SEDRO WOOLLEY: Latino students are the largest ethnic group in the Sedro Woolley School District (19.8%), but the limited number of Spanish resources prevents parent involvement and decision-making power in school-related events. Circle participants wanted to develop tools to communicate and support their children to overcome the challenges of growing up in a bicultural environment. The Circle met with the local Program Director of Strengthening Families. Thanks to their efforts, a Spanish version of this nationally recognized parenting program was implemented in their rural community.

PORT TOWNSEND: Justice Circle participants concentrated on healthcare, specifically, making preventative health exams and other options available to immigrant women who lack medical insurance. They organized a forum called Women & Health, with presentations from a doctor, a nurse and a staff member from Jefferson County Public Health to talk about the importance of preventative healthcare and to give the community information about the options that the county has for people with limited income and undocumented status. They also created a resource booklet in Spanish of resources available in Port Townsend.

BILLINGS, MONTANA: Angela’s Piazza is a safe haven for urban Native American women in the Billings area. The Justice Circle focused on the next generation of women in its community and created a pamphlet on healthy dating with local resources available for youth to prevent teen dating violence and pregnancy. The Circle distributed the pamphlets to various youth-oriented community agencies and schools counselors.

SUNNYSIDE: Justice Circle participants decided to build awareness and learn how to become more politically involved. They organized a community forum and invited local Hispanic leaders to discuss what people should know about politics, and how to get politically involved to make positive social change. The Circle attended a City Council Meeting and experienced how the process of bringing a social justice issue for the City Council’s consideration works.

MT VERNON: With limited availability of low-income housing, Latinos often face inflated rent due to a lack of English skills and knowledge of tenant's rights. Undocumented immigrants face an additional obstacle to owning a home because of the limited availability of housing loans. In partnership with several organizations, the Justice Circle hosted a Spanish Financial Literacy workshop for the Latino community to initiate steps toward homeownership. Panelists engaged participants in an interactive budgeting session and discussed credit and asset building opportunities.

CLINTON, IOWA: The Justice Circle decided to provide, free of charge, proper clothes to job-ready women who have been referred by local agencies that work with people who live in poverty. The Circle named their organizing effort PurSuits-Clothing Women in Confidence and created a logo. Renaissance, a local second hand retail store, partnered with the Circle to offer professional attire to those who need it. Donations of clothing were sought from area residents. The YWCA Clinton has allowed the group to use their 501(c)(3) designation to allow donors a charitable deduction for their contributions.
FORKS: Circle participants recognized that stigma of addiction feeds isolation and denial that push people deeper into addiction and farther from the hope of recovery. They wrote a letter to the editor of their local paper on the impact of stigma on addiction. They also organized a panel of women who are in recovery to raise awareness and discuss ways to improve their mental health and wellness so they can live self-directed lives.

SEATTLE: The Circle held a voter registration drive at two local transitional housing programs and raised their voices to the City Council testifying at the Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods, and Finance Committee meeting about the need to include funding for transitional housing programs. Finally, the Circle invited the Outreach Director for Seattle's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda to dialogue about the importance of having more funding for transitional housing programs versus short term shelters which they believe are a revolving door to homelessness.

TACOMA:

Circle 1 — While most of the Kaja Women Warriors Circle participants live on Puyallup tribal lands, some belong to other federally recognized tribes or do not have the necessary documentation to prove their tribal affiliation. Living in unsafe neighborhoods without access to an exercise center, the women chose to use their voices to seek access to the Puyallup Tribe Elder Center’s facilities to care for their health and well-being.

Circle 2 — Justice Circle participants from Catherine Place sought to educate their community about how their immigration status could impact their ability to qualify for a mortgage to buy a home. The Circle collaborated with the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC) to host a two-day home buying course. A team from WSHFC made up of an experienced real estate agent and mortgage professional provided the seminar in Spanish. Each person that finished the two days of the course received a completion certificate that would allow them to request a loan.

