



954 5th Avenue, Suite 535, San Diego, CA 92101

April 21, 2009

### Letter of Support

We are pleased to proudly write in support of the of the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative.

As pastors of a relatively young church, we have the privilege of ministering to a diverse set of people and families from the Mid-City area. We chose to worship on Sunday mornings in the auditorium of Hoover High School because we see the shared geographic "boundaries" of City Heights, Talmadge, and Kensington as a strategic opportunity to bridge race, class, and culture through a worshipping community. Now, after nearly two years, we are a bi-lingual church (with English- and Spanish-speaking leadership) of roughly 175 members reflective of our neighborhoods' diversity. Immigrants, refugees, and native-born families from all walks of life call our church home.

At this early stage in our organizational development, we are still trim programmatically, but we recognize that the life-on-life relationships forged in our faith community, coupled with the relational "social work" that friendship among struggling families requires, ought not be under-estimated. In addition, we are committed to being blessed by our neighborhood through funneling volunteer mentors to Hoover High, organizing and staffing improvement projects on campus, running a small weekly youth group, adopting newly-arrived refugee families, and most importantly encouraging our members to be active members of their various communities. During the summer, we run a high school leadership internship that provides the staff for a concurrent summer sports camp at Colina Park, a very popular, free and healthy option for local kids, especially given the cuts to summer school.

Some of our primary values such as empowerment, indigenous leadership development, and reconciliation align directly with the Initiative's outcomes, especially those concerning youth development and safety. We are committed to being as involved as is helpful in the Planning process. Faith communities can bring to bear a lot of the social capital and professional expertise of their members, not just staff. With regard to our leadership team, Anastasia Brewster has a background in data analysis (stats and GIS) and has agreed to pledge a minimum of 12 pro bono hours per month to the planning process.

Best regards,

Rev. Stephen Phelan  
Pastor

Rev. Edgardo Avila  
Pastor