

## BUILDING JUSTICE PODCAST



### CRISJ Building Justice Podcast

**Season 3, Episode 10 : Building Tomorrow's Leaders by Investing in Parent Leaders Today.**

**Moderator: Maria Elena Pulido-Sepulveda**

**Guests:** Graduates of the Sacramento Parent Leadership Institute: Crystal Harding, Fienishia Wash and Zainab During .

**Please note:** This transcript may be imperfect. Please contact Maria Elena Pulido-Sepulveda directly should you have questions.

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### Music lyrics:

Company under construction, the function, justice for the human family we demand it. Justice, true freedom, equality is a must. Thus, decolonization of the planet. So bust this. People be the power now we're Building Justice. Pulling out divinations, now we're Building Justice. Welcome the planet to the Podcast, "Building Justice," "Building Justice," "Building Justice." Building is to add on, or to do away with.

### Introduction

Maria Elena: Welcome to Building Justice, a podcast by Sacramento State's Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) . We explore critical issues affecting our communities with the hopes of creating a healthier and more just world.

### BODY

Maria Elena: Welcome to the Building Justice Podcast my name is Maria Elena and I will be the facilitator for this afternoon's episode where we will be discussing parents and their power in politics. And I am going to let the three guests introduce themselves today. Whoever would like to go first.

Fienishia: I guess its me. My name is Fienishia. What do you want me to say?

Maria Elena: Whatever you want to, however you want to introduce yourself just Fienishia

Fienishia: I'm just Fienishia

Maria Elena: She is also a Parent Leader

Fienishia: Oh yeah what she said

Crystal: I'm Crystal and I live in North Highlands Sacramento area

Zeinab: Hello everyone my name is Zainab Ewing and I am a proud Parent Leader and I live in North Natomas

Maria Elena: So I had the pleasure of meeting two of you, I already knew Crystal before PLTI but I got the pleasure of meeting both Fienishia and Zainab while we were doing the Parent Leadership Training Institute. We are the graduates of the first cohort here in Sacramento County (cheers) and I just want to know why you all decided to apply to be part of the PLTI program.

Zainab: Sure I can go first, um so I actually found out about the program from my kids' school. It was at a time when I was you know I had just finished my Masters program, I had some free time, but I was also getting to be more involved in the community. You know being an immigrant, being a Black woman, I think coming to a different country we try to just keep to ourself and not get involved. But for me I think it was like during 2020 the whole George Floyd you know racial injustices that really hit me really hard you know having a Black son, having a Black husband I was like I need to be more involved I need to know what's going on out there. So when I saw the flyer for my kids school I applied. I wasn't sure what it was about but I was like hey just apply give it a try.

Maria Elena: Awesome

Fienishia: For me I joined PLTI I can't even remember where email came from but I'm a very curious person so just I think out of interest of wanting to know more about Sacramento as an implant. I'm originally from the Bay Area so I know how to navigate systems but I was willing to learn how to navigate Sacramento systems. And just seeing if I could find a community so my interest was peaked on what a community in Sacramento would be like and what I would get from this particular course.

Maria Elena: Okay, Crystal would you like to share? No? Okay. You are already pretty civically engaged..

Fienishia: Why did you join PLTI?

Crystal: Why did I join? I joined PLTI I received an email from First 5 Sacramento and when I saw the list of topics and subject matter I was like ooh they giving us the game they laying it out all the things we need to know to really be civically involved and take some action in our community so that's why I applied.

Maria Elena: So I learned about PLTI while I was at a DELAC meeting for Twin Rivers Unified the person who runs the FACE there just kind of handed out this kind of thick stack of papers and I was like oh that looks kind of interesting. I was finishing up my last semester at Sac State and I wanted to gain more skills in being civically involved I think I'm already pretty civically involved but I wanted to learn how to I guess up my game and see more solutions instead of just "thank you for your public comments". So, I think the next question I'll ask is what was your experience like with PLTI?

Zainab: For me honestly it was really great like I said earlier I've never been involved in civic stuff. I'm very shy so I just try to keep to myself go to school do my homework, go to work make money just stay in my own little lane. But being part of PLTI was really eye opening for me. I got to make some strong connections you know meeting like minded individuals. Just having a lot of resources like meeting people that are in power. Getting involved in community projects so I for me I learned a lot. I was also able to be exposed to an opportunity to join Sacramento Prevention Cabinet through a colleague that I met at PLTI so it was all good experience for me.

