

Commentary: New Latino Radio Station Beacon of Hate in the Bay Area

It is another beautiful morning on June 9th as we listen to the morning show of the new Latino radio station in Tampa Bay, La Nueva 92.5 FM, featuring a game called "el paredon". The game invites listeners to call in and express their dislike for a person – the favorite one being the mother in law.

One listener calls in to express his disgust for all homosexuals. The radio host enthusiastically cries out "let's exterminate them all!" after which listeners are treated to the chilling sound of an automatic machine gun.

La Nueva 92.5 FM prides itself to be "the voice of the Latino community in Tampa Bay." It is interesting for a community that is often negatively stereotyped to turn around and incite to hatred and bigotry against other minorities.

According to the latest figures from Attorney General Charlie Christ, Pinellas and Hillsborough County now rank number 1 in hate crimes in the State of Florida. Hate crimes include assault, rape, kidnapping, robbery, intimidation, vandalism, burglary, and arson. Hate crimes motivated by the victim's sexual orientation have increased relentlessly over the past five years.

Many crimes go unreported or are not classified as hate crimes by reporting agencies. A few months ago, a Tampa father beat his three-year old son to death because he was afraid the child might be gay. Thinking the boy was a "sissy", he believed he could "convert" him by beating him to "toughen him up."

And, hate crimes are only the top of the iceberg. As a non-profit organization working with schools, teachers and students to create a safe and conflict-free learning environment, we at Community Tampa Bay can attest to the pervasiveness of teasing, torment and violence in our schools. According to the 2005 report on School Bullying, 90% of gay and lesbian students are afraid to go to school, because they have been harassed or assaulted in the course of the past year...

La Nueva 92.5 FM does not make our work any easier. It is regrettable that a popular radio station like La Nueva 92.5 FM uses its platform to spread hatred and divisiveness in our community rather than to impact it positively by bridging cultural divides.

Birgit Van Hout
Executive Director
Community Tampa Bay
... the future of NCCJ