

OUTCOMES FROM JUNE 8, 2016 MENDING POVERTY CONFERENCE

The ***Ninth Annual MENDING Poverty Conference*** was held Wednesday, June 8, 2016 at the headquarters of MEND - Meet Each Need with Dignity in Pacoima. Focused on ***affordable housing and healthy neighborhoods***, the conference was attended by 129 people.

Trent Stamp, CEO of the Eisner Foundation, welcomed conference participants and highlighted the role philanthropy can play in meeting the challenges addressed by the conference. He also discussed the importance of solutions that bring together volunteers and nonprofit staff from across generations.

Morning keynote speaker Mercedes Marquez, President of Marquez Community Strategies, described in dramatic terms the social, cultural, financial and political issues that make achieving affordable housing difficult. She cited experiences both in running the Los Angeles housing agency and as Assistant Secretary at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, woven in with her personal story to provide some lessons learned about how to overcome these challenges - especially given the lingering effects of the 2008 recession.

After a networking break so conference participants could connect with each other, three Action Workshops were presented:

- (1) *What's the Housing Reality in Your Neighborhood? Housing 101 in Los Angeles*
- (2) *Who is Your Best Advocate? Engaging Clients in Public Policy*
- (3) *What Does Stable Housing Look Like? Models & Resources for Housing Stability*

Workshop speakers included nonprofit and community leaders. They ranged from Holly Benson of Abode Communities to Alan Greenlee of the Southern California Association for Nonprofit Housing to Jerry Selby of City Heights Community Development Corporation in San Diego.

Kaiser Permanente Panorama City COO Murtaza Sanwari and Wells Fargo LA Metro Region President Marla Clemow introduced the keynote speakers. The conference

concluded with a keynote speech by Rushmore Cervantes, General Manager of the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department. He provided an overview of housing needs in the City of Los Angeles - ranging across diverse populations, geography and income levels. And he outlined the numerous programs the City makes available to facilitate and fund affordable housing.

The conference's hosts were *MEND* and *Valley Nonprofit Resources*. Conference sponsors were Agora Realty, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, The Honorable Felipe Fuentes, Habitat for Humanity - San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valleys, Kaiser Permanente, The Honorable Sheila Kuehl, LA Care, LA Family Housing, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County, New Capital, LLC, Thomas Safran & Associates, Union Bank and Wells Fargo.

A Planning Committee chaired by Stephanie Klasky-Gamer of LA Family Housing guided development of the conference.

The conference evaluation showed that overall satisfaction with the conference was "high" or "very high" for 99% of participants, and 92% said that the likelihood of their attending the conference again next year also was "high" or "very high." Overall satisfaction with the keynote speakers was "high" or "very high" for 100% of participants, and 80% of participants rated satisfaction with conference networking opportunities as "high" or "very high."

We would like to hear from you if you have ideas about taking action from MENDING Poverty 2016, or about how to shape a successful conference day for a possible MENDING Poverty 2017.

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