



Neighborhood News July 2013 Election



Special Edition Interview with our Council District 6 Candidates



YOUR VOTE COUNTS TUESDAY JULY 23!

Next Tuesday, July 23rd the voters of City Council District 6 will elect a new Council member to fill the vacancy left by Tony Cardenas. In an effort to connect our residents and stakeholders with local government, the Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council's Secretary and Youth Outreach Chair, Bethany Harris, interviewed both candidates, **Nury Martínez** and **Cindy Montañez**.

The following excerpts were chosen to highlight the differences between the candidates. Both candidates are well qualified and share many strengths. Please go to our website, Lakebalboanc.org, for the full interview.

What are the most pressing issues that CD6 faces? And how do you plan on addressing them if you are elected?

Nury - The most basic problem facing our San Fernando Valley communities is that they have been overlooked for far too long. We must ensure that Valley communities receive our fair share, particularly when it comes to getting potholes fixed, fixing sidewalks, tree trimming – the basic city services that every Angeleno deserves.

We also have one of the highest unemployment rates anywhere in the City, which is why job creation will be my number one priority. So many of the other problems we face - increasing public safety while reducing gang crime are inextricably linked to a lack of good paying jobs.

Cindy - Throughout my professional career, I have fought to ensure that the San Fernando Valley receives its fair share of government and city resources; and I will continue that effort on the LA City Council. As the councilmember for CD6 I will focus on middle-class job creation, safe neighborhoods, and improved overall quality of life for my constituents. Economic recovery and middle-class job creation will be my top priority as they are the key to creating safe neighborhoods. I commit to work with residents, the business community, and the LAPD to strengthen relationships and mobilize City resources to get quality of life issues resolved, fostering a renewed sense of community pride.

Beautiful Lake Balboa

What efforts will you make to make yourself more accessible to your NC's and constituents?

Nury - My roots are in the San Fernando Valley. In the recent Daily News editorial endorsing my candidacy, the paper specifically cited my grassroots support. I believe that the first responsibility of a City Councilmember is to be accountable to their constituents. My office will be at every Neighborhood Council meeting in each community, and I myself plan to be a frequent visitor.

Cindy - My candidacy for City Council is about people and, once elected, I plan to partner with Neighborhood Councils, community organizations and the business community to improve the quality of life for all people in CD 6. I plan to seek the input of Neighborhood Councils and stakeholders as we develop workable solutions to citywide challenges.

What recent accomplishment can you speak to - related to the health and welfare of our children? And how do you plan on building on such an achievement?

Nury - In my four years on the School Board, we've set API scores on an upward trajectory and seen an increase in graduation rates. I was the author of LAUSD policies that restored funding for the arts education, enhanced linked learning initiatives and improved our early education system. I've also been proud to bring over 20 school beautification projects to schools in my district.

Since 2007 I have served as the executive director of Pacoima Beautiful, an environmental justice non-profit. We work to educate youth about Water and Energy.

My longstanding commitment to these issues stems from one place, my daughter Isabelle. I understand the issues affecting children because I am a mother myself, and I pledge to be the Council's fiercest advocate for the health and welfare of our children.

Cindy - In the California State Legislature, I passed a law that severely limited children's exposure to pesticides at our schools. And I will continue to fight for the health and welfare of our children as a Councilmember.

I am also proud of the work I have done at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power where I have developed strategies to increase the use of renewable energy and decrease the City's carbon footprint. These initiatives improve our environment and the health and welfare of everyone across the City, including children.

What words of wisdom do you have for young people interested in making a difference in the

Nury - My biggest piece of advice to young people is to get involved! I started organizing in my community when the factory where my mother worked announced it would be closing and outsourcing their good-paying middle-class jobs overseas. We organized in protest, and I've been fighting to make life better in my community ever since.

