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Oral History Interview on Education/Instruccion, part 2

Julia R. Grenier

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Consent form: GrenierJuliaRamos_consent20100701.pdf

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Location: at her home in Arizona, via phone

Recording format: digital audio

File name: GrenierJuliaRamos_interview20100701.mp3

Length: 53:29

Transcribed by: Jasmin Agosto

Additional files: none

Abstract: Julia Ramos Grenier recalls her experience as a co-director of Education/Instruccion, a civil rights advocacy group based in Hartford, Connecticut, with Ben Dixon and Boyd Hinds. She describes her work in challenging housing discrimination with the Ya Basta project (translated as "Enough already"), including organizing volunteers to pose as home buyers in different Hartford and suburban neighborhoods to compare how real estate firms steered racial and language minorities toward specific areas. She also recounts more about the Westledge School and her activism at stockholder board meetings of insurance corporations based in Hartford.

Additional comments: This is the second of two interviews. Submitted as part of the [OnTheLine web-book](http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu) by Jack Dougherty and colleagues (<http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu>).

Speaker Key:

JG: Julia Ramos Grenier

JD: Jack Dougherty

JA: Jasmin Agosto

JD: ...to confirm that you're okay with being recorded for this call

JG: Sure

JD: And like before, you'll get a copy of the interview and we'll even make a voice recording and we'll send it to you on CD or something like that with both last time and this time on it and it's the Hartford Studies Archive at Trinity College that ends up with the donation. This helps keeps Civil Rights history alive so we appreciate your participation in all that, Okay?

JG: Mmhm

JD: And you were also very kind to do what teachers do during summers: look over people's writing. You made some comments on Jasmin's document. Jasmin, you want to begin with that?

JA: Um so I looked over what you said and it sounds like it's pretty just logistical in terms of the school changed from UHART and to UCONN and some other things like Travelers instead of Poor People's Federation.

JG: Yeah I think when you and I were talking I had not looked at my CV and thought that far back in remembering where I was when I first made contact with Boyd but it was Travelers.

JA: Okay.

JG: Yeah and the University of Hartford came after I was in E& I working with E&I and I decided to go back to school.

JA: Right. Okay good. Now is there anything else you'd like to say that's kind of beyond logistics or anything else that you might want to comment on about the draft?

JG: Was that me? Were you asking me?

JA: Yeah.

JG: Okay. No, I mean, it's your paper. Um, I didn't want to go in there and start mucking around in there 'cause it's your paper. I just wanted to clarify those particular issues so that it's accurate in terms of where I was and what school I was in when I graduated from when I was an undergraduate.

JA: Right. Well, thank you for that. I don't know, maybe we can have another conversation at another but we should stick to the questions for today.

JD: Well I think what Jasmin is going at is that she welcomes any comments, criticisms, and suggestions so anything that comes to mind even while we are talking today feel free to...

JG: Okay. I'm looking at the consent form you sent me and I've got it here. Now I'm going to have to more than likely mail it to you because my scanner for some reason is more than likely not working.

JD: The U.S. mail is a wonderful thing still. I'd be happy to take a copy in the mail. That would be great. Thank you very much for doing that. Um well we wanted to do a follow up today because we had a couple more questions. We're just trying to get a little more in depth on a couple things here particularly because we were fortunate enough through Jasmin's help find a lot of the sort of paper materials over the past several months that was supporting a lot of the experience that you and the activism that you and

Education/Instrucción led. So I guess I want to actually begin with project Ya Basta, the housing discrimination testing and all this which we're so impressed to see such a broad participation by so many people in this including yourself and I just wanted to sort of back up to that for just a second. Can you tell me more about how the idea of let's do this testing of housing discrimination, how it came about? Was it something that people were already doing in the city? Or did you folks, did you feel like you were some of the first to do it in the area?

