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Frog Hollow SAFE – Safety Alliance for Everyone – is a coalition addressing blight and safety consisting of multiple community partners including SINA. The principle guiding SAFE’s work is that clean streets make the neighborhood more attractive for the people who live and work there, and less attractive for those who pursue illegal activities. SAFE encourages neighborly connections, inspires residents to take action to address problems, and coordinates clean-up events.

Most recently, SAFE worked with a team of residents to apply for Love your Block grants. Funded by the Bloomberg Foundation, the Love Your Block program provides small beautification grants of \$1000 to projects improving Frog Hollow. SAFE helped organize residents to apply for the grants, which required at least five residents to be involved per application. They were reviewed by a panel that included a City Council member, the heads of Blight Remediation and of Community Engagement for Hartford, a representative from the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, a local business owner, the area’s Community Service Officer and a SINA representative. We are pleased to report that two of the five winning grants were by SAFE for projects on Wolcott Street, an area where SINA has focused its efforts.

The first grant will create a playground from readily available, recycled materials like tires and wood. It will be built on a vacant lot owned by developer Carlos Valinho. The playground will incorporate the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, offering safe and highly visible elements on which children can practice climbing skills, play music, or improve their sense of balance. Logan Singerman, the SINA staff person who helps coordinate SAFE activities, explains “Not only will we re-utilize a vacant lot, but we will do so by re-purposing tires originally thrown out as bulky waste on city streets. One person’s trash can be another person’s playground.”

The second winning application was to create a mural on a Wolcott Street building that abuts the playground lot. The mural will be painted on plywood, so that it will not permanently alter the historic building on which it will be displayed. According to Logan, “This project was born from the suggestion of a resident on Wolcott street and her grandchildren. We will continue to involve them and other residents throughout the design and implementation process.” Hartford artist Corey Pane, who has installed similar murals in Colt Park, will design and supervise the creation of the mural.



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.



From Our Executive Director, Melvyn Colon

This has been a busy winter for SINA. In addition to wrapping up our new strategic plan, we built on the success of SAFE to help neighbors submit two winning grant applications for the Love Your Block program. We added two strong members to our board of directors while continuing to build homes on Wolcott and Brownell Streets, and to manage rental housing. We are also very pleased with the progress of SIHP, our new job placement program that helps our anchor institutions identify strong candidates. And we have some fun to recommend as well, with Trinity’s CineStudio preparing to celebrate its 50 anniversary this year.



ENTHUSIASTIC EMPLOYEES

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.



Enthusiastic Employees

SINA Institutions Hiring Program (SIHP) started in February 2018 when Elsa Huertas joined us as Career Navigator, with support from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Forging relationships with organizations that provide job training or certifications, and with Human Resources departments and hiring managers, Elsa provides an array of services to help match job seekers with SINA anchor institutions that need to fill jobs.

Many residents of SINA's zip codes 06106 and 06114 have strong job skills, but may lack resumes, interview experience, or the computer savvy to apply online. Elsa explains "we have great candidates who need help navigating the system since everything is electronic these days. Some already have minimum wage jobs, but want better opportunities. I offer resume editing, interview practice and tips, follow up during the process, and a guide to online submission systems. I help candidates understand our anchor institutions' reference requirements and on-boarding processes."

Elsa's early months were spent meeting SINA partners and building a structure. Since then she has met with more than 100 viable job candidates, usually working with each person at least two or three times to get a sense of their strengths and interests. Most of those candidates were referred to Hartford Hospital, Trinity College and CT Children's Medical Center for possible jobs. So far 24 of them have been hired at these anchor institutions, and another 10 were referred to and hired by other employers.

All SIHP placements are doing well in their jobs. One has moved into a position of responsibility training other employees and another received a quick promotion. Carlos Natal – *pictured on first page* – was CCMC's first hire through SIHP. He worked with Elsa on his resume and interview skills, then followed up consistently with the required recommendations. After a successful phone interview, in-person interview and job shadow process, Carlos now has a full-time job with benefits. He wrote to Elsa, "I would like to thank you for changing my life. Without you, none of this would have been possible."

Elsa says "candidates with advanced degrees see opportunities at anchor institutions they might not perceive at other jobs, because SINA's partners are committed to this program. There's a level of trust that is building with our partners, who know SIHP candidates have been vetted, and with the community, so now we are getting many candidates through word of mouth." SINA's anchor institutions get qualified, motivated employees who are happy to have good local jobs – a classic win-win.

Welcome on Board!

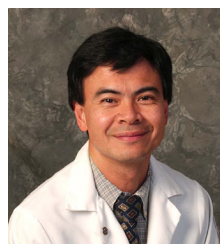
Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) is a partnership between Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. Therefore, our board of directors always includes representatives from these anchor institutions. This year we are delighted to welcome two new board members.