Circle 3 — The English Circle at Catherine Place hosted two focus groups at Nativity House shelter with homeless women to discuss the safety issues they encountered when they aren’t able to get a bed, how they stay safe, and what support they felt they needed from the community. The Circle provided them with a survey about safety items they felt they needed. The group put together and handed several safety kits. Then met with the Office of Human Rights and Equity to advocate for more funding for shelter for homeless women.

CONNELL: The City Council was approached by a businessman to lift the ban on the retail sale of marijuana arguing that it would bring in more tax money to the City. Circle participants testified and argued that the retail sale of marijuana would jeopardize family structure and safety for just $11,000 profit to the City and influenced the City Council of Connell’s decision to not lift the Cannabis ban.

SPOKANE:

Circle 1 — Circle participants from Transitional Living Center felt compelled to address the law that “automatically” disqualifies individuals with Child Protective Services charges from volunteering in their children’s school or pursuing careers in Early Childhood Education and Social Work. They invited their elected representatives, a family law attorney, a CPS and Worksource staff member to discuss how this law affects their future. They argued that changing the law to be applied on a case-by-case basis rather than “automatically” banning access to certain populations would create a just way for parents to model positive change for their children.

Circle 2 — The Circle hosted their first housing panel at Miryam’s House. They invited professionals from the community who work in various areas dealing with housing, including Spokane Housing Ventures, Spokane Housing Authority, Northwest Fair Housing, the Tenants Union, Supportive Living, and a facilitator for the Responsible Renters program. Participants shared their stories with the panelists with the intention of letting them know that the work they are doing is affecting real lives. They also posed several questions to enlarge their knowledge and juggle opportunities to continue to get involved.
WALLA WALLA: The Circle chose to work on bullying prevention to guide other parents to raise awareness, talk about the issue and intervene if their kids are involved as aggressors or abusers. They chose to concentrate on children in preteen years and partnered with two staff from Garrison Middle School to organize a forum for Latino parents.

VANCOUVER: To help support families around immigration issues, the Circle decided to create a brochure combining most of the information that families are being given at local know your rights events and adding a wallet sized card that explains their rights in case ICE knocks at their doors. They also organized a three part presentation: a Know Your Rights talk with local lawyers, a session to go over power of attorney and a presentation on dealing with fear led by a counselor.

WENATCHEE: The women addressed DSHS translators’ misuse of language and code of ethics. The Circle identified two interpreters at the Wenatchee DSHS office who they experienced were abusing their power. Instead of giving direct translation, the interpreters were adding unnecessary and racist remarks which broke the code in terms of accuracy, cultural sensitivity, nondiscrimination and professional demeanor. The group decided to exercise its right and reported them to authorities. An investigation took place and resulted in the suspension of both interpreters. The DSHS office agreed to implement new training strategies to guarantee that interpreters comply with the code of ethics.

BELLEVUE: Circle participants from St Louise want to make sure that healthy lunches are available in schools. They believe that what ends up on their children’s plate isn’t always nutritious and are concerned about the repercussion of eating unhealthy lunches since it can take a seriously negative toll on both mental and physical health. They conducted a survey among parents and elementary school kids, gave a presentation at their parish and partnered with the Bellevue PTSA Council president to bring this important issue to the Bellevue School District’s Board of Directors meeting.

MATTAWA: The women’s objective was to reduce the town’s garbage and begin to educate the community on how to effectively recycle. Circle members testified at the City Council meeting and requested the support of council members for their recycling education campaign. The Circle led community members to collect garbage and taught their community how to recycle and divert garbage going to the landfill.

KENT: The Circle expressed their concerns about pedestrian safety at a dangerous crossing that leads from their apartment complex to several stores. Rob Brown, Acting City Traffic Engineer from the City of Kent Public Works Department visited the Circle and committed to conduct an investigation this summer to record pedestrian and driver traffic as well as speed violations on S 260th St. in an effort to determine whether the Circle request of a marked crosswalk needs to be implemented in the area.

ISSAQUAH: Residents of Issaquah are concerned about the lack of affordable housing in their area. Currently the city of Issaquah has enacted a moratorium on development, one of the issues being discussed by the city is affordable housing. The circle participants want to ensure that the voices of those being directly impacted by the cities decisions will be heard.