Cindy - Make a difference in your community. Get involved! I would suggest volunteering for community organizations, political campaigns, or your Neighborhood Council to address needs in your community. This will not only provide or improve needed services in your neighborhood, but also provide an important civic education on how to get things done. This advice comes from personal experience. I was the youngest person ever elected to the San Fernando City Council and the youngest woman ever elected to the California

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To fill the vacant seat left by former District 6 Councilmember Tony Cardenas an election was held this past May. Encouraging stakeholders to be well-informed voters, the Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council invited each candidate for a special forum at the May 1st, meeting. There was a great turn out for the event, as many were eager to hear what each candidate's plans were.

*As none of the candidates won more than 50% of the vote on May 23rd, a special election is being held later this month on July 23rd. Out of the candidates who ran, it is the two women that are left running for the seat – **Mrs. Nury Martinez and Ms. Cindy Montañez.***

To shed light in the past achievements and future plans of both women, and provide Lake Balboa residents with something to mull over before filling out their ballot, LBNC's new Secretary and Youth Outreach Chair, Bethany Harris, sat down with Martinez and Montañez. She first met with Ms. Montañez, at her office on Sherman Way and Hayvenhurst the day before launching her campaign. Later Mrs. Martinez took time away from finishing up her work on the LAUSD board and spending time with her daughter Isabelle to meet with Ms. Harris at Millie's.

As there are a great many schools with over 9,000 students within our neighborhood boundaries, Ms. Harris' questions focused on how each candidate proposed to enhance the quality of life for the children and families of Lake Balboa.

The following are each candidates responses to Ms. Harris' questions.

1.What are the most pressing issues that CD6 faces? And how do you plan on addressing them if you are elected?

Nury - The most basic problems facing our San Fernando Valley communities is that they have been overlooked for far too long. We must ensure that Valley communities receive our fair share, particularly when it comes to getting potholes fixed, fixing sidewalks, tree trimming – the basic city services that every Angeleno deserves.

We also have one of the highest unemployment rates anywhere in the City, which is why job creation will be my number one priority. So many of the other problems we face - increasing public safety while reducing gang crime are inextricably linked to a lack of good paying jobs.

Cindy - Throughout my professional career, I have fought to ensure that the San Fernando Valley receives its fair share of government and city resources; and I will continue that effort on the Los Angeles City Council. As the councilmember

for the 6th Council District, I will work to improve the quality of life for the residents of the San Fernando Valley and to help position the City of Los Angeles as a world leader in sustainability and economic prosperity. The three things I would like to accomplish are middle-class job creation, safe neighborhoods, and improved overall quality of life for my constituents.

Job Creation: The City of Los Angeles continues to deal with the harsh impacts from the worst economic recession since the Great Depression; therefore economic recovery and middle-class job creation will be my top priority.

Economic growth is critical to addressing the fiscal challenges the City is confronting. Among my strategies for job creation are:

- Working with green technologies companies to locate to the heavily industrialized areas of District 6. This will create jobs in a rapidly growing industry that is environmentally friendly to the surrounding communities.
- Work with Neighborhood Councils, the business community, and other community stakeholders to develop community plans that include opportunities for economic development without undermining the quality of life in the neighborhoods.
- Promoting the District 6 Economic Development Zones with a goal of businesses relocating to these areas spurring local hiring.
- Examining the concerns of the business community with respect to the obstacles to doing business within the City of Los Angeles and developing approaches to overcome these barriers.

Safe Neighborhoods: The success of a healthy economic recovery and a more prosperous business climate is key to creating safe neighborhoods and delivering quality city services to the residents of the 6th Council District. Creating safer neighborhoods will not just be a function of hiring more police, which may not be a feasible alternative given the City's short-term projected budget deficit. I will work towards solutions that maximize the public safety resources the City already has through improved community policing initiatives. I will work with Neighborhood Councils and other community groups to foster greater interest in Neighborhood Watch programs and to develop stronger partnerships with the LAPD. My office will also serve as a liaison among residents, the business community, and the LAPD to strengthen and improve relationships, and to build trust within the community.

