

Linking With Logan

Part of SINA's work involves community engagement, reaching out to neighborhood residents to keep them connected, build pride and improve safety. From barbecues to awards, we find a variety of ways to accomplish this. Logan Singerman, SINA's new Director of Community Partnerships and Communications, is getting creative about engaging neighborhood residents during this time of disengagement and distancing.



Logan holds a BA in Christian Ministries from Messiah College and is presently enrolled in the University of Connecticut's Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program. A Wethersfield native, he now lives in the North End of Hartford with his wife and three kids. Logan came to SINA from AmeriCorps and Center Church, where he had previously done similar work. He says "what drives me is a genuine love for people and my belief that everyone has gifts to offer. I enjoy being the one to help connect those dots. I want to work with others to leave the world better than we found it." His job at SINA is to bring people together, involving community members and institutional partners to work collaboratively on strengthening the neighborhood. This makes the neighborhood cleaner and safer, while providing volunteer opportunities, recognizing "bright stars" and "amplifying the community voice."



In December, Logan knocked on every neighbor's door and distributed flyers about our first Holiday Decoration Competition on Wolcott and Madison Streets. Thirteen homes participated and over 30 residents called or texted in their votes for best decorated home. First place went to our newest residents, at 36-38 Wolcott Street. Luz Vargas, who has lived on Wolcott Street for over 40 years – longer than anyone else – took second place with beautiful decorations on her apartment door.

Winners received Home Depot gift cards to help them invest further in their properties.



Now, in today's pandemic, Logan is staying connected to residents through a variety of eblasts and posts on Twitter (@sinainc) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/sinainc). He has created SINA Shares, a news bulletin for quick information sharing during COVID 19. It includes resources for health, employment and other basic needs, along with ideas for taking care of kids who are stuck at home, and ways to help. To receive SINA Shares by email, contact Logan at lsingerman@sinainc.org.



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. Our offices, located at 207 Washington Street, are closed for the duration of the health crisis. For more information call (860) 493-1618 or visit www.sinainc.org. You can follow SINA on Twitter (@sinainc) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/sinainc). To receive SINA Shares, our weekly news bulletin, by email, contact Logan at lsingerman@sinainc.org.

Want to receive the SINA REPORTS electronically?

If you would like to receive the SINA Reports electronically please contact Linda at lvalentin@sinainc.org or leave a message at (860) 493-1618 ext. 101.

Alternatively, you may fill out the form at www.sinainc.org/contact-us.



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SPRING 2020

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Some Needed Cheer

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.



Some Needed Cheer

A drive along Washington Street reveals a remarkable sight – a giant frog sitting in front of SINA's offices. Two sculptures joined the frog, climbing up the building. Part of a creative placemaking effort along the entire street, these pieces were chosen by SINA board and staff. As Melvyn Colon, SINA executive director explains, "the frog represents both Frog Hollow and the tree frog, coquí, that is a symbol of Puerto Rico." Simsbury artist and CCSU professor Vicente Garcia did the two pieces that climb the chimney, while the frog sitting on the lawn was done by Kent artist Denis Curtiss.

Colorful, bilingual (English and Spanish) wraps are also part of this project, placed on 11 electrical boxes along Washington and Hudson Streets. The four different designs were created by Hartford resident Constanza Segovia and installed by Sign-Pro. Banners will follow soon, showcasing SINA's anchor institutions of Trinity College, Connecticut Children's and Hartford Hospital to help connect this "med-ed corridor" of Hudson and Washington Streets. According to Jackie Gorsky Mandyck, Managing Director of the iQuilt Partnership, funding came from CT Next, through Innovations Places grants meant to help people find their way more easily while celebrating local residents and institutions.

Jackie points out that "this winter was also the 10th anniversary of Winterfest, and SINA is a long-time sponsor." She says 40,000 people enjoyed the skating rink in Bushnell, and another 40,000 visited for the event.

In addition, Jackie coordinates Hartford 400, an effort underway for Hartford's 400th birthday in 2035. The idea is to examine all existing regional plans, get people excited about a shared vision, and think about what that might look like. The process includes corporations, nonprofit agencies and city departments. Jackie says "we don't want to settle for ok, we want to go for great, with transformative projects that are inclusive. I ask people to think about if we were to throw a big party in 2035, what would we be celebrating?" No doubt this pandemic will influence people's ideas about that, as we realize how much we are missing now.



All articles written by Beth Pite.

