

POLICY WATCH – July 2013

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While most of us cringe at the thought of summer school, luckily, we have some intrepid students who see attending school in the summer as a major opportunity to improve their futures. NBLC kicks off two Algebra Academies in July for students who spend time in a variety of workplaces to connect the dots on why learning algebra is a key to college and career readiness.

This issue also looks at the aftermath of the recession and its impacts on the middle class. It is not a pretty picture. And yet, while the middle class is hurting, that isn't the main factor why the middle class and other Americans feel our country is more divided than ever, and fervently want to see the country united again. This time blame the lack of leadership, not the economy for this sentiment.

If you are looking to learn more about giving back, check out BoardMatch which helps you find the right nonprofit board to offer your talent and treasure. And if you want to know what's really happening in the North Bay, don't miss Members in the News!

Best,



Cynthia

NBLC's Algebra Academies Kick Off in Novato and Petaluma



NBLC's Algebra Academy program provides English learners entering their freshman year the ability to jumpstart their algebra education while connecting the dots on why learning algebra is important to their futures. The program is devised to achieve several outcomes: closing the achievement gap for Latino students; exciting more students to pursue majors in math and science; exposing students to a variety of careers and industry sectors to raise their knowledge of career choices; and helping employers, educators and students understand what skills are important to

master to be successful.

The program consists of two Algebra Academies: one in Novato and the other in Petaluma. The program is a partnership between NBLC and the corresponding school districts: Novato Unified and Petaluma City Schools. The students spend three weeks learning algebra and immersing themselves in the workplaces of a diverse group of employers. The worksites provide the students the opportunity to meet with scientists, doctors, engineers, technicians and other professionals who discuss their career

paths and what they love about their jobs. The students are also provided tours and the ability to see real work in action. This direct experience helps the students dream bigger about their futures as many will be the first person in their families to go to college.

In Novato, the worksite hosts are: CSW/Stuber-Stroeh; Novato Community Hospital, Buck Institute for Research on Aging; Sonoma Raceway, Novato Sanitary District, Redwood Credit Union and Veolia Water.

In Petaluma, the worksite hosts are: Kaiser Permanente, Ellis Creek Water Recycling Center, Labcon, Redwood Credit Union, Clover Stornetta, Petaluma Police Department, X2nSat, and the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center.

The Algebra Academy program would not be possible without the generous sponsorship of Skywalker Properties, PG&E, Redwood Credit Union, BioMarin, Kaiser Permanente and Comcast. Thank you to our wonderful sponsors! We would also like to thank Wells Fargo Bank, Sunny Hills Services, and Sonoma Raceway for generously donating school supplies for the students.

