



Melvyn Colon,
Executive Director of SINA, Inc.

SINA's Summer of Community Engagement

SINA organized and participated in several community engagement activities this summer.

Neighborhood Clean-Up with Know Thy Neighbor - In June, we worked with Know Thy Neighbor (KTN), a grassroots, faith-based coalition, to involve youth in a neighborhood cleanup. KTN brings together residents, police, nonprofit partners, churches and fire personnel to promote healing conversations and carry out projects together. Young people from the faith-based Hartford Project cleaned Madison, Jefferson, Broad and Affleck Streets by painting fences, mowing grass and doing repairs.



As part of this activity SINA created a demonstration garden on its lot at 1064 Broad Street. Youth from the Hartford Project and Compass Peacebuilders participated in growing healthy food by planting tomatoes, zucchini and green peppers. SINA harvested the vegetables and donated them to a food kitchen.



Tenant Cook-Out - August saw a combined cook-out and back-to-school event for tenants in our properties on Broad, Jefferson, School, Vernon and Affleck Streets, and Park Terrace.

We hosted 25 tenant families at our newly fenced-in property on Broad and Ward Streets thanks to the outreach efforts of our property manager, Marisol Medina. Bank of America donated back-to-school supplies that enabled us to give backpacks filled with supplies to 34 children. The delicious food was prepared by Yisenia Martinez and her mother.

Wolcott and Squire Streets Verbena/Block Party and Street Clean-Up - This is our third year partnering with Vecinos Unidos to organize the Wolcott and Squire Verbena for a neighborhood clean-up and party that took place September 23 (so okay, it was already fall.) The street-cleanup on Wolcott, Squire and Ward Streets was followed by a block party with music and dance performances, food and activities for children. The 150 attendees included performers, residents and folks who stopped by to enjoy the delightful weather. City Councilor Wildaliz Bermudez made a passionate speech for aid to Puerto Rico. We received generous support from developer Carlos Valinho and the law firm of Richard Zayas.



SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

207 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106

About SINA

Since its founding in 1977 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 the 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 sinainc.org.



NEWS BRIEF: *SINA Welcomes Newest Staff Member*

Elsa Huertas has recently joined SINA as the new Career Navigator. Elsa brings with her a wealth of work experience and skills that can cross over to many areas within an organization. She is versed in all areas of HR from recruiting to employee relations to labor relations/negotiations and training. Elsa has held Director of Human Resources, Director of Programs and Director of Employee Assistance and Career Agent/Liaison positions. In the role of Career Agent for CT Works she provided career counseling and coaching to the dislocated workers within the assigned region. Her knowledge of the job market and trends allowed her to coach clients to ensure they had the necessary skills needed to move forward in their professional lives. Her passion is to get the job done and to meet the needs of the employer and the employees!



SINA in the COMMUNITY



SINA is a partnership between Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. 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.



Welcome on Wolcott

Luz Vargas has lived on Wolcott Street in SINA's neighborhood for more than 40 years and she loves it. She originally chose the location because it was so close to the hospital, pharmacy and banks, and she has fond memories of the parade that used to come by, celebrating Puerto Rican culture. Luz has made Wolcott Street her "little nest," raising her children, grandchildren and a great grandchild here. Many family members have stayed nearby, so Luz always has a big pot of food cooking to welcome them. She feels very safe here surrounded by family and long time friends, and will walk her dog at all hours. Luz doesn't hesitate to ask people where they're from if she doesn't recognize them, especially young people hanging out. She finds most people very respectful and says most of the neighbors look out for each other.

"I think the neighborhood has changed for the better. It's good that SINA has done renovations here," says Luz. She believes empty or deteriorated lots should be turned into small homes, rather than large buildings, to preserve a neighborhood feeling. "Good people need housing," according to Luz, who states confidently "I live peacefully here."



Sharing Story & Soil

387 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT

The quirky coffee shop just opened this summer, yet midmorning draws a steady stream of visitors in advance of the even busier lunchtime. Everyone receives a cheerful greeting from Sarah, who owns Story & Soil with her husband Michael McCoy and their partner, Michael Acosta. It's a first business for all three Hartford residents whose diverse backgrounds blended into a shared vision of coffee quality and community building.

