



## PORTRAITS OF AMERICAN LIFE STUDY PANORAMA DE LA VIDA EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

June 2009

### Thank you for being in PALS!

You are one of the original members of the Portraits of American Life Study (PALS) from the first round of interviews in 2006. PALS is a research study that looks at many aspects of peoples' lives and how this may change over time while maintaining the privacy of all members of the study. Your time is valuable, and we appreciate your sharing it with us during interviews.

In this important study, *you represent the perspectives of many other Americans, and your involvement helps researchers to better understand all segments of our society.* Below you can find descriptions of some of the research that is already being done using the early findings of PALS.

### Your Participation Making a Difference:

**Health Issues** Improving the health of all Americans is a goal of public health officials. By studying the PALS data, researchers are exploring why it is difficult for some people to receive health services.

**How We Get Along** Trust is essential among different groups of people; without it communities cannot work well. A researcher is using PALS data to uncover how peoples' satisfaction with their lives, their connections to others around them, and their surroundings might be related to their degree of trust.

**Deviant Behaviors** Why do some people break the law? What do behaviors that are outside publicly accepted standards have to do with other areas of peoples' lives? Researchers are trying to find answers to these and other questions from the PALS data.

**Exploring Matters of Faith** In the upcoming book "Faith Matters," researchers are learning about the differences in the religious actions and beliefs among Christians. They are using the PALS data to understand how different Americans approach faith and politics.

### Get ready...

In the future, research team members will call the PALS participants (you!) to conduct the next phase of the study. Thank you for sharing your time with us. As before, we have gifts at the end of each interview.

### Meet one of our Principal Researchers: Dr. Michael Emerson



Michael Emerson earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in 1991. Now a prominent professor at Rice University, he teaches courses in race and ethnic relations, religion, urban sociology, statistics, and research methods. In his research, he has published several award-winning books.

In 2006, he published *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton University Press). This award-winning book serves as the leading work on multiracial religious congregations.

He is grateful for your participation in PALS: "Life in the United States is changing rapidly. Just see how different gas prices are from a year ago! The PALS participants are allowing our nation to better understand how the many changes are impacting our lives," he said.

Recognized as a national authority in his field, Dr. Emerson has appeared on or been interviewed by CBS Evening News, the New York Times, National Public Radio, USA Today, the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, CNN, PBS, and many others.

He resides in Houston, Texas, where he and his wife raise their four children.



### Have You Moved??

Let us know when you have a change in address, phone number, or email address, and we'll send you a \$20 gift card! Call 1-866-888-PALS (7257) or email [pals@rice.edu](mailto:pals@rice.edu).

**Did you know...**members of the PALS study gave over 3,000 hours of volunteer time in one week?

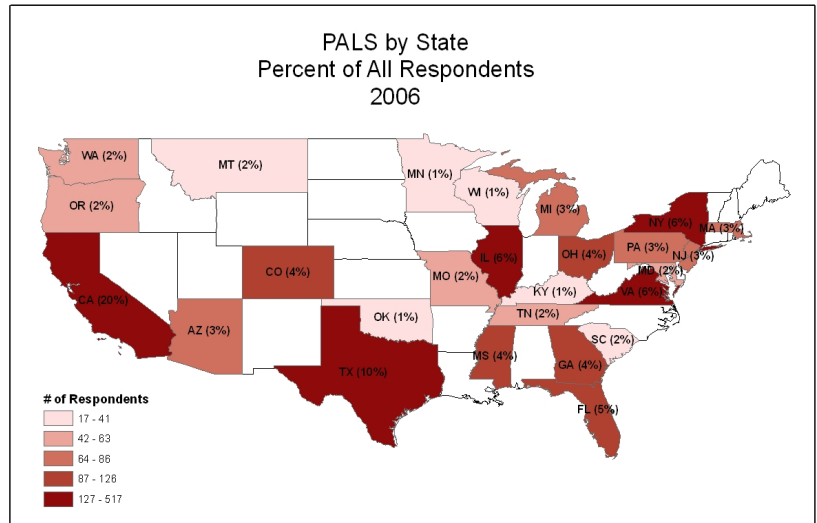


## A Note on Your Privacy

The staff of the PALS project takes the confidentiality of your survey responses very seriously. Original interview data are stored on a thoroughly secure computer server, accessible only to select PALS personnel through security codes. When the results of the project are published, all personal information is always removed, so that the individual people cannot be identified. Protecting your privacy is of the utmost importance to us.

If you have any questions or need information regarding the study, contact the PALS Project Administrator, Adele James, at **866-888-7257 (PALS)** or [pals@rice.edu](mailto:pals@rice.edu)

The map below shows where PALS people live. The percentage of people in the survey is listed for each state.



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Rice University | Center On Race, Religion, and Urban Life, MS 28  
P.O. Box 1892 | Houston, TX 77251-1892

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