

SINA

reports

Fall 2005

SINA & NINA

Collaboration Expands "Cops-N-Kids" Program

Kids in Hartford will have plenty to read this year, thanks to a community outreach program called Cops-N-Kids. The Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) and Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) conduct the program in partnership with the Hartford Police Department. Initiated last year in the Asylum Hill neighborhood, this new collaboration has expanded the program into the southend of Hartford.

The Cops-N-Kids effort provides Hartford police officers with new and gently-used children's books to distribute as they patrol the Asylum Hill, Frog Hollow and Barry Square neighborhoods. The officers also visit local community organizations, such as the Aetna Center for Families, Mi Casa, and the Boys & Girls Club, to hand out books to school-age children who live in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Officers distributed books at the program's launch held on Sunday, August 14 at the 3rd Summer Family Multicultural Celebration on the Learning Corridor campus. "Thousands of books have been distributed since that launch," said Ken Johnson, executive director of NINA.

"Participating in this program gives me an opportunity to do more for the kids who live in this community," said Community Service Officer Marcos A. Massa. "They love the books I give them, and that's the key. They see that I'm not just here to make arrests." - continued on page 3

Beyond Boundaries

After many years of focusing exclusively on its 14 blocks, SINA is now looking at how its "lessons learned" can help influence housing and community development policy on a statewide perspective. This year, together with other concerned organizations and coalitions, SINA embarked on a statewide campaign to create affordable housing opportunities, for both homeownership and rental properties.

"This year was a remarkable year for housing in Connecticut - a historic turning point in the state's commitment to affordable housing. After many years of declining resources, we achieved a \$100 million Housing Trust Fund at Department of Economic and Community Development; a new Land Use Fund providing \$6.5 million annually through Connecticut Housing Finance Authority; 500 additional units of supportive housing; increased bonding to rehabilitate public housing; and more," said Jeffrey Freiser, Executive Director of the Connecticut Housing Coalition.

- continued on page 4



Community Service Officer Marcos A. Massa participates in the Cops-N-Kids program to help youth develop positive associations with police officers.

IN THIS ISSUE :

- SINA & NINA Collaboration Expands "Cops-N-Kids" Program
- Developing Leadership in the Latino Community
- Executive Director's Message

Plus More...

For the last eight years, SINA's achievements have transformed the landscape of Hartford's Southside, from new curbs and sidewalks to comprehensive renovations of blighted apartments. While working towards the completion of our brick and mortar projects like the Cityscape Homes, the Solomon Building, and the Community Sports Complex, SINA has also been opening up new doors of opportunity and involvement.

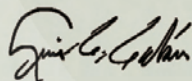
By collaborating with other local and statewide community development organizations, SINA's experience and models are reaching beyond our borders to make positive impact in other neighborhoods and other areas of work.

Recently, SINA has partnered with Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) to expand the Cops-N-Kids program. By equipping police officers with children's books to distribute, the program aims to encourage a friendly and trusting relationship between youth and law enforcement. Further regional collaborations are expected in response to SINA's public safety forum held in July. Discussion at the forum sparked interest in a new cooperative endeavor focused on addressing how youth respond to loss and grief.

On a state level, SINA has joined with other nonprofit development organizations to support legislation aimed at increasing the supply of affordable housing throughout Connecticut. Not only has SINA seen success in its advocacy efforts, but our work at the Capitol has helped forge collaborative bonds with organizations such as the Connecticut Housing Coalition.

With every passing season, SINA expands its networks and impact as a leader in neighborhood development. A testimony to this success, SINA increasingly attracts attention from groups and individuals interested in our comprehensive model. Recently, a Pennsylvania delegation of community leaders and elected officials, on a learning trip to Hartford, requested a visit to SINA. Similarly, we have received inquiries from college students on SINA's relationship with universities and communities.

In addition, SINA has been asked to present its model and approach at forums and conferences like the July 18 Community Development Advisory Council Community Forum, cosponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund, Inc., and the Partnership for Strong Communities.