JG: We were actually the first. Nobody was really, that we knew of, was doing anything like that. We did have people as a way of, you know, when we got together with people and talked about racism and institutional racism and so on. People would bring out particular problems that they had had or were having and as I recall correctly it was in one of those types of get-togethers and in talking to people that people started saying you know it looks like we're not going to be able to buy houses in such and such places because we're not going to be allowed to go in there in that particular area and people started bringing us information about some of the experiences that they had in trying to locate whether it was an apartment or a house or whatever in places that did not look like what they look like. And I'm not sure if Boyd and Ben had any other experiences that, you know, I'm trying to recall because it's so long ago, whether they had any individual experiences themselves that also spoke to them in terms of doing that. But I do remember that it was...information that people brought us and that thing happened a lot when we talked to people. They would bring material to us, they would bring experiences or issues that they were having and as example as the problems that they were having. And we heard about this whole issue of people being speared to different kinds of places in the city or out you know away from certain places outside of the city and then we decided we wanted to take a closer look at that.

JD: Now I've seen complaints, you know people who were in charge of collecting you know general complaints about general housing discrimination before like you know during the 50s and 60s we've seen the CT Civil Rights Commission collecting complaints but the idea of having sort of testers you know Black and white couples go out or something like that or Puerto Rican and Black couples go out. That's, you know, another step of sophistication. So how did this all come together? Did you folks have to recruit folks to do this or

JG: We did. Um, again we had to ask people whether they would be willing and able to act as testers. We knew that if we used testers we wouldn't be able to get any compensation towards people that had been steered because that was not what the government would do if we had brought this to any legal kind of action. But we did want to show that this was indeed happening and that it was against the law to do that. But we asked people and you know, I volunteered for one series of testing myself. In West Hartford and another one in the South End of Hartford and we had people coming out of the woodwork wanting to do this. So we set together you know like white couples, individuals who were single for example, Hispanic couples, intermarried couples, interracial couples, you know any combination and permutation you could think of you know to see how people would react in that the real estate companies do that. And people just volunteered to do that.

JD: And when you were recruiting people and getting volunteers to do this do you recall how was your best way of getting people to become testers? Were there certain groups or types of people that you looked for or found you?

JG: Well, you have to remember that we had a lot of people who were working with this in different capacities. People who wanted to just talk to us and hear about some of our ideas, people that we had interacted with either at Westledge or in some of the companies. There were some people in the companies who would come and talk to us, you know, without allowing us to use their names sometimes.

JD: When you say the companies, you mean the real estate firm?

JG: Not the real estate companies but you know some of the other companies in the city of Hartford.

JD: Okay, that makes sense.

JG: You know, whether it be banks or other companies that we talked to people, school systems, and that kind of thing. So we had a lot of people who were willing to work with us in different capacities and we also had students who were very interested and I know a number of the testers were also students that came in and did that kind of work with us. So we really didn't have any lack of people to draw from. And a number of the people like I said were from Westledge because the Westledge group who put together Westledge was this group of fairly privilege white individuals and one of the first things that they did along with founding the school of Westledge was to buy homes in Blue Hills and they lived and that's where Boyd also bought a house as well and they were trying to bring back white families and that was one of their intentions. Was to try and draw back white families into the area so that we could have a more multi-cultural living environment. They were really not successful in doing that but there was a number of them and they had friends and friends of their friends so we had quite a big pool of people that were willing to work with us.

JD: It's fascinating. Yeah that's a very different time from what's happening now in some ways. So let's just go on with that for a second and Jasmin knows, she and I had talked ahead of time today she's always going to jump in with things she wishes...I want to turn. I just sent you a copy of this a minute ago. I didn't have it earlier. So you've got it to have a copy of but we found in the legal papers about the Barrows case that a summary of your witnessing of discrimination. I'm going to read just a couple lines from it. And my question really is what do you remember of this particular day? It says "Defendant Samuel J. Vaco 755 Broad Street Hartford..."

JG: Just tell me what page you're on so I can follow along.

JD: So, I just sent you an email.

JG: I got it.

JD: You're stuff begins on the it says page two on the bottom but really it's the third page of that file.

JG: Third page? Okay.

JD: So you want to take a minute...you're basically at the bottom of the third page and most of the 4th page.

JG: OK.

JD: It says Jose Nunez at the top and Julia Ramos McKay.

JG: OK. Got it. I got it, okay.

JA: She has it Jack.

JD: Yeah, she's got it. Just giving her a second to read it over, see what she remembers.

