun we can show we can defend ourselves and who we are close to and this creates and feeds a sense of vigilantism politically speaking, its been really advantageous for the GOP to build on these ideas but that feels out of scope. Not sure where to cut things off.

Comments 11/9 (cont.)

Scribe Summary

UCLA students were invited to have an open dialogue on gun violence. Before we engaged in dialogue participants were asked what expectations they had for our session. Participants shared that they hoped to learn more on the topic and engage in dialogue. Below are some highlights of the session.

Impact of Gun Violence

- Some participants believed that social media and video games normalize gun usage
- Others disagreed and did not buy into the idea that video games normalized gun usage
- Another participant noted that police officers are not often the best responders to call for disputes especially for those that suffer from mental illness

Personal Experiences with the Police

- Police were not helpful or they did nothing at all
- Experiences with the police are tainted because of fear rooted in the family's immigration status/background
- Police were skeptical of qualified mediators ability to handle disputes
- There is resistance from the police to give up or share responsibilities with qualified mediators

Impact of Shooting Drills and Safety

- The psychology of going through these drills and experiencing something like it is deeply traumatizing
- Avoiding in-person classes after returning back to in person because of the fear of gun violence

How Did We Get Here? What Factors Contributed to This?

- The ideology of the second amendment is the main reason for the lack of gun control
- Personal rights and independence is associated with how many "arms" we can bare
- We want access to guns because we believe we need access to them
- The political situation in this country makes gun violence seem inevitable

Comments 11/10

Scribe's Summary (Group One): 11/10

- What we talked about (Group One)
 - Gun Violence
 - How gun violence affects different communities specifically: educators, students, senior citizens, families of victims
 - Concerns for the exponential market there is for guns as toys in real life and in video games
 - The innate fear of a shooting taking place anywhere coupled with the many real life experiences that many have had with gun violence
 - Frustrations based around the easy access to high grade automatic guns and the lack of preventative measures to ensure that those with these weapons are in a right state of mind
 - The need for an update to the second amendment as the era and consequently guns have changed since 1776
 - Preventative measures
 - Enact extensive regulations for gun licences and owners
 - Address mental health for youth early on
 - Government programs that offer incentive for trading guns in
 - Promote personal responsibility
 - Analyze and address the systemic problems with gun laws
 - Work our way up through the different levels of government to create change

Comments 11/10 (cont.)

- What has been the most direct impact on gun violence?

Rosemary - age (72) former social worker in many communities riverside san bernardino, hear gunshots all the time (near park, lots of gang activity, speaking on behalf of senior citizens and how it feels unsafe to even leave after dark, concerns on how we have shifted from being able to leave our doors open to not leaving the house

Ms. Berry - a kindergarten educator, a couple weeks ago high school sent out a message that there was a threat and thus there would be increased police presence which led her to pull her daughter out of class that day causing many absences because of the fear that the school is no longer safe, the absurdity of having practice/drills where students at such a young age have to follow a specific procedure

Comments 11/10 (cont.)

- How has video games and social media influenced any mind in the country?

Ms Berry - desensitizes the action of using guns but unsure how that may actually impact actual shooters, curiosity as to how that may affect their perception on the world

Rosemary - 9 yr old grandson concern when used for extended periods, it's important to engage with kids to avoid addiction to video games, interjecting with other hobbies (reading, sport), desensitizes younger students before they even have the ability to develop at that impressionable age.

Yadira - extended family roles, commercialization of gun violence through toys, questioning what toys are being used or how they might be used, look at what they are seeing in the media and in everyday life, questioning everything and having these conversations with the kids to get a sense of why kids might be inclined towards guns.

Comments 11/10 (cont.)

- Q3

Martin - graduated few years ago, recent experience in the shooter drills designed to make us feel prepared but instead makes us feel nervous and fear as it is unfamiliar, awareness is good, fear is a byproduct of the drill but preparedness is highlighted.

(Laura) Ms berry - cousin who lives far and not relationship close, San Bernardino shooting her former job was at the shooting (5 years ago roughly) killed several people, cousin survivor (person protected her and died in the process), the trauma and impact of that is unimaginable

Rosemary - tend to block violent and ugly memories that are in the daily routine, had many friends that were scared because of that day, Christmas party where two people came up to shoot the event and how many people had to huddle and shelter in offices, problem it can happen anywhere, you never know who might be the shooter, fear in community of the uncertainty

John (JG) - terrifying recalling the San Bernardino shooting with the cousin, anti-guns, but understand that some want rights but with automatic guns that can kill mass amounts of people then why is that legal, protection hand or pistol, hunting rifle, leave the automatics for military, gun owners need to pass mental tests and check ups and periodic checks and governmental checks, there needs to be some accountability, they do this (surprise gun checks by government) in England which means it can be done, consequences for not following rules unsure of extent but enforced.