Maria Elena: That's great.

Fienishia: Was it what did I get out of PLTI?

Maria Elena: Yeah what was your experience?

Fienishia: My experience with PLTI was very authentic. I was going through some hardships at the time so it was more personal and educational because it gave me a community and a place to reach out to. It also taught me how to navigate so my experience with the process was interesting and very good and positive. And motivating it kept me moving through what I was going through so that was something to keep me pushing to keep the will high and to have support from people who barely knew me but the support was truly there. So that was an awesome thing to have and to get out of PLTI.

Maria Elena: How about you Crystal what was your experience like with PLTI?

Crystal: My experience with PLTI was transformational it was very powerful to see.. I think our first retreat was 30 people

Zainab: 20 something

Crystal: 20 to 30 people in a room and everybody was like “I’m a leader” “I’m doing this” or they were doing whatever they were doing in their lives but for us to come together and have these conversations about white supremacy, racism, like you all still talking about.. like I was a little nervous. But it was so empowering to like really have those tough conversations with people who were invested in wanting to do more and wanting to dismantle this system or these systems that were all impacting us in different ways.

Maria Elena: My experience in PLTI was I really enjoyed it. So we had a we had a I guess a pretty diverse group but we had a lot of strong Black women in that room and that was beautiful to me but I think Crystal you and I had the conversation about how Black women constantly show up for everybody. And like I think that work has been proven historically even within the Civil Rights Movement. I know there was some conversation around is there too much of one being over represented kind of thing. And my thing is that for me I think it Audre Lorde or I think it was or maybe it was Bell Hooks I can’t remember right now but, whatever oppression you allow to happen to someone else you’re allowing to happen to you right. So for me I just look at it as all these women showed up because they’re not wanting to see oppression happen to them, to their husbands, to their sons. And I think in Sacramento we love to talk about how diverse we are but do we really talk about how even though we are diverse we have a lot of similar experiences and if we would just show up for another for our most oppressed people then we wouldn’t see a lot of the strife and the struggles that we all have within those individual pockets of diversity right so it was just really amazing to see all of you show up and be willing to be open with that conversation and never was it like accusatory. I don’t know about for the Anglo women in the group but I can speak for me that it was I never felt like I was being attacked and I felt like was being given information on how I can better show up and be more supportive and again because that’s going to result in more positive outcomes for my community so why wouldn’t I do that? And then you know the communities I am automatically assumed to be a part of as well I’m not I don’t consider myself Latina but everybody puts me in that Latina box. So as an Indigenous woman what that means to be marginalized in that group and then put in another group and so I really I enjoyed those conversations those were huge to me.

Fienishia: And even with that said the inclusivity that it had because there was so much diversity. I know at the beginning like she said we started out with 27, 28 people a couple of men in the process. There were men in the beginning.

Maria Elena: Where’d they go?

Fienishia: Right you know what I mean but that the inclusivity that it was for everybody to actually have it its just that it shows you also who stands strong in that and its always the end like you said that Black women show up for everyone but who really shows up for them? But you do have a few other minorities and a couple of Anglos that always pop up to show up, so it represented how actually our country has been running for years what we ended up developing in those twenty weeks. But how we all came together to come for a solution for what we felt and how our minds melded together to make what we done in that twenty weeks awesome it was immaculate it couldn’t be replaced it can’t be changed so its well appreciated.

Maria Elena: I agree. So we talked about that some of the people weren't able to continue on with the program for whatever reasons I think I wanna touch on that before we go into our community projects. If you could do PLTI again would you?

Zainab: I would honestly I definitely would.

Fienishia: I for sure I would even with knowing what I learned I would go back and do it again. I think its worth it, it may seem a bit repetitive but with changes in facilitators and how people think it will change it will evolve and you can get something new every time because everybody don't have the same thought processes right so I think even if you take it multiple times you will come out on the end with different things because you have different folks each time. So I would definitely, definitely do it again.

Maria Elena: Yeah I think I would do it again too if I had the opportunity to do it again just because of you know with some of those other groups I assumed that it was going to be a certain way and so for it not be that way and to have these people like genuinely show up and care and know that they have privileges over other people in that group I thought it was really great. I was sad when some people stopped coming well when everybody stopped coming. But it was you know I think because that first ten weeks you spend so much time on the feels right so its already hard to let your facilitators go and then when people that you went through that with are no longer able to participate its you know you miss them you want to make sure they are doing okay. But yeah I would do it again.