JG: Now this is the Collie-Wagner, Franklin Avenue. Okay this is the South End ok.

JD: And we just happened to pull this one. If you remember other testing clearly we can talk about that. I'm just kind of curious if this brings back a couple thoughts in your mind here.

JG: Yeah that was the one in the South End I remember I had a tape recorder in my purse.

JD: Aha! Okay.

JG: Hahaha. Yeah that was one of them and the other one was in West Hartford and I don't remember the company. But it was a real estate company in West Hartford area.

JD: And so you mentioned two of these things. Two of these testing incidents you called them in the report called them at least the lawyers refer to them that way. Just tell me what you remember. Were you nervous about this? Were you surprised? Was it not surprising to you what people were saying?

JG: It was not surprising. Nervous? Well, maybe a little bit because I didn't know if we were found out how people would react. But then also thinking that these people wouldn't even think about the fact that people would actually come in there and pose as buyers to do testing. So they were pretty much oblivious to the possibility that somebody would do this. I felt okay and I was with someone else. 'Cause on both occasions I had somebody with me. The West Hartford one I remember that the gentlemen I was with. He and I posed as a couple, a Hispanic couple who didn't speak English all that well. You know we had some English but not really really good English. So we went into this company

and through signs and that kind of thing tried to make ourselves understood and the receptionist, I remember there was a person there at the front that was fairly nice, was very helpful in trying to be helpful to us. And you know we made known that we wanted to purchase a house, that we had the funds and all that that was necessary and I remember a gentleman in the back room telling the receptionist that all the receptionist had to do was yell and that we would understand. You know just talk loudly so they can understand you. And they were standing around back there looking kind of patronizing, smug, kind of smirking like you know what are these people doing, thinking they can buy a house. And through much effort in talking with another agent that was there they started to show us houses and the houses they showed us were of course in Hartford.

JD: Sure, sure.

JG: And we said you know, we'd like to buy a house in West Hartford because we're its going to be close to our business our job and we have a way of getting to work that's easier and they clearly steered us. They did not show us anything that was available in West Hartford at all or any other town besides Hartford. And it was the North End and South End of Hartford basically that they showed us in. I do remember though that when the gentleman said something about yelling at us that the gentleman I was with as a tester, he had a temper. And I could see that he's was getting ready to jump him and you know break out in very good English that he had and I had to kind of pull his coat and let him know you know no no don't do that because that's not the point. We basically just spent the time there trying to get them to sell us a house in West Hartford or show us something that we could buy in West Hartford and they did not do that. They very clearly showed us places elsewhere and that was the experience that all the other testers basically had. We had that I can recall very few and I can even count them on a few fingers that actually came back and said that they had not been steered.

JD: Yeah, I was impressed I guess out of the maybe 9 largest firms you investigated as a group only one of them came up relatively clean. And I remember seeing that in the reports. It was impressive. Another name in front of me in a different section of the legal work and your name is next to this one. Juan Fuentes?

JG: Yes, Juan is the one gentleman I was with.

JD: And this sounds like it was at...on the other side of the page is says Ms. Dianne Finely from Barrows and Wallace in West Hartford office so it sounds like that would be

JG: That's the other end

JD: That's the other...yeah that makes sense there okay. I'm going to move on Jasmin to a couple questions about the reports. Okay?

JA: Mhm.

JD: Okay, so Jasmin and I. we knew of the sort of the “Fair Housing at its Worst”, the 10 reports from Education/Instrucción. We had seen one or two of them in actually the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. was the first place we found pieces of them. Just like reports 9 and 10 or something or 8 and 9. And then nowhere in the libraries in the Hartford area did anybody actually save these and put them on a shelf. Which isn’t surprising. Sometimes with paper materials like this but then finally we found the whole set of 10 in the files of a civil rights, the CT civil liberties union and they were thinking of using them at one point and they didn’t actually used them but at least people kept them together. They’re amazing reading to this day. I think they’re some of the most innovative sort of civil rights writing I’ve seen for the 70’s. They’re really educational. They teach me a lot and I think I actually know a little bit about this stuff. How on earth were these reports created? And who participated in the process, how were they done? Could you tell me a little more just about that sort of you know, let’s make this series of reports? How was that done?

