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Traveling exhibit inspires youth empowerment in east Salinas

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A child kisses the back of the head of his dog. The photographer, Karla Guillen, took part in The Photo Voice project, in which local teenagers documented their community. Guillen photographed both positive and negative elements of East Salinas, including mothers affected by gang violence and youth enjoying local parks. The project is sponsored by the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative. Karla Guillen for the salinas californian

Written by
SUNITA VIJAYAN

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East Salinas
Gang
Housing

A dilapidated but occupied [home](#).

A portrait of a field worker with a slight, sweet smile on her face.

A [mother](#) holding an oversized photograph of the son she lost to gang violence.

The photographs strike at the viewer's heart with their glimpses of Salinas; they're images that could grace the cover of National Geographic.

The 16 pictures result from the efforts of a small group of teenagers who traipsed across the city for a week in August 2010 as part of a photo documentary project.

For the past year, these images have been making their way around Salinas as a traveling exhibit sponsored by The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative. The initiative is a 10-year, \$1 billion project aimed at creating a healthier environment for children and youth in impoverished areas around the state. East Salinas is one of 14 communities chosen to focus on improving issues such as employment, education, housing and neighborhood safety.



Inspiring change

It's been just over a year since the Photo Voice project, titled "Picturing Health in Salinas," took place, but its effect is still

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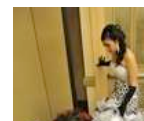
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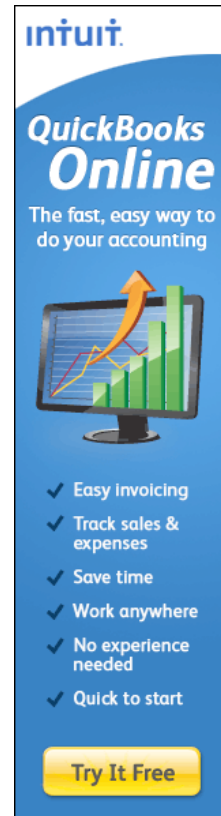
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