

2016 SEFCEDA Annual Report

SEFCEDA has experienced several changes in 2016. The SEFCEDA office is now located at 3362 E. Balch Avenue in Southeast Fresno. The interim chief executive officer is Juan Manuel Saavedra, pastor of Grace United Methodist Church & St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Fresno. SEFCEDA's founder and CEO Jose Leon Barraza is currently pursuing other avenues to impact and improve the quality of life in Southeast Fresno.

While certain details about SEFCEDA have changed, the goals and emphasis have not. SEFCEDA continues to be dedicated to the promotion of economic prosperity for all Southeast Fresno residents by creating and expanding opportunities in employment, employment education, education, housing, recreation and entrepreneurship. The Board of Directors of SEFCEDA in 2016 continue to prioritize two major areas of service: 1) workforce development - improving the work skills of our clients and their knowledge concerning employment and career opportunities, 2) continued support of projects that improve the recreational opportunities of Southeast Fresno residents while promoting a healthy community life.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Each year SEFCEDA has seen the Prosperity Center grow, change and grow. The workforce training and education has assisted hundreds of residence since the center's inception in 2013. During this time over 1200 residents have attended the workforce orientations, many of whom have been referred to Workforce Connection's construction training program. The emphasis has continually been to assist displaced workers within the community.

The prosperity center has included financial literacy and asset building workshops to help clients grow and prosper in their financial well-being; dissemination of information on public housing, home ownership, consumer protection, and foreclosure and credit counseling; information on scholarships, school grants, and career counseling; and information on government programs and services on an as-needed basis. Implementation of this work has been made possible by a grant from Wells Fargo Bank with additional staffing provided by the AmeriCorps VISTA Program.

A pre-apprentice training program has been negotiated with the Cesar Chavez Foundation in the construction of an apartment complex in Southeast Fresno where SEFCEDA will participate in the recruitment, pre-screening and referral of selected participants. Implementation of this project is contingent on funding approval by the State of California.

IMPROVING THE RECREATIONAL LIFE OF SOUTHEAST FRESNO

Throughout 2016 SEFCEDA continues to take a major role in promoting the creation of new parks and soccer fields in Southeast Fresno. More than a 1000 residents participated at various community events where needs assessments for more parks and soccer fields in Southeast Fresno were conducted. Staff made several attempts at negotiating with the City of Fresno and partnered with Building Healthy Communities, the United States National Park Service, and the San Francisco-based Trust for Public Land to create a relationship with several government agencies including the Malaga Water District, the City

of Sanger and other community based non-profits that has resulted in the creation and development of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). This Authority group can be entrusted with public lands to develop the parks and recreational facilities that are desperately needed at a regional level for underserved communities. Currently our former SEFCEDA CEO is chairing the Authority. These efforts are supported by a grant from the California Endowment and has included the support and participation of California State University Fresno, Fresno Pacific University, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, Sanger Unified School District, the Latino Peace Officers Association, Hmong Farmers of America, member agencies of the Fresno Building Healthy Community and various soccer leagues. SEFCEDA will continue to work with and seek to nurture the JPA in these efforts. Other SEFCEDA efforts have included an ongoing relationship with the Bicycle, Pedestrian, Automobile Committee (BPAC). Southeast Fresno has the largest number of pedestrian and bicycle deaths in the region. The goals include improving bike paths and trail ways, sidewalks and footpaths in order to ameliorate the fatality count.

With a grant from the Central Valley Community Foundation, SEFCEDA initiated the Latin Music and Art event which will be made a self-supporting annual event. Originally set to occur at Pilibos Park, the event was moved due to City of Fresno Parks Services' maintenance projects, to Mosqueda Center. Nevertheless, a smooth transition to Mosqueda Center made for a successful event. SEFCEDA assured a high turnout by creating a Facebook event page that invited people, contacted community keystones who spread the word throughout Southeast Fresno, posted promotional flyers and posters in strategic areas, and aired promotions on television and radio.

The event focused on various styles of Latin music and dance. Attendees learned dance steps, both solo and partner dancing. Several hour-long lessons were offered before the event, and shorter sessions were offered at the event. The Latin Music & Art affair also featured graphic art with the art and the artist prominently featured. Freshly made traditional carne asada tacos were sold with all the condiments and toppings provided. Generous donations from Donaghy Sales LLC, Pom Wonderful, Kraft Foods, and others enhanced the experience. Security was provided by Vanguard Security and our volunteer event staff came from SEFCEDA volunteers, as well as Roosevelt and Sunnyside High Schools.

A survey was administered during the event and online afterwards, yielding 150 overwhelmingly positive responses. Ten-\$50 gift cards were awarded as door prizes during the event to those that completed the survey. The surveys included improvement recommendations for the 2017 event. One of the palpable results of this effort was the unity of the Southeast Fresno community with over 500 people in attendance. People demonstrated an interest in doing further events like this within the community. We celebrate these accomplishments!