

- **No.18**
 - **Building community-researcher capacity for CBPR & incubating community science partnerships through a Community Science Workshop / Environmental Justice Network**

 - Name: **Sullivan**
 - First Name: **John**
 - E-Mail: josulliv@utmb.edu
 - Organisation: **Sealy Center for Environmental Health & Medicine / NIEHS Center in Environmental Toxicology (University of Texas Medical Branch @ Galveston TX)**
-

- Authors: **John Sullivan, Juan Parras, Alexandra Bambas-Nolen, Sharon Croisant,**

- **Abstract:**

- Background: The concept of an active network to transmit skills, share news and advocacy approaches, promote collaboration among CBOs and regional researchers, and extend the regional network of community based Environmental Justice organizations was first proposed by Juan Parras, founding director of the Houston based Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (T.e.j.a.s.). This network was conceived in terms of Encuentro's Tejano linguistic roots – derived from its dual connotations of discovery and engagement - and its Community Science Workshop component was inspired by a European model of community accessible and needs responsive science, the Science Shop. The Encuentro network embodies and forefronts a community context for Community Science Workshop framing of needs-based, actionable science, based on CBPR principles of multi-directional communication and participation, effective partnership, capacity-building, and transparency to provide an approach for generating research focused on community-identified needs that empowers civil society, informs policy (development / regulatory), and integrates environmental exposures and consequent health outcomes, social determinants of health, and the ideas of multiple stressors, community vulnerability and resilience, and cumulative risk within a holistic perspective reflecting a social-ecological model of community health, and a model of risk communication grounded in the theory of cultural cognition. Process / Methodology: The Regional EJ network has convened an annual Encuentro / Community Science Workshop from 2008 to 2011. The hosting and logistics duties have revolved around Houston area CBOs, and planning the agenda, inviting keynote speakers and skill development providers has followed a Freirean, consensus model throughout. The UTMB NIEHS Center in Environmental Toxicology partnership supports an annual focus on the use of CBPR as a research model – which includes sponsoring a successful community – researcher duo to forefront their challenges and successes – and the collective agenda offers community science themes and topics that reflect the needs and interests of regional EJ communities, skill-building workshops that empower communities to educate, organize and advocate for their constituents. Encuentro / Community Science Workshop activities continue throughout the year bringing site-specific skill development workshops on community-based participatory mapping,

health impact assessments, dialogues on barriers impeding full participation in CBPR from both the researcher and CBO perspectives, and scoping meetings to frame potential scientific collaborations focused on addressing chronic or emerging community issues. Major local and regional 2012 concerns include: hydraulic fracturing, air impacts / greenhouse gas deficits of "dilbit" crude refining, Gulf oil spill impacts on food web / human health, ports communities environmental health issues.