



HEALTHY, SAFE AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES IN
SAN DIEGO COUNTY

NEWS & SUCCESS STORIES



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**SPEAKWELL SPOKESPERSON TRAINING
EMPOWERS RESIDENTS TO MAKE THEIR VOICES
HEARD**

Meredith Gibson, Media Director: Countywide Media Advocacy, Institute for Public Strategies

Community residents across San Diego County are learning how to become effective leaders and advocates for their communities through the SpeakWell Spokesperson Training. The training is provided through the Countywide Media Advocacy project of The [Institute for Public Strategies](#) and prepares citizens to advocate for their communities through training on public speaking and how to effectively frame their message.

The training includes various hands-on exercises designed to increase confidence and comfort in a public speaking forum. Participants learn how to speak in front of the media, a city council, planning commission, school board or other decision-making body as well as how to write an op-ed to submit to news outlets. They also learn tools like the Message Triangle to help focus their argument based on data and personal stories to impact a policy action.

On November 15, 2019, the Institute for Public Strategies provided the SpeakWell training as part of a Resident Leadership Academy Supplemental Training series to over 40 resident leaders who have participated in a [Resident Leadership Academy](#).

Participants used their new skills in a team-based, mock city council session. Using the Message Triangle, teams presented their community issue to the whole group who played the role of an actual city council. Speakers were videotaped so they could review their performance, and instant feedback was provided by the trainers and fellow participants.

“RLAs are currently working to address a wide variety of issues in their communities, so acquiring this new set of skills was very timely and useful,” shared Dana Richardson, Vice President of Community Health and Engagement at [Community Health Improvement Partners](#) and co-creator of the Resident Leadership Academy curriculum.

Youth throughout San Diego County are also taking the SpeakWell training to advocate for policies that prevent harms from alcohol and other drugs, like eliminating the promotion of e-cigarette products to teens. Twenty members of the Youth Advocacy Coalition, a program of the North Inland Community Prevention Program, attended a SpeakWell training in Fallbrook to build their leadership skills and learn how to address the issue of vaping in their community. When asked how they planned to utilize the skills they learned from the training, many students replied that they felt more comfortable with public speaking.

“I learned how to be more vocal about what I believe in. I feel so much more comfortable and I know a lot more about how to do it,” shared Youth Advocacy Coalition member Cianya Mejia.

To bring a SpeakWell training to your organization, please contact Meredith Gibson, Countywide Media Advocacy Media Director, at mgibson@publicstrategies.org or 619-476-9100 ext. 118.