

SINA Reports

2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

www.sinainc.org

Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance

a partnership between



Hartford
Hospital
A Hartford HealthCare Partner



Trinity College
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

SINA's mission is to restore economic vitality and improve the quality of life for the people who live, work, play, and study in the neighborhoods of South Hartford.



SINA SELLS HOMES ON WOLCOTT AND SQUIRE STREETS

In 2016 SINA sold two, 2-family homes on Wolcott Street. During the summer SINA sold a 2-family home on Squire Street. These are the first three to be sold of six homes we rehabbed on Wolcott and Squire Streets. We plan to start construction on an additional six homes in the coming year, four on Wolcott Street and two on Squire Street. SINA is making a concentrated investment in Wolcott and Squire Streets because we want to make this area of Frog Hollow the new focus of our Homeownership Initiative.

Concentrated investment is the approach we took on Colonial and School Streets a few years ago and the results have included reduced crime rates, new homeownership opportunities for working families, elimination of blight and a higher quality of life for all residents of those streets.

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SINA Awarded \$2.5 Million by State Department of Housing to Develop Affordable Homeownership Opportunities In Greater Frog Hollow



SINA is one of a small number of organizations and municipal agencies awarded grants to develop homeownership housing in their communities. SINA was awarded \$2.5 million in a highly competitive selection process. Funding for the Affordable Homeownership Program was approved by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2014 under the leadership of Senator John Fonfara (D–Hartford, Wethersfield), a strong proponent of using homeownership to revitalize low income communities.

SINA will use the funds to develop 12 homeownership opportunities in south central Hartford. Each home will be Energy Star compliant, most with a three-bedroom ownership unit and a two-bedroom rental unit. The opportunity to collect income from rental units increases the affordability of the homes for prospective buyers. A total of twenty-three affordable housing units will be created.

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SINA WORKS WITH RESIDENTS TO CREATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



In January 2016 SINA approved an economic development plan to create new economic opportunities for residents and businesses in Frog Hollow and nearby surrounding neighborhoods. The basis of the plan is a comprehensive economic development study which was reviewed and discussed by community stakeholders. The stakeholders

ranked the strategies in terms of their potential to bring the greatest benefit to the neighborhood. The SINA board selected the three strategies that were ranked highest by the community stakeholders. These are listed below.

SINA has engaged in economic development work for over 35 years. In the past we've operated a job training center, developed a program in the public schools to expose students to STEM careers, and worked with the city and state and our neighborhood partners to bring sidewalk improvements and lighting projects to make Park Street and other neighborhood corridors more attractive to customers. SINA also worked with SAMA and a private developer on the financing for El Mercado on Park Street. The housing development we do throughout the neighborhood is also a form of economic development.

In 2015 SINA's board of directors decided to develop new economic development initiatives. SINA hired a consultant, Peter Kwass, to conduct an economic study of the neighborhood and make recommendations on how the SINA institutions, neighborhood residents, local small business and SINA partners could work together to bring new economic opportunities to neighborhood residents and local businesses.

The project had three goals:

- Increase job opportunities for neighborhood residents by strengthening linkages between residents and SINA institutions, with attention to both jobs within the institutions and construction jobs related to institutional development projects.
- Increase entrepreneurial opportunities for neighborhood residents and businesses, with particular attention to markets created by SINA institutions and their employees, patients, students, and visitors.
- Contribute to the physical and economic revitalization of the neighborhood, including but not limited to the Washington Street, Broad Street, and Zion Street corridors, through strategic commercial development and related infrastructure investments.

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SINA's History, Accomplishments and Current Initiatives Featured on U.S. Government Website

A comprehensive overview of SINA's 30-plus years of success in transforming Hartford's Southside neighborhoods is currently being showcased as a featured "case study" on the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) website.

Under the headline "Anchor Institutions Join to Restore Economic Vitality, Improve Quality of Life in Hartford's Southside Neighborhoods," the case study chronicles SINA's history and accomplishments, from the organization's earliest efforts in the late 1970s to build neighborhood collaboration, to the successes that are the Learning Corridor and Cityscape Homes, to SINA's most recent major initiative, economic development.

SINA was officially founded in 1978 by Hartford Hospital, the Institute of Living and Trinity College. In later years, Connecticut Children's Medical Center came aboard, along with Connecticut Public Television and Radio.

"Over the years SINA has successfully grown and evolved to meet the changing needs of the community it serves," said SINA Executive Director Melvyn Colon. "It is rewarding to be considered highly by those at the highest levels of government, and to have our story and successes showcased in such a prominent venue."

In the case study, SINA's work is hailed as a "national model." According to the article, "Although the alliance's activities and priorities have evolved over time, its commitment to holistic community development in the three low-income neighborhoods surrounding the anchors — Frog Hollow, Barry Square, and South Green — has not wavered."

The SINA case study is featured within HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research website, which houses a vast assortment of information, research and data on national housing needs, market conditions and existing programs. The Office of Policy Development and Research supports the Department's overarching efforts to help create cohesive, economically healthy communities across the country.



To read the case study, visit www.huduser.org, and click on "case studies" under Research & Publications.

SINA Partners Donate Patrol Bicycles to Support Local Law Enforcement Efforts in Frog Hollow

On May 13, 2016 SINA donated to the Hartford Police Department four specially-equipped bicycles through a public safety grant. Grant funding comes from SINA's member institutions: Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. At an April 29 ceremony held at Trinity's Koeppel Community Sports Center, Police Chief James Rovella accepted the bicycles on behalf of the city of Hartford and the Hartford Police Department.

