

Planning for Our Future

SINA has developed a new strategic plan to guide our efforts through 2022. The planning effort was led by board chair Jane Baird along with executive committee members Barry Kriesberg and Dickens Mathieu. The board of directors met often over six months to shape SINA's priorities. The plan was approved officially by the chief executives of the three member institutions—the CT Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. The strategic plan built on work done over the past couple of years to develop several neighborhood plans including an economic development plan, a community safety plan and a comprehensive community development plan. These earlier planning processes convened groups of community stakeholders to develop strategies for the development of neighborhood housing and economic opportunities, and to identify ways for residents to come together to address safety, security and quality of life issues.



Our new strategic plan has three priorities. These are neighborhood economic development, community strengthening and education/health. We will continue our efforts to advocate for and increase investment in housing, employment and commercial development to address our goals for neighborhood economic development. We will increase resident engagement, the involvement of our anchor institutions,

and our visibility as a facilitator in order to strengthen the community. SINA will continue to work in partnership with other organizations to improve education and health.

We know that homeownership increases neighborhood stability. We will continue to create those opportunities, while also working to increase the placement of local residents in jobs at member institutions. In keeping with our emphasis on comprehensive neighborhood development, we will target several streets throughout the neighborhood including Wolcott, Squire, Brownell and Madison Streets. In the past SINA has focused its development activities on Colonial, School and Jefferson Streets. Through our new coalition, SAFE (Safety Alliance For Everyone), we will build on this year's efforts to fight crime and blight through grassroots action and neighborhood cleanups.

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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 www.sinainc.org.

Planning for Our Future Continued

Recognizing the new understanding among health professionals about the social determinants of health, SINA will continue to work on improving outcomes for neighborhood residents. Our initiatives for improving education and health outcomes have included employee engagement in elementary school science fairs, book drives and tutoring. We will also continue working with the CCMC Healthy Homes Initiative on issues like lead hazard control and energy efficiency. Our annual REACH (Recognition Education Achievement and Community Health) event awards seven college scholarships to neighborhood students through a competitive process run by institutional volunteers. Going forward, the REACH committee will be central to our health and education efforts.



CCMC employees donated books to Maria Sanchez Elementary School



THE DEAN OF HOUSING



SINA is a partnership between Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. SINA's mission is to work cooperatively with community stakeholders to restore economic vitality and improve the quality of life for the people who live, work, play, and study in the neighborhoods of South Central Hartford.



The Dean of Housing

Dean Iaiennaro, SINA's Director of Real Estate Development, is truly our dean/czar/guru for anything housing related. His myriad responsibilities include all of SINA's real estate acquisition and property management, from grants and demolition, to construction/rehab of new homes, to supervision of those who manage our rental housing and commercial spaces. Dean's 20 plus years of community development experience include an early stint at SINA and work at the Hartford Housing Authority. He was also CEO at Connecticut Housing Investment Fund, and an independent consultant who specialized in advising national investors about affordable housing.

While Dean manages compliance, financial reporting and interactions with all levels of government, he also has to prepare grant applications, secure investments and obtain debt financing for SINA's housing. This is particularly challenging with rental properties, where operating budgets are tight and affordable rents can't be raised to market rates to cover costs. He has to continuously research and apply for funds to maintain the buildings, many of which are older and need rehabilitation. Another challenge is obtaining funds for homeownership programs, which have been shown to stabilize neighborhoods more than rentals do, in the long term. However, state investments are still largely focused on rentals.

Dean's work is additionally complicated by the fact that many of SINA's buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places, and their guidelines don't always match up well with local building codes. He explains "the homes need insulation, but that is in conflict with keeping the original plaster. The interior trim, which they want you to keep, is often contaminated with lead. And you really can't make good windows out of old windows" because they don't keep out the cold as well as new windows do.

Once the properties have been acquired and the funding is in place, Dean still can't relax. Rehab of older buildings and construction of new homes to fit the fabric of historic neighborhoods present challenges that regular construction doesn't. People often break into vacant buildings seeking shelter or theft opportunities. Dean says "it's a struggle to find good contractors who want to work in these areas" because of these site security and safety issues.