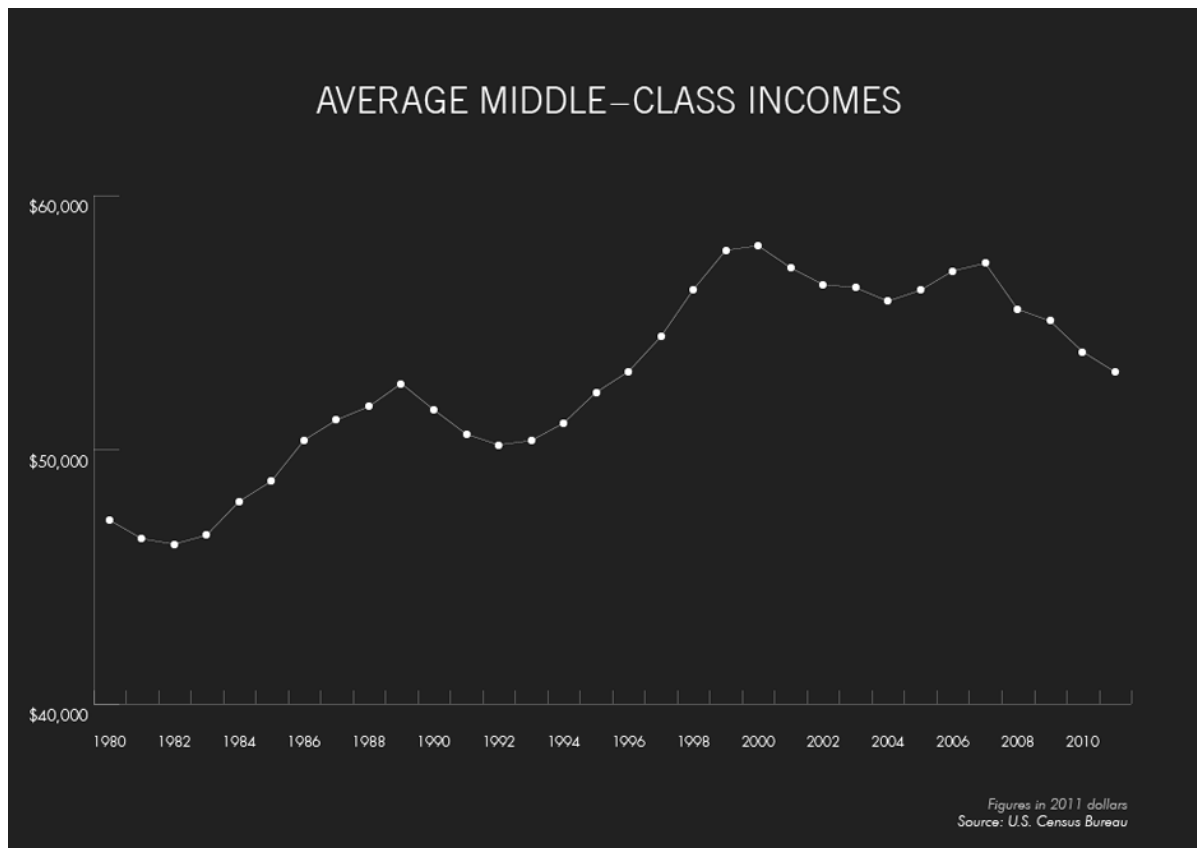


This life-changing program is a testimony to NBLC's commitment to improving education as our top public policy issue. The future of the North Bay depends on the success of North Bay students.