JG: Yeah, it was written by a group. You notice that there were a number of people named.

JD: Yup.

JG: Many of them students again who devoted a great deal of time in working with three of us in generating these reports. So it was basically people just writing sections and putting them together into one whole document. I can’t even tell you going back what I wrote, what Boyd wrote, but it was basically a group effort in putting those together. And then going through and making sure that you know, it reflected exactly what was going on and what we thought was going on.

JD: Yeah, I saw names in the acknowledgements. It mentions the first series of them names like Jean Bast, Rick Basili, Billy Donafasi

JG: Yea Donafasi was very very active with us. She was there a lot.

JD: And when you say students, are they coming from University of Hartford? From Trinity? From UCONN? Elsewhere?

JG: You know I’m trying to remember, you know, where did they come from. You know, it’s a long time ago in a galaxy far far away.

JD: I understand.

JG: 30 some years ago. And I’m trying to remember where they came from and for the life of me I cannot. I think some of them were from UHA, maybe some of them were from Trinity,

JD: With Alumni Directory we can track some of these names down if we are looking for them. It’s not too hard to do. That’s fine. And to your recollection this is a time where

sometimes there's like vista funding available for students to work with non-profit organizations. Were some of these students funded to work with your group?

JG: That I can't recall. There's a possibility that they were. I know that Trinity was very helpful to us from time to time. And I do know that they kicked in space for example or some kind of ability to get information through their facilities. And they provided that gratis some of the times. But I don't know if some of these students were actually funded.

JD: It's something that they would be more likely to remember so that's okay. I'm just curious on that. Back to these reports. So you know, you got a pretty clear sense of how they're put together. And you know we're noticing there's a, you know, maybe one, two, three, four of them that are coming out in February '74 just before the lawsuit is announced and then another batch comes out. So I take it that these were... Did you have a press conference with these when you were bringing them out or how did you disseminate them?

JG: We did talk to reporters. We didn't have like a press conference per se but we did provide them to reporters who came in and interviewed us and talked to us about, you know, the information in the reports. Basically and I can't remember how, what the reporters did with those stories that were published in terms of some of the information. One of the other problems we had to what that there were a number of things that we couldn't say because of the lawsuit. And so if you look at the reports we do say it time you know we can't talk about this particular thing because of, you know, the lawsuit itself. But we tried to at least provide as much information as we could about you know the realities of what's going on with these companies.

JD: And when you were writing these up who was your intended audience? Who did you want to see this?

JG: We wanted to let anyone who wanted to read the reports read the reports know about this but we wanted the press to get the information also. We were not adverse to going to the media and letting the media know exactly what we thought was going on. And for them to delve further into that information. And come up with their own sources as well. But we also wanted to keep something in writing so that we had some sort of documentation. One of things I wanted to ask you was, have you either one of you been in touch with Boyd's children?

JD: That's on our list to ask you about.

JG: I lost touch with them unfortunately but I have a feeling they have a lot more unless they destroyed it a lot more information in archives. Because what happened with E & I was that once Boyd and Ben and I went off to do our thing. I went back to school and Ben decided that he wanted to do something a little different in terms of the education and Boyd went into his political kind of career, we still had people, we still got together, we still had Board meetings, our annual meeting and so on and we still talked to each other and we still had people working with us but then after a while what happened to us there

was a group I believe it was Massachusetts who decided that they wanted to form I don't know a franchise maybe or a subgroup of E/I in Massachusetts to try and carry out the same kinds of activities and we gave them a blessing and said you know: go for it! And I know that some stuff got done in Massachusetts but unfortunately I was so busy doing what I was doing in terms of graduate school that I didn't spend a lot of time figuring that out. And I know that when Boyd passed away his children became involved to some extent in E/I and we had Board meeting with a couple of his children present it was when Ben was working for I think it was a bank or something I'm not sure what he was doing then.

JD: He's had different jobs over time. Yeah.

JG: Yeah. And I do know the children said that they had a lot of the materials and some of the material from Massachusetts as well.

JD: So I don't know the names of the children. Do you recall any of the names?

JG: Oh my goodness. Beau was one.