It's working, as evidenced by a nonstop flow of state workers who "love the convenience." They were joined by a couple of older women "just blowing through town" and a young man who "had a meeting at the Capitol, heard about it and wanted to check it out."

What they found was a tiny, charming space filled with soothing colors, repurposed lighting fixtures, fresh flowers (arranged weekly by Sarah's mother) and light bites paired with delicious drinks.

Sarah "loves to incorporate new things" and is enthusiastic about seasonal offerings, creative coffee cocktails and the current favorite, Spanish latte. She explains the partners "did a lot of the renovation, climbing scaffolding to hand paint the crown molding" and reusing old floor joists for shelving. They "play a lot of vinyl" on a turntable hidden in a wall niche, because Sarah says "music is very important to us."

Best of all is "the great satisfaction" of bringing people together, building community and contributing to the renaissance of the neighborhood. Visitors range from couples on first dates to city leaders in meetings. Sarah is pleased to provide a space where "micro-relationships are making a macro difference" in Hartford.

Seeking Nominations for 2018 Neighborhood Service Awards

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/nsa2018.



Helping Hartford Women

Dr. Peter Beller is the Medical Director for Women's Ambulatory Services at Hartford Hospital and he manages their Women's Clinic, located on Park Street. He is also a member of the SINA board of directors.



The Women's Clinic is a full service ob-gyn practice with 20,000 visits per year, mostly from women who live or work in the neighborhood. Dr. Beller and the clinic's six doctors work with medical residents from UConn and Dartmouth, midwives, advanced practice nurses and physician's assistants. They provide everything from annual exams and pap smears to contraception and surgery, and they deliver 800-1000 babies annually.

All staff members speak at least some Spanish. Medical assistants and secretaries are required to be bilingual because approximately 70% of the patients are Hispanic. While it used to be mostly Puerto Ricans, the population has shifted. Other islands and Central America are now represented, so the staff constantly deals with different cultures. Lately, immigrants from Albania and Ghana have moved to the Airport Road area and are visiting the clinic.

Dr. Beller says being a board member provides him with an entirely new perspective on his work at the clinic. His background was private practice, so he finds SINA board service rewarding because it is "an opportunity to learn new facets" of healthcare. He finds fellow board members very engaged and "willing to help (him) understand the social services world." Working with SINA gives Dr. Beller a "fuller flavor for the neighborhood and his patients... it has been an enjoyable journey."

Recognizing REACH Winners

The REACH (Recognition Education Achievement and Community Health) awards are given annually to people who epitomize SINA's commitment to neighborhood revitalization and community. Award winners are chosen by a committee that focuses on youth development, neighborhood advocacy and community leadership. The award ceremony was held at Trinity College in June.



Katherine Ramirez, Cora Mercer, Christopher Brown, Joshua Michtom and Steve Balcanoff.

Neighborhood Service Awards

Christopher Brown puts his beliefs to work every day, reducing his carbon footprint and providing a role model by bicycling to his jobs at Trinity and BiCiCo. An advocate for the community, Chris attends city council meetings to promote bike lanes and bicycle stands, and he served for years on the board of the Frog Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone.

Joshua Michtom attended law school to help people and recently returned to his love of music, recognizing the arts as a way to bring people together. He helps children through his work as a public defender for CT and he is the founder of the Hartford Hot Several, a city-wide brass band that appears at festivals and brings music to schools.

Cora Mercer is passionate about her work at Hartford Neighborhood Centers, where she is now executive director, because she has intimate knowledge of why the services of HNC are so important. This drives her commitment and longevity at HNC, which serves 300 children from Frog Hollow with early childhood programs, a food bank and summer camp.



Karla Spurlock-Evans, Alison Draper and Chanel Erasmus.

Trinity College Institutional Award

Dr. Alison Draper is the Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Science, which covers natural and physical science, math and engineering, and is a Lecturer in Environmental Science. She also manages an annual research symposium, supervises summer programs for Hartford 10th graders, and coordinates Connecticut Tech Savvy, an event to teach young women about STEM careers.



Ivan A. Backer Scholarships

Bulkeley High School Graduates
Toi Alexis Jackson
Destiny Alize Gonzalez
Lorena Minja

SINA Student Support Scholarships

Capital Community College Students
Shantel Cameron
Alvana Abedini
Valerie Zayas
Allyiah Guiont