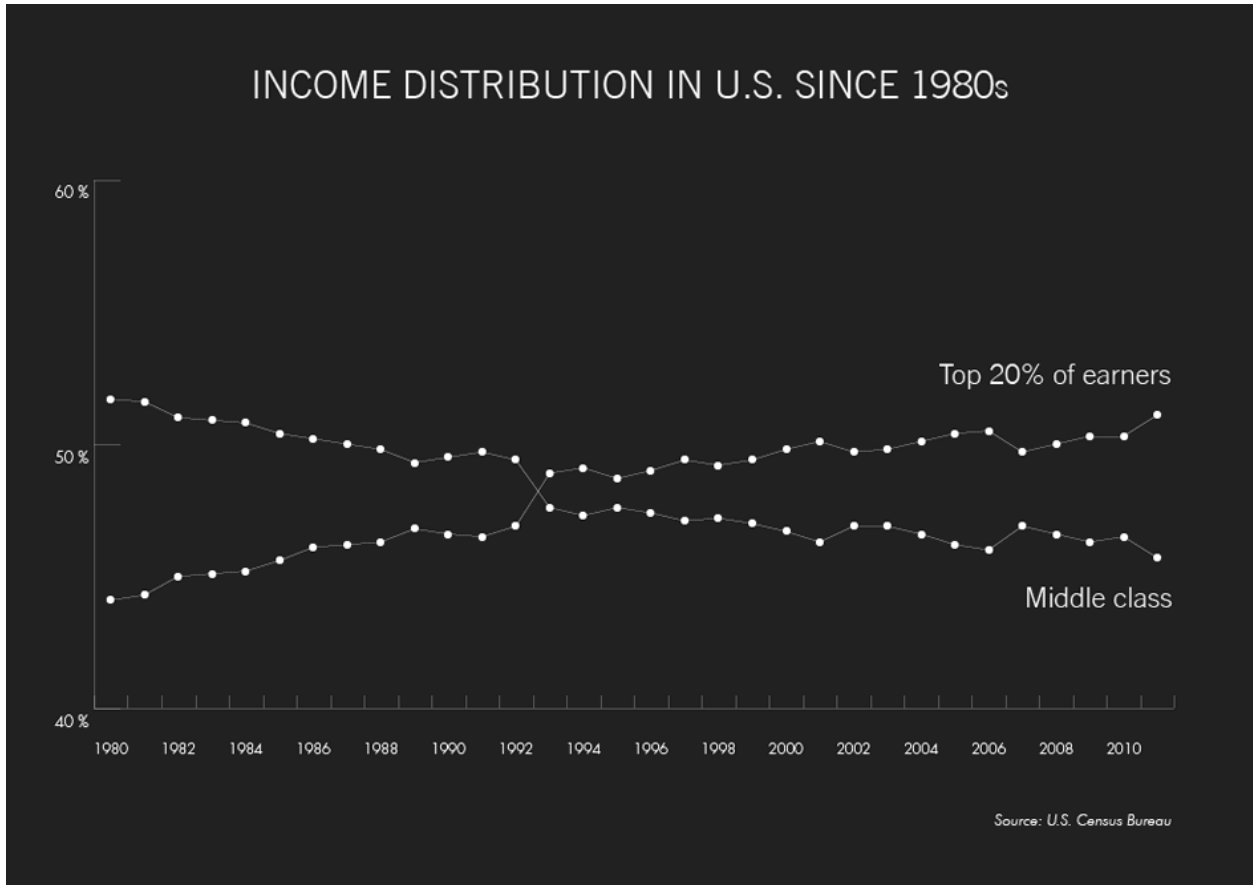
Middle Class' Recovery Not So Good

Much hand-wringing has occurred over the slow and uneven recovery from the Great Recession. Perhaps no group has been more impacted than the shrinking middle class. The following charts taken from PBS's Frontline (July 9, 2013) graphically illustrate the depth of the change.

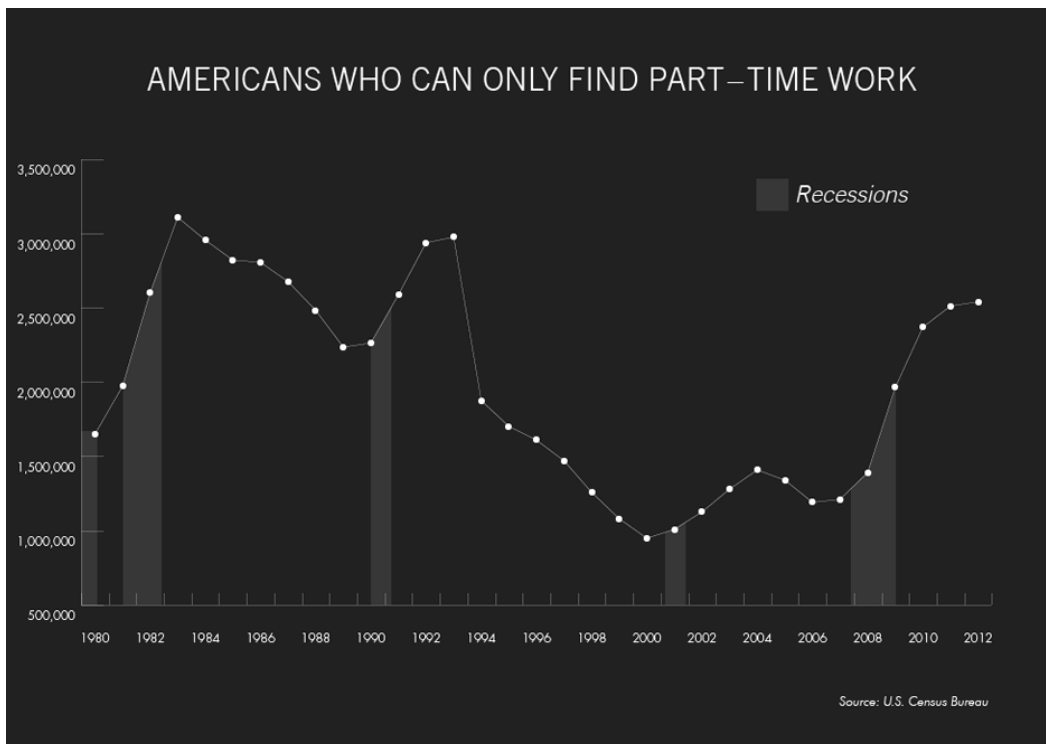
Middle class incomes down 8.5% since 2000.



