



Nosotros Nos Curamos Gathering Plans

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Elkhorn Slough Foundation

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Nosotros Nos Curamos is a series of gatherings aimed to build community with a social emotional learning lens. The goal of our gatherings is to have an intergenerational group of participants create fellowship. The gathering plans are easy to follow and each one has a topic/theme for each session. Youth development best practices, restorative talking circles, and mindfulness are at the core of each session as a form of structure. We will be engaging in a talking circle followed by some nature walk/land restoration work as a way of implementing restorative practices into our daily lives. To us it is important to engage with a healing conversation followed by a healing activity out in nature. The potential for family engagement is the greatest reason for implementing these plans. Nosotros Nos Curamos allows everybody to be themselves, reflect and talk about things that are intentional in their growth as humans. Being human together is the biggest gift we can give each other.

Nosotros Nos Curamos is best suited for two sessions a month on both the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month with families from the Las Lomas community and surrounding area. All sessions will be held at the ESF Outdoor Classroom at Carneros Creek with the goal of having a consistent cohort of families participating. Each gathering will cap at about 20 people. Participating twice a month will give us programming for about five months. If there is a high demand for participation then we can modify the plans and schedule to accommodate more participants.

Juan has been leading talking circles for several years and has seen the power it brings to a community. In the 15 years he has been in education this by far has been the most helpful tool. If done properly this can transform a community for the better. It is his hope that this program can bring healing and a sense of community to the families that participate in the program. Juan sees outdoor exploration, collaboration, restoration, and service learning as huge successes of the program. Seeing smiles, sharing tears, and restoring native habitats are indicators of a successful Nosotros Nos Curamos Program.

About Juan Ramirez

Juan grew up in Salinas and attended CSU Monterey Bay where he discovered his passion for education. After teaching locally for five years, Juan took his skills to Oakland where he coordinated an expanded learning program for seven years. Restorative justice practices and community building were deeply embedded in the work he did in Oakland and he hopes he can bring home. Holding space where people can heal together with the land is something he hopes he can co-create with families across the watershed. In his free time, he enjoys spending it in his garden with his daughter and their chickens.

About Elkhorn Slough Foundation

The mission of Elkhorn Slough Foundation is to conserve and restore the Elkhorn Slough and its watershed. We see Elkhorn Slough and its watershed protected forever—a working landscape, where people, farming, industry, and nature thrive

together. As one of California's last great coastal wetlands, Elkhorn Slough will remain a wellspring of life and a source of inspiration for generations to come. Elkhorn Slough presents a dynamic balance between human and natural health. It will take all of us to accomplish the mission of conserving and restoring the Elkhorn Slough and its watershed.

Intro to Nosotros Nos Curamos

Purpose and Intro:

Today's purpose is to come together as a community to provide a safe space for all of us to express ourselves, build community, identify our relationship with each other and the land, and get to a space of radical imagination for the future of our community and the place we call home. My purpose here is to begin to strengthen the relationship between community and the natural world, and my hope is to bring radical healing and transformation to the community as a whole. Let's try to imagine this place as the most beautiful and thriving place and thank it for what it gives us. For some of you, this might be the first time you've done this, but I invite you to come with an open heart and an open mind. For those that share vulnerability, wisdom, and your truth, I hope you can bring that and open a space for others to do the same. Some questions to think about today are: How can we start looking at how deeply connected we are to each other? What makes you feel connected to this place? What makes you feel safe? Let's explore that today. Without judgment, express ourselves freely, learn from different perspectives, and identify how you can be supportive to each other. How do we do that together? Remember that you share with each other as much as you want, but being open and vulnerable is what deepens relationships, it's what connects us all, it's what makes us feel and be our true selves.

Introduce seven circle guidelines:

Respect the talking piece, Speak from Your Heart, Listen with Your Heart, Speak with Respect, Listen with Respect, Remain in the Circle, Honor Privacy. **(ask for thumbs up if everyone agrees)**

Setting Values:

Part of building community is bringing everybody together and expressing who you are. Technically values are an attempt to not only create safe spaces, they are to create brave spaces - so what does that mean? - brave spaces are spaces that allow everyone in the community to bring their true selves unapologetically without fear of being made fun of.

