

Annual Report

Report Date

2003



Our new logo!

Thank you for your interest in the Colonias Development Council. We hope you enjoy this brief summary of our activities over the last year. If you would like more information, please contact us or visit our website!

Drawings in this report are by Rini Templeton.

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Our Approach

CDC takes an asset-building approach to working with southern New Mexico's colonia communities. "CDC's mission is to improve the quality of life for residents of southern New Mexico's colonia communities," says Executive Director, Diana Bustamante. "Community organizing works by building on the power of the people to take action to bring change to their own lives." CDC does this through its hands-on

program of community organizing and leadership development. Lead Organizer, Rubén Núñez says: "Our success comes from listening to what people in communities have to say about what they need. CDC doesn't give people what we think they need, but provides a process by which community members can identify and act to address their own needs." CDC's work focuses on five areas that people in communities have

identified as priority concerns. These are: Community development, economic development, youth organizing, immigration and civil rights and environmental justice.



Community Organizing and Leadership Development

The focus of CDC's work is on building strong committed grassroots organizations. Diana Bustamante says, "Community organizing and leadership development are the common threads that link all CDC's activities. The heart of what we do is support leaders willing to work for their communities and a process for addressing community needs." Using this process, CDC has expanded its scope of work from four to twelve

communities since 1994. Communities where CDC is currently active include Salem, Milagro, Rincón, Rodey, Las Palmeras, Montana Vista, Chaparral, Columbus, and Hatch.

This year we are especially happy to welcome the community of Rodey into our council. In March 2003, community organizer Mary Ann Benavidez was invited to begin working in Rodey. Now this colonia has a community group (La

Colonia Unida de Rodey) with over 25 active leaders. The group has made significant progress in working to address community environmental and infrastructure needs. For example, they have negotiated with the County to gain paved roads and are working hard to gain a new community center.

(story continued on page 2)



Community Organizing and Leadership Development

“Lack of infrastructure and housing remains one of the most pressing issues for colonia residents. CDC’s strategy has been to focus on helping residents obtain needed infrastructure and using such projects to build leadership and community organizing capacity.”

Diana Bustamante,
Executive Director



“CDC’s role is often to serve as an interface between colonia communities and agencies with the resources to bring infrastructure into colonias. We help residents work effectively with these entities to gain the infrastructure they need to be vibrant, healthy communities. This process also builds the kind of community leaders needed to bring about real change in colonia communities.”

In other member colonias, CDC successfully sustained our core leadership and/or expanded this leadership. In Chaparral, for example, community members involved in CDC activities jumped from approximately fifteen to over fifty. In November 2003, Chaparral organizers helped residents form a new group, *Vecinos Unidos de Chaparral* (United Neighborhoods of Chaparral). *Vecinos Unidos* now has over 20 members

and is focusing on Chaparral’s infrastructure needs. The group is also committed to improving environmental conditions through advocacy and organizing clean-ups and other actions. Residents are also concerned with civil rights issues. Says *Luz Mora*, “People want and need more information about their rights as citizens and residents.” Over the next year CDC plans to build on these successes by

expanding our base of committed leaders and helping them mobilize communities around a spectrum of issues. Organizers are also forging many more cooperative efforts between residents of different colonias around common concerns such as education and the environment. “If we work together, anything is possible,” says Community Organizer *Mary Ann Benavidez*.

Community Development

Infrastructure needs continue to be a colonia priority.

This year CDC kept working with residents of Las Palmeras and Montana Vista to gain natural gas services. In 2001, residents tried to gain funding for this project by drafting a Community Block Development Grant (CDBG). They wanted access to natural gas because many could not afford to heat their homes with high-cost propane. When their application was rejected, CDC worked with them to come up with another solution. CDC, Tierra Del Sol Housing, Inc., (TDS) and Anthony Water and Sanitation District (AWS), procured funds to allow residents to get low-cost loans to cover the costs of individual household hook-ups. Enough residents were then able to sign up for natural gas services to persuade the gas company to

suspend the cost of installing the main line. The result? We now expect Las Palmeras and Montana Vista to be fully hooked up to safe, affordable natural gas services within 2004, leveraging \$150,000 worth of infrastructure into these communities.

This year CDC was also contracted by Doña Ana County to coordinate the community outreach component of a countywide wastewater hook-up project. A team of application processors were trained by the county and hired. To date 2,500 households to date have been signed up to the project. Mary Ann Benavidez, who helped coordinate the project, says: “What this means is that now these people will not only have access to wastewater, they will also be able to explain how the projects work to their fellow

community members. That will help communities know what they need to do to get the infrastructure they need.”