Developing Leadership in the Latino Community

For SINA, meeting its mission to develop leadership doesn't end at the office. SINA's Executive Director Luis Cabán, along with his wife Maria, personally contribute to the Latino Endowment Fund, an initiative that encourages philanthropy amongst the Hispanic community. Recently, the fund helped four Latino executive directors attend a five day intensive leadership training program at Harvard University.

SINA's commitment to develop leadership also spurred the creation of the Latino Civic Engagement Academy, a program that helps prepare leaders to run for public office and manage political campaigns.

SINA created the Academy after Mayor Perez, a former SINA executive director, traveled to Rochester, N.Y. as a keynote speaker for a graduation in a similar civic engagement program. Understanding SINA's mission, Mayor Perez then shared the vision and SINA set out to establish a similar prototype.

In June, Hartford's new Latino Civic Engagement Academy graduated its first class of 18 participants.

A Way to Heal

Southside organizations discuss program to help youth deal with grief - *continued on page 4*

During SINA's July public safety forum, participants discussed various safety concerns, but the conversation quickly centered on how youth deal with grief. The topic began as a dialogue with law enforcement officials about street shrines and their possible gang associations.

Through an open discussion, the group recognized the need to give attention to this issue, including getting youth's feedback and perspective, and developing programs that help youth process grief.



The prevalence of street shrines sparked discussion, at SINA's July public safety forum, on developing programs that help youth deal with grief.

SINA & NINA

Collaboration Expands "Cops-N-Kids" Program

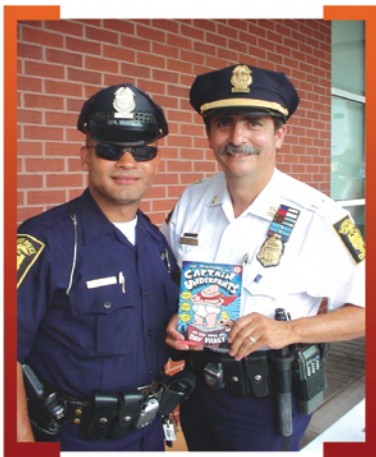
continued from page 1



Community Service Officers Massa and Barrett distributed books to kids at the Family Multicultural Celebration on the Learning Corridor campus.

In the last few months, Officer Massa has distributed books to many youth, but he remembers one encounter in particular. "After I gave a book to one boy who was about 12 years old he said to me, 'I used to think you were bad guys but I want to thank you for giving us something.' Now, every time I see this kid, he remembers my name."

On the northside, Community Service Officer Barrett is encouraged by the impact that the program is making. "The books open kids eyes to the fact that we care. There is an unbelievable reaction when we show up with books. One of my colleagues responded to a domestic situation and said that the kids in the house were crying and very stressed. He remembered the books, gave them to the kids, and they started smiling. He asked them, 'Do you have any books in the house?' They said 'No.'"



Officer Massa and Deputy Chief Lopez know that giving books to kids provides them with both learning and fun.

will help them do better in school and build a stronger future."

"SINA is thrilled about partnering with NINA on this initiative. The social and educational objectives of this program are very worthy and provide yet another cog in our overall effort at building community," said Luis Cabán, executive director of SINA.

In addition to helping Hartford youth associate police officers with positive experiences, the Cops-N-Kids program also addresses low literacy rates and educational deficiencies that can lead to crime later.

"While education in Asylum Hill has improved greatly in recent years, children in this neighborhood still perform far below their suburban peers," said Lynda Godkin, the chairperson of NINA's board of directors and senior vice president of state and community relations at The Hartford Financial Services Group. "Putting books in kids' hands for them to keep

Honoring a Community Leader

After more than two decades of leadership in her Frog Hollow neighborhood, community resident Edie Lacey is moving on to new and exciting challenges. SINA would like to take this opportunity to honor Edie for her dedicated service and wish her well in her new endeavors.



