



THEN AND NOW MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION'S NEW FACILITY



A NEW COMMUNITY ROOM PROVIDES BRIGHT SPACE FOR MUJERES' CHILDCARE PROGRAM

Visitors to Mujeres Latinas en Acción's current headquarters may find stories about the agency's past hard to believe: An outdoor bridge was the sole connection between meeting rooms and offices in rainy and snowy Chicago weather. Sexual assault counseling sessions were held in the evenings at an isolated school building with long, echoing hallways.

Since moving into its new building in 2006, Mujeres Latinas en Acción ("Latina Women in Action") at last has a physical presence in the Pilsen neighborhood appropriate to its important community role.

The bilingual and bicultural agency, which seeks to empower Latinas and their families, believes

its new facility sends a message to the community that it's "here to stay, and that we're serious about what we're doing," according to President & CEO Maria Pesqueira.

Successfully owning and developing its own facilities has helped to prove that Mujeres is an impressively capable organization.

Serving its clients with dignity—whether they are victims of domestic violence, adults developing their parenting skills, mothers and daughters training for leadership or children in need of help with English-language homework—is paramount to Mujeres' work.

"Is this really for us?" asked one
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THEN AND NOW: [LEFT] THE BUILDING, A FORMER WAREHOUSE, BEFORE CONSTRUCTION IN 2004 (PHOTO COURTESY MLEA); [RIGHT] THE REHABBED BUILDING'S EXTERIOR

NEW RESOURCES TO INCREASE IMPACT

Two longterm supporters recently increased their commitments to CCLF. The new investment and grant dollars will help CCLF to significantly increase its level of impact in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in coming years.

Northern Trust announced a new \$400,000 investment commitment in late April, bringing the bank's total investment in CCLF to \$1 million. Northern Trust has been a key CCLF supporter for nearly 15 years, providing pro bono services as well as grants and investment capital.

The Grand Victoria Foundation also significantly increased its level of support for CCLF, committing a \$290,000 award in March. The two-year grant will provide \$200,000 in permanent capital for CCLF's loan pool and \$90,000 to support activities in lower-wealth suburban communities.

Since the foundation's initial grant to CCLF in 2002, CCLF has made loans leveraging nearly \$55 million in public/private investment for projects in suburban Chicagoland, and has conducted several training workshops each year in targeted corridors.

SPRING 2007

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MISSION

To provide low cost, flexible financing to community development organizations engaged in affordable housing, social service and economic development initiatives that benefit low- to moderate-income neighborhoods and families throughout metropolitan Chicago.

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(ABOVE) MARTIZA REYES'S CLIENTS FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IN THE NEW SPACE. (BELOW) TEENS GATHER FOR AN AFTER-SCHOOL MEETING OF PROYECTO JUVENTUD.

participant in disbelief upon seeing her parent support group's new meeting room for the first time.

Says Pesqueira, "When you have a nice space and can provide service with dignity, people feel good about what they're doing [by coming to the program]."

Martiza Reyes, coordinator of the Sexual Assault program, attests to the benefits of having an appropriate space to conduct counseling sessions:

"Before, our clients had to go to an isolated, lonely, dark building. We had to give them the option of going elsewhere if they felt uncomfortable. But at this location, our clients feel completely at ease. Now they can open up more quickly, and get directly into counseling."

The 13,000 square foot building contains office space for 40 dedicated staffers, a computer lab, childcare facilities, meeting rooms, and a large community room.

Mujeres Latinas en Acción purchased the warehouse that is now the organization's headquarters in 1996 with a \$102,440 loan from CCLF. Mujeres soon paid off that loan successfully, and came to CCLF again in 1999 for a \$200,000 bridge loan to stabilize the building until construction could begin.

"We had a capital campaign," said Pesqueira, "but banks don't usually see that as real. If it wasn't for the type of support that [CCLF] provides, we wouldn't have been able to do this." The project ultimately represented a \$3.5 million investment in Pilsen.

Mujeres has doubled its impact several times over since the 1990s, and now directly serves 4,500 people each year. Plans for the future include rehabbing its outgrown former facility, which it still owns, and continuing to reach out to Latinas throughout the metro area by partnering with organizations in Berwyn and Cicero.



THE MUJERES BUILDING'S ENTRANCE FACES A BUSTLING RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL STREET.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

More community facilities are in the works with predevelopment financing from CCLF.

Look for these projects to be built in the next months and years:

- **Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council** received a \$295,000 predevelopment loan from CCLF in late 2006 for a mixed-use project that will include a daycare center, community center, office space and apartments affordable to seniors earning less than 60% of Area Median Income in the Brighton Park community area.
- **Wisdom Bridge Arts Project** is using a \$429,000 predevelopment/landbanking loan from CCLF in 2005 to build a community arts center in the Rogers Park neighborhood.

Editor's Note: Community Blueprint includes regular profiles, recognizing our friends' financial, in-kind and programmatic contributions.

