

Press Clippings 12/28/19

---Daily Herald---12/28/2019

How schools are working to count every child in the 2020 census

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy

Nearly 1 million children younger than 5 in the United States were not counted during the 2010 Census, officials say.

The error -- attributed to inaccurate reporting by parents and mistakes made by census enumerators -- had implications for allocating government funds toward the education, health and well-being of those children and their families.

"Missing one child means missing out on federal funding for that child for the next 10 years," state Superintendent of Education Carmen Ayala said during a recent census summit in Chicago.

Mobility, child custody issues, distrust of government, immigration status, language or literacy barriers, and complex and shared living arrangements are among the reasons why children, youth and college students could fall through the cracks.

Schools and colleges are integral to helping families understand the importance of the 2020 Census and improving participation, especially among hard-to-count groups such as young children, immigrant families, people of color, homeless people and college students, U.S. Census Bureau officials say.

That's why government officials are turning to educators to deliver a clear message -- make every child count in 2020.

"Schools are anchor institutions of our communities, and very trusted," Illinois Deputy Gov. Jesse Ruiz said. "People revere their teachers, as they should. They are going to listen."

Illinois has set aside \$29 million for census outreach efforts in partnership with local community groups, schools, libraries, governments, and social service agencies to get a full count next year. Key to these efforts is leveraging the biggest asset -- children.

"Don't discount the kids," said Choua Vue, vice president of community impact for Illinois Action for Children and a child of refugees who helped her parents navigate the U.S. system. "They are going to be our largest champions for families that we are not able to access."

The stakes are high for 2020. Census data is used for the distribution of more than \$1.5 trillion in federal funding, grants and support to states, counties and communities. It helps determine funding for schools, hospitals, roads, public works and social services such as Medicaid and college aid.

For schools, the census helps determine allocation of federal funding for Title I programs, special education, bilingual education, classroom technology, teacher training, Head Start, preschool and after-school programs, and school lunch assistance.

"Students who are not counted, it's their entire school life that gets missed because of these undercounts," said Darren Reisberg, Illinois State Board of Education chairman. "In 2010, Illinois' self-response rate was 80.7% of households ... lower than any other state around us."

Elgin Area School District U-46, the state's second-largest school district with more than 38,000 students, receives \$38 million in federal funding.

"The kids are coming, either way," CEO Tony Sanders said. "The bigger piece for us is to ensure every kid (in the state) is counted for the purpose of funding not just public schools, but also federal dollars that can come back through social service agencies and other units of government."

State education officials are urging schools to raise awareness through census-themed pep rallies, student art contests, school newsletters, and talk about the census during parent-teacher conferences and school board meetings.

"There's a rule of thumb in advertising that says people need to hear something seven to nine times before the message sinks in," Ayala said. "So start talking about the census at every public meeting and community event. We are encouraging all of our schools to host census nights during the online self-response period, March 12 through April 27."

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How U-46 is getting creative as part of its census push

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Karla Jimenez, coordinator of family and community engagement and census liaison for Elgin Area School District U-46, speaks with Ana Laura Martinez about the 2020 Census at the Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin. Martinez has a second-grader at Garfield Elementary School and a 10th-grader at South Elgin High School. *Courtesy of Rocio Robledo/Centro de Informacion*

Elgin Area School District U-46 officials are working on an employee and parent awareness campaign about the 2020 Census.

The district has developed a "tool kit" for administrators emphasizing census talking points and answers to frequently asked questions. Officials are reaching staff members and parents through newsletters, presentations, emails, posters in schools, flyers sent home with students, school websites, U-46 app alerts and social media.

A more targeted information campaign is planned closer to Census Day on April 1, when every home will have received an invitation to respond to the census.

Officials are training school employees and parent leaders about the census so they understand its impact on the district and the 11 communities U-46 serves, said Karla Jimenez, coordinator of family and community engagement.

The district is partnering with public libraries to reach specific populations, such as engaging Latino families participating in a recent posada -- Mexican pre-Christmas celebration -- at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin.

Meeting children and families where they spend much of their time, such as schools, libraries, community centers, museums and holiday events, is a key strategy to reaching hard-to-count groups, said Denise Raleigh, Gail Borden Public Library spokeswoman and co-chairwoman of Elgin's Complete Count Committee.

"We have over 70 organizations that are already working on the census, but the school district is really one of the most significant partners that we have," Raleigh said.

U-46 will be making school computer labs and tablets available for parents and community members who want to complete their census forms online -- a new feature in the 2020 census.

Schools also can use tools available on the Census Bureau's [Statistics in Schools website](#) to educate children and families.