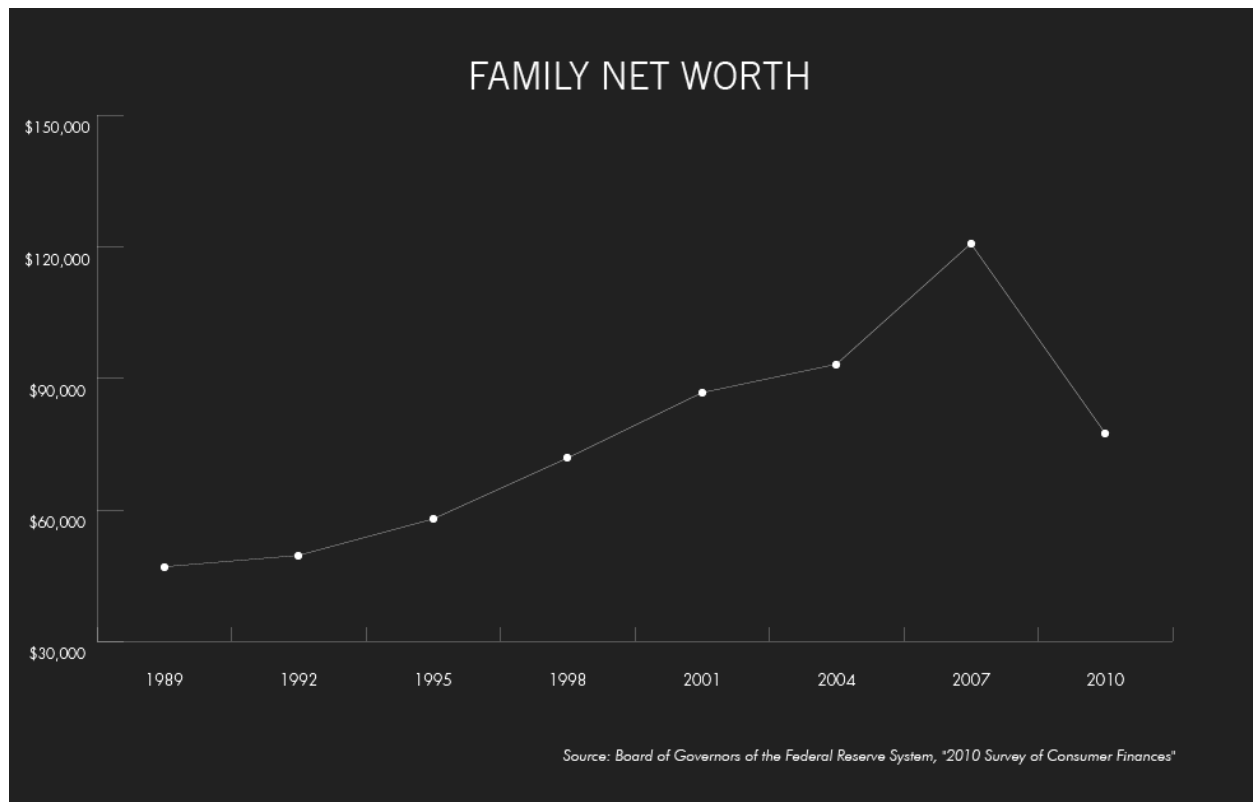
Income Distribution in the U.S. since 1980s shows the middle class share shrinking and the top 20% of earners' share growing 16%.



The percentage of people stuck in part-time jobs, which tend to have lower pay, unable to find full-time positions.



And lastly, perhaps the most telling chart, depicts how much middle class families' net worth has "plunged."



Americans Feel Divided, Not United



A recent article in *The Atlantic* by Dan Baer and Mark Penn, "One Nation, Divisible" (June 28, 2013), said that an *Atlantic* magazine/Aspen Institute American Values Survey of more than 2,000 Americans shows that "more than 60% of Americans say we are more divided as a country now than we were 10 years ago, with even higher percentages saying America is at least as fragmented now as it was during the Great Depression, Vietnam, and Watergate. Nearly six in ten Americans rate the health of our democracy as weak, and only one in three thinks this feeling of disunity is going to get better anytime soon. Perhaps most strikingly, one in five Americans doubts that America can remain united as one country. The poll asked which phrases of the Pledge of Allegiance ("one nation," "under God," "indivisible," etc.) apply to our nation today, and people gave their lowest vote, with only 45 percent, to "indivisible."

But there is a huge change in the reasons why Americans today feel this way. The previously divisive issues of a bad economy, religion, lifestyles, etc. aren't the cause of their concerns. What they attribute the finding of America being a divided country is a different cause. The authors said, "The source of our sense of disunity, it seems, is not so much the way we live, but the way our leaders do. When asked

which figures in America do the most to divide our nation, every group in America, across age, gender, political party, and region said "politicians," choosing them at a rate of more than five to one over media figures, corporations, religious leaders, and others. Americans particularly blame "money in politics" and "Congressional gridlock" for driving us apart."

