

SHERMAN HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CENTER
2260 ISLAND AVENUE • SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92102



April 22, 2009

Mid-City CAN
Resident Selection Committee
4275 El Cajon Blv.
San Diego, CA. 92105

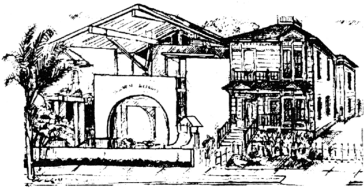
Mid-City CAN and Resident Selection Committee:

Proyecto de Casas Saludables (Proyecto) began four years ago as a community development initiative in City Heights focusing on housing habitability through the development of local resident leaders from the community. We are pleased to offer our support through this application to serve on the Oversight Committee as City Heights works to respond successfully to the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative. This initiative has the potential to improve the lives of City Heights residents in important ways. We expect the project to support the core of our organizational vision and methodology: to ensure habitable housing through systemic and permanent change for all of City Heights residents through the collective power that arises from grass-roots organizing and the development of a strong and independent resident organization.

Proyecto is a grass-roots organization created and run from within the Spanish-speaking, immigrant community in the City of San Diego. Although Proyecto has historically involved the Spanish-speaking community we have residents from other ethnic groups and include immigrants from regions outside Latin America.

Since 2006 we have worked to address the terrible conditions of rental housing that newly arrived and poor residents have often been resigned to inhabit. Through the efforts of the community to protect itself, and through its organized advocacy efforts, we are beginning to develop the power necessary to create tangible results. We have graduated 190 recent immigrants from our Academy of Leadership. The Academy of Leadership educates residents in a number of areas critical to their health and the health of their families: habitable housing (an area often included under the designation of "tenant/landlord advocacy"), fair housing (housing discrimination), education reform, immigrant rights, employee/labor rights, the structures of governmental power, and community organizing.

From the Academy of Leadership we have drawn over 50 promotoras, local women who serve as advocates and educators within their neighborhood communities and assist residents find their own individual and collective voices. Through the efforts of our promotoras we surveyed housing conditions in City Heights in 2008; then, in collaboration with the Latino Research Center at California State University, San Marcos our organization documented the disproportionately large amounts of mold and cockroaches asthma triggers present in



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substandard housing in City Heights. As a result, our resident base has decided to develop and advocate for a comprehensive city ordinance requiring landlords to provide habitable housing to their renters.

Proyecto is prepared to assist you and the community of City Heights to prepare the grant proposal to the California Endowment due in May. We bring unique and essential resources to the community that will help us all ensure that the process is meaningful and democratic. First and most importantly, our organization was established by residents and continues to be guided by resident voices as they struggle to ensure that all City Heights residents have a decent, dignified, and healthy place to live. These resident voices will be solicited and made available during the planning process and our presence on the Advisory Committee will help us ensure that the input from residents is honored and received with respect.

Second, we have developed considerable resources and skills in the grant writing and program administration process. I will be available to you and I will make available to you our organizational development consultant. This consultant is a talented grant writer, researcher, and program developer. We will make his time available to the Advisory Committee at no cost during the months of May and June. We are willing to take on as large a share of the research, planning, and writing effort as will be necessary to successfully complete the plan of activities and budget. Finally, we have office and meeting space that we can make available to the Advisory Committee and can commit \$150 to provide office supplies and printing.

We have participated in this initiative from the beginning and understand the commitment from community residents and organizations that will be necessary to make this process a success. Please let me know if there is any other way we can assist you at this point. As always, it is a pleasure working with you.

Sincerely,

Genoveva Aguilar
Director