The Hartford Police Department's South District Officers will use these bicycles to patrol the Frog Hollow Neighborhood. Police Chief James Rovella spoke of the benefits of Hartford Police Officers riding bicycles instead of patrolling in cars: "The goal of community policing is to know your patrol area. These bicycles make it easier for Hartford's Officers to become intimately connected with their patrol area. It allows for more immediate and direct contact with neighborhood residents. It facilitates the building of relationships that is essential to creating trust between officers and community residents."

Executive Director Melvyn Colon said, "We are pleased to support the efforts of our local law enforcement officers with this donation. Since its creation in 1978, SINA has worked to improve the Frog Hollow Neighborhood in numerous ways. Through our community outreach and our Economic Development Planning Process SINA has confirmed that public safety is a concern of neighborhood residents as well as the people who work, visit and live in the institutions that make up the SINA partnership. Working with Lt. Gabriel Laureano, Sgt. Dixon Vega, and Police Chief James Rovella, SINA identified police bicycles as vital tools that would support the Hartford Police Department's Implementation of community oriented policing."



From left to right: James Shmerling, President and CEO of CT Children's Medical Center; Joanne Berger-Sweeney, President of Trinity College; HPD Police Chief James Rovella; and Stuart Markowitz, President of Hartford Hospital

James Shmerling, President and CEO of CT Children's Medical Center, noted, "I am delighted to be here this morning as we celebrate a partnership with the Hartford Police Department that will help the children in South Central Hartford to grow, learn and succeed in a safe and supportive environment. Social determinants—the circumstances in which people live and work—powerfully affect health. That is why Connecticut Children's has embraced a broader definition of community benefit that includes community-building activities. Through SINA we have worked in close cooperation with local enforcement to support their efforts to implement community-oriented policing and to facilitate community-police engagement. We hope that the donation of these four bicycles will enhance their efforts, contribute to the health of our local neighborhood and help its residents to thrive."

Stuart Markowitz, President of Hartford Hospital, said, "It's truly remarkable that our three institutions – Hartford Hospital, Connecticut Children's and Trinity College – have banded together in such a strong partnership to improve the quality of life in this community. That includes the health, safety and economic vitality of this neighborhood and its residents, as well as the well-being of our employees, patients and visitors ... and the students who come here to

study. It's clear that our efforts, through SINA, in housing and community economic development, need to be aligned with neighborhood security and safety. Development work must go hand in hand with community engagement, leadership development, and discreet work with local law-enforcement efforts."

Trinity College President Joanne Berger-Sweeney said, "As a Hartford resident, I am personally grateful for the consistent presence and work of the Hartford Police Department. As president of Trinity, I was thrilled to support the building of the Trinity College substation. I know that many community members – and that includes me and my family – value the dedication of the Department's Community Service Officers. We hope that the bikes presented today will continue to facilitate such strong relationships between the Hartford Police and our community. We at Trinity College look forward to greeting the officers as they ride the bikes throughout our campus and neighborhood on their local patrols."



10th Annual REACH Awards Ceremony

This year's Recognition, Education, Achievement, and Community Health (REACH) Ceremony was held on May 25th at the Hartford Hospital Education Resource Center. The Ceremony can best be described as a story-telling event. The stories are about everyday heroes who have contributed to their community in remarkable ways, and about young people who have worked diligently in the face of eye-opening challenges in order to further their education. Lawrence E. Milan, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC), which hosted this year's event. The event was emceed by long-time contributor Steve Balcanoff and Katherine Ramirez, both of CCMC. For more information and to read the full bios on all the recipients visit www.sinainc.org/reach.

Neighborhood Service Awardees



From left to right:
Tim Ketterer, Matthew Labbe, and Rosa Flores

Rosa Flores

As Coordinator of Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) at Capital Region Education Council (CREC), Rosa displays compassion and commitment to the total welfare of children and parents. She provides home-based intervention and prevention assistance, including education and advocacy, to families who are at risk of child abuse and /or neglect. Nancy Cantana, Program Director of CREC's Child and Family Development Services, observes, "Rosa shines in everything she does. She's a guru, she makes it work and she does it with style." Rosa designated Triple P to receive the \$250 donation.

Matthew Labbe

Officer Matt Labbe joined the Hartford Police Department in 2003. Since then he has worked to protect and serve Hartford's residents, business owners, and visitors as a patrolman and as the senior officer in Hartford's K-9 Unit. According to Lt. Gabriel Laureano, "Matt will get out of his car and interact with anyone. If he sees a shanty on a particular street he will stop to see if it's occupied, then use his cellphone to find the nearest social services agency to help the person living in the shanty." Matt designated the American School for the Deaf to receive the \$250 donation.

Tim Ketterer

Mr. Ketterer is the music teacher at Bulkeley High School. Nominated by a former student he is responsible for building the Bulkeley's Music Program from the ground up. Tim designated the Bulkeley High School Alumni Association to receive the \$250 donation.

The Neighborhood Service Awards recognize individuals in the community who have made outstanding contributions to Hartford neighborhoods. This year SINA donated \$250 to a nonprofit chosen by each award recipient.

Connecticut Children's Medical Center's Institutional Award



Myrna Millet-Saez has worked for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center and UConn Health Center's Pediatric, Youth and Family HIV program since 1995. For over 20 years Myrna has been on the front lines of prevention, intervention, and care management, aiding adults, children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. Myrna stated: "It's good when you find a field, a job you feel comfortable in. That's me, I like what I do." Myrna designated the CCMC/UConn Pediatric & Youth HIV program to receive the \$250 donation.