JD: B-e-a-u?

JG: I believe so. There were three of them. Two boys and a girl. I think the girl was Amy but I'm not sure.

JD: Okay. There's still a memorial. There's like a Wendy and Boyd Hines memorial scholarship that's given out every year. So another thing is I can sort of find out what the people who hand that out what their contact with the family is. Maybe the family is still involved in that. I don't know.

JG: I would imagine so because there was some kind of trust in the family and I believe the children were a part of that. So hopefully you can ask them if they kept many of the materials because we generated a lot of written stuff. It was not just these reports.

JD: And certainly compared to other kinds of groups I think you guys. Your organization was great at getting things down in print clearly as well. It certainly helps us today figure out what was your thinking at the time and so forth.

JG: Yeah, we wanted to preserve some of that information so that it would be useful to people and they could. And many people just wrote to us. And we sent this information to them via mail.

JD: I saw reference that there were 500 copies of the first set of reports made up and then there was a funding from some foundation to do another 500. Does that sound right to you?

JG: Right. Mhm

JD: When we look at the reports ourselves. I think Jasmin and I were just talking about this. There's something kind of striking to us. We try to look at all 10 reports and see what's going on here and the first few reports which are timed to come out just before the lawsuit against the real estate firms. The first reports are pointing to here's what realtors, what the real estate firms are doing. And then it doesn't stop there though because the analysis gets deeper. It gets further into here's what local corporations Aetna, Travelers, and others. Here's what they're doing to create the markets. Here's what the state and national regulatory agencies are not doing. Here's their failure to act. And you have this sort of multi-level layered analysis of this. I'm kind of stunned how you guys came up with all this over a short period of time. But maybe there's a long period of time behind this.

JG: There was. There was. What happened when we first got together there was this kind of naiveté that companies would love to have us come in and do multi-cultural training. We very quickly realized that was not going to happen. So we started doing a lot of research ourselves in terms of companies and their Boards of Directors. And who these people were and one of the things that you see that in the report is that we did this webbing of people on these Boards because they were all white males; older white males and the interconnection. And we realized, once we started this web of who sat on who's Board and how what a small group it was and what interconnections there were, we started looking at them and their companies and their background. And we got as much information as we could that was available. I remember and one of the things that I did change on the report for Jasmin was that we didn't start out on Albany Avenue we started out right on Asylum Avenue in a you know kind of a I think it was two or three room office suite. We were right next to Igor Sigorsky Jr. and became very good friends with him. And he became very active in supporting what we did too, quietly.

JD: You seem to have a lot of quiet friends, yes.

JG: We had many quiet friends with a lot of pull. And because like I said, they just came out of the woodwork when we needed them but we started in those three rooms and we I remembering amassing all kinds of documents, pieces of information, annual reports from these companies, and one of the things that we decided was that if nothing else one of the things that we were going to do and this was very early on was go out and buy shares in these companies so that we're stock holders and we can go to the annual meetings and we can talk about these. And I remember standing up at these meetings. We would let Boyd do a lot of that because we felt that if a black hand or a brown hand went up they would kind of overlook us. So then Boyd would get up and ask these questions. After a while people would just kind of grown at the meetings and say oh, here they are again. But I remember in those three rooms that we had so much information that we could barely walk through.

JD: I could only imagine. But you managed to summarize it fairly clearly in these reports. Very impressive.

JG: And we read, we read, we read. And we had people helping us analyzing some of the information also. My roommate at the time worked with us. She was part of the effort in trying to do this interconnection of little lines. These strings that we hooked up between different Boards. I remember her getting up on a ladder or chair and trying to paste these things up on the walls. So we had lots of people and lots of information. And that's what we did, everyday for more than 8 hours a day.

JD: Now, let me ask another question here. And this is I'm going to push this a bit further here. But I'm trying to remember, I'm trying to figure out how your thinking and what you remember feeling at the time. Here's one way to think about what happened. You had this very sophisticated analysis of what's wrong with the system in these reports. And there's different people who have different kinds of roles in this. You've got these real estate firms and the discriminatory steering they're doing and then you got larger corporations, and state regulators and federal regulators who aren't doing their jobs

JG: And the lack of affirmative action

JD: Yep, and when this turns into something that can go to court the part that turns into something that can go to court is probably the most concrete part the way I'm looking at it is here are these real estate agents. You can point to them and say here's real people, here's what they said was wrong. We have the taped recorded evidence so forth and you won that case. But you didn't get to take the state and national regulatory agencies to trial the same way you were able to take the real estate firms to trial.

