

# 2009 Presidential Inauguration Viewing and “Be the Change” Forum

Tuesday, January 20, 2009  
8:00 a.m. - Noon  
Mexican Heritage Plaza  
San Jose, CA

## Dialogue Overview

The groups addressed two questions:

- What does President Obama's speech and presidency suggest about the change we can expect to see?
- What do you believe are the possibilities for constructive change in our community?

After the small group discussions, everyone came together to share highlights from the conversations. Key points are summarized below.

- Groups responded to what they thought would be different under President Obama's administration.
  - Americans will have renewed faith in our leaders.
  - The White House will operate differently. We will see more honesty and transparency.
  - How the world sees the U.S. will change for the better.
  - There will be an increase in U.S. pride.
  - The White House will represent all U.S. residents.
  - The administration will reflect what this country should represent: love, respect, a government of the people, respect for science, civil liberty, immigrant opportunities, and youth opportunities.
  - The old language of divisiveness is gone.
  - The administration will reach out to other parts of the world to work together.
  - It is a new era of smart and inclusive government and of volunteerism.
  - The administration will expect that people will participate in the change that is needed. There will be grassroots efforts.
  - The good old boys club has been dismantled.
  - A change in energy policy is expected.
  - The administration will make environmentally conscious decisions.
  - There will be an increase in collaboration and diplomacy.
  - There will be better foreign policy.
- Many groups responded to President Obama's call for citizen involvement and how Silicon Valley residents can answer that call by coming together around shared values.
  - We need to take the initiative to make the change they wish to see.

- We need to become involved and be leaders regardless of age, from students to senior citizens.
  - We need race and religious tolerance.
  - We need to change the “fend for yourself” culture of Silicon Valley.
  - We need to meet our neighbors, develop relationships one-by-one as a means of building bridges.
  - Silicon Valley adults have focused too much on themselves and not enough on the welfare of the community’s children.
  - Silicon Valley can apply President Obama’s message that “...we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist” as we seek to solve contentious problems within our community.
  - It is time for members of Silicon Valley to pull together. We are rich. We need to share it.
  - Change will require shared sacrifice. Some things will have to be given up (i.e. give up time to volunteer, programs you love will go away to make room for something better).
  - Youth must take responsibility for their future. They must have the drive to go for what they want and learn to overcome obstacles.
  - We must hold out our hands to disengaged communities that may now feel a renewed sense of hope, so that they will feel comfortable and can find ways to get involved.
  - We are the problem, we are the solution.
  - What we do in our community will effect the nation.
  - Intolerance will not be accepted.
  - We all have a personal responsibility to individual, family, co-workers, community, and local government.
  - We need non-partisan collaboration while holding ourselves and government accountable.
- Many groups identified specific tasks that would promote President Obama’s agenda for the common good in Silicon Valley.
    - Build community – form groups to connect different generations through common interests.
    - Create programs that oppose violence and are available to all members of the community.
    - Must find better ways to mediate the conflicts between us (i.e. gang violence)
    - Make education a priority and build a better educational system that addresses the needs of children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
    - Address the unprecedented budget crisis in the California state and U.C. college systems which is preventing students from entering college.
    - Parents and guardians and students need to take responsibly for education and racism in schools. We can organize, we can have group discussions.
    - Must address how we approach crime in San Jose.
    - Provide training in leadership for youth. It will ensure that youth know how to lead in a positive way.
    - A webpage has been set up as a tool for collaborating and taking action in Silicon Valley: [thecommunityorganizers.org](http://thecommunityorganizers.org).
    - We need more youth involvement and youth intervention.

- Provide training to adults and youth in collaboration skills.
- Exercise our right to vote.

### **Event Organizers**

Teresa Alvarado, Executive Director, Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley

Leon Beauchman, Area Manager, External Affairs, AT&T and Board Member, Santa Clara County Office of Education

### **Event Sponsors**

American Leadership Forum – Silicon Valley

Councilmember Nora Campos

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

### **Invited Organizations Include (but were not limited to):**

American Civil Liberties Union of Silicon Valley

American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley

Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute at De Anza College

Center for Community Learning & Leadership @ SJSU

City of San Jose

City Year San Jose/Silicon Valley

Community Leadership San Jose

Communiversality

Generation Engage

Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley

Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network

Latina Coalition of Silicon Valley

Latino Leadership Alliance

NAACP

Public Allies of Silicon Valley

San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce

Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators

Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations

Silicon Valley De-Bug

Silicon Valley Leadership Group

South Bay AFL-CIO Central Labor Council

The Interfaith Council on Race, Religion, Economic and Social Justice

Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley

Working Partnerships USA

100 Black Men of Silicon Valley