Ivan A. Backer Scholarship



From left to right: Imanol Santana, Liliana P. Garcia Guzman, Grecia A. Zaldivar, and Ivan Backer.

In honor of Ivan A. Backer, three scholarships were awarded to Bulkeley High School seniors continuing their education in an accredited 4-year postsecondary program. Selected based on academic achievement and community service; the awardees are Liliana Patricia Garcia Guzman, Imanol Santana and Grecia Zaldivar.

Liliana will attend the University of Connecticut to pursue a career as a psychologist. *Imanol* will attend the University of Connecticut to pursue a career in business administration. *Grecia* will attend the Central Connecticut State University to pursue a career as a psychologist.

SINA Student Support Scholarship

Four scholarships were awarded to Hartford residents attending Capital Community College to provide much needed financial support. The 2016 SINA Student Support Scholarship recipients are Shantel Cameron, Tiffany Lewis, Reykelis Rosario, and Torre Shorter.

Shantel Cameron is enrolled in nursing courses and plans to become a mid-wife. *Tiffany Lewis & Torre Shorter* are pursuing careers in nursing. *Reykelis Rosario's* goal is to be a teacher.



From left to right: Steve Balcanoff, Katherine Ramirez, Tiffany Lewis, Torre Shorter, Shantel Cameron, Reykelis Rosario, Joseph Barber, and Melvyn Colon.

NEWS BRIEF:

Maria C. Sanchez Elementary School

SINA has begun a new partnership with Maria C. Sanchez Elementary School to co-sponsor their Science Fair. The Fair was held on April 28th. SINA's contributions included recruiting judges and supplying award medals to first, second, and third place winners of each grade (pre-K to 5th grade). Six employees of Connecticut Children's Medical Center, a firefighter, and a police officer were recruited by SINA as judges. Winners received their awards on June 3rd during the Maria Sanchez' Community Meeting Celebration.



From left to right: Sharlin Maximo, Steve Balcanoff, Chair of REACH Committee, and Ailyn Santana

Community Engagement Brings New Resources to the Community

Conversations between neighbors are a necessary component of creating a healthy community that is able to advocate for its specific interests. Adrian Texidor, SINA's Community Engagement Specialist, encourages these conversations and pays attention. What he learns helps him focus his energy and to work with neighborhood leaders to bring resources to our community.

This year SINA held a dinner for homeowners who have purchased a SINA home and organized a summer cookout for residents of Cityscape Apartments. These events were held to create connections between residents and to identify issues for collective action.

SINA also participated in the Maple Avenue Revitalization Group's annual Community Day at the Webster Theatre and spoke to many of the 900 residents who attended this event.

Our conversations with residents at each of these events helped SINA reconnect with SINA homeowners, SINA tenants, and members of the wider community who live in the Frog Hollow, Barry Square, and the Behind the Rocks neighborhoods.

Each person we spoke with expressed concerns about public safety and litter. As a result SINA has increased its involvement in fostering strong police-community relations in order to efficiently and effectively reduce crime. In an effort to



During SINA's Homeowners Dinner

encourage and facilitate police-community cooperation SINA adopted the Public Safety Team model developed by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) in conjunction with several community-based organizations around the country.

SINA was selected by LISC to receive a HUD Section 4 Public Safety Team grant to establish a team in South Hartford. SINA is only the third organization to be selected by LISC for funding under this program. The grant will be used to work with community residents and other stakeholders to create a public safety plan and to identify the resources needed to implement the plan.

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There's a New Sergeant in Town: Featuring Sergeant Kevin Ouellette



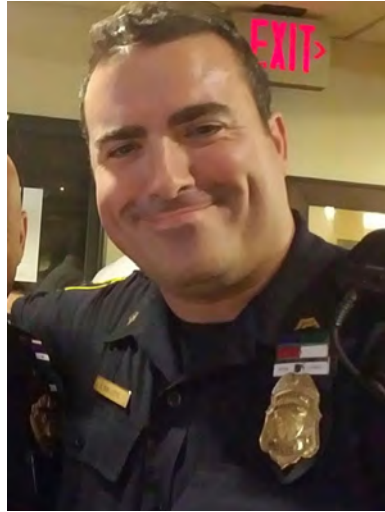
Community Engagement Brings New Resources to the Community

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To address littering, Adrian solicited the help of Hartford Community Court. The administrators of the community service program agreed to add the streets identified by SINA to its service area. Within weeks, young men and women in orange vests were cleaning up Madison and other nearby streets.

Our community engagement effort reached into the public schools this year. SINA collaborated with HOLA, Bank of America's Hispanic employee's affinity group, to donate 200 backpacks with school supplies for students who attend María Sanchez Elementary School.

The new resources SINA helped bring to our community started with conversations with community residents. These led to collective action and to advocacy to address the public safety and litter issues that are of such concern to all of us who live, work and play here. If you want to be involved in these conversations call SINA and ask for Adrian.



Sergeant Kevin Ouellette

Thirteen year Hartford Police Department (HPD) veteran Sergeant Kevin Ouellette has been assigned to take over the responsibilities of retired Sergeant Dixon Vega as South District Administrative Sergeant (SDAS). Sgt. Ouellette leads a team of officers whose responsibilities include addressing quality of life issues and crimes such as excessive noise, public drinking, vagrancy, drug-dealing, and motor vehicle violations.

