



March 1, 2007
Volume 41, Issue 18

City on a Hill Press

cityonahillpress.com

a student-run paper

Local Kids, Parents get First Glimpse of College Life

EPC encourages local families to send kids to college

Lisa Donchak
Campus News Reporter

"This is a classroom?" one middle-school girl asked, her eyes widening as she entered Classroom Unit 2.

"A university classroom has a lot of people in it," her mother responded, leading her to a seat in the packed auditorium.

Last Saturday, about 700 families, the majority of whom spoke Spanish as a first language, visited UC Santa Cruz for the seventh annual Educational Partnership Center [EPC] Family Conference. The conference was designed to show parents and students whose families have not attended college that "higher education is an attainable goal for everyone," as Acting Chancellor George Blumenthal said in his speech to attendants.

According to Carrol Moran, the executive director of the EPC, events like these have "doubled the college-going rates in schools that [they] worked with" in the past.

Jaimie Vargas, EPC's director of development and communication, said "The most important thing for our parents is the chance to really visualize themselves as parents of college students, and for our students to realize 'I can do this. I can be a student on a college campus.'"

Watsonville residents Natalie Colin, 12, and her mother Angeles Colin both speak primarily Spanish and attended the event. When asked how many of her four siblings would go to college, Natalie quickly replied "Todos," or "all of them."

Angeles admitted that college might present a financial burden

to her family, but was appreciative that the event addressed that possibility and encouraged families to prioritize a college education.

"The parents are all interested in sending their children to college," Moran said. "What they really need is the information."

Throughout the day, families attended workshops and events that gave them a better idea of what college life was like and how to make it a reality.

Workshops covered high school requirements, financial aid information, and involved a question and answer session between attendees and students, parents, and UCSC faculty. During lunch, families were able to look at booths at the College and Community Resource Fair, which featured other universities and opportunities for college



Courtesy of EPC Staff

Over 700 local families came to UCSC's seventh annual Educational Partnership Center Family Conference to learn about how to send their children to college. Most of the children would be the first people in their families to attend college.

students.
Vargas said that at the event, "Parents start to understand what a transforming experience going to college can be for their child, their family, and their community. That's really our goal."

According to Moran, "The event is one of the most profound things we do."