

SINA

reports

Winter 2008/2009

TOMATOES. RADISHES. ZUCCHINIS.

This summer, new residents took root and flourished in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. SINA provided the soil. Grow Hartford tilled, seeded, weeded and watered. The results: empty lots transformed into agricultural classrooms, and a harvest of organic produce distributed to Hartford residents.

The partnership that turned vacant land to vegetables began earlier in 2008 when SINA offered Grow Hartford use of its empty lots. Grow Hartford, a project of the Hartford Food System, selected two parcels, one on Broad Street and one on Zion Street.

"This is a great thing to do with empty lots," said SINA's Development Director John Rosenthal. "It has many benefits to the community."

Grow Hartford's summer program helps kids cultivate leadership and work skills, and offers the community opportunities to dig-in and make a difference. At the end of the summer, the fresh produce is distributed to homeless shelters and other community organizations.

"This is my first time gardening," said Bernice Martinez, Grow Hartford youth participant. "It's good because we are helping the community by giving food to the people that need it. I learned a lot about vegetables and making the community beautiful."

In addition to enriching the community with nutrition, the program has a public safety impact. Bustling with positive activity, vacant lots are less likely to attract loitering or crime.

"This year we grew and distributed 5,164 pounds of fresh produce," said Jerry Jones, Executive Director, Hartford Food System. "In 2007, we harvested 3,694 pounds. That's a big increase and a large part of it was because of the two SINA lots."



Grow Hartford youth participant Yashira Ortiz hands a freshly picked head of lettuce from the Broad Street site to a neighborhood resident.

Spreading the Good News

Two years ago, Wendy and Jose Vega visited their pastors in the Southside of Hartford. They discussed the "good news" of their faith, and discovered some other good news that would eventually convert them from renters to first time homeowners. *Continued on Page 3*



Today's grim economic climate and uncertain forecast, casts its shadow on all of us. Indeed SINA's budget feels the impact, but our concern and commitment remains constant – focused on the Southside community and its residents, many of whom feel the pressure of escalating energy costs, financing difficulties and foreclosures.

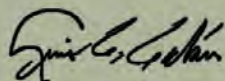
To help our neighborhoods weather this storm, SINA is stockpiling nonfinancial resources - finding creative ways to produce economic fruit. This summer we saw the literal success of this approach as two of SINA's empty lots, loaned to the Grow Hartford program, produced 2 ½ tons of fresh fruits and vegetables for city residents.

Working towards the establishment of a Cityscape Homeowners Association, we are providing our homeowners with valuable information – including resources for government assistance aimed at avoiding foreclosures and notifications for workshops that teach money-saving do-it-yourself home repair skills.

Difficult economic times force many organizations to retrench, and can threaten important community programs and services. SINA is calling together our community partners to find out how we can help. Bringing everyone to the table enables us to discuss this season's specific impacts and the preparations and responses to see us through.

While the financial crisis takes the forefront, public safety remains a fixed priority. To increase security in SINA's neighborhoods, SINA is funding extra weekly patrols focused on problem areas. To further address community public safety concerns, SINA looks forward to working with Frog Hollow's new Community Service Officer Miguel Maldonado.

Just as it is evident that we're probably seeing the worst of times, it's probably also true that better times are just ahead. We, as a community, however, will be more prepared than ever for success. SINA will be instrumental in sustaining growth and prosperity. It's clear to us that just like many stock holders, we're in it for the long run. We're not simply building a community for us today, but a community that will continue to progress for generations to come; for those who will call the Southside home.



In the News

Summer 2008

In preparation for this year's election, Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz launched the "¡Tu Voto Si Cuenta!" campaign to register 10,000 new Latino voters in Connecticut by the October 28th deadline. SINA's Executive Director Luis Cabán provided leadership for the campaign's steering committee. The campaign was a success – more than doubling its goal and registering 22,351 new Latino voters in Connecticut.

On August 15, 2008, the Southside community celebrated the official ribbon-cutting, marking the completion of the Maple Avenue streetscape. The ceremony, held in Barry Square, included the recognition of those who had "donated" inscribed bricks to help fund the project – which beautified 3.2 square miles of Maple Avenue with new sidewalks, pavers, curbs and streetlights.

Coming Soon

Effective January 2009, SINA's Executive Director Luis Cabán will be serving as the Chairman of the steering committee for the Latino Endowment Fund. The Fund, a part of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, funds special projects for Latino nonprofits.

Enabled by a generous \$25,000 competitive grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation based in Norwalk, CT, the Latino Civic Engagement Academy will be hitting the road. On January 31, 2009, the Hartford-based program will begin its first leadership series in Bridgeport at Housatonic Community College. Led by the Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum, the six-week course provides Board of Education training. The LCEA has formed a local advisory committee made up of Latino leaders to help promote the program and recruit participants. SINA helped establish the Academy, and SINA's Executive Director Luis Cabán serves as the principal instructor.

Introducing Paul Mutone



SINA welcomes Trinity College's Paul Mutone to its board of directors. On October 1, 2008, Mutone joined Trinity College as Vice President for Finance and Operations and Treasurer. In December, at SINA's annual meeting, he will be welcomed as the new SINA Treasurer.

Paul comes to Trinity from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY, where he served as Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs. During his approximately 20 years in finance, Mutone has worked in both higher education and the private sector. A native of New York, Mutone is married with three children.

Extra police presence on the streets helps Southside's public safety "hot spots" beat the heat.

