

The infl uenc e of Samu el Mart inez in the Fru itval e Dist rict

[Samuel Martinez Discusses History and Traditional Healing](#) from [Natalie Rodriguez](#) on [Vimeo](#).

[Samuel Martinez](#) is a part of the history Oakland's [Fruitvale district](#) as a therapist, healer, social justice worker, activist, writer and traditional dancer. During the [Urban Relocation](#) program of the 1950s, he and his mother were relocated to the Oakland housing projects where they faced [racial inequality](#) and discrimination, which he says have "made him stronger."

After refusing to join the Vietnam War, at 18 years old he became an anti-war activist and joined the [Chicano Moratorium](#). As a parent and organizer he helped create [El Centro Infantil de La Raza](#) and served on the board of directors.

Martinez is a [Licensed Clinical Social Worker](#), who contributed to the creation of a mental health department at [La Clinica de La Raza](#). He [refers](#) to himself as a "Social Justice Healer offering a Traditional Healing Praxis." His praxis began with his mother's traditional teachings of healing and in 1977 he incorporated the theories of Paulo Freire's [Pedagogy of the Oppressed](#). In 1971 [La Clinica de La Raza](#) was established in the [Fruitvale district](#) in order to provide accessible health care for the neighborhood's Latino population. La Clinica opened its first mental health site named [Casa del Sol](#) in 1978.

In his backyard, Martinez leads community *TemesCalli's* or Sweat Lodges for family and extended family alike. Martinez says that the meaning of *TemesCalli* stems from "Calli" which means home and "Teme or tema is in a prayerful way." He says that the prayer lodge is "the creation story in our five senses because we are beings of the five senses."

As an author he has published several books including [The Indian Dream: Surviving the American Holocaust](#) and [AmeriCaCa–The Sounds of Silenced Survivors: Surviving America's Campaign to "Kill the Indian, Save the Child."](#)

Oakland and Bullies Say, "Snitch"

A well-known tactic of intimidation amongst the youth of Oakland is the saying that "Snitches get stiches," which means that if students speak up about wrongs that they know of or are victims of, or "snitch"; they will suffer violent consequences. In the city of Oakland, violence is nothing new, however with increasing attention to the issue of bullying and talks of Federal Anti-Bullying legislation, the Oakland Unified School District is avidly doing its part to put a stop to it.

According to the [Huff Post Politics](#), although 49 states already address the issue of bullying in some way, currently, there is no Federal legislation in place; which is why Senator Bob Casey's Safe Schools Improvement Act would hold

schools accountable for
collecting data on incidence and
response.

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The Problem



The entrance to the Oakland Unified School District in Oakland, Calif., on Sunday, June 23, 2013. (Photograph by: Natalie Rodriguez/Full Sail University)

California is one of the 49 states with [Anti-Bullying Laws and Policies](#) in place. Under these laws and policies, federally funded schools are required by law to address and investigate cases of bullying. Troy Flint, Director of Public Relations at the Oakland Unified School District, says OUSDs policy on bullying “is that protection should be more than protection. Students need to be taught to respect difference whether it’s ethnic, religious, people with disabilities, or gender or sexual orientation.”

As a part of their effort to eradicate bullying, the district offers training for principals on how to recognize and prevent bullying, counselors who intervene in bullying cases, and complaint procedures. Flint talks about the opportunity that all middle and high school students were given to attend a

screening of the Lee Hirsch documentary, [Bully](#) with an introduction and question and answer session with the director. Later the district formed a curriculum related to the film.

When Flint mentions that this issue is receiving increasing attention he also says, "I think attitudes are changing about what constitutes bullying and the impact it can have not only on a child's social life, but on their affinity for school, and their willingness to learn."

The fear of "snitches" getting "stiches" may be a real one, but the OUSD is making sure that its students know that they are not alone, they are watching, and they are working to create a culture of respect.