Sgt. Kevin Ouellette was raised in a family which was involved in the a construction business. He learned very early on the benefits and opportunities in this industry but decided it wasn't for him. He searched for something

different. Through his courses at Tunxis Community College he explored careers focused on helping others. This exploration led to a course of study in Criminal Justice.

Upon graduation from Tunxis, Kevin submitted applications to join the police departments of Hartford County's most populated cities. He explained his decision by noting that "It provides for good chances to positively impact the greatest number of people. Serving so many more people helps to energize me getting up in the morning and going to work." Fortunately for Hartford, Sergeant Ouellette was accepted into the Hartford Police Department's class of 2001.

Sergeant Ouellette has sought training opportunities whenever available. This thirst to improve his knowledge and skills has led to a variety of jobs in the department and eventually, to a promotion to Sergeant.

He uses his experiences on the job and his training to aid in the personal and professional development of younger officers and new recruits. Of particular importance to him is helping officers understand how victim and witness perspectives of a crime shape police response to it.

Although his position allows Sgt. Ouellette to impact a broader citizenry, he speaks fondly of his days on patrol and of the daily opportunities it gave him to meet and talk with dozens of residents and business owners. This was a time when people would ask him for help. Although as the SDAS he now spends most of his time managing other officers, he continues to meet with community leaders, business owners, and residents to address specific complaints or concerns.

Sergeant Ouellette is based at the HPD Trinity College substation located on the corner of Broad Street and New Britain Avenue, which was built with support from Trinity College.



HEALTH SPOTLIGHT

United Technologies Family Resource Center

The United Technologies Family Resource Center is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of our patients and families through family-centered care, education, and support. All patients and families are welcome to use the UTC Family Resource Center and its services during their experience at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Education

The UTC Family Resource Center offers different educational opportunities for patients and families, including:

- Computer stations providing access to information on medical conditions
- Kids Education Station, offering interactive and educational games
- Classroom-style education sessions with providers
- Resource library
- Information sessions with community organizations

Support

Our expert staff will support patients and families through their journey at Connecticut Children's. Our Family Education and Resource Coordinator connects families to many resources, including:

- Health information
- Support groups and services
- State and community programs

Feel free to visit any time during standard operating hours; no appointment necessary

Play

The UTC Family Resource Center has fun activities for children of all ages, including:

- A children's library
- Toys and board games
- Arts and crafts activities
- Electronic "Smart Table" loaded with games
- Apple iPads available

Relaxation

Located on the second floor of the Medical Center, the UTC Family Resource Center is a comfortable place to relax before appointments or during procedures.

Amenities include:

- Free coffee, tea, and hot chocolate
- Charging stations and power cords
- Reading nook with flat-screen TV and Roku
- 200-gallon fish aquarium
- Noise-reduction chairs for extra peace and quiet



Article accessed at www.connecticutchildrens.org/patients-and-families/your-childs-visit/utc-family-resource-center on December 13, 2016



NEWS BRIEF:

SINA Receives Public Safety Grant

SINA was one of three organizations to receive a Public Safety Team Grant from the Federal Department of Housing; the other two organizations are located in Richmond, Virginia and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This particular grant is administered by the Community Safety Initiative of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

This grant will allow SINA to contract with a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design specialist who will conduct safety and security assessments on current SINA properties and provide suggestions to SINA on how we can incorporate safety and security improvements into any future construction. Additionally, this consultant will provide a safety and security workshop for the residents of Frog Hollow in the upcoming months.

FEATURED BUSINESS

BiCi Co. - 415 Park Street, Hartford, CT



From left to right: Ken, Seth Max (volunteer), Martin, Wanda Quiros (volunteer), Kendrick, Angel, and Brandyn

In 1878 Pope Bicycles was a major manufacturer in the city of Hartford supporting Albert Pope's Good Roads Movement's push for paved roads. In 2014 the last bicycle shop in Hartford shut down.

Identifying a youth and community activity vacuum, Anthony Cherolis, Youth Specialist at Center for Latino Progress (CLP) approached Yanil Teron, its Executive Director, with the idea of BiCi Co. Together they researched models of bicycling communities in nearby states and thought Hartford could use and support a community bicycle repair shop. CLP's BiCi Co program opened its doors in June 2015.

Anthony Cherolis believes the "great thing about a bicycle is that you can use it to teach everything from bicycling history to engineering," which aligns with the Center for Latino Progresses overall educational mission.

BiCi Co started by giving 30 summer youth interns an opportunity for hands-on bicycle education and service learning projects. This framework developed into the community bike shop that now exists. Since then, the program has grown to include Bikes for Job Access, Earn-A Bike and BIKE LIFE courses as well as Do-It-Yourself (DIY) member hours for teens and adults.

- **Summer Youth Employment Program:** A five week paid "work and learn" experience for students between 8th and 12th grades. Youth placed at BiCi Co learn about bicycle history, engineering, maintenance, and repair. Youth also have the opportunity to train others on bicycle safety.
- **Bikes for Job Access:** BiCi Co works with local shelters and CLP's job training programs to identify individuals who can benefit from having a bicycle to get to work. This program is on a referral basis.