Teachers can incorporate interactive classroom activities and lesson plans designed using census data in various subjects -- math, English, history, geography and civics. Activities include coloring pictures of people and animals living in a home and singing a census song with a catchy refrain: "The census counts people in homes big and small. You count if you're tiny. You count if you're tall. Because everyone counts in the U.S. of A. Everyone counts in their own special way."

Students can learn fun census facts about all 50 states and participate in [activities](#) by grade level -- from counting for preschoolers to examining career statistics for high schoolers. Bilingual materials also are available highlighting how a complete count benefits all communities.

Press Clippings 12/29/19

---The Courier News---12/29/2019

A look back at what made 2019

10 of the most significant stories that affected community

By: Rafael Guerrero

Spring elections

As a result of the April 2 election, there were many new faces on Elgin-area school and municipal boards.

School District U-46 welcomed two new board members: Kate Thommes, of Elgin, and Eva Porter, of Hanover Park, replacing Jeanette Ward, of West Chicago, who did not win reelection, and Phil Costello, of Bartlett, who opted not to run again.

Ward's defeat ended her four-year tenure on U-46 more controversial members. She's now running as a Republican for outgoing State Sen. Jim Oberweis' seat in the 2020 election.

Incumbent Elgin council members Toby Shaw, John Steffen, Tish Powell and Rose Martinez all won reelection for the four, four-year seats that were up for grabs. Newcomer Baldemar Lopez defeated Steve Thoren and Jerri McCue to fill a two-year seat.

Elgin Mayor Dave Kaptain won a third term this spring, holding off a challenge from Councilwoman Carol Rauschenberger.

U-46 suit settled

In 2017, Henry Sembdner was a Kenyon Woods Middle School student who suffered serious injuries that required being placed in a medical coma when a fellow student slammed him to the ground and beat him into unconsciousness.

The family sued **School District U-46** for its handling of the incident, and this year the school board agreed to pay a \$1.5 million settlement.

Both sides are prohibited from discussing the matter.

Crazy cold

A late-January cold front brought an unprecedented deep chill to the area, with "high" temperatures of 20 below zero and wind chills of 50 below.

Schools in U-46 and other districts closed for days; Algonquin-based D300 had to close an extra day when the deep freeze damaged 20% of its bus fleet. A burst pipe inside Gail Borden Public Library temporarily closed its KidSpace section.

The record temperatures prompted the closure of businesses, stores, libraries, gathering places and government buildings because it was too dangerous for employees to come to work.

Two unusual snowstorms in April made the winter even longer when they arrived just as trees and flowers began to bloom. The second dumped more than 4 inches of snow in Elgin and St. Charles.

Snow returned in the fall, causing Halloween and Veterans Day activities to be canceled or moved indoors. Perhaps fittingly, Christmas Day 2019 saw temperatures close to 60 degrees.

Shootings, homicides

A few shootings garnered attention in and around Elgin in 2019. The list included:

Joshua Bey, 24, was shot to death Aug. 6 during an argument in the 1200 block of Fleetwood Drive. A few days later, two men wanted in connection with the shooting, Xavier Butler, of the South Elgin area, and Isaiah Butler, of the Elgin/Schaumburg area, were arrested and charged.

Jose M. Cervantes, of Carpentersville, was shot by police in the Berkshire Circle/Wakefield Drive neighborhood in June when he fired a gun at him. Cervantes' injury was not life-threatening and he was charged with attempted first-degree murder and other crimes.

A 14-year-old girl was seriously injured in a Dec. 3 drive-by shooting about a block away from **Lowrie Elementary School** in Elgin. Three days later, Elgin police announced two minors had been charged with felonies in connection with the incident.

Press Clippings 12/30/19

---Daily Herald---12/30/2019

David Nelson, 83, nurtured Elgin's musical legacy

By: Steve Zalusky



David Nelson was skilled pianist and talented teacher who spent his latter years documenting the legacies of the notable musicians who came before him in his hometown of Elgin. Nelson died Dec. 22 at 83 years old. *Courtesy of Elizabeth Marston*

Music, teaching and Elgin history were David Nelson's passions.

He blended all three as an instructor at Judson College and Elgin Community College and board member and program chair for the Elgin History Museum.

Nelson died Sunday, Dec. 22, at age 83, but leaves behind a legacy as a talented pianist and teacher who helped preserve the memories of the city's musical forefathers.

Born and raised in Elgin, Nelson from an early age showed an interest in the piano, at times pulling a chair up to a radiator at home and pretending to play. His parents bought him his first piano at an estate sale when he was 6 years old, and his talent took off from there.

After graduating from **Elgin High School** in 1954, he studied at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, earning a bachelor's degree in music in 1959 and a master's in 1961.

His notable performances included a 1962 appearance on the "Artists Showcase," playing "Hungarian Fantasy" with the NBC Symphony in Chicago.