Fienishia: What about you Crystal?

Crystal: Oh I would definitely do it again for sure yeah. And I think that's why I think I'm really appreciative of you all for showing up today and Maria Elena leading us into this new chapter of our journey as alumni and how do we really show them how its done. Like keep that authenticity going keep the connection our network supporting each other like how do we show them how its done. So I'm excited for this next chapter but I would do it again.

Maria Elena: Me too. I'm excited for the next chapter too. So part of the twenty weeks was we had to come up with a community project and so I know they were like oh you don't have to be done with it by the end of the twenty weeks and all that good stuff but I got passionate about youalls projects.

Crystal: She did too and Alexx for sure.

Maria Elena: Yeah I know and I think that was something else I really liked like how we were all ready to support eachothers projects right at the end of that. So can I ask about your projects? How are you feeling about them is there new progress? Is there supports you need? Building Justice does have a pretty wide net of people so you know you might talk about your

community project and there might be someone whose got some buy in who want to come you know support so please.

Zainab: Yeah so my project is about helping immigrants you know that are coming to the U.S. how to get them acclimated to resources to help them perhaps get a job, get their social security because when I came to this country I really I was lost you know and it was so funny because I was in America everyone wanted to come to America but I was here I didn't feel I belonged at all. I wanted to go back home I was like I wanna go back home my mom was like well I don't have money to buy you a ticket to come back. I was like well I want to commit a crime so I can go back for free.

Crystal: Whatever I gotta do.

Maria Elena: For free

Zainab: Yes she will tell you that, If it will get me free transportation because I didn't care. It doesn't matter what you have if you don't feel included you know, I was feeling empty. I was like I wanna go back home to Sierra Leone eating bread and butter than to be here in America where I didn't feel I belonged. So I don't want anyone else to go through that and feel what I was feeling so my project is about how do you support someone who is new to the country, how do you make them feel like they belong. How do you maybe like just listen to what they are going through mentally? Because it's a lot of adjustments right, I moved here after high school right so I felt like I know everything back home my family is back there and coming to someplace new its like one rising stairs. As far as where I'm at on that project um so when I was in that project in my community where I live now North Natomas I also got caught up and there was a lot of stuff going on at the time, city council and you know Twin Rivers Unified School District it was just a lot going on at that time so I had to put a pause on my project. And immediately focus on my community. I went to a couple of city hall meetings you know talked to the mayor and our council member so I was so involved even Supervisor Phil Serna and again I'm thankful to PLTI for helping me with resources you know Maria Elena here got me some resources so it was just a lot going on that I got behind on my community project but I do have resources. I think what I need to do now is just kind of strategize and put some time and that's the thing too time. I work full time, I have two little kids, I'm a wife you know I have my commitments. So there's just so much going on that I feel like I need time to my community project. It's like a full time job and unfortunately I just don't have that time. I wish I could take time off work or quit my job so I could do it. No really it's a job its time and I don't have that right now. But I would like to get to a place where I have a few weeks off of work and just do my community project.

Maria Elena: Yeah I know right even with the grant writing training its like who has time to write a grant?

Fienishia: So for me my community project is called S.O.U.L. Parent Lounge and the idea for S.O.U.L Parent Lounge came from pretty much my own experience of going through hardships

and not having a community not having support or even though I wasn't from a different country not feeling like I belonged no inclusivity not having the resources or knowing how to navigate the systems within the place you are in. So I decided to make a place where my idea is to have a hub eventually a building a lounge to wear parents can have a place to relieve whatever, their life stresses, their daily stresses, what they're going through, where we can be grios to each other and tell our stories of resiliency our stories of hardships, how we came through, what we are doing to get through. If someone else has a suggestion that maybe we can get through or to. To have trainings where we can build financially where we can build emotionally you know and things to have free nights for parents and eventually have family days on the nights and weekends. So more like a place to have community and a place for parents not kids, just kids or families but for parents to go to have relief, you know somewhere to go just to fit in to have that moment you know because you are busy being a wife or a husband and a parent and wearing our many hats. So where we can have a place to lay some of those hats and just wear that relaxed hat for a minute or our sabbatical hat year 2024 right? So that's my idea behind S.O.U.L Parent Lounge and just to further define S.O.U.L means Sharing Our Unique Lives and that's what my intent is behind having this place where we can Share Our Unique Lives.