And the politicians are also blamed for another growing concern – wealth inequality. The analysis shows, "A remarkable 62 percent of Americans, including a plurality of Republicans, say elected officials "mainly reflect the values of the wealthy." Sixty-three percent of Americans -- including nearly half of Republicans -- say big corporations have too much power. In perhaps the most damning appraisal of America's current playing field, barely four in ten Americans say today's wealthy people got there by actually working harder than everyone else. Indeed, over 80 percent of Americans say that if we want to regain our unity, we need to shrink the gap between rich and poor."

Says Baer and Penn, "No, Americans aren't feeling divided by a failure to agree on a set of common values; they feel divided by the failure of our civic and corporate leaders to represent those values themselves. In perhaps the clearest indication of our ambivalence toward our public leaders, President Barack Obama is called out in this poll as both the most divisive and the most unifying force in the country."

The survey depicts that Americans want the divisiveness to end and have solutions on how to do it. The authors say, "Americans want to regain unity through measures the Founding Fathers would have recognized quite well: "hold politicians more accountable" (27 percent), secure "greater cooperation by Republicans and Democrats in Congress" (22 percent), and "limit the power of the federal government" (22 percent). Americans say regaining unity will require "encouraging meetings between parties" and "reducing bureaucracy," far more than they favor structural changes like "reforming the redistricting process." What propels unity, Americans declare, is "equal opportunity" and "freedom of speech" (at 59 percent each)."

Americans see equal opportunity coming from the U.S.'s free market economy – "56 percent of Americans, including 52 percent of Democrats, say America's free market economy is 'very important' to helping individuals reach the American dream. Looking to the future, over one in four Americans says technological growth is the biggest strength of our economy."

Baer and Penn conclude that Americans want their country to be united. And that "the state of our discord is deep, but it need not be permanent. Americans are simply uncertain about how to get there. And they're despairing that their leaders will help them find a new unity. For a nation in which 59 percent think the country is heading in the wrong direction, there is a good bit of urgency and optimism on this question. Sixty-three percent say it's very important for politicians to get unified. *Seventy* percent say it is possible for politicians to come together on the issues that truly matter to America." Let's hope the politicians take this message to heart.



Join a Nonprofit Board in Marin



If you are interested in joining a nonprofit board in Marin County, BoardMatch Marin can help you find your perfect match! BoardMatch Marin is a program of Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership that helps create excellence in nonprofit governance through a comprehensive array of services. They provide recruitment and placement of qualified board members as well as expert training and consultation, with services available to board candidates, current board members and executive staff.

There are currently over 50 agencies in Marin County partnering with BoardMatch to recruit qualified candidates to serve on their boards. Visit www.boardmatchmarin.org to view a current list and to request an in-person meeting with a BoardMatch Coordinator. After your consultation session, your coordinator will communicate with agencies on your behalf until you are successfully matched! For more information, visit www.boardmatchmarin.org or contact Lauren Dunford, Volunteer Services Associate, ldunford@cvnl.org or 415-448-0333.

Members in the News

Sonoma Raceway Raises More Than \$140,000 for Youth Groups During NASCAR Weekend in Sonoma

Charitable events combined to raise more than \$140,000 for Sonoma County youth groups during the 25th Toyota/Save Mart 350 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series weekend at Sonoma Raceway, June 21-23.

Kaiser Permanente Plans to Open New Emergency Center June 2014

Rarely do people express a fondness for visiting the emergency room, but patients are anticipated to have a more comfortable experience when the Kaiser Permanente campus in Terra Linda opens its new multi-million dollar emergency center in June 2014.

Wells Fargo Becomes World's Most Valuable Bank

Wells Fargo's stagecoach has raced ahead of its global competitors to become the world's most valuable bank.

Brad Bollinger, Editor and Associate Publisher of the North Bay Business Journal, has Been Named Publisher of the Six-County Business Publication

Bollinger joined the Business Journal as editor in 2005 when it was purchased by the New York Times Co. The Business Journal was purchased in November 2012 by Sonoma Media Investments, LLC, and a locally-owned media company.

Autodesk to Let the Public Share, Alter its Materials

Design software giant Autodesk will announce Tuesday that it has made a batch of training materials available under Creative Commons licensing, as part of a larger plan to eventually make all its support and learning documents free to use, share and, in most cases, alter.



Who We Are

Over twenty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 44 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org