

Summer 2011

SAFETY

IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

For the fifth straight year, Hartford has seen crime fall to its lowest recorded level. For Southside residents directly affected by crime, however, there is little comfort in those statistics. They are more interested in what can be done to further improve the quality of life in their community. That was the goal of the recent Community Public Safety Forum held by SINA. The forum took place at the Vernon Student Center on the Trinity College campus. Nearly 100 members of the Hartford community attended.

"The goal of the forum is to have a conversation," said SINA Executive Director Luis Cabán. "This is an open two-way communication to learn, share and partner toward the common goal of improving the Hartford Community."

Trinity College President Dr. James F. Jones celebrated the partnership and turnout for the event. "Safety in one's community is literally the single most important issue," he said. "The Community Public Safety Forum will help lead us in a direction to improve public safety to the furthest extent possible."

Judge Raymond Norko from the Hartford Community Court spoke about a movement he instituted in 1998. After seeing repeat offenders show up in his court for quality of life crimes, Judge Norko brought the innovative approach of fighting misdemeanor offenses through community service and restitution projects rather than conventional sentencing. Through collaboration with social organizations, the court also provides assistance to offenders who may need mental health services or drug counseling.

Hartford Police Chief Daryl Roberts discussed the changing model of law enforcement. Under his leadership motto of "Service, Relationships, and Safety," the department has implemented its Neighborhood Policing Plan to assist both the police and community in tackling problems they cannot solve on their own. Deputy Police Chief Paul J. Ciensinski, Commander of the South District, addressed the progress made since the Neighborhood Policing Plan started. By integrating the officers into the community, they have been able to increase communications between neighborhoods and the police department, address crime patterns, problem areas, and conditions of disorder.

Leaders who have helped strengthen the police-community relationship spoke out such as Hyacinth Yennie from the Maple Avenue Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. Also presenting was Mayra Esquilin of Hartford Areas Rally Together who organizes the community to act collaboratively to fight blight and improve the quality of life for Hartford residents. Warren Hardy provided an inspiring testimonial about his days as a gang member, subsequent incarceration, and turnaround. Eventually, he joined the Peacebuilders to patrol troubled areas and form relationships with at-risk youth to prevent violence. *Continued on page 4*



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This edition of SINA Reports contains some of the things I enjoy most: food, art, music, and my beloved Frog Hollow neighborhood. While those features are fun, it is the SINA retrospective which I believe provides the most telling story. As we look back at all of our accomplishments we can see the impact made in the area. The millions of dollars in construction projects, the jobs that came with them, the investments in our students and education facilities, the new streetscapes, the housing made available, and the contribution to the municipal grand list are impressive. There's value in quantifying our undertakings. Only then do we get a complete picture of what our member institutions have meant to our community.

What our residents want most is a safe place to live, and in this newsletter you will read about the recent public safety forum that covered a variety of issues important to Southside residents.

What's a "Mash Up" you ask? If you missed it, we will let you in on a very unique Billings Forge event. Also, for the first time in our existence SINA is in the process of constructing single family homes, something you'll want to know about. In addition, an article about the Latino Cooking show and healthy eating. As usual our eclectic, yet well designed plan to create a vital Southside neighborhood continues with a commitment to future housing projects and educational programming.

It is our belief that our members' investments have not only helped us avoid blight and reduce crime, but they have been critical in securing an improved quality of life for our residents.

Luis C. Cabán, Executive Director

Readers Rank Frog Hollow



In the Hartford Advocate's "Best of Hartford Reader's Poll 2010" readers placed Frog Hollow in third place in Great Hartford in the "Best Neighborhood" category.

SINGLE FAMILY HOMES FOR SALE

Colonial Street, a once barren stretch connecting Trinity College and the Institute of Living will breathe new life into the community as SINA soon expects to complete the construction of 10 new one-family homes.



In a continuation of Cityscapes Homes Phase IV, the newly constructed homes will feature Energy Star rated appliances, blown in foam insulation, and high efficiency gas boilers. The three-bedroom houses are available to first-time homebuyers. The owners must be able to afford the home, must live in the property, and earn a certificate by attending homeownership training. There is assistance available to those who qualify.

SINA Executive Director Luis Cabán says the sale of these first one-family homes, to be built by SINA, will "raise the bar," attracting middle and high-middle income families that will provide income diversification in the neighborhood.

ARTS IN THE CLASSROOM

SINA's Luis Cabán was recently selected to join a collaborative network of schools, arts providers, and community organizations known as the Hartford Performs program.

Hartford Performs is an Arts Education Collaborative developed by Hartford Public Schools in partnership with the Greater Hartford Arts Council. The stated mission is "To ensure that all Hartford Public School students have access to quality arts education delivered through in-school teaching staff in partnership with the city's vibrant arts community."

Cabán will help guide the board on ways to effectively deploy the resources of the Hartford artistic community into the classroom and measure the impact and outcomes of the program.