Maria Elena: So real quick Crystal before you tell us about your project I want to say that I remember when Zainab came with that community issue and like you said you came into this program just wanting to learn more and watching you just take that initiative and unite your community was huge like to from not feeling included to like saying "hey did you know this is going on and we need to fix it and can you show up?" I was super proud of you I know we all were and so it was just really nice to have that support and honestly it like I know you said you were feeling like you didn't want to be involved anymore after that.

Zainab: Yeah I was like I'm done

Maria Elena: But because you stepped up I know I shared with you that when they had talked about selling that piece of land the year before I was the only one who was opposed to them selling it so you showing up the following year and putting in all that work really made me feel like, like I said at the beginning that I wasn't just getting a thank you for my comment because I had put something on record that could help support you even though neither one of us got the outcome we wanted with regards to that its like that's the power of your voice and your presence and your putting in your time and efforts and then with your parent project I when we talk about community right, there is such a lack of community I think everywhere in this day and age and that project is, I'm so excited about it to see it come to fruition because I really feel like that's the place where community is going to start to build. That's where you are going to be able to start to see that like everybody needs maybe not a sabbatical but we for sure need some respite its hard to catch your breath sometimes you know what I mean.

Crystal: catch woo, find it woo

Maria Elena: Right, and just being able to find people who maybe...

Fienishia: Like minded

Maria Elena: Like minded or maybe don't have those skills but are wanting to get those skills, wanting to build that community, wanting to have playdates you know what I mean. Like look at all our babies out there playing right now different ages, different likes and they're all playing together having a good time you know so I'm really excited about that.

Fienishia: Connection is important

Maria Elena: It is, and Crystal do you want to share about your project.

Crystal: Well not really um, Um I'm still at it I think I chose something that was near and dear and current in my life because I serve on the board for the park district, it made sense for me to be an ambassador of the district and to promote what the district had to offer I mean from programs to activities to community events it just made no sense why our programs weren't like abundantly full and there weren't waitlists so that's kind of, its still happening. And then my family and I also participate so when I go to adult volleyball on Mondays I'm recording like I'm here and come on through and inviting folks so its going well. The goal though is that our programs are waitlisted so that's not going to well because they just canceled programs so were still at it.

Maria Elena: So don't complain people when there's nothing to do because you aren't showing up that's, that's I'm saying it not Crystal, me Maria Elena I said it.

Fienishia: And I was going to say that I appreciated where you came with your project so you aligned your project with what you already had going on so it really wasn't much extra weight to carry but it is a lot of weight to carry but the alignment of what you currently have on and to that project to amplify your area was an awesome intertwinement you know what I mean so you could keep that going on it's a continuous project

Crystal: I have to

Fienishia: it wasn't just for you know the PLTI process and it is a continuous thing that you can continue to do so that's what I loved about your project.

Crystal: Thank you.

Maria Elena: So my project was really about my personal experience um when I was finishing up at the community college I had an elder ask me "why are you here?" and I said well I had to think about it for a second and I said well you know I am the product of two generations of institutionalization and I chose a different institution I chose higher ed. Both of my grandparents on my father's side had been in and out of prison my dad's whole life, my part of



my life. Uh my father started becoming incarcerated when I was a teenager um so I had originally planned to focus strictly on parents and families that are experiencing ambiguous loss through the institution of prison but what PLTI taught me was that not everybody is going to care about my project. And so there is so much stigma around people being in prison even though this country has what like the largest population of people in prison.

Crystal: mmhm profit, profit

Maria Elena: so I had to look at it again and another argument that I have been making lately is that we lose a lot of brown and Black people to the institutions not only of prison but of military because if you don't want to go into prison they you are going to go into the military because there's that status in being a good patriot.

