

LACCRR

A friend of mine gave me a flyer about redress. At first I had no idea about what they were talking about. I attended a meeting which was held at the old Union Church in Little Tokyo and I took my kids because they were real little at the time. We discussed how unjust the internment was and how nothing was ever done about it. We felt that we couldn't let them get away with just shoving it all under the rug after all these years. At first we just talked about the idea of redress and reparations and whether such a idea was even within the realm of possibility or just too "far out." It didn't make any difference to me whether a small group like us could influence a nation. The issue was worth pursuing. Many of us had experienced the anti-war movement in Berkeley and we went to marches without ever thinking about whether we could stop the war or not. I felt that something could happen if the issue was correct, and that in itself made it worthwhile.

We often met at the old Nishihongwanji Temple in Little Tokyo. We didn't have a chairperson. There was nothing formal about us. We did everything through consensus. When something came up, we laid out all the tasks and people just volunteered to do them. It was a very collaborative group. A guy named Alan was probably the most organized amongst us because I remember him passing out an agenda. We even had rotating chairs. Sometimes, whoever showed up first would be the chair of the meeting. Other times, whoever showed up last would be the chair. Nobody that attended was a slacker because everyone believed in the cause! Nobody was there for their own ego--that's what made this group so interesting.

After people began showing up regularly, we decided that we should call ourselves something or give ourselves a name. That's how the Los Angeles Community Coalition on Redress and Reparations got it's name. We began to do a lot of outreach and met with many groups. We attended church meetings, gardeners' meeting and met with many people in their homes. We had to do a lot of homework. We needed to know what they



Outreach: Photo cubes about the internment

wanted so that we could be assured of their support. Sometimes we would go to meetings in which five of us would be there and only two people would show up. We had to have a lot of information, statistics and facts about the internment which was not easy to find at that time.. we kind of saw ourselves as sort of this “rag tag” grassroots army that was going to fight for redress!

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