Carlos Espinosa

Carlos Espinosa is Director of the Office of Community Relations at Trinity College and manages the college's community technology space, Trinfo.Café. That is now part of the new Center for Hartford Engagement and Research, which includes community learning, liberal arts action lab, civic engagement and urban education. Carlos represents Trinity at meetings and events, maintaining relationships with community groups and business leaders. He says "Hartford made me who I am. Growing up in the Behind-the-Rocks neighborhood, it was an amazing gift to attend Trinity. That gave me the power to think for myself. Now I want to give back."

A graduate of Trinity College, Carlos holds a B.A. in Educational Studies and Sociology and an M.A. in Public Policy. His master's degree involved working at Hartford Areas Rally Together, through Trinity's community organizer training program which no longer exist. He explored public policy as an analyst and lobbyist for Washington, D.C.'s Center for Community Change before helping found the Caring Families Coalition, a Connecticut advocacy group. In 2003, Carlos became the Director for Trinfo.Cafe and the Smart Neighborhood Initiative, Trinity's community digital divide project.

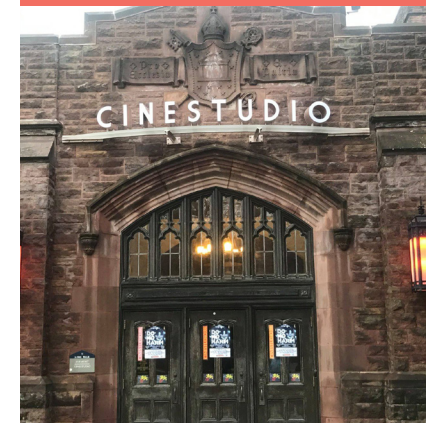


Dr. Cunegundo Vergara

Dr. Cunegundo (Connie) Vergara is Medical Director of Ambulatory Services at Hartford Hospital, in charge of out-patient services at the Brownstone Building. Since University of Connecticut School of Medicine residents and fellows care for these patients, Connie is also an associate professor training these doctors. They serve 55,000 Hartford residents annually – regardless of insurance or ability to pay – who might not otherwise have access to specialties like cardiology, neurology, orthopedics and urology. Connie explains, "I am a social justice person, and often tell my students they don't need to go to Africa to do relief work." He has created partnerships with Hartford's community health centers, which usually can't provide specialized care, to refer patients to the Brownstone.

Connie earned a B.A. in chemistry from College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and an M.D. from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. His internship and residency were at The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center/Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Prior to joining Hartford Hospital, he was the Chief Medical Resident at New York Downtown Hospital.

SINA extends a warm welcome to both Carlos and Connie. We are grateful for their service and confident they will become vital contributors to our work.



Classic Movie Palace

Founded in 1970 by a group of Trinity students, Cinestudio is housed in Clement Chemistry Building on the Trinity College Campus, built in 1935 with a design by McKim, Mead and White. The students

turned a little-used lecture hall with troubled acoustics into a beautiful recreation of a 1930s film house, with sound by National Theater Supply and Dolby. Cinestudio's sold-out grand opening in February 1970 offered a double feature of Alice's Restaurant and The Beatles' Yellow Submarine.

The independent, not-for-profit theater features a single screen with a classic "Austrian shade" curtain and a balcony. John Michael Mason, chairman of Cinestudio's board of directors, is excited about recent upgrades, saying "when we make changes, we want them to be top quality, so we are grateful for private philanthropy and grants. For example, we had to remove seats to make the theater ADA-compliant, but took the opportunity to replace them with gorgeous, art deco style seats." He also mentioned important, less visible upgrades to their website, restrooms, box office and software.

Cinestudio's diverse programming includes foreign classics, cult favorites and new masterpieces. It hosted May's Trinity Film Festival, which featured a new entrance sign. Designed by Boston's Coco Raynes Associates, the sign echos the curves of the building, lights up to guide people, and was installed without damaging the brownstone.

Two founding members, James Hanley and Peter McMorris, have guided Cinestudio since its inception and continue to manage its operations. John Michael explains "we have just two full-time staff and two part-time projectionists. Everything else is run with student and community volunteers, including a manager every night." Cinestudio also provides unique opportunities for young people to learn how to operate a fully professional movie theater.

The board of directors recently completed a strategic planning process to help Cinestudio celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2020. Among the anniversary festivities will be announcements about an organizational structure for the next 50 years. For now, get up-to-the-minute information about Cinestudio on Instagram ([instagram.com/cinestudiotheater](https://www.instagram.com/cinestudiotheater)) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/cinestudio.) "Most of all, attend Cinestudio," says John Michael. "In these days of streaming and on-demand, it's more important than ever to support the few remaining theaters where you can really see a movie and enjoy a respectful presentation."