Fienishia: That safety net

Maria Elena: mmhmm there's that safety net too um and then unfortunately between substance abuse and mental health issues and generational trauma we lose people to mental health institutions so I decided to include those to institutions with regards to ambiguous loss and so my project is focusing on using art therapy to keep families connected um while one parent is unable to be in the home so that way when they do return to the home its not as difficult for them to be reintegrated into the home. And the reason I chose art was because I didn't want something in all three of those institutions to some respect those people are having to put their safety and well-being at the forefront so I didn't want to do one more, I didn't want to give them one more thing to stress about and so I thought art for me while I was in school I had a couple of projects that involved art that really allowed me to process some heavy material so I thought here's a good art is a really good way to get people to work through some things and then they can exchange that art right. Like I tell you what my favorite thing to do on a summer day is and then I draw that and then my child tells me what their favorite thing to do on a summer day is and they draw that I send that home to them they send that to me wherever I'm at. I've got a little piece of artwork and I've got a little bit of new knowledge about my child that I may not have got even if I was home. So yeah I'm still in the process of getting that going and then I've go to shop it out to different organizations that work with people in all three of those institutions and then just start getting families connected and get them working on it.

Fienishia: That's awesome and I like the art a lot of people are going to art like you said for that healing because it allows a space in the room for growth and to express yourself without judgement. I like that connection send it to the parents send it back so they can have a piece of that information of both so that is an awesome idea.

Maria Elena: For me it was a safety issue.

Fienishia: And it makes a lot of sense because outside don't understand what goes on inside

Crystal: No not at all

Zainab: Yeah not at all

Crystal: Not at all

Fienishia: And that's how come a lot of people get trapped up because we start out out here and when they do get caught up and get institutionalized they are on the outside world thinking not know what really happens on the inside.

Crystal: True

Fienishia: and then you get all mentally broken down because you have to get broken down in there you can't keep your outside mind mentality inside of there.

Crystal: Wow it's a whole different environment

Fienishia: it's a whole, its ran a completely different, what politics, what democracy you know

Maria Elena: Same thing for...

Fienishia: you know what I mean you no longer in your hood, its no longer Kansas, you have hit outer space you hit another galaxy

Zainab: There are rules there are regulations

Fienishia: and there not the rules you are used to living by and its not the societal rules its not society don't govern what happens inside of the institutions

Maria Elena: and it's the same thing for the military and it's the same thing for those mental health institutions.

Fienishia: especially in the military they govern when you can call they ain't even telling you where they at. You can't ever contact your members because its so secret so private to keep everybody safety at hand right but whose safety is it that we keepin'

Zainab: I think that's what I appreciate about PLTI too like just not even for human perspective but my own little bubble getting exposed to what else is happening. Like what you are going through, what she is going through but I feel like I've learned and grown so much and also like not being born and raised here like I don't know how things are so I'm so thankful for PLTI just hearing everything you're sharing I think me and Jennifer were like "wait what?" like you have a what like a curfew for like Black people like what year was that you know?

Fienishia: a lot of areas and its like people don't know so this is what I tell a lot of people that want to move even out of California when you go to a different place you have to learn what

their rules, their laws, their regulations are especially ones pertaining to whatever your ethnicity or your culture is. It's different everywhere in America its different. You go in some states you get treated this way you go in other states you get treated that way. What are the rules what do they run by?

Zainab: Like the streets codes you know what I mean

Maria Elena: Yeah

Fienishia: Theres a disturbance, there is a noise ordinance everywhere you go in California some people go by it some people in some peoples neighborhoods you gotta be cool where they know things go on and they don't trip off it, but all it takes is one person that's out of that normal community to do something and then you gonna see how much of a noise and you never knew that place had a noise ordinance. But that one person came and did something and it just lit up the whole everything you know what I mean so its like you have to know learn where you're trying to go to before you decide that's what you want to do and we just jump into everything as humans we gonna go in we got this we know what we doing. But I like the PLTI and like you said it gave you guys history a little bit of history and for me even thought I knew some things and I know a lot but its always wonderful to hear everybody elses experiences if they went through things on the same level that I went on how they handled it. Maybe I went somewhere before them and I laugh because hahaha this is why I'm placed here because I went through this and you know what I might just shed some light or hahaha that person went through that already maybe I need to talk to them. So it opens your mind to different perspectives, different cultures, different ways of lives and thought processing. You know not placing yourself on a pedestal or like you said being in that bubble but its allowing you to have an expansive type of knowledge you know what I mean, because I also have friends where is he from not Sierra Leone but he's Ethiopian I think and he just brought his wife here and she just had a baby and he was like oh I don't even know how I don't even know how to what we do? So ironically when you came into the system, I've known him a couple of years before you got here. I met him when I first came to Sacramento Lyft driver, you got here and you were reaching out like oh I needed to know these type of thigs and these type of things, ironically he was calling me at the same time like oh do you know about this system or what system and I was like oh yeah let me help you with this, this, and that and I'm gonna listen to you too because I can hear what you're saying but I can also oh I have a friend that's also from here and there and they went through this avenue you know so it was helping me help someone else as well that didn't have access to PLTI like I did to have access to a Zainab who had a community project in helping to matriculate and acclimate new people you know what I mean so that was a good resource a good way we all helped out and reached out to each other in each other's community projects as well.