Improved Quality of Life: The little things that degrade quality of life in a neighborhood can suddenly lead to a feeling of neglect and ambivalence within the community. Furniture left out on the sidewalk, graffiti, broken streetlights, potholes, items illegally dumped, and abandoned cars can all lead to more serious problems. These are all basic city services that our constituents deserve to have fixed in a timely manner. I commit to work within the communities to

mobilize City resources to get these quality of life issues resolved fostering a renewed sense of community pride.

There is also much to do in the areas of housing, transportation, and economic development, and I am committed to doing all I can to ensure that the quality of life for the residents of the 6th Council District is improved in those areas. In addition to addressing the issues that directly impact the residents of the 6th Council District, I will continue to provide strong leadership on citywide business, environmental, and economic growth efforts.

2.What efforts will you make to make yourself more accessible to your NC's and constituents?

Nury - My roots are in the San Fernando Valley communities I'm seeking to represent. In the recent Daily News editorial endorsing my candidacy, the paper specifically cited my grassroots support. I believe that the first responsibility of a City Councilmember is to be accountable to their constituents. My office will be at every Neighborhood Council meeting in each community, and I myself plan to be a frequent visitor.

Cindy - During my time as a member of the State Assembly, I represented 60% of Council District 6. The foundation for my City Council candidacy is the existing and new relationships I have built with the constituents of Council District 6. My candidacy for City Council is about people and, once elected, I plan to partner with Neighborhood Councils, community organizations and the business community to improve the quality of life for all people in CD 6. I plan to seek the input of Neighborhood Councils on issues that impact stakeholders. I will also seek the input of CD 6 constituents as we develop workable solutions to citywide challenges.

3.What recent accomplishment can you speak to - related to the health and welfare of our children? And how do you plan on building on such an achievement?

Nury - I am immensely proud of the work I have done on behalf of our children, not only on the Los Angeles Unified School Board, but also through my non-profit, Pacoima Beautiful.

In my four years on the School Board, we've set API scores on an upward trajectory and seen an increase in graduation rates. I supported Breakfast in the Classroom to ensure that every LAUSD student begins his or her day on a full stomach, and ready to learn. I was the author of LAUSD policies that have restored funding for the arts education, enhanced linked learning initiatives and

improved our early education system. I've also been proud to bring over 20 school beautification projects to schools in my district.

Since 2007 I have served as the executive director of Pacoima Beautiful, and environmental justice non-profit. At Pacoima Beautiful we established YUTEP (Youth United Toward Environmental Protection) – a youth group to provide college prep, opportunities for civic participation, and leadership skills. We worked with the community to establish Fox and Laurel Canyon Pocket park, which will provide San Fernando High School students the opportunity to learn about planting and play a role in the upkeep of the park. We work to educate youth about Water and Energy Conservation and providing them resources such as meters, energy efficient light bulbs, which they can take home and educate peers and family. Through our Healthy Eating Active Living Education program we engaged local high school students who conducted community surveys to determine availability of healthy eating choices and conducted survey of local restaurants to evaluate healthier options in the community. The students were then able to create policy recommendations based off of findings.

My longstanding commitment to these issues stems from one place, my daughter Isabelle. I understand the issues affecting children because I am a mother myself, and I pledge to be the Council's fiercest advocate for the health and welfare of our children.

Cindy - In the California State Legislature, I passed a law that severely limited children's exposure to pesticides at our schools. And I will continue to fight for the health and welfare of our children as a Councilmember.