After settling back in Elgin with his wife Dolores, whom he married in 1967, he embarked on a career that included teaching piano and music theory from his home for 53 years. He also taught piano and music theory at Judson College for 11 years and piano at Elgin Community College for 17 years.

"I love teaching; taking talented students willing to work, molding them, and giving them as much as I can," Nelson was quoted as saying in 1975.

He also distinguished himself as a solo performer with the Elgin Musicians Club, Elgin Symphony Orchestra and Elgin Choral Union.

For the last 20 years of his life, Nelson spent considerable time at the history museum documenting Elgin musicians such as Jane Chipman and Charlo Byars Bohl, who were familiar to him but unknown to newer residents.

"We had a lot on (better known musical figures like) Joseph Hecker and some of the earlier ones, but we didn't have a lot on people who were active in the '20s, '30s, '40s," said Elizabeth Marston, director of the Elgin History Museum. "That's the kind of information that he brought out in front of people today."

He distilled this knowledge when he wrote "My Life's Musical Career as a Musician, Teacher and Pianist."

As program chair for the museum, Nelson "set the tone" for much of the programming at the museum and was the guiding figure behind the evolution of its annual benefit gala.

"He really took us up a level in terms of organization and leadership," Marston said. "He was a very disciplined person. Very particular. Very thorough. That's what we needed. He helped the museum develop into a better organization."

Nelson's efforts twice earned him the Elgin Mayor's Award, as well as the Elgin Area Art Council's Community Spirit Achievement Award.

Nelson is survived by his wife, Dolores, nieces Cindy Rowley and Sharon Atkins, and six great-nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Dec. 30, at Symonds-Madison Funeral Home, 30W730 US-20 in Elgin, followed by services at 12:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Elgin History Museum for the Nancy Kimball House Restoration Project, the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, or a charity of choice.

---Daily Herald---12/30/2019

Top stories in the Fox Valley- 2019

Daily Herald Report

U-46 settles Sembdner lawsuit

Elgin Area School District U-46 agreed to pay \$1.5 million to the family of Henry Sembdner, a South Elgin boy who suffered brain trauma during a beating by a Kenyon Woods Middle School classmate in 2017, as part of a settlement agreement.

The Sembdners' lawsuit against U-46 was dismissed with prejudice on Oct. 29 as a result of both parties reaching an agreement on Oct. 21. The agreement did not constitute any admission of fault, responsibility or liability on the part of the U-46 school board.

The \$1.5 million lump-sum payment includes the cost of the Sembdners' legal fees. Money will be put into an account that Henry cannot access until he is 18, according to court records.

Henry, now 15, is a sophomore at South Elgin High School. He was 12 and a Kenyon Woods seventh-grader at the time of the February 2017 attack that left him unconscious. He was assaulted in a school hallway where there were no security cameras after he and his attacker bumped into each other. The attacker picked Henry up and slammed him to the ground headfirst, rendering him unconscious and putting him in a coma for five days. The 14-year-old who attacked Henry pleaded guilty to battery in July 2017. He was sentenced in juvenile court to 12 months of probation and was ordered to complete 100 hours of community service. He also had to undergo counseling and had to write an apology letter to Henry.

Elgin High celebrates 150 years

Elgin High School's alumni, retired and current employees, and students marked the school's 150th anniversary this year with a "Sesquicentennial Celebration" in April.

Celebration attendees walked down memory lane during an "All-Class Reunion" and toured the former high school building at 355 E. Chicago St. -- now Elgin Area School District U-46's administrative headquarters -- and the current school at 1200 Maroon Drive, followed by a program in the school's auditorium. Officials unveiled a granite marker commemorating the school's history and had a special NASA presentation in the school's honor.

Elgin High has earned many distinctions in 150 years, including embracing desegregation early on and educating a former Nobel Prize winner. Inventors, novelists, actors, scientists, athletes, former Elgin public servants, and heads of prominent local and national corporations count among Elgin High's notable alumni with new names added every few years to the school's Hall of Fame.

It was Elgin's first public high school, formed in the fall of 1869, and is among Illinois' three oldest public schools and the nation's 100 oldest public high schools.

Elgin High School started with makeshift classrooms in what was known as the "Old Brick" building at Kimball and Center streets. Since then, three dedicated schools were built to house students.

The first class comprised 12 girls its first year. Its first graduating class of 1872 had only three graduates -- all were women. More than 43,000 students have graduated from the school since it opened.

Today, Elgin High's nearly 2,600 students are 75% Hispanic, nearly 10% white, nearly 5% Asian and nearly 7% black. Seventy-five percent of students come from low-income backgrounds and 22% are English language learners, according to the 2019 Illinois Report Card.