Crystal: Learning from each other that's for sure.

Fienishia: Always and I love it I love that all our minds were melded into that pot and we all had different minds we didn't allow ourselves to subject what we felt or what we thought because someone else didn't think how we thought.

Crystal: And you all might think the weird part, a weird part well it was weird not weir but something interesting to me was I enjoyed when we got into conflicts when we had disagreements

Fienishia: It wasn't disagreements it was debate

Crystal: Debate, I mean I loved it because we had just because that's life right even with family, or loved ones, or neighbors we're gonna not see eye to eye on every single thing

Fienishia: you're not supposed to that's what makes us unique

Crystal: and that's why I loved it because it was like "I'm gonna see you next week right?" like we had this conversation but that's it you feel your way I feel my way or whatever it is but I'll see you next week.

Fienishia: Even if we didn't say it we knew we would see each other next week and say for whatever reason that person didn't show you'd be like dang why they didn't come? Now you thinking I hope what I said last time didn't make them not show up you know what I mean so its like you got concerned and you got worried like oh then when you saw somebody come in and you felt that their vibe wasn't that was something that we had. I don't know about you guys but I sensed everybody's vibe and aura coming in I could kind of tell if you were gonna have one of those days or if you weren't going to have one of those days. If you were gonna participate you know what I mean, I could kind of tell.

Crystal: Or depending what time Zainab came like dang she must have had a long day. I'm like you know.

Maria Elena: So I'm glad you bring that up because no because ok so I'm not throwing anybody out under the bus but like when we had those conversations it seemed like the facilitators were more uncomfortable with us having those conversations than we were. To their credit though, I will say that is one thing that they were really good about was checking in with people both as it happened and then the following week just as being one of those people who you know had an issue um and then they don't have all of the cultural knowledge so being open to learning that I thought was really nice on their part. Um..

Fienishia: If were being candid I don't think it was I think they were more nervous about where it would have went if the intervned because you mentioned in the beginning there was a lot of color a of African American, Black people and they felt it was going one particular way or the other so with us having the types of conversations white supremacy, racism, what systems work for whom. Privilege over non privilege if they jump in the conversation which one of us folks of color were gonna have a type of reaction they weren't ready to deal with. So instead of

coming to that confrontation we gonna let it ride to see how it plays out and since every time the conversation added that we were all responsible adults even though we had our cultural differences we were wise enough and experienced enough not to let that fold into the violence that they may have been thinking it would lead to right. So they allowed the conversation to go because we didn't let anything come pass this is just us expressing what we've been through. No I'm not riding on you I'm just expressing what I've seen so I think it was more from a confrontational point they didn't want to get involved in because they didn't have that kind of experience with that, no one could say anything to interact or intervene in what we felt or what we experienced as marginalized groups they didn't know what that was so they couldn't really react to it so I'm just gonna let it play out and as long as don't nobody get into it as long as nothing physical happens woo we good then next week we just come back and go "are you guys good? Everything okay with you? No?" you know we didn't have any, everything's fine we great.

Crystal: But what we learned from the National training is that there are groups that had to incorporate some cultural piece like the Native group they realized that they couldn't just jump into, like how we jumped in, jumped in talking about heavy off top yeah some of them were like nah we had to restructure.

Fienishia: That's why I said they realized once they let it go we didn't take it to a physical standpoint we kept it with experience, knowledge, and intellect and when we got upset we shutdown, so it was never like (screaming) it was like you might be sitting with someone with their arms folded the rest of the class

Crystal: Okay because I was shutdown a couple of times

Fienishia: You might have had an attitude with somebody on their hands on their face or their arms folded for the rest of the class but there was never anything physical and by the end of the class everybody had that lifted off their shoulders we were in our hand circles and feeling positive vibes.

