

Dr. César A. Cruz

Co-founder & Caretaker

Homies Empowerment Program

December 6, 2023

[5:00 pm] Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)

We're back w/ [#EquityChat](#) sponsored by [@CollegeFutures](#) w/hosts [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) & [@DrPamLuster](#). We are chatting w/Dr. Cesar A. Cruz ([@teolol](#)), Co-Founder [@Homies](#) Empower and Friday's [#RealCollegeCA](#) Basic Needs Summit keynote. Welcome Dr Cruz!

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·45s](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster](#) [@equityavengers](#) and 4 others

Blessings to all of you. It is my honor to be here. I appreciate this opportunity to be here with all of you. I would like to invoke the ancestors including Tubman, X, Lebron, Kochiyama, Chavez, Kochiyama as we speak about the real.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·16m](#)

It is our honor, and we are grateful for your centering ancestors in this space. [#BlessingsUponBlessings](#)

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·14m](#)

Mexica tiahui, Asé and Amen.

[5:05 pm] Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q1 [@teolol](#). As you engage in equity-focused work, what is your walk-up song or anthem? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·20s](#)

None, I'm not a super hero, we don't need 'em, we need empowered communities. However, I love Redemption Song, Something Inside So Strong, Gracias A La Vida & Glory. Those songs walk w/me as I journey life [@DrPamLuster](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[5:11 pm] Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q2 [@teolol](#). You have dedicated your life to justice and are considered an education thought leader. Was there a defining moment or experience that catalyzed your journey to engage in this work via education? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·25s](#)

It was day 23 of our hunger strike, w/out food, fasting 4 education. 3 fasters left, and as we met w/[@DoloresHuerta](#) to negotiate a deal with Gov of CA I knew change was possible. That cemented my life's calling. [@DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[5:18 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q3 @teolol. Much of your work has centered around supporting gang-impacted youth. How does @HomiesEmpower's approach to seeing gang-impacted youth through an asset-based lens support this work? [@DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·42s](#)

Initiation, gotta wear a color, sell product on street, be loyal, you're right I'm describing, Girl Scouts, but kids in gangs, labeled terrorists. [@homiesempower](#) sees assets; belonging, rites of passage, family, & we incorporate that in our high school too. [@DrTammeil #EquityChat](#)

[5:25 pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q4 @teolol. FREEdom School is @HomiesEmpower's newest endeavor. Tell us more about this new model of education and how it centers racial equity. [@DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·1m](#)

<http://HomiesHighSchool.org> centers freedom for kids historically left out of school. Our roots, intergenerational wisdom are part of every space, math, science, arts. Our teachers, curriculum & way of being reflect our ancestries as Indigenous peoples. [@DrPamLuster #EquityChat](#)

[5:32 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q5 @teolol. As keynote for this Friday's #RealCollegeCA Basic Needs Summit, can you share more about @HomiesEmpower's community responsive programs and how these programs evolved from community need? [@DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·2m](#)

At Homies we're responding to our community, best we can. Started by feeding our people, then came FREEdom Store, Care Center, FREEdom Farm, Wellness Ctr, FREEdom School and soon free thrift store. All efforts to cover basic needs, a base to thrive from. <http://HomiesEmpowerment.com>

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·16m](#)

Engaging in the work of FREEDOM at all levels.

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol·15m](#)

We must try, with our life. It is our duty to fight and to win, Assata Shakur.

[5:39 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

Q6 @teolol. To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. How do you educate yourself and who is informing your practice? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol:52s](#)

I learn from the founding 9th graders at our school. I learn from the 40+ staff [@HomiesEmpower](#) I learn from my elders like @NaneAlejandrez I learn from my comrades like @CandiceElder [@AndrewPark](#) [@Reyes](#) [@NewinOrante](#). I especially learn from my wife & kids. I learn from reflection

[5:46pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

Q7 @teolol. We all have a vision of the future we want to live in. What is your freedom dream for higher education and what gives you hope for its future? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol:26s](#)

Education is free, accessible & welcoming for all. There are no PWIs, just universities 4 all. We learn about all the things we want plus relationships, love, hope, agency, how to grow our own, care for each other and we dream and learn tools to co-create our world. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil:31s](#)

Wage love, wage love, wage love.

[5:53 pm] Dr. Curry (@lamkeithcurry)

Q8 @teolol. The road to racial equity is long. How are you sustaining yourself? What practice would you recommend to other #EquityAvengers? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Dr. Cesar A. Cruz @teolol:24s](#)

We deserve tools to deal w/our thoughts; meditation, mindfulness, our emotions; self regulation, our health; access to healthy food/exercise, & to get to Ikigai, our sacred purpose. I praxis meditation, vegetarianism, yoga, unpack my thoughts & emotions & feed my spirit/purpose.

[6:00 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

TY Dr. Cruz [@teolol](#) for your commitment to racial equity & uplifting your community. Join us 12/13 as we close 2023's [#EquityChat @CollegeFutures](#) w/ [@GoCCCS](#) Joe Garcia ([@CCCSChancellor](#)). [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@DrPamLuster](#) [@equityavengers](#) OUT! Sending to our colleagues [@UNLV](#)