Over the past year, CDC has also helped member communities in both the North and South advocate with the County to gain other needed infrastructure improvements, including paved roads, improvements to water systems, etc. This type of assistance to member communities will continue to be a priority for CDC in the coming year.



Child Care/ Economic Development Initiative

Columbus: In June 2002, the Columbus Child Development Center, the first licensed child care facility in the community, opened its doors. The Center is the first center developed under CDC's Child Care/Economic Development Initiative (CC/EDI). CC/EDI came about because women in member colonias identified lack of good child care as a major problem in their communities. By April 2003, the Center was employing six women and providing quality affordable care to seventeen children. But the Center faced a problem. These numbers just weren't enough to keep the

Center financially sustainable. What made the problem worse was that many families could only afford to pay around \$7.00 a day instead of the \$13.00 a day needed to actually cover costs. Staff recognized that unless they were able to raise enrollment, the Center would have to close. With the support of the CDC, the women developed a plan. They told their story to local media and reached out to the community, going door-to-door and out to the onion and chile fields to tell people about the services they offer. By July 2003, the Center had over forty children enrolled and had to take on three new

employees—bringing the total of fair wage jobs created by the Center to nine. Now the Center is financially stable and staff members are working to keep building their program. Staff members are all working to pursue individualized education plans that will enhance their ability to provide quality child care services. The Center is also a proud member of Aim High New Mexico, which helps programs improve their quality and move toward full accreditation as quality early child education facilities.

Chaparral: The Chaparral CC/EDI group, Luz en el Desierto, has carried out a market survey, developed a business plan and gained a donation of an acre of land on which to build their Center. For the past year, the group has been trying to get funds to begin construction. This has proved difficult. Recently, however, the group formed an alliance with the Chaparral sewing collaborative *Mujeres Aprendiendo a Coser(MAAC)*. The two groups of women have decided to work together to gain a building that will house both projects. Recently, the women

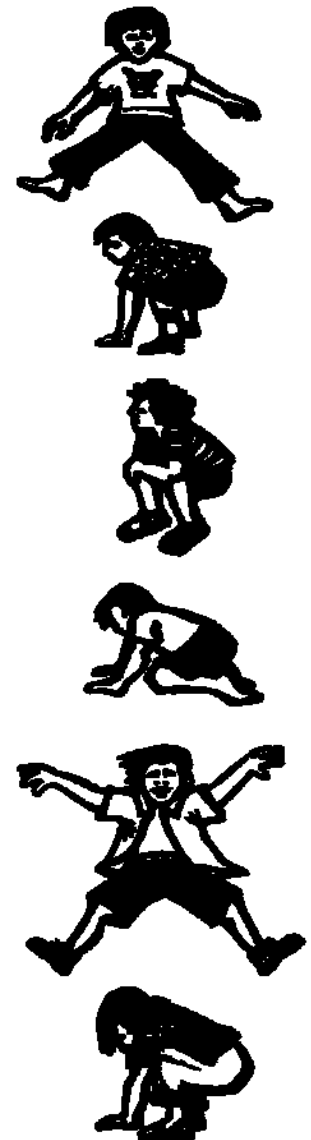
identified a modular school building for sale in Chaparral. They estimate that by using self-help labor they will be able to lower the cost of construction to around \$60,000. This is much less than the amount required to build a new building. The two groups of women are now working closely together to obtain the funds they need and are confident that they will achieve success.

"Without a building it has been hard for the Chaparral groups to progress. Recently, the women have really demonstrated their leadership by working to come up with a new solution to address this problem. By identifying a less expensive building option, they have really taken ownership of the process. We are proud of the leadership and determination they have shown in seeking an alternative way to advance their projects ."

Megan Snedden
Economic Development
Coordinator

"Achieving our dream of opening a child care center has made me realize that dreams can come true, even if they seem impossible. Now I am working toward other dreams like getting my GED. I hope our project will be an inspiration to other women with dreams for their families and their communities."

María Gaytán
Child Care Assistant



"I am really exited about working with CDC staff and people in communities to develop financial literacy and tax preparation services over the next year. I see it as a great way to build financial knowledge and security in communities. I am convinced this is a straightforward and effective way of building community assets."

Elva Villegas
Office Manager

Other Economic Development Efforts

Mujeres Aprendiendo a Coser (MAAC): MAAC is a group of eight women who have developed products, explored local markets, and begun selling products at local craft fairs. CDC has used a community organizing strategy to help the group plan for the future and form strategic alliances to advance their project. Last year, MAAC established a partnership with a weaving collective in Chiapas,

Mexico. In December 2002, Margarita Pérez-Pérez, a weaver from the Chiapas collective, visited the Chaparral group. She told them about the experiences of the Chiapas weavers. Now MAAC is purchasing hand-woven squares from the Chiapas women and using them in their products, including pot holders, bags, and children's clothing, which they have selling locally with some success.

