

OUTCOMES FROM JUNE 16, 2010 MENDING POVERTY CONFERENCE

On Thursday, June 16, 2010, more than 180 people attended the ***Third Annual MENDING Poverty Conference***, held at the headquarters of MEND - Meet Each Need with Dignity in Pacoima. The daylong conference was focused on *Getting People Out of Poverty: Programs, Policies and Collaborations That Work*, this year's theme.

The conference highlighted successful programs, public policies and collaborations. The focus was on increasing the impact of nonprofits serving poor people, and on strategies nonprofits can use to work better with policymakers, the community and each other. Particular attention was placed on identifying "ideas for action." An *Action Paper* summarizing these ideas has been drafted, and will be finalized as part of the work of the *Collaboration on Getting People Out of Poverty in Los Angeles*, created by 71 of the conference participants.

Opening keynote speaker Heather Grant of The Monitor Institute and co-author of *Forces for Good* talked about leveraging social networks and web-based tools as forces for creating change and expanding the impact of nonprofit organizations to address poverty. After a networking break so conference participants could connect with each other, three Action Workshops were presented: (1) *Effective Poverty Reduction Programs*; (2) *Policy Change and How Los Angeles Nonprofits Can Make It Happen*; and (3) *Community Collaborations to Get People Out of Poverty*. Speakers ranging from Josh Sides of California State University Northridge to Elliot Perry of Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy to Nancy Ibrahim of Esperanza Community Housing provided diverse views on these subjects, all with a practical bent. Workshop Moderators Florence Green (IdeaEncore), Ken Larsen (California Association of Nonprofits) and Beatriz Solis (The California Endowment) presented each group's "ideas for action" at the closing plenary session. These ideas are now incorporated into the *Action Paper*.

The luncheon keynote speech was given by Connie L. Rice of The Advancement Project. Her remarks concentrated on how to get people out of poverty by leveraging public resources, and by engaging unlikely allies in the work of change - using examples from her long career as a civil rights attorney and community advocate.

The conference's hosts were *MEND* and *Valley Nonprofit Resources*, with a set of sponsors - Kaiser Permanente, Wells Fargo Bank, Habitat for Humanity, the Los Angeles County Commission for Women, Southern California Edison, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, California State University Northridge's School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, UCLA's Center for Civil Society, the Office of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and the Office of City Councilmember Richard Alarcon. An 18-member Planning Committee, co-chaired by Florence Green of IdeaEncore and Carmel Sella of Wells Fargo Bank, guided the development of the conference.

The conference evaluation showed that 99% of participants rated the conference as "outstanding" or "very good," and 78% thought it was "highly relevant" to their organization's work. Conference materials are available for free downloads at www.valleynonprofitresources.org (Community Voice section).

We would like to hear from you if you have ideas about taking action from MENDING Poverty 2010, or about how to shape a successful conference day for MENDING Poverty 2011, which is already in the works!

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