Edie's community involvement began in 1985 when she and her neighbors initiated a series of block watches in Frog Hollow. Edie's efforts as a block watch captain parlayed into her active membership in the Frog Hollow Revitalization Committee (FHRC). In 1993, Edie began chairing this committee and secured a "safe neighborhoods" grant, which resulted in the opening of the Affleck Street Police substation. By 1994, the FHRC initiative took steps toward becoming a recognized Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ). Hartford created NRZs to revitalize distressed neighborhoods by empowering residents and community stakeholders to undertake collaborative improvement efforts in their neighborhoods. Edie worked hard to ensure the establishment of the Frog Hollow South NRZ. For 9 years Edie served as co-chair for the NRZ, a position that involved writing and revising a neighborhood plan and making sure all stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute to the development of the plan. In 1998, Edie also served as co-chair of the Inter-Neighborhood Collaborative where she spearheaded a multi-neighborhood approach to revitalization issues in relationship to the construction of the Learning Corridor.

"Edie is an inspiring, compassionate, and hard-working community resident whose leadership is felt by so many in a variety of ways. Her tireless efforts and dedication have positively contributed to her Frog Hollow neighborhood and the city of Hartford. She is a true leader," described Debra Borrero, chairperson of SINA's Education, Community & Volunteer Committee.

Edie's leadership and service continued with the new millennium. Edie represented Frog Hollow and co-chaired Hartford 2000, a coalition of all the neighborhood revitalization zones in Hartford. She also assisted the Capital Workforce YO! Hartford community advisory commission and served on the board of the South Hartford Initiative.

Edie's community participation began with her career as a public school teacher. For 24 years, she taught several elementary grades, and secondary English and mathematics in Connecticut schools as well as in Athens, Greece. Since 1995, Edie has served as the middle school Library and Media Director for the Wethersfield Public Schools.

In 2002, Edie received a Community Leadership Award from Leadership Greater Hartford, an award that recognizes individuals who perform outstanding personal service in their communities. Most recently, SINA presented Edie with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the November 14 Neighborhood Service Award ceremony, honoring her impressive legacy/resume of community leadership in the Frog Hollow neighborhood.

"I very much appreciate the countless hours of work that Edie puts into our neighborhood development efforts. Acknowledging her years of dedication to this community with a special recognition award is a 'slam dunk,'" expressed SINA's Executive Director Luis Cabán.



**SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE**

400 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106

**Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HARTFORD, CT
PERMIT No. 4361**

A Way to Heal

Southside organizations discuss program to help youth deal with grief - continued from page 2



Representatives from SINA, SINA's member institutions, other community organizations and the Hartford police department discuss safety concerns and solutions during SINA's public safety forum at Trinity College.

Together with other community organizations like Trinity Boys and Girls Club, SINA is exploring ideas for programs or forums that help kids deal with loss.

"In my field, I see a lot of kids that lose peers or relatives and have nothing to help them with the grief process," said Unit Director Tauheedah Muhammed of the Trinity Boys and Girls Club, who helped lead the discussion. "They resort to the things they know, like shrines, because they don't know any other way to heal."

Beyond Boundaries

continued from page 1

When State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier first proposed the Housing Trust Fund, SINA diligently advocated for its establishment. In June, the Senate approved the Fund, which will be capitalized with \$20 million annually in general obligation bonding over the next five years.

SINA also supported the new Land Use Fund by advocating before the Governor's Office, Senate, and the House of Representatives. This new fund will add a \$30 fee for recording documents in local land records. Twenty-six dollars of this charge will be divided equally for four purposes: affordable housing, historic preservation, farmland preservation and supportive housing.

"These victories were accomplished by a combination of grassroots advocacy, passionate local voices for housing raised across the state, and visionary leadership from public officials, such as State Treasurer Denise Nappier. SINA and other housing practitioners came to the Capitol and told their compelling stories. They described their wonderful successes in creating affordable homes, and the potential to multiply those successes with more help from the state," said Freiser.

Indeed, the achievements of SINA's collaborative activism will impact families in the Southside and throughout Connecticut by increasing the availability of secure, safe, and affordable housing.

SINA's mission is to work cooperatively with the community to develop leadership and improve the economic, physical and social characteristics of Hartford's Frog Hollow, Barry Square and South Green Neighborhoods.

Publisher: American View Productions, LLC

LUIS C. CABAN - Executive Director • JOHN M. BAILEY - Director of Community and Government Affairs

IVETTE QUIROS - Executive Assistant • KEITH HEDMAN - Fiscal Officer