JG: No, no. We knew that was not going to happen in terms of what they needed to do and what they were supposed to do. We tried to get HUD involved as much as we could to come in and sanction these people in some way but affirmative action at that point in time really wasn't where it came to. It was on paper. You know, people spoke about it. But it didn't happen in reality and no one wanted to do anything about making it happen at that time. But we tried to bring a suit like that because a company was not adhering to affirmative action. We thought of it. We tried. We talked to some people about it and they said it's not going to fly.

JD: It's tough to make a court case work about what somebody failed to do.

JG: Right.

JD: It's easier to show here's some real...who said the wrong thing. Now Jasmin and I have been going back and forth on this. So, congratulations on you know you got the Justice department to get involved in the case against Barrows and the other firms and you won the settlement. We look at the settlement though and we try to figure out: were you pleased or were you satisfied with the settlement? There's a difficult decision there but

JG: We were not. Because our feeling was that the settlement basically meant that they companies would kind of get kind of a pass and might revert to form at some point. The reality was that they didn't exactly revert to form thanks to the suit. But I remember at the

time we heard about the settlement saying well, there it goes again. The system is taking care of its own. And we were pleased that the justice department had taken it up, that it was litigated that something had happened and people had taken notice but at the same time we thought, eh, what does that mean now that they're settling it? Does it mean they're not going to do it anymore or does it mean they can just like wait a while and then revert back to form.

JD: Jasmin and I saw documents that the real estate had to show that real estate firms had to show that they did non-discrimination training and we know that can actually be educational can be very powerful for people but it can also be like yeah I did that workshop, check off the box or something.

JG: And that was our feeling too because part of what we did and we did put together some very good presentations on multiculturalism for training purposes. Along with getting this documentation on these companies early on we developed training packages that we thought these companies were going to want. And none of the real estate companies came and said can you do it for us, can you tell us how we do it, or refer us to someone how we do it. None.

JD: Yeah, they wanted you to stay out of their rooms and Board meetings and stockholder meetings and stuff. We appreciate what you were doing. I just have a couple wrap up questions here. Jasmin has interviewed Ben and we've seen a copy of someone else's interview with Ben a couple of years ago and we've spoken with you. We know the least about Boyd Hinds and we will follow up with his children to see what others have said. We've seen a couple newspaper clippings because he did move into politics. There were a couple more things written about him. But I'm still trying to figure out. At the time your group was coming together I think I read somewhere that he had come out of maybe like the navy and was a systems analyst or something like that. Do you recall any of this?

JG: Yeah, he had some kind of military background. I don't recall exactly at this point in time what it was. And what he did. I do know that his father was the Director of the Boy Scouts of America. He came from an upper middle class kind of background.

JD: He had a fairly privileged life it sounds like and I'm just trying to figure out how he moved into hanging out with people like you and others.

JG: Well I think again it was that group of white folks who started Westledge it happened at Westledge. That group came together at Westledge and the moving into Blue Hills area and buying houses there because they had a lot of that you know privileged guilt kind of feeling about what was happening to ethnic minorities in the United States and so while we were at Westledge, I was actually hired by Boyd with Ben to come in and teach at Westledge. We were to be teachers and I was to teach, you know, the students, I believe I taught English to them and I also was to expose them to multicultural kinds of experience in literature and things like that. While we were at Westledge, Ben and Boyd and I and I can't tell you the moment it happened like the minute that we actually got together but we started talking to each other at lunch, at meetings and talking Ben and I about our