Financial Literacy and Tax Preparation Services:

Recently, Megan Snedden attended a meeting in McAllen Texas. A group there, LUPE (La Union del Pueblo Entero) presented on the financial services they offer their members, including tax preparation. Impressed by their model, over the next year CDC will offer tax preparation help and is working to develop a colonia-friendly program of financial literacy education.

Youth Organizing

"The youth are the future of our communities and youth issues are tremendously important to colonia residents."

Rubén Núñez
Lead Organizer

The Youth Organizing Project (YOP) underwent some upheaval this year. Despite substantial effort, CDC has not yet employed a full-time youth organizer. However, one of the former members of the Hatch Recreational Organizing Council (ROC) served temporarily as Youth Coordinator. Vivien

Benavidez helped ROC members put on a "Know Your Rights" Dance, host visits from YouthAction and Albuquerque's Young Women United, and develop a mural painting project. The ROC also hosted a training on the Rhetoric of Juvenile Justice with Dr. Stephen England, with over 25 participants. In October,

ROC members attended YouthAction's Southwest Regional Gathering. CDC continues to search for a qualified permanent youth organizer. Meanwhile, staff members are using this hiatus to build our knowledge of the issues and strategies of youth organizing today.

Immigration and Civil Rights

This year CDC worked to build partnerships that will help ensure that colonia residents know their rights and how to protect those rights. In the south, CDC organizers supported the work done by the El-Paso *Red Fronteriza Por Los Derechos Humanos* to provide comprehensive "Know Your Rights" training in colonias and to develop and nurture the

human rights committees in specific communities. In October, CDC organizers helped the *Red* coordinate trainings in Las Palmeras and Chaparral reaching over 40 local residents. CDC organizers also supported "human rights" committees formed in the Anthony area and Chaparral.

CDC is working to increase its collaboration with the

Family Unity Office and Office of Catholic Social Ministry (OCSM) to provide more effective immigration outreach. In September 2003, CDC hired Erika Contreras to provide support to organizers on immigration issues. CDC has also committed to providing in cooperation with OCSM community organizing and "Know Your Rights" (Story continued on page 5)



Immigration and Civil Rights (Continued)

training to communities within the ten counties of southern New Mexico outside CDC's traditional scope of work. CDC and OCSM will provide at least four such presentations in the coming year.

This year, CDC also established a close working partnership with Southern New Mexico Legal Aid (SNLA) by committing to work together to expand education and advocacy around immigrant farm workers rights. Together we plan to print brochures, mount a popular education

campaign, and organize concerned stakeholders. Current urgent issues include worker's compensation and the short hoe/hand weeding issue. *Diana Bustamante says: "These issues are really vital. New Mexico outlawed use of the short hoe years ago because of the increased risk of worker injury. However, some farmers in southern New Mexico are apparently circumventing this law by having farm workers hand weed fields—a practice which creates an equally high risk of creating worker disability."* This new area

expands CDC's work in civil rights in exciting new directions.

"I see our efforts as building a rights network or safety net which helps ensure that the civil rights of southern New Mexico's Latino population are protected not only in terms of immigration but also in terms of housing, labor, and education—all the components that make up a life."

Diana A. Bustamante
Executive Director



Environmental Justice

This year southern New Mexico's colonia residents mobilized to address environmental health and justice issues to an unprecedented degree. CDC helped residents coordinate eight community clean-ups in six colonias. Over 600 residents turned out to pick up trash in their communities. As a result of these efforts, three communities developed yearly clean-up calendars, and five developed committees to address the environmental health issues facing their communities. These include access to municipal trash collection services, paved roads,

wastewater systems, risk of groundwater contamination, and air quality.

This year CDC also played a key role in developing the New Mexico WasteWatch Project. The mission of New Mexico Wastewatch is to stop the targeting of New Mexico's low-income and ethnic communities as potential waste sites and to develop a community-friendly State environmental policy. In 2003 WasteWatch partners helped introduce four bills into the New Mexico State Legislature that aim to make New Mexico air and water quality standards at least as

stringent as Federal standards. Partners also met with the New Mexico Secretary of the Environment and gained assurance that WasteWatch partners would have a role in 1) coordinating town hall meetings around the state to gain community feedback on State environmental policies and 2) ensuring a proposed State Environmental Commission has significant community representation.

(Story continued on page 6)

"The appeal of the Chaparral landfill decision is an unparalleled opportunity for us to make the environmental concerns of communities like Chaparral heard around the State and beyond."

Diana A. Bustamante
Executive Director



“I’m a farmworker’s daughter and I know what the environment means to all of us. The environment is the most important