Crystal: Honestly it was more great times than those.

Fienishia: But every time we had an issue this is why there was more great times because if there was an issue in a class more than likely 9 times out of 10 the two people that had the issue by the time it ended class they done had a conversation that nobody seen them have and by the end of class it's all cool and kosher that if it's being talked about everybody like "you all good" what you mean? What you talking about? Oh we already talked, we dealt with that so it's already an afterthought so that's what I mean by our minds being experienced enough not to let the physical connection become violent. We had more of a connection to where we wanted to be one you know.

Zainab: Like the day that I thought that Maria Elena was like upset at me. I think that we are so aware of everyone that you can tell when somethings up and I was like is there something I do wrong you know what I mean and she was like oh no you're fine and I think that we talked also.

Fienishia: And it kind of happened ever since the first day that we met. I don't know if you all paid attention like she said in the retreat it was that many people but only certain people kind of connected, and from day one certain people kind of connected and it was

Zainab: I felt connected with everyone

Fienishia: I'm not saying necessarily everybody.

Maria Elena: I was drained

Crystal: I was drained

Maria Elena: Okay it wasn't just me okay

Crystal: No there was so much

Maria Elena: Okay the retreat

Crystal: The retreat was just so much

Maria Elena: It was

Crystal: And then we had to talk and do this, do this, do this

Fienishia: You know I got into it with someone the first day

Crystal: Yes the first day

Fienishia: So you aren't telling me anything

Zainab: Oh she's trouble, I'm just kidding

Fienishia: I was trouble but I was trouble enough to weed out who didn't need to stay and it wasn't intentional. No, no because even though that person and I again we had a issue I was trying not to speak to that person after that to make it that but they came to me and wanted to think they wanted to talk it out right, no they thought they wanted to talk it out and even though I was nice and approachable they still took it a certain kind of way and they felt a way they continued to come but for whatever reason they fell off. Everybody that made it through certain process whether they got into it with somebody or had a debate on they own it was a

weaving process whose gonna be able to withstand whatever is dished at them regardless so I had to face not only that particular person but my facilitators really not standing up for me at that time you know what I mean I felt like I had to back down and I wasn't really necessarily needed and until they really looked at it to see that I was feeling that way to say come here let me talk to you and pull you to the side and see whats really going on they didn't understand and they didn't know anything you know what I mean so it was a wait and see process because they didn't know how to handle the outcome of what they the diversity, so much diversity they had.

Maria Elena: Which is funny because they want a diverse group

Fienishia: But they don't understand what it means to have, you want a diverse group but you don't know what it is to have a diverse group all at once

Zainab: We were so passionate you know like a lot of passion

Crystal: Yeah

Fienishia: We had a lot of experience and we were willing to share so its not that we had the passion we were willing to share WITH passion

Maria Elena: Yeah, well no yeah. Because bringing it back to when you thought I was upset with you and it had nothing to do with that it had been the material that we were working on, a loss I had experienced and just like I was over it because sometimes like you pointed out you're not telling us like what you want us to do so then I'm sitting here frustrated like this is what okay I'm confused on what you want me to do and then you are having me look at some stuff hitting really close to home for me and it was just like and all you did was ask a question and because I was already frustrated I just like I didn't answer in the nicest way that night you know which was disappointing to me because I should be able to move past my emotions but that was a big loss for me and I never, you know I'm still trying to process that so it was just like I just not in the mood and I wasn't just gonna... you know I've only left class one time and that was because it was very much a cultural thing and there was no being able to have that discussion with the other person and that's just because that's how I was raised so they were automatically right even if I felt they were wrong kind of thing you know what I mean so I had to walk away that night, but other than that yeah I appreciated the opportunity when you talk about more good times than bad times, no matter what none of us grow as people without some type of adversity right without some type of bad experience, so there was no way for us to get the most out of that program without having those bad times in my opinion.

Crystal: I agree. Totally agree

Maria Elena: We are almost at the hour mark that went by fast. So I just if there is anything else you wanna share but I wanna thank you all for making time to come out today and have this discussion and I still wanna know how your community projects are progressing.