Rehab: Before and After of 22-24 Wolcott Street (Currently Under Construction)

All articles written by Beth Pite.

JUMP for Health

"Small changes can make a big difference" says Dr. Helen Wu of UConn Health Center. She is the lead researcher for the Just Us Moving Project, or JUMP. Her goal is to improve diabetes management by encouraging increased physical activity in African/Black and Hispanic/Latino communities. They are much more likely than the general population to have diabetes and be hospitalized for diabetes-related complications.

Many people get discouraged once they're told they have diabetes. They feel overwhelmed by too much advice that simply doesn't work for everyone. Dr. Wu explains "we try to encourage people to start small, build up their confidence and use their existing resources. They don't have to buy anything, eat special foods, or join a gym. We make it easier for people to make the changes they know they should make."

For example, JUMP participants are given a FitBit to remind them to move, not just sit. Recent research has shown that too much sitting is as bad for health as smoking. JUMP also offers suggestions for activities that are easy to include in everyday life, such as house cleaning, walking the dog, dancing, cooking, or playing with children and grandchildren.

Dr. Wu has decades of experience researching health-related behavioral change, and she worked with Latino communities in Texas for much of that time before coming to Connecticut eight years ago. She is Chinese American – a population where diabetes is increasing – and this quest is personal. Her mother was on diabetes medications, but was able to get off them after changing her diet and adding exercise.

Through JUMP, Dr. Wu hopes to give more people hope – and health. Anyone interested in learning more should contact Megan Wing at (860) 707-0526 or email justusmoving@uchc.edu.

The Dean of Housing Continued

So what keeps Dean going, week after week, and year after year? As he explains, "it's interesting, challenging work that needs to be done – and I don't like easy things." Largely thanks to Dean's efforts, SINA has been successful in getting money to develop 75 homes (mostly two family) and 83 apartment units in 12 multi-family historic buildings.

This year he pulled off a significant coup, winning a very competitive grant from the Department of Housing. SINA's proposal was the only one to receive homeownership funds in the state. The \$1,067,307 award will enable SINA to create eleven affordable housing units by substantially rehabilitating existing properties on Squire and Madison Streets. This is especially gratifying because we have targeted these streets for intensive efforts from both our homeownership program and our community engagement initiative. Ultimately, Dean says, "in my heart of hearts, I think people need a place to live."

SINA MARKS 30th HIP GRANT



Trinity College employee

In December SINA assisted the 30th family to buy a home under the Homeownership Incentive Program (HIP). HIP was developed (at the suggestion of the Metro Hartford Alliance) by the three SINA member institutions- the CT Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. Its purpose is to provide an incentive for employees of the institutions to buy homes in the south end of Hartford. SINA administers the program by working with the employees, their realtors, banks and lawyers.

Through HIP, \$10,000 grants are available to qualified employees who want to become homeowners. The grants are forgiven after five years if the buyer continues to live in the home and work at the member institution.

The program strengthens the local housing market by creating a pool of willing buyers. It brings to the neighborhoods skilled professionals who often engage in community activities. It provides walk-to-work opportunities for employees of the hospitals and the college. It reduces the number of employees who have to make long commutes to their jobs, an advantage on snowy days. The program makes it possible for many employees who didn't think they could afford a home to become homeowners. HIP is one of the many ways that the three SINA institutions help to build community in the neighborhoods of the south end of Hartford.

SINA'S HOMEOWNERS FEATURED IN VIDEO



Leviticus Fund, a major supporter of SINA's homeownership efforts, recently created a video celebrating its 35th anniversary. The Fund encourages the development of affordable communities by making loans that support social and economic justice. We were pleased to see SINA featured prominently in

their video. Delene Falcon, owner of a home we renovated, spoke eloquently about her sense of community. Taquisha Ramos, who purchased another SINA home, emphasized how important it is to her children to understand the responsibility and pride of homeownership. We are happy to have neighbors like Delene and Taquisha, and we are especially thankful to Leviticus Fund for their support of our Cityscape development.