Go around the circle and share your name, value you bring and need from the community. (Facilitator models)

TLS/ DM: Make an invitation to participate in breathing/mindful breathing. Emphasize the importance of being present today. If you can dig deep and bring your divine self today, today is the day. Share an intuitive practice.

Check-in:

What does land mean to you? (ask if you can take notes) validate people's responses

Deeper Check-in:

How is your relationship with the land? Past, present, future? In this watershed?

Main Activity:

What does healing mean to you?

Do you have a practice/ritual for yourself that brings you healing?

How do we heal with the land?

Offer information about what the foundation is doing to heal the land and importance of the watershed. Brief, not to lecture.

What is your relationship with Elkhorn Slough?

How could that relationship be strengthened?

Debrief:

Rose and a thorn

Mind, heart and feet

CATS (call outs, amends, thank yous, shout outs)

Our seeds will blossom

Purpose and Intro:

Today's purpose is to connect with each other and spend some time to share and listen deeply. We all have so much going on in our lives that we might not take the time to listen to each other without thinking about what you are going to respond with. Today we will focus on soul expression through an art activity and words that lift ourselves and each other up. Healing is the reason we all come together and that brings change in many forms. Change can come in the way we think, the way we feel or the way we have an impact on the land. Us being here creates change. Thinking about land and this work, change brings renewal and emergence in nature. Seeds emerge from the darkness of the earth in spring and like them we are emerging from the darkness that COVID brought us. It's also a time for celebration and how we can be in a community that is celebratory, encouraging each other and seeing the beauty in each other. How do we see the light and growth in ourselves and each other right here and now?

With that in mind, let's think about all the ways we have grown, transformed, and discover our own beauty. We will be doing a reflection activity that hopefully brings light into ourselves and each other. Remember that you share with each other as much as you want, but being open and vulnerable is what deepens relationships, it's what connects us all, it's what makes us feel and be our true selves. Let's remember our values we hold and bring our best selves to our circle.

Remember our seven circle guidelines: Respect the talking piece, Speak from Your Heart, Listen with Your Heart, Speak with Respect, Listen with Respect, Remain in the Circle, Honor Privacy.

TLS/ DM: Make an invitation to participate in breathing/mindful breathing. Emphasize the importance of being present today. If you can dig deep and bring your divine self today, today is the day. Share an intuitive practice.

Check in:

What seeds are you growing, blossoming inside of you? What plans, intentions, goals are blooming for you right now??

What changes in nature are you noticing?

Main Activity: Individual work time and community building

Hand out a blank piece of paper and crayons/ colored pencils. Ask participants to spend 5 minutes drawing their flower, plant. Ask them to take out their phones/computer to google a picture of the flower they want to draw. Tell participants that their drawing

should have the following in it and that it should be big enough so that it covers most of the page.

1. Ground/Soil
2. Roots
3. Stem
4. Flower bud/petals

Once you have your drawing done then tell students that they are going to add some words that represent what light they are seeing in themselves.

Ground/Soil: This represents the support systems you have. What keeps you grounded? What keeps you motivated? This is what feeds our flower so think about words/people that feed our soul/person. This could be people, ritual, self-care, religion, relationships and so on. **Give participants two minutes to add the words that represent that.**

Roots: Explain to students that roots represent their fears, what do you not show people, what concerns you, and what you don't want people to know about you. **Give participants 2 minutes to add the words that represent that.**

Stem: Explain to students that the stem represents the growth they have seen in themselves. This can be this year, last month, or even today. What words represent that growth in themselves. **Give participants two minutes to add the words that represent that.**

Flower Bud/Petals: Explain that the Flower represents the beauty they see in themselves, What are you proud of? What beauty are you seeing in others and in the world around you? **Give participants two minutes to add the words that represent that.**

Reflection:

How was that activity for you?

What is coming up for you? What are you noticing?

Where did you have more words and Why?

CATS