I am also proud of the work I have done at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power where I have developed strategies to increase the use of renewable energy and decrease the City's carbon footprint. These initiatives improve our environment and the health and welfare of everyone across the City, including children. I plan to build upon these achievements by making reductions in greenhouse gas emissions another high priority once elected. The strategies that I will pursue include: phasing out coal-fired power plants at the LADWP; initiating smart grid technology; expansion of renewable energy resources; improved energy efficiency and resource conservation in public buildings; continue the effort to reduce the urban "heat island" effect through green roofs and expanded tree planting and creation of open spaces; improved public transportation; sustainable development; and reducing the use of fossil fuels at the Port of Los Angeles through "electrification." Not only will this improve our environment, which will be beneficial for our children's health, but it will also ensure that our natural resources are preserved for future generations.

4. School is out right now, and in Lake Balboa, close to 80% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch during the academic year. Of the nearly 20 schools within our neighborhood boundaries, less than a handful of them have a nutritional assistance programs for the summer months. How do you suggest the city and or neighborhood councils move forward in helping our families during difficult times – regardless of the time of year?

Nury - As a School Board member, I was proud to support Breakfast in the Classroom to ensure that no LAUSD child begins their day on an empty stomach. Healthy children have healthy minds, and it's crucial that our students are well fed and able to learn. We know that well nourished children make better students. In the year since we've implemented the program, we've seen increased academic performance, attention span and focus with decreased absenteeism, tardiness and visits to the nurse because of hunger.

Unfortunately these problems do not go away when the school year ends. One possible way to address this is by utilizing our school campuses as centers for the community at large. This community schools model would mean that our campuses remain a resource, not just from 8-4 during the school year, but in the afternoons and evenings all year round. I would look to our neighborhood councils to be my partners in finding a way to get this done.

Cindy - According to the California Department of Education, public and non-profit agencies may sponsor programs under the Summer Food Service Program (see website at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sf/>). If a need exists in the community, I would encourage Neighborhood Councils to work with local organizations who may wish to sponsor summer food programs and as a Councilmember I will assist in these efforts.

***The following question was featured in the Los Angeles Food Policy Council's interviews with then mayoral candidates Gruel and Garcetti prior to the election. <http://blogs.kcrw.com/goodfood/2013/05/la-mayoral-candidates-on-la-food-policy/>**

The question is very applicable to our district. Please describe what your answer would be, as well as expound upon how you would like to include the neighborhood councils in such a plan.

5. "Los Angeles was called "the epicenter of hunger" by the USDA Deputy Administrator of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, because of its high level of residents that are food insecure, and its low rates of enrollment in CalFresh (the California name for SNAP), administered by the County Department of Social Services. The city has attempted to increase SNAP enrollment through its Family Source centers. What additional role, if

any, do you think the city should have on a local, regional, and statewide level on this issue?”

Nury - I agree with the City's steps to increase SNAP enrollment. Los Angeles should be at the front lines of lobbying our partners on the County, State and Federal level to increase access to nutritional assistance programs.

Cindy - Given limited resources at the local level, I would propose the City take a multi-pronged approach to address this problem. First, I would propose that state and local governments work with non-profit community organizations to expand outreach and enrollment assistance opportunities. We should also consider strategies to create greater involvement of for-profit grocery stores, which would benefit from greater participation in the CalFresh program. This could be accomplished, in part, through marketing, including public service announcements, funded by for-profit organizations. Expanding CalFresh may make for-profit stores located in underserved communities more economically viable, allowing more stores to locate to those communities.

6. What words of wisdom do you have for young people interested in making a difference in the community?

Nury - My biggest piece of advice to young people is to get involved! I started organizing in my community when the factory where my mother worked announced it would be closing and outsourcing their good-paying middle-class jobs overseas. We organized in protest, and I've been fighting to make life better in my community ever since.

Cindy - Make a difference in your community, get involved! I would suggest volunteering for community organizations, political campaigns, or your Neighborhood Council to address needs in your community. This will not only provide or improve needed services in your neighborhood, but also provide an important civic education on how to get things done. This advice comes from personal experience. I was the youngest person ever elected to the San Fernando City Council and the youngest woman ever elected to the California Legislature.