- **Earn-A-Bike:** An eight-week course for teens ages 13-18. Participants complete the program earning the bike they worked on. They earn and get to keep a bike by learning bicycle maintenance, Hartford's bike history, bicycle science, and safety skills.
- **BIKE LIFE:** A program in cooperation with local partners that provides bicycle maintenance and safety seminars followed by a spring bicycle giveaway event. Last year's BIKE LIFE program taught 80 teens, plus parents and siblings, about bike safety and distributed 62 bikes with locks, lights, and helmets at the BIKE LIFE Festival.
- **Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Member Hours:** Member Hours are Wednesday and Saturday afternoons with a Women's Day on Monday afternoons. When asked about why the center has women's only DIY hours Tony remarked, "we want everyone to feel welcome to use this space." Memberships are paid annually at \$100 for individuals, daily for \$5, or at no cost by accumulating equity (by volunteering 10-15 hours in the shop). Cherolis's motto is "Your hands should be dirtier than mine." During DIY Member Hours you can learn how to tune up your own bike by shadowing mechanics and experienced bicycle enthusiasts. You can also purchase a used bike from BiCi Co's inventory of refurbished bikes.

With more bike routes and shared bike roads being developed it's important for all to know the rules of the road. BiCi Co is making an effort to grow the Hartford bicycling community and increase mobility and access to jobs for youth and adults while supporting bicycle safety. SINA has supported BiCi Co by purchasing 3 professional quality bike mechanic stands. Items which enhance the safety, ease, and efficiency of the students and members working on their bikes. BiCi Co can always use your help, and no knowledge of bicycle maintenance is needed. For more information or to register as a DIY Member, visit www.bicico.org.



Kendrick installing a front light using the new work stands.

Frog Hollow State of Mind

HeartBeat Ensemble brought community theater to The Studio at Billings Forge with its performance of *Frog Hollow State of Mind*. The performance piece, written by Frog Hollow resident Cin Martinez, is structured around a mother and son relationship but includes a series of vignettes that illustrate the complex lives, concerns, and aspirations of Frog Hollow residents.

Frog Hollow State of Mind is the third performance piece in the Ensemble's Neighborhood Investigative Project series that uses interviews with residents, members of community-based organizations and local business owners as the basis of its script. Asylum Hill was the subject of a previous performance piece in the Neighborhood Investigative Project series and the Behind the Rocks/Southwest neighborhood will be featured in an upcoming performance.

Act One was a scripted performance that made use of the information gathered via the interviews, in many instances using actual quotes. The mostly bilingual cast used English and Spanish interspersed in such a way to make it possible for monolinguals to understand the message. The use of "Spanglish" brought recognition and laughter to Latino audience members who grew up in Hartford or have lived here for a long time. The script avoided stereotypes and provoked serious thought about important issues in the lives of Frog Hollow residents. The highly charged theme of sexual and gender identity was treated in a sensitive manner. Real Latino family norms and values were depicted with an excellent selection of cultural adages and phrases. An interesting but not fully developed aside concerned the robbery of a Wells Fargo depot in 1983 and how it

continues to be viewed in the Latino community. These references to local history, colorful characters and local expressions created a sense of connection between performers and the audience.

Act Two was an unscripted conversation between the artists and the audience. The civic dialogue that followed allowed the audience to express feelings provoked by the performance. Audience members discussed some of the themes surfaced during the performance including appalling housing conditions (disrepair), less than desirable police/community relations, illicit drug activity, gun violence, insufficient recreational facilities, lack of affordable rental housing, and the need for increased civic engagement and political empowerment.

The organizations that provided funding for this project, including Trinity College, SINA, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Billings Forge Community Works, and The Betty Knox Foundation, believe it can foster more community conversation and encourage Frog Hollow residents to become civically involved.

HeartBeat Ensemble is a 15 year old organization located in the Carriage House Theater on Farmington Avenue in Hartford. Its mission is to "create provocative theater that connects our community beyond the traditional barriers of class, race, geography and gender." As such, *Frog Hollow State of Mind* not only celebrates culture, but also involves residents in identifying barriers to neighborhood improvement.

NEWS BRIEF:

SINA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

SINA extends a hearty welcome to Barry Kriesberg and Dickens Mathieu, our newest board members.



Barry Kriesberg,
Vice President of Operations
at Hartford Hospital



Dickens Mathieu,
General Counsel and
Secretary of the College
at Trinity College

SINA FEATURED IN NEW ANCHOR INSTITUTION JOURNAL

The inaugural issue of the Journal of Anchor Institutions and Communities, published in October of 2016, features an article written by executive director Melvyn Colon on the history and current activities of SINA. The article, "SINA – An Enduring Multi-Anchor Partnership in Hartford", is an elaboration of the presentation he gave at the annual conference of the Anchor Institution Task Force in 2015. It goes back more than 38 years to the founding of SINA and makes the point that the three institutions that make up SINA, the college and the two hospitals, have been acting like anchor institutions for a longer period of time than almost any other anchor partnership in the country. They created among the first "buy local, hire local and live local" programs in the country. SINA's long history of involvement with the public schools is also detailed as is the work of the REACH Committee (REACH is an acronym for Recognition, Education, Achievement and Community Health). Colon describes the Learning Corridor as "one of the largest and most ambitious redevelopment projects ever undertaken in the City of Hartford". He recounts the development and rationale for SINA's growing homeownership program as well as more recent program initiatives in community engagement and economic development.



A copy of the journal can be accessed at (http://www.margainc.com/files_images/general/AITF_Journal_2016_Vol_1.pdf). A copy of Colon's article can be found on SINA's website at www.sinainc.org/resources.

The Anchor Institution Task Force, formed in 2009, is described as "a growing network of over 700 leaders promoting the engagement of anchor institutions—including colleges, universities, hospitals, community foundations, libraries, arts institutions, and other anchors—in community and economic development", (<http://www.margainc.com/initiatives/aitf/>). An inspiration for the founding of AITF was the work of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania.

