COUNCIL DISTRICT 10
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

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PRESS RELEASE

Council District 10 and Empowerment Congress Hosts Community Training Session: Creating a Narrative to Spark Collective Change

In celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Empowerment Congress and in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend, the 10th Council District in collaboration with the Empowerment Congress hosted a specialized training session with community leaders, neighborhood council representatives, and members of the faith community on Friday morning.

Led by Harvard University Pedagogy and Curriculum Specialist, Sarah ElRaheb, the 3-hour training session allowed participants to reflect on what has driven their personal engagement on civic issues, and helped them craft their "public narrative" in order to spark collective change. Following the training, attendees participated in breakout sessions to begin applying their personal "storytelling" tools, in an effort to further their advocacy efforts and enhance their leadership styles.

"The Tenth District is proud to partner with the Empowerment Congress to create opportunities for residents to not just be educated and engaged on the issues that impact their communities, but feel personally empowered to make a difference," said Karly Katona, the Caretaker for the 10th Council District. "There are countless issues impacting the communities we serve, and this training creates an opportunity to collectively learn how to use our voices, and our personal stories, to inspire positive change."

"The power of public narrative is the ability to share your personal calling - connected to the shared values of your community - for the purpose of activating change. Its true impact is bringing together your community, through storytelling, to take real, organized steps towards the changes you want to see in the world," said trainer, Sarah ElRaheb.

"Learning skills on how to convert my personal story to resonate my "why" in the work that I do in serving other special needs families will exponentially expand my leadership impact as well as help to build stronger relational partnerships," said attendee and Outreach & Community Partnerships Officer of Special Needs Network, Inc., Mary Lee.

Founded by Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas thirty years ago, as a means to affect political change in the face of police brutality and lack of economic opportunity in South Los Angeles, the Empowerment Congress continues to leave an indelible mark on countless issues that impact Los Angeles. Over the past three decades, the Empowerment Congress has promoted civic engagement by educating, engaging, and empowering residents, businesses, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood groups, religious institutions and community leaders around shared opportunities to improve their communities.

"This anniversary is a special one. Over the years, the Empowerment Congress' unique model has allowed us to build and transform our communities through communication and mobilization," said Empowerment Congress Leadership Council Member and Director of the County of Los Angeles' Center for Health Equity, Sonya Vasquez. "Stories are powerful pieces of data that can convey our history, the impact of policy decisions, and ways to transform the community in a manner that numbers and percentages just can't. Storytelling can be a powerful method for galvanizing a community to advocate for change and see that change become a reality. Learning how to craft and share your story can also be a healing way to honor our ancestors and ensure that future generations remember the past."

For a video recording of the training, please click here.

For more information, please visit: www.empowermentcongress.org

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