experiences as ethnic minority individuals and Boyd kind of being mesmerized by this and getting information from us about what the experience was like and what we wanted would like to see happen that was different. And as we talked and kind of got our thinking together and talked more about what a multicultural world would look like and you know we were pretty kind of revolutionary about things because we were not only talking about representation of ethnic minorities so that they had a voice but we talked things like one man, one vote and how that could be discriminatory. That having a majority rule was discriminatory because if you didn't have the same amount of power or voice then you could be over talked or overridden by the majority and that wouldn't happen if we went in and wanted to share the power in some way and got like a vote, that we would be overridden basically. Because it wasn't worth anything. And we'd say things like okay we did a training module and talked about this okay let's go in and talk about this. Let's look at the power base, let's see how much of it is there and then what you do instead of divvying it up equally is that you give more to the underrepresented groups and less to the overrepresented groups and then equal the power that way. And then take a vote and see what happens. And that's why we liked Star Power, the game.

JD: Now that's interesting. A student of mine was just asking about this and I said there's a neat game called Star Power from this era. And Jasmin you haven't heard of this at all have you?

JA: Well, yeah. Well since talking to Julia but not before that.

JD: Okay. I think we gotta get Star Power back in the classroom. I'll see what I can do about that myself.

JG: I don't even know if it's published.

JD: It's, you know, maybe we'll make the web version of it or something like that. But somebody else is actually working on games and simulations about inequality. So I'll talk with that student.

JG: I wonder where we did with Star Power. You know the most important part of the game was the debriefing component to get people to look at how giving people this little crumb, you know this one vote, really wasn't enough. We did that at Westledge when Ben and Boyd talked about that and we got and as we did that we got more and more kind of alienated from Westledge in terms of you know it wasn't going to happen through Westledge. Then Boyd came up with the idea that his wife Wendy's trust would allow us to do this by funding us each equally, the same salary to be able to do this full time so that we didn't have teaching kinds of expectations put upon us that we didn't. We would have the full day to talk, to come up with information, to put together these training things that we were talking about and so on. And that's where it happened. It was at Westledge.

JD: And so, that was the funding support that made it become Education/Instruccion.

JG: Right. And I remember even going through, what do we call this? And going through different names and trying to figure out what would be a good name for what we were trying to do and a name that was multi-culturally representative as well. And spending a lot of time with that. Our logo. I don't know if you ever saw our logo. The hands.

JD: Well on the front of the reports. Is that what you refer to as the logo?

JG: Well, I think we even had like little pin buttons that we had done up that we would give to people put on their lapels. It's hands forming kind of an octagon. And the hands were white, black, yellow, brown. So that was what we were trying to represent. And they were all linking each other by holding each other's wrists so that it formed that kind of hexagonal shape. And that was our logo. And I remember in talking about the logo and talking to an artist and coming up with what we thought would be most representative. So we spent a lot of time doing that kind of stuff. And then a lot of time also talking amongst ourselves about our own experiences personally. For example, and I think I told Jasmin this. We would go off and go to meetings for example out of town and I remember saying to Ben and Boyd. I said, you know one of the things that really bothers me is that the two of you share a room and I have a room on my own when we go to a hotel but the two of you get to talk, get to debrief what just happened at the meeting because you're in the same room and that privies that and so the two of you come up with these ideas and tell me about it but I was not a part of the process. And I remember Boyd being very almost distraught with this saying, you know, you're absolutely right that in doing that we're depriving you of that experience or being able to process the information the way we're processing it. And we spent a lot of time doing that kind of thing. Trying to live what it was that we were talking about. It was exciting. It was also frustrating at times. And nothing ever got done unless we all three agreed that it was going to be done. And all three of us had equal power in deciding it would happen or not. But it was a real experience...to answer your question, Boyd was the one that I think was the kind of a catalyst in that he really put his money where his mouth was. And you know that family money. And even when he was in the legislature I remember that people were not very favorable because he was like the conscience. He was like the little nat that just would not go away. And he was not a team player as they thought he should be because he was a white male. He was basically forever zapping them and zapping them and zapping them. And then he got really tired of that.

JD: Julia, if you could think of two or three of Boyd's close friends from this period of time especially from the Westledge to Education/Instrucción period maybe people who lived in that neighborhood that he lived in, any names come to mind?

JG: Oh boy.

JD: That's 30 years I know, but...

JG: I know...I can see their faces and I'm trying to remember their names. Maybe Ben might be a better source.