In an effort to address crime and quality of life concerns, SINA is partnering with the Frog Hollow South NRZ and the Hartford Police Department to increase police presence in the Frog Hollow neighborhood.

"We hear a lot of public safety concerns from the community," said Doug Campbell, Chairman, Frog Hollow South NRZ. "And from the city, we hear that there's not enough police or money to increase patrols."

In response, SINA developed a \$10,000 grant to "promote the neighborhood policing plan and further community relations" in the Southside. Since this was a pioneer endeavor, SINA also provided the Hartford Police Department with technical support through the grant process

The grant, called Specially Assigned Police Officers (SAPO), enables Southside's Community Service Officer or other district officers to spend extra time on patrol - targeting problem areas and increasing police visibility in the community.

Implemented in early summer 2008, the officers' average eight extra patrol hours a week, using the time to address the community's specific concerns - whether motor vehicle violations, troublesome corners, drug activity, loitering, even coordinating with the City for extra trash pick-up.

"Anytime you can get more police on the street, it helps out," said Campbell. This summer police reports noted a decrease in crime from last summer (Statistics show a 20% reduction in crime between July 2008 and July 2007).

Visibility is key when increasing police presence, Campbell explained. Often the officers will "park and walk" - parking their cruiser and then walking the beat - doubling the safety impact, with the noticeable sight of both a police vehicle and a uniformed officer.

Protecting the Presidents

At the corner of Washington and Jefferson stand two abutting buildings. Aptly called President's Corner by SINA, these long vacant buildings await the final funding that will transform them from eyesores into affordable elderly housing.

"It's a perfect location for elderly housing," said SINA Executive Director Luis Cabán. On the bus route, directly across the street from the hospital and only one block from a 24-hour pharmacy and convenience store, the location will provide its residents access to the services they need.

SINA purchased the buildings in 2006 and has since been leveraging funds and preparing the plans for the development of 31 units for the elderly. Contingent upon funding, SINA hopes to begin construction in the spring of 2009.

In the meantime, to protect the buildings' structural integrity, SINA is investing \$400,000 in immediate repairs. Current work includes roof patches and plumbing and façade repairs, all aimed at avoiding further deterioration, especially during the winter months.

Corner to Corner

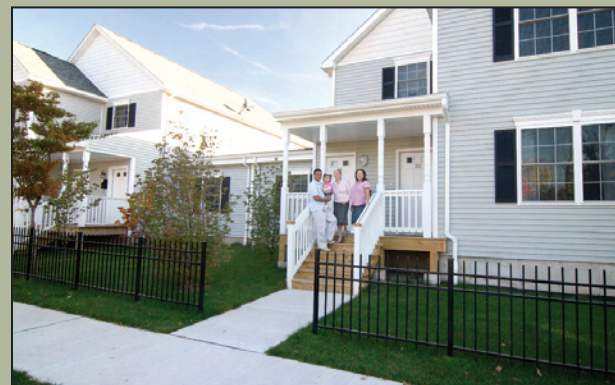


From corner to corner, Officer Miguel Maldonado knows the Frog Hollow neighborhood. "That's why I took the position as Community Service Officer," he said. After four years as a patrol officer in the area, Maldonado's community knowledge and commitment made him the perfect fit for the job - which opened up after the previous CSO Officer Estrella received a promotion. On October 1, 2008, Maldonado began his duties as CSO - serving as a liaison between the community and the police department's district commander.

As CSO, Maldonado is dedicated to understanding and addressing the community's quality of life concerns. "I have more opportunity to be proactive in the area now," said Maldonado who engages the community by attending blockwatch meetings and talking with local business owners.

Spreading the Good News

At that time, the Vega's pastors rented an apartment in one of SINA's new Cityscape Homes. When Wendy and Jose expressed their admiration for the place, the pastors introduced them to the landlord, the home's owner, who told the couple all about the Cityscape program.



Hearing that a community-building organization called SINA creates new or renovated homes and offers them to first time homebuyers at an affordable price, the Vegas went to the office that same week to apply.

Wendy and Jose originally sought a one family home, but with none available at the time, they



SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

400 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106

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

Spreading the Good News Continued from Page 3

waited. SINA would soon be embarking on Phase IV of their Cityscape Home – creating 18 new houses on School and Colonial Streets.

A year later, Wendy drove by the first Phase IV house under construction on Colonial. Liking what she saw, she contacted SINA. Although it was a two-unit house, the Vargas family, having grown with a new baby girl, was more than ready to move into a home of their own.

As renters they had seen many apartments, Wendy explained, most of them in disappointing condition. In contrast, they loved the quality of the Cityscape home, and appreciated that the rental unit would provide extra income.

At the end of August, the hopeful news they had heard many months before became reality as they moved in to their home. For Wendy, who works as a teacher, the closing date came just in time, only days before the new school year started.

“John Rosenthal from SINA really helped us get the house closed before my work began,” said Wendy. “Throughout the whole process he was great – always available to answer our



calls.”

Today the Vega family is enjoying the home’s “newness” as well as its amenities such as off-street parking, a garage and laundry. They appreciate the location as well – on a quiet street only a block and a half from their church, where Jose now serves as a pastor – spreading the gospel’s great news, and, when appropriate, letting people know about a really good homeownership program.

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
JOHN ROSENTHAL - Development Director • IVETTE QUIROS - Executive Assistant • KEITH HEDMAN - Fiscal Officer
Linda Valentin - Clerical Support*