SINA and MHAGH Collaborate to Develop a Neighborhood Plan for Frog Hollow



Under the auspices of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), SINA along with The Mutual Housing Association of Greater Hartford, developed a joint five-year plan to improve quality of life for Frog Hollow residents and businesses. The plan "Goals & Strategies for a Welcoming & Engaged Community of Opportunity, 2016-

2020" lays out how SINA and Mutual Housing will focus time and resources over the next five years and what they will accomplish.

The joint planning effort underlines a commitment made by both organizations to join forces on initiatives that will improve the economic status, housing conditions and quality of life of neighborhood residents. For the most part, the organizations pursue a division of labor with Mutual Housing doing development of affordable rental housing and SINA developing homeownership opportunities. One area of overlap is neighborhood engagement and leadership development. The planning effort has identified opportunities for the two organizations to work together on a broad strategy of community building that encompasses these two activities. The organizations have started to work together on specific community building projects. The emerging economic development initiatives will present another opportunity for the organizations to collaborate on specific projects.

The plan is based on conversations with the significant neighborhood stakeholders including neighborhood residents, MHAGF tenants, the NRZ's, the three major institutions and other community partners. It envisions a neighborhood where collaboration between residents, businesses, and institutions is valued and supported for the betterment of all; where inclusive decision making happens that leads to initiatives that have neighborhood-wide impact; and, where residents are actively involved in molding the public and political life of their neighborhood.

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The plan focuses on issues important to those who live, work, and play in Frog Hollow. These include opportunities for employment, homeownership opportunities and affordable rental housing, youth advancement, increased public safety, economic development, and an overall enhanced quality of life. The plan includes priorities and goals for each of these four principal areas as well as a process for evaluating progress.

With the goal of increasing affordable rental housing stock, the plan calls for nearly 140 units for very low, low, and moderate income families. These will be for individuals, families, and for the elderly, as well as for those needing supportive housing. Ground floor commercial spaces will be renovated. Rehabilitation or new construction will yield 32 homes for sale.

In the economic development arena, SINA and its partners will focus available resources on employment services and identification of job opportunities within the two organizations and within the SINA institutions.

SINA Anchor Institutions' purchasing activity will be analyzed to explore market-driven small business opportunities to meet demand for products and services.

The plan also emphasizes improving neighborhood safety and reducing blight. In collaboration with the Hartford Police Department (HPD), SINA will convene a community Safety Team to enhance police-community communication and crime reporting. Working with the City, Mutual Housing of Greater Hartford and SINA will advocate for more effective and immediate vacant lot use and blight remediation strategies. This will include analyzing and determining how best to implement tax-lien sales and the use of revenue generated by such sales.

The plan is an important tool for anyone wanting to participate and contribute to Frog Hollow neighborhood development. It can be viewed in its entirety at: www.sinainc.org/resources.

Affordable Homes on the Way Thanks to \$2.5 Million State Grant Continued from page 1

SINA has developed 83 affordable rental units and 59 affordable one- and two-family homes for homeownership in Frog Hollow and surrounding neighborhoods.

Martin Gavin, President and CEO of Connecticut Children's Medical Center when the grant was awarded in 2015, hailed the award to SINA as "an important step in improving quality of life for residents of the Frog Hollow and surrounding neighborhoods. We know that the health of our children is influenced by many factors. SINA's homeownership program contributes to greater resilience for the families that make SINA properties their new homes. Supporting the SINA partnership is one of the many ways that we work in Hartford to safeguard the health of our children."

"This is a terrific achievement for the neighborhood," said Stuart Markowitz, President of Hartford Hospital. "We support SINA and we are proud to contribute to revitalizing the community – through the homeownership programs and support for educational opportunities. For 159 years, Hartford Hospital has been committed to improving the quality of life and economic vitality of our community and our staff. A strong healthy community is important to residents, to our staff, our patients and families."



Representative SINA Home

Joanne Berger-Sweeney, President of Trinity College, applauded the selection of SINA for the grant award, stating, "Trinity has developed important partnerships with community groups throughout the city. Our work with SINA is particularly focused on reinvigorating the community in our own backyard, and we are proud to be a partner in SINA's homeownership programs. These new funds will provide more homeownership opportunities in our neighborhood and further strengthen the South End of Hartford."

Jane Baird, President of the SINA Board of Directors and Director of Government Relations at Connecticut Children's Medical Center said that "All of us at SINA are thrilled to receive the award from the Affordable Homeownership Program and we look forward to using the funds to continue our work that aims to improve the quality of life in Hartford's South End for all those who live, work, play, study and do business here."

MY TRAIN TO FREEDOM – IVAN A. BACKER'S MEMOIR OF NAZI EUROPE AND A LIFE OF ACTIVISM



Ivan Backer was SINA's first Chief Executive. He served in this role from 1978 to 1996. His retirement 18 years ago has allowed him to work on other projects. One of these projects was to write a memoir that recounts his escape in 1939 from Nazi occupied Czechoslovakia in the Kindertransport organized by Sir Nicholas Winton, often referred to as the "English Schindler". As a ten-year old he left his family and friends to board a train on a journey that would take him through Germany to the Netherlands, where he boarded a ship to England. His mother found a place for him on the train and fought her own misgivings and her sister's admonitions against dividing the family. Ivan believes that this move may have saved him from the fate of so many of his Jewish countrymen whose life ended in a Nazi concentration camp. His family eventually reunited in England where Ivan attended several schools. In 1944 the family made its way to New York City, where he grew to manhood.