Welcome Aboard



Megan Brown
Photo by Amanda Hausmann

SINA's anchor institutions are all represented on our board of directors, and our newest board member is from Trinity College. Megan Brown is the Director of the Liberal Arts Action Lab and she joined us this fall, but she is certainly not a stranger to SINA.

The program Megan runs is a partnership between Trinity and Capitol Community College. Its purpose is to help students apply a liberal arts education to real world problems. Students work with community partners who have identified issues that can be addressed in a semester, and last semester SINA's was among the projects chosen. The investigation of absentee landlords in the south end involved public records, random sampling, and field research – in depth observations of more than 30 properties. Owner occupied houses were found to be in better condition than those with absentee owners, most of whom live in the region.

Megan came to Trinity after working in the labor movement, eager "to bridge the divide" between "the academy" and organizations doing work on the ground. She believes this "is a way for higher education to stay relevant, and for Trinity to contribute to where we are." Since arriving here two years ago she has directed housing related projects nearly every semester.

SINA's Housing Incentive Program (HIP) was mentioned to Megan as an employee benefit when she came to Trinity. She used HIP when buying her house and says the process was "seamless, and was turned around quickly." She enjoys the neighborhood and her ability to bike or walk to work. Megan says "I love the work SINA does and I'm really excited about joining the board."



From Our Executive Director, Melvyn Colon

This newsletter issue was begun in the winter, when our world was very different. Given the strange times we are living through, our priorities have shifted to keeping our staff and neighbors safe and healthy. We are developing new ways to reach out and to support the community. We are sending out a weekly news bulletin, SINA Shares. It includes resources for health, employment and other basic needs, along with ideas for taking care of kids who are stuck at home. It also highlights stories of compassion and ways to help. Previous volumes included a video from the Surgeon General demonstrating how to make a personal face mask, a summary of rental and mortgage protections, an invitation to join Trinity College students in recording yourself reading books to be shared with neighborhood children, and much more. To receive SINA Shares by email, contact Logan at lsingerman@sinainc.org, or contact him on Twitter ([@sinainc](https://twitter.com/sinainc)) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/sinainc).

Walk to Work



Margarita Cortavarria,
Victoria Cabrera, and
Marlene Pereira

Local residents looking for work know that getting a job in the neighborhood solves many problems with scheduling and transportation. Since SINA's anchor institutions are also looking for reliable employees, our Walk to Work (WtW) program, run by Career Navigator Elsa Huertas, helps match job openings with skilled candidates. During the pandemic, our healthcare partner Hartford Hospital is particularly in need of Patient Care Associates (CNAs.) Anyone with relevant experience is encouraged to contact Elsa at ehuertas@sinainc.org.

Diane Wilson, MSN, RN, is a Nurse Educator for the STAR (specially trained and responsive) Team at Hartford Hospital. She was thrilled to discover Walk to Work, saying "it was very helpful to meet with Elsa and learn about the program. The process was easy, with resumes and paperwork all in order, and interviews went really well. The candidates were very engaged and excited about the jobs."

STAR team members move as needed between 30 different hospital units, so experience and flexibility are essential. Diane hired several WtW candidates and explains "they are amazing with patients, and staff members like them. They have to be able to get along with different people and be willing to learn, and they are." Among Hartford Hospital's recent hires as Patient Care Associates (PCAs, or CNAs) are local residents Kharmi Tann and Maria Reyes de Bastista.

Kharmi says "I like my job. Everyone is so nice." Her job involves measuring patients' vital signs, charting them and generally "taking care of whatever the patients need." Kharmi was studying medical assisting at CREC because "it's in my family" – her grandmother and aunt worked in healthcare. CREC referred her to Elsa at SINA. Besides resume assistance, Kharmi says Elsa "helped me prepare for the interview, and made me feel ready. I recommend her to everybody, because she's been great."

Maria found Elsa through the Building for Health program – more about this in our next issue – when someone from CT Children's showed up at the door and Maria asked about jobs. She was referred to Elsa and worked with her to land a PCA position. Maria had previously worked as a home health aide, but she prefers the hospital because of the additional medical training and the fact that she meets new people every day. She says "I love to talk to people, so my favorite part of the job is spending time with my patients. And I live three minutes away, so I can walk to work!"

"I met with Elsa at least four times," Maria explains. "She prepared me for everything – how to talk, my resume, how to apply – and has been like a mentor to me. She's a beautiful person who always sees the best in you. If she hadn't helped me, I wouldn't have gotten the job."