

PINECREST

Moms learn about climate change

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Is climate change too complicated to control? Can we do something about it — and if so, what? Can we protect the environment for our children and their children and their children's children?

These were the questions considered Sunday by about 60 people, some holding crying babies, others pushing strollers in the Hibiscus Room at Pinecrest Gardens during a panel discussion: *Kids in a Changing Climate: What Parents Need to Know*.

The event was hosted by Moms Clean Air Force, a group of individuals who unite against air pollution to protect children's health, and the Cleo Institute, a nonprofit organization that promotes environmental literacy and civic engagement.

"We wanted to give mothers and fathers and families a voice," said Dominique Browning, the co-founder of Moms Clean Air Force and a former editor at *Esquire*, *Texas Weekly* and *House & Garden*.

"We want to move this conversation beyond right wing and left wing, between Democrats and Republicans, and go straight down the middle of fixing a pollution problem."

Browning, who moderated the discussion, stated that climate science is actually a simple problem and a simple thing to fix. She introduced the four speakers who are health experts, climate scientists, journalists and mothers.

The panel included Vanessa Hauc, a correspondent for *Noticiero Telemundo* and the mother of a 19-year-old son; Dr. Susan Pacheco, pediatrician and professor and mother of three; Nicole Hernandez



CONCERNED PARENTS: Viviana Orduz, above left with 9-month-old daughter Valentina Otero, listens to a "Kids in a Changing Climate" panel discussion at the Hibiscus Room at Pinecrest Gardens on Sunday. Claudia Trejos, above right, mother of 9-year-old Sophia Chang, asks a question of the panel. Below, Nicole Hernandez Hammer speaks on rising sea levels.

Hammer, an expert in sea-level rise and the mother of a 7-year-old son; and Angela Barranco, with the White House Council for Environmental Quality.

Hauc began the conversation by addressing the issues head-on.

"These past couple years, there has been a shift in perception and people are not denying it [sea level rise]," said Hauc, who created the environmental segment "Alerta Verde" on *Telemundo*.

"We used to debate this issue. Now the scientific community agrees that this is happening."



PHOTOS BY MATIAS OCNER/MIAMI HERALD STAFF



For more information

For more information about Moms Clean Air Force, visit moms-clean-air-force.org.

For more information about the Cleo Institute, visit cleo-institute.org.

The experts continued the conversation with Dr. Pacheco discussing asthma and other health effects of the environment, Hammer presenting statistics and predictions on the rising sea level in South Florida, and Barranco talking about political action plans like President Barack Obama's Climate Action Plan, released in June.

Some of the attendees said they learned a lot.

"The sea level is an issue I hadn't even thought of," said Claudia Trejos, a South Miami resident and mother of 9-year-old Sophia Chang. "The degree and growth took me by surprise."

Trejos, who is a sports anchor for ESPN, said she valued the information and worries not only for her daughter but for lower-income areas around the world that do not have access to the information presented at the panel.

"There are parts of this world that are completely oblivious," she said.

She believes that people should take action.

"Do as much as you can as an individual because there are power in numbers," Trejos said.

"The biggest mistake is to make this somebody else's issue, allowing others to take ownership of what is our responsibility," she said.