Fienishia: I will share my last piece then tell about the community project. The last thing I will say is that what I don't want to say didn't like but as you mentioned, how they lacked expressing what they wanted from us like trying to tell us about the activity but not tell us what they want us to know thinking that they would persuade us or manipulate our thought process so I guess not having enough trust in our own thought process as individuals that's what I felt like every time I made a complaint about you are not giving us direction on how to complete this process because we're grown you wanna know where we are let us give you what we are going to give you and then let integrate from that if were not going in the angle that you want us to then you go "okay well I see where you guys are coming from but we wanted to lean more towards if something like this happened to you" you know what I mean so its like direction after you see where the base is. That would be the only thing I would say for me um forth coming should be a little bit more receptive to where someone's baseline is and how you can go from there to develop not saying that you have to give them the direction but let them tell you where they are so you can guide them along the direction that you want them to.

Maria Elena: Trust the participant just like you want the participant to trust the process

Fienishia: Say that again, and as far as my community project and you know a building is always nice a place to actually have access to so a building for hubs and workshops a space like that you know always have resources. Resource books I'm trying to put together to make sure I have resources available and separated you know so some office supplies like card separators, protectors, and things like that. So office supplies a building or access to a space um things like that.

Maria Elena: Can I give you a suggestion especially with those office supplies S.O.U.L. Parent Lounge Wishlist on Amazon  
Anybody else?

Crystal: One thing I wish we would have done more of was talking about the personal like the individual and like wellness and healthy like parenting stuff and then if they would have even like did an event for us just the parents to like play or have fun or go out. I don't know I just feel like that would have been...

Maria Elena: Like the string thing, they should have done more of that? When we were doing the yeah

Fienishia: that was the connected, that was to show our connection but

Zainab: Like a picnic or something like that

Crystal: Yeah

Fienishia: That's why S.O.U.L. Parent Lounge right



Crystal: Yeah

Fienishia: Through S.O.U.L. Parent Lounge we could have things like Sisters in Soul who does that so you have that SOUL weekend or that SOUL those events that you can have that type of community connection that you're looking for.

Crystal: The thing is that they're talking about some heavy topics. They're talking about civics and leadership and being in positions of power, running for office. That \$#!+\$ heavy excuse my language but that's a lot you know and I don't think they really um share with us kind of like how important it is TIME right like our time management like making ourselves a priority. I think you were talking about baselines some of us don't even know what rest is you know what I mean like those are some that if we would have wove that in or included some of those in and allowed us to rest when we are at like PLTI during class like thirty minutes of just chat but we were so on we gotta go curriculum, curriculum, curriculum, time, time, time which I get but also its important for us to you know to just be with each other.

Fienishia: So can I put out a proposal or maybe a suggestion for you guys to take back to the community that maybe the alumni that aren't a facilitator or coordinator can coordinate on a weekly basis to have that in person conversation right that personal touch right. Just an additive so if they do need to debrief after that extra session of that long session of whatever you know what I mean I think that would be an opportunity for the alumni to sort of participate and feel connected to what we started and you know progress forward with other cohorts. That's how you keep your retention and your alumnis and the participants.

Maria Elena: I think that's a good idea just like we have alumni that have become facilitators for certain weeks like why don't we have alumni come back and be a check-in person for the first ten weeks, a check-in person for the next 10 weeks.

Fienishia: Like they got daycare every week right? So maybe ten minutes or so before the class ends you do ten minutes for that debrief before you do your circle then maybe some people wanna go talk to somebody one of the old parents some who...

Maria Elena: Somebody whose been through it somebody who processed those emotions and those thoughts

Fienishia: And then you have that available then go back and hit the circle and send your people off for whatever because now I done let out all of that heavy stuff off my chest I might be able to think about one word that I feel after I done let all of that stuff off my chest.

Maria Elena: Yeah no I agree

Fienishia: You know what I mean

Maria Elena: I think doing it before survey would be good because you probably get more impactful survey information because you've given them a brief opportunity to process that information instead of talking about here fill out this survey now.

Crystal: Fill out the survey while were still doing class though

### **Concluding Language**

Thank you for listening. We hope our ongoing conversations spark understandings, empathies, and motivation to join the struggle for a better future for all. {PAUSE.....} You just listened to the 'Building Justice' podcast. The information contained in this podcast, including its title and description represent the views and opinions of the hosts and guests and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Sacramento State, CRISJ and/or the 'Building Justice' podcast committee

### **Outro Music Lyrics**

No more penalties and no more wars. Based on the actions. Now, time for "Building Justice," "Building Justice." Time for building justice, justice.