Ivan came to Trinity College in 1969 to work as director of the Office of Community Affairs. In this role he connected Trinity students to the community outside the campus. In his memoir Ivan recounts his early years at Trinity and the community activism that eventually led to the formation of SINA. He writes warmly of the many people he met along the way and the causes that he joined. These were all linked by his religious conviction and passion for social justice. Like many survivors of genocidal persecution Ivan asks, "Why was I spared?" Ivan answers this question by dedicating his life to social activism.

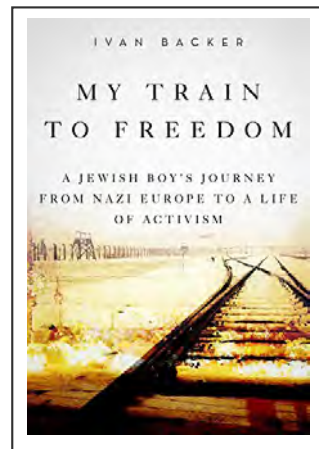
Some readers may be interested in Ivan's faith journey, from Judaism to his eventual ordination as an Episcopal Priest. He even served for several years as a parish priest in New Jersey. Ivan provides evidence that although he has answered for himself the questions regarding his religious identity, he continues to engage the fundamental questions of faith and to reject dogma.

There is much reflection in this memoir about the forces that shaped his life and the experiences that formed his values. Spending an afternoon with this book is a rewarding investment because the reader will inevitably connect with a place, person, reflection or experience that Ivan describes with great skill.

Ivan has done readings of *My Train to Freedom* and participated in interviews throughout the country and in Europe. This past April Ivan did a reading at the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC.

Ivan's influence at SINA continues. Every year we give out the Ivan Backer Scholarship to three students at Bulkeley High School to attend a four year college of their choice. Whenever he's not traveling to a far-flung destination (Ivan is a citizen of the world), he will attend the award ceremony and pose with the students, who often relate stories almost as dramatic as Ivan's own story.

My Train to Freedom: A Jewish Boy's Journey from Nazi Europe to a Life of Activism, by Ivan A. Backer. Published in 2016 by Skyhorse Publishing, New York, NY. info@skyhorsepublishing.com. Because it is a recent book by a local author, copies may be found in local bookstores.





Wolcott Street home

SINA SELLS HOMES ON WOLCOTT AND SQUIRE STREETS

Continued from page 1

The Wolcott Street homes date back to the Civil War era. The restoration of these historic homes and their conversion to homeownership housing represents a milestone in our efforts to help more families achieve homeownership right in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. With few homeownership opportunities available in Frog Hollow, many families must look elsewhere to find one and two family homes in excellent condition.

The homes on Wolcott and Squire Streets are especially attractive because they have a rental unit which brings in revenues that help lower the cost of homeownership. In addition, the interiors are brand new. They have been thoughtfully remodeled to provide comfort and peace of mind to buyers. They are designed to be highly energy efficient. This makes them even more affordable.

These homes are appealing for many reasons beyond value for the money. They are located in an area that has unique assets. There are several excellent schools within reasonable walking distance. Hartford Hospital and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, two hospitals that contributed to the construction of these homes, are a short walk away. Trinity College, which also contributed to the construction, houses a fine library as well as Cinestudio, one of the best movie theaters in the region. At Park and Washington Streets you can take a bus to any part of the city and to many suburban towns. Park Street, with its wonderful variety of good restaurants, bakeries and stores of different types, is around the corner. Bushnell Park and Pope Park are no farther away than a brisk walk. And if you walk a little farther you can get to the many fine eateries and entertainment venues in downtown Hartford and Parkville.

SINA will continue to build housing for those looking for homeownership opportunities in Frog Hollow. In 2017 we will start construction on 12 new and rehabilitated homes. For more information please contact Lesbia Hernandez at Re/Max Renaissance Realty (860) 756-0980.



2017 SINA Neighborhood Service Awards **SEEKING NOMINATIONS**

The Neighborhood Service Awards program, sponsored by SINA, recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Hartford's southside neighborhoods.

Anyone who lives or works (for pay or as a volunteer) in the Hartford neighborhoods south of Capitol Avenue is eligible. You can nominate yourself or someone you know.

Call the SINA office at (860) 493-1618 for a copy of the Candidate Nomination Form or nominate online at www.sinainc.org/nsa2017.

**Nominations are due by
Monday, April 10, 2017**

Sample Categories:

Community Volunteers
Fire Fighters
Agency Board Members
Police Officers
Social Workers
Store Owners
Recreation Workers
Government Officials
Teachers



“M” is for Music, Mariachi and Mosaica!



Students during their guitar class. (Photo: Mariachi Academy of CT)

The rebirth of the “Arts and Culture” section of *VIVA Hartford News* is brought to you by Cultura Mosaica, an organization whose mission is to promote the culture and Latino heritage in our communities. Cultura Mosaica is featuring the work of the Mariachi Academy of Connecticut.

The Mariachi Academy of Connecticut has been in existence since 2008 under the direction of its founder, Evangeline Mendoza Bourgeois. It is a program in collaboration with the Spanish Community of Wallingford. From its humble beginnings, the Academy has been conducting music and music theory classes in Wallingford for children and teens between 7 and 17 years old. Something very peculiar worth noting is that all students, 100% of those who have studied at the Academy during the last eight years, have continued onto their university studies.

After its successful programming in Wallingford, the Academy opened its campus in Hartford this last summer to duplicate its music program. Both academies led their intense daily instruction programs for a week where the students learned various techniques and songs, which they ultimately presented together in front of an audience.