JD: Yup, we are going to follow up with him again too.

JG: Yeah, do ask him for the names of some of the people who lived in the neighborhood with Boyd and Wendy.

JD: We could probably piece it together from some of the documents 'cause there's a lot of times in the legal documents a list of people's addresses at the time so we could just sort of look on the map to see.

JG: The other thing you can do is back track and see the founding people of Westledge. They were all there.

JD: Okay that's a circle there. So Westledge founding. Okay. My last question, maybe Jasmin has more but we have all this wonderful documents that you've produced and everything but we have yet to find a single photograph of the three of you from this period. Do you have possession of any photographs from this period of you and Ben and Boyd?

JG: You know, I don't know. I can't recall that we actually had pictures. You know, I know that there were pictures taken but I don't know that I have any of my own. Again, I think maybe if they're still in existence the children would have them.

JD: That's my next guess there. And we'll pursue that and we appreciate that we'll look for Beau Hinds, we'll look for Amy and we have some other names of figuring out what the children's names might have been and who makes the foundation's decisions now. Now we can sort of track some of this. Julia, those are my questions. It's been an honor to talk to you and listen to your memories of this period. And Jasmin has been much more silent than ever.

JA: I just love listening. Sometimes I could just listen all day.

JD: Jasmin of course did the very useful first interview with you and so I know she's grown a lot from that interview but if there's any other follow up interview questions now is the time.

JA: Yeah, actually going back to one of the first things that you had mentioned. I didn't want to cut in right away but um. You mention these get-togethers and the spreading of the word happening in so many different levels and so many different people and I'm just kind of curious as to what that looked like. Was it literally just people coming in the office sitting down having a cup of coffee?

JG: That's what it was. We would have certainly meetings too. People talking about a particular issue or topic or whatever. But we had people walking in. And especially when we were on Albany Avenue. We were in the corner and people would just walk in. I remember walking in and asking to use our phone and then he picked it up and went to dial and then he slammed the phone down and says "you guys know you're being tapped?" And for a fact I also know that we had FBI dossier somewhere. That was let

known to us somehow by somebody that the FBI were looking at us as are these revolutionaries or some kind of subversive type group? Um and I'm sure nothing came of it because we weren't our phone was tapped, definitely, we knew that. And we would make fun of it sometimes. On the phone we would say you know, are you listening? But people would just drop in and talk.

JA: How do you think people got to know that that was a space that they felt welcome in?

JG: I think a lot of word of mouth. Some of the newspaper articles that got published at times. The police knew about us. My husband who is now my husband, he was not my husband then was a police officer in Hartford and he remembers hearing about this Education/Instruccion group and thinking that they were just a bunch of do-gooders. And that's what he told me later. But you know his background is French Canadian. He's not Hispanic or Black. But he grew up basically in a kind of similar situation in which you know French Canadians were kind of looked down upon.

JD: People who've explained to me that was a large group here even through the 70s. That was Park Street area and so forth.

JG: Yup, yeah.

JD: What's your husband's first name?

JG: Ron. Ronald Grenier.

JD: Jasmin anything else?

JA: No, just wanted to touch on that to get a better picture of that because I think it's pretty cool.

JD: Well, Julia, again, thanks for your time.

JG: Well, thank you.

JD: We'll get the 2nd transcript out to you and we'll follow up on some of the things but you're participation helps keep history alive and it inspires others to see what can be done to.

JG: Thank you. Thank you for doing this because it got me to think about things you know I put away. In a way put away but not really because I think that experience just became part of my make-up and I still talk the same way when issues come up. I try and get to the root of what's going on rather than looking at the surface. In this political climate that we have that's very important to take a look at what's going on underneath the surface. And who the power brokers are and what is it that they stand to gain in all of what's going on. But in any case this is part of what I've become basically. If you find do information from the children, could you let me know?

JD: Oh, certainly. I will personally make sure that especially if we find photographs 'cause our usual routine is that we sort of ask to make scans of them you know we never ask for the originals and I would, you know, anything that we can get that we can copy of and pass along. And even just contact information, whatever we come up with.

JG: Okay, great, thank you so much.

JA: Thank you Julia.

JG: Okay, Bye Bye.