LUTHERAN VOLUNTEER CORPS: PARTNER IN SERVICE



DAVID THEISS, CCLF'S 5TH LVC PROGRAM ASSISTANT

To all outside appearances, Program Assistant David Theiss is an ordinary member of the CCLF team. He works a 9-5 day, commutes on the CTA, and stays busy coordinating the Project Readiness Workshops and assisting with lending and portfolio management. Yet Theiss, instead of a salary, earns just a stipend to cover food, rent, and \$100/month in personal expenses.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of a "beautiful friendship" between CCLF and the Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC), a year-long service program and community of faith that unites people to work for justice with peace.

Members of LVC, like Theiss, live together in intentional household communities of 4-7 people, strive to live simply and sustainably, and work full-time in nearly 100 social justice organizations in nine urban areas—including Chicago—across the U.S.

According to Joanne Otte, Chicago/Milwaukee coordinator for the program, "LVC partners with CCLF because of the organization's unique way of working towards each of the LVC tenets of social justice, simplicity and community. CCLF's commitment to rejuvenate neighborhoods and improve the lives of those who live and work in the Chicago metro area is shared by LVC in its commitment to encourage and build up intentional community."

"CCLF benefits from these full-time volunteers who are committed, hard-working and passionate about the issues of community development for a fraction of what it costs to hire a full-time employee."

"CCLF BENEFITS FROM THESE FULL-TIME VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE COMMITTED, HARD-WORKING AND PASSIONATE ABOUT THE ISSUES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT."

- JOANNE OTTE, LVC COORDINATOR

Theiss says of his experience, "This a great opportunity for a volunteer interested in working to create new financial realities for other organizations. We are effecting change on a wide scale, and that's very exciting to me."

For more information about LVC, visit www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org.

CREDIT MEMOS

Tri Fund Development received a \$600,000 acquisition loan for the Lake Park Shopping Center in the Kenwood neighborhood. CCLF is participating with ShoreBank on the loan. *Thanks to Nicholas Harned and Richard L. Williams III of Vedder Price for serving as CCLF's counsel on this transaction.*

Oakwood Shores Phase 2A Associates LP received a \$350,000 predevelopment loan to develop 199 rental apartments as part of the former Madden Wells CHA Transformation development in Kenwood/Oakland. 147 of the units will be affordable to households earning 60% of AMI and less. *Thanks to Richard L. Williams III and Robert W. Dixon of Vedder Price for serving as CCLF's counsel on this transaction.*

THANK YOU, FUNDERS!

CCLF thanks Bank Leumi USA, First Midwest Bank, Grand Victoria Foundation, HSBC-North America, LaSalle Bank, MB Financial Bank, Northern Trust and Washington Mutual for providing critical operating and program support thus far in 2007.

Thanks as well to the many individuals who help us provide loans and technical assistance at a reasonable price by contributing to our annual campaign!

IN THE NEWS

CHICAGOLAND POVERTY RISES; SUBURBS HIT HARDEST

Poverty grew throughout Chicagoland from 1999 to 2005, with the highest poverty rate increases in suburban collar counties, according to the Heartland Alliance Mid-America Institute on Poverty's 2007 Report on Illinois Poverty. Poverty rates increased the most, 36.1%, in DuPage County during this period.

BANKS READY TO INVEST MORE IN COMMUNITIES

Banks can invest more in low- and moderate income communities thanks to a recent regulation change. Congress raised the limit on "Part 24" community development investment (including investments in affordable housing and other real estate development) from 10 to 15 percent of a regulated financial institution's capital and surplus.

Said Comptroller of the Currency John C. Dugan, "Financial institutions recognize the value of strengthening our communities through these types of investments, and they want to do more." CCLF staff were among a delegation that toured Chicago with Dugan in 2006 to rally support for this regulation change.

"HOME GROWN" BEST PRACTICES

Historic Pacesetter LP, which received a \$1 million predevelopment loan from CCLF in 2005, is featured as an example of "best practices" in Chicagoland housing in Home Grown: Local Housing Strategies in Action. The collection, compiled by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Chicago Metropolis 2020, and Metropolitan Planning Council, can be found online at: <http://metroplanning.org/homegrown/>

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HOLMES HONORED FOR CRA LEADERSHIP



HOLMES ACCEPTS AWARD FROM WOODSTOCK INSTITUTE BOARD CHAIR ADA SKYLES (PHOTO COURTESY OF TED LACEY PHOTOGRAPHY)

Executive Director **Calvin L. Holmes** was recognized with a Community Reinvestment Award from the **Woodstock Institute** at its 22nd annual reception April 24. Holmes received the award in honor of his energetic and creative leader-

ship of CCLF, leadership in the Chicago Community Reinvestment Coalition and national advocacy on behalf of CDFIs and the Community Reinvestment Act.

Also honored with awards for their community reinvestment work at the reception were **Kelly Mizeur** of the **Women's Business Development Center**, and the **Trinity United Church of Christ**.

Woodstock Institute is a 33-year old Chicago-based policy and advocacy nonprofit that works locally, nationally, and internationally to promote community reinvestment and economic development in lower-income and minority communities.



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