THE NATURE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD

In the 19th century, Hartford's Southside was the epitome of a factory-based community. Employees from world renowned factories populated the flourishing neighborhood until the manufacturing plants left the area. The neighborhood grew poorer and increasingly downtrodden during the 20th Century.

Since the 1990s, SINA and its member institutions focused on jobs, housing, education, and public safety to address the community's widespread issues.

SINA's approach to development is "high impact and high visibility," through physically improving the landscape with millions of dollars in streetscape renovations on Park, Washington, Broad, Vernon Streets and New Britain Avenue, and with youth recreational facilities.

Just as significant is SINA's contribution in housing development, rehabilitating 83 rental units in 13 apartment buildings, and developing 50 new and rehabilitated homes for first-time homeowners. SINA has also purchased and land banked several other key parcels of land for future development.

With the progress made by SINA since

the 1990s, it remains important to justify SINA's work in a quantifiable way. Executive Director Luis Caban says, "It is difficult to put a dollar amount on someone who learns skills and can work for life, buy their first home, and send their children to quality schools."

SINA's initiatives have had positive outcomes for Hartford through the availability of construction jobs including Trinity Boys and Girls Club, Mi Casa Family Service and Educational Center, Learning Corridor, the Koeppel ice skating rink, and various housing developments. The housing development initiatives contribute approximately \$250,000 in annual property taxes. From January 2000 to December 2010, over \$27 million dollars were invested in housing development, and the Learning Corridor provided a \$112 million investment in neighborhood schools and for Hartford youth.

In addition to building 10 single-family homes on the formerly barren Colonial Street, SINA's contributions will continue as Hartford Hospital plans to build a \$47.5 million parking garage and the \$36 million President's Corner Medical Center.



SINA's offices in the heart of Hartford's Southside

SINA's value is not only apparent from the physical appearance of the target neighborhoods and the awards it has won, but its model of "comprehensive community development" has become influential in policies on a local and national level.

There is a significant return on investment in SINA activities. Board of Directors Chair Jane Baird commented, "The value of SINA's holistic approach, which encourages economic development and security, becomes obvious when you look at the major role it has played in the creation of a vital neighborhood."

MASH UP



A "mash up" is the combination of existing entities into something completely new; the Mash UP organized by Billings Forge Community Works recently combined multiple activities into a full day of creative programming. On Thursday, February 3rd, the Mash UP combined everything from food to dance to art to old-time radio theater, all on the Billings Forge grounds.

The day kicked off at the Lyceum with a live broadcast of WNPR's "Where We Live" with John Dankosky. John welcomed Tom Condon from the Hartford Courant, Cary Wheaton, the Executive Director of Billings Forge Community Works, and SINA's Luis Caban.

The afternoon was filled with culinary delights, cooking classes, tastings, and lectures from local organic farmers. Firebox donated its proceeds straight to Billings Forge Community Works and offered an Allagash Craft Beer Tasting and Specialty Cocktails.

As the afternoon turned into night, Mash UP patrons sampled the variety. The Workshops offered Open Studios, where the artists-in-residence offered a behind-the-scenes look at their work. The Lyceum featured acapella music from Hartford's Artists Collective's Women of the Cross and tales from storyteller Tom Lee. Perhaps the most eclectic event of the night was "Catie Talarski's Radio Adventure Theatre." Finishing out the evening was the "Indie Open Mic" showcasing local talent.

Mash UP was a true showcase and celebration of the arts and what Billings Forge offers as a Hartford cultural centerpiece.



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LA REVOLUCIÓN CONTINUES

The classic flavors of Latino cuisine have a special place on tables throughout the region; however, these traditional dishes can be prepared in a healthier manner. “Revolución de Nutrición” seeks to propose healthy alternatives. The TV program started as a segment on the popular Spanish language variety show “El Show de Analeh” as a way to raise awareness of the importance of good nutrition and leading healthier lives through healthy preparation of traditional Latino dishes and non-Latino dishes with Latino ingredients. The five minute feature is now expanding to a full half-hour format.

“Revolución de Nutrición” started because of the increased risk of health problems in the Latino community. The show is about preventing illness,” said host Ana Alfaro.

The show is produced through a partnership between SINA, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, Hartford Hospital, and Billings Forge with a production crew from Capital Community College.

“We’re different from other cooking shows because we show specific ways to eat healthy.” Ana said, “We demonstrate the dish cooked both traditionally and in a lower calories way.” For example, the Mother’s Day show featured kids from Mi Casa cooking a healthy shepherd’s pie using plantains instead of potatoes.

The half-hour version of “Revolución de Nutrición” is set to air in June on Univision Channel 18. The featured recipes are developed by Julie Carrion, Executive Chef and Director of Education at the Kitchen at Billings Forge.

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During the forum, the audience, panelists, and law enforcement officials broke out into groups to discuss the specific issues related to substance abuse, property crime, quality of life, and violence. After the discussions, representatives from each group presented their ideas to make the city a safer place. Ideas such as reducing litter, graffiti, noise, and driving violations. These will be topics for future Community Public Safety Forums.



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.

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