Classes in Hartford are conducted in two groups in the Sacred Heart Church located at 24 Ely Street (behind the new stadium) and there are spaces available in the beginners group. The Mariachi Corazon de Plata, with registration open, meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7pm; Mariachi Corazon de Oro, which is made up of advanced students and requires an audition before joining, meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6-7:30p.

The Academy’s faculty is comprised of all the members of the Mariachi México Antiguo, who had been travel-

ing from Las Vegas, Nevada during the last three years to direct and facilitate the music program. So far ten of the twelve members have moved to Connecticut to work more closely with the students. Their physical presence expose the students to a more holistic education where they learn about the Mexican culture, the language, the history of Mariachi and also to perfect the art of reading, writing, criticizing and presenting music.

All the members of Mariachi México Antiguo have completed their formal university studies in music, and several of them started from a very young age with a focus on mariachi music as well as classical music. At this time, the last two members are completing their university studies in Nevada before settling in Connecticut to join the rest of the faculty.

Among the future plans for the Academy and the faculty are: an expansion of the Academy throughout Connecticut, including Bridgeport and West Haven; establishing the Academy as a nonprofit organization; leading the students to national mariachi competitions; and making Mariachi México Antiguo the authority in mariachi music par excellence in the East coast.

Readers interested in enrolling their children in Mariachi Corazon de Oro in Hartford should contact Director Adam Romo at 860-478-2566. More information is available at www.mariachiacademyct.com.

Cultura Mosaica looks forward to promoting, sharing, collaborating with you and attending your events whenever possible. If you have information that you would like for them to help you disseminate via their social media accounts or with their networks, email info@culturamosaica.org.



Violin class with the little ones. (Photo: Mariachi Academy of CT)



SINA WORKS WITH RESIDENTS TO CREATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Continued from page 2

Peter Kwass, SINA's consultant, gathered data from numerous sources including interviews with residents and neighborhood partners to develop a comprehensive study which identified a number of strategies that SINA could pursue in order to increase employment for neighborhood residents and create more business opportunities for local merchants and business people. The study contains unique information that has never been compiled including hiring and purchasing by the three SINA institutions as well as information on the shopping habits of institutional employees and students.

SINA hired Leadership Greater Hartford to lead a set of discussions of the study with our most important stakeholders. Ted Carroll and Ana Valentin-Jackson served as our facilitators. One stakeholder meeting brought together policy makers, government officials and representatives from philanthropic organizations to identify opportunities to work with SINA on the implementation of the recommended strategies. A second meeting with neighborhood residents and community partners, including the three NRZ's with which SINA works, reviewed the recommended strategies and ranked them according to priority and importance to the neighborhood.

There was general agreement at the second stakeholder meeting on the strategies that should take priority. On the basis of these discussions SINA's board of directors identified the following three strategies to pursue as programs:

1. Placement of neighborhood residents in entry-level jobs at the hospitals and college
2. Support youth career exploration and preparation through engagement with a range of careers at the hospitals and college
3. Establish a small-scale institutional purchasing program with particular focus on food services, building and grounds services, automotive services, and printing/graphic design.

In addition, they identified three strategies that SINA would pursue as initiatives, or campaigns. These involve advocacy and promotion rather than direct implementation.

4. Launch a restaurant and grocery products market development initiative to promote local enterprises within the institutions and throughout the city
5. Advocate with the City for public realm improvements on key commercial corridors and gateways
6. Convene a task force of key stakeholders to develop a neighborhood cultural initiative

SINA is currently engaged in the implementation of these strategies. The first of the strategies to be implemented will be a program to place trained, job-ready residents in jobs at the SINA institutions. We are currently exploring referral systems with our partners in the workforce development field in order to develop a training pipeline for neighborhood residents interested in working in the institutions.

We will also begin working in the near future to implement a purchasing program that will identify opportunities for local businesses to become vendors to the institutions. Our REACH committee is working with the Maria Sanchez School to find ways to support youth career exploration. We are working with Cultural Mosaica, a new community-based organization that is promoting Latino cultural education. Through our support for Cultura Mosaica, the development of a neighborhood cultural initiative is moving forward.

SINA will also intensify its efforts to market local businesses. In the past we have featured and promoted Frog Hollow restaurants in this newsletter. One recent publication on the eateries at El Mercado was featured by Trinity College in its internal communication systems. We will continue to work to identify a greater variety of neighborhood businesses and to reach larger audiences.



SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

207 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Nonprofit Organization
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About SINA

Since its founding in 1978 SINA has worked with community organizations on issues such as affordable rental housing, education, public safety, homeownership and commercial development. With dozens of apartment units rehabilitated, homeownership programs, and the opening of The Learning Corridor, its visible impact in Frog Hollow, Barry Square and South Green neighborhoods has been significant and its community involvement has been a constant presence.

SINA continues operations today in offices at 207 Washington Street. For more information call (860) 493-1618 or visit www.sinainc.org.

Consider joining us at the next ***Frog Hollow NRZ Meeting***

The Frog Hollow NRZ (Neighborhood Revitalization Zone) aims to revitalize Frog Hollow through the collaborative involvement of residents, businesses and government to find a common vision for the neighborhood. The Frog Hollow NRZ meets the **3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:30pm to 7:00pm.**

Odd Months: The Lyceum (227 Lawrence Street).

Even Months: Trinity College Center for Urban & Global Studies (70 Vernon Street).

To get involved, please contact

Adrian Texidor at atexidor@sinainc.org.

For more information visit www.fhnrz.com.