Comments 11/10 (cont.)

- Q4 Highest rate of homicides in the US, how did we get here?

Martin - US has the second amendment to bear arms which is integral for many, if we need to change the constitution then that needs to happen because the statistics are horrifying, ban assault/automatic weapons no place in our country

Laura - "I think people are just more fearful of becoming victims."

John - the second amendment at the time was in 1776 where the guns required an extended period to reload, the type of guns we have vastly different, the idea behind the amendment was for protection not for assault

- Q5 What can we do in the future? Gun violence prevention

Martin - to get people on board in terms of anti guns, board members and in government, stricter guidelines to get a license as well as moderate, mandatory training, banning of the automatics,

Laura - agree with the change in the laws, make it harder to obtain a gun, mental health there is always some issue that is brought up that makes it concerning, start with kids young give them purpose and understand the meaning of human life, address the problems that youth have at those stages to help stop them from getting to that point

Comments 11/10 (cont.)

- Q6 As individuals, what can we do to put this into practice?

Rosemary - people who commit the violence don't get it from legal places but rather the black market, ppl who are responsible protection are very different from those that create violence, the people who we would want to prevent or do the screening would not be done, the incentive to have guns be turned in for gift cards, maybe create government programs that will exchange monetary amount for the guns, stolen guns from homes ppl have responsibility to have safety and kept from others, the ppl who are committing these acts are probably the ones who are not doing legally

- Q7 Any other topics?

Martin - addressing systemic problems deeper dive into what their situation was, how can we change the attitude about guns, analyze why human life is so poorly valued, look at the environment that may lead to these education, poverty, food crisis;

- Q8 Actions that we would like to take?

Laura - the news constant change in stories and how it comes and goes in a week or less, keep the conversation at the forefront ~ thanks for hosting the event keep present

John - find out what we can do at the local level and then work the way up, combine in organizations and as a community ~ thanks for hosting the event

Rosemary - scary at first in joining this conversation but relatively relaxed place, (question where does this information go? used to guide where the community is so that we can provide a more geared dialogue and to create resources that would suit the community).

Comments 11/10 (cont.)

Scribe's Notes (Group Two): 11/10

- Question 1 - most direct impact of gun violence
 - gangs, especially in Mexico led to migration
 - Cece: Gun violence in schools, Cece has a child-school shooting drills
 - Nalya: child of refugees, fleeing a civil war in El Salvador US-backed. US promotes gun violence abroad
 - Mano: school shooting drills, high school. Feel privileged to not have that experience
 - Emely: earthquake to mass shooting drills
 - Jason: dad took his life, at a party there was a drive by and she died
 - Nalya: guns used in El Salvador and by cartels have trickled down from the US government
 - Mano: Mexico only has one gun store so many of the guns from the US-all of those guns really come from from the US
 - Emely: a big problem is poverty which leads to violence in poor communities-it's a living
- Where do mass shootings come from?
 - Mass shootings come from legal gun sales
 - Jadon: more restrictions, Japan had few guns and no mass shootings
 - Mano: mental illness does not equal mass shooter-hyper-individualism leads to fear of the other

Comments 11/10 (cont.)

- How about police and gun violence

Jack: cites a stat, police killed 2x as many people as mass shootings in 2020 and so far in 2021

Emely: bad encounter w/ police, they have a lot of power over ppl

Mano: if the police don't have guns then what do we do

Jonathan: restricting police to be more investigative

Calling 911 means the cops come instead of ambulance

Nalya: friend murdered, rather than let medical personnel come from across the street the police let her bleed out, she died on the scene. Cop called as a result of a domestic dispute, police are scared to show up to these situations. Officer is literally shaking. They're not equipped to handle the situation

Manu: patriot act: police have fear-based training

Jason: police are required to enforce racist laws

Special Thanks to:

In Alphabetical Order

Andreanela: Survey

Audrey: Flyer

Brandon: Facilitator

Clarissa: Scribe

Ely: Faciliator

Emely: Survey

Emily: Registration

Jack: Facilitator

Jazmin: Scribe

Johanna: Facilitator

Jonathan: Coordinator

Julio: Facilitator

Leslie: Facilitator

Michael: Facilitator

Perla: Scribe

Professor Ridley-Thomas: Mentor, Educator Yadira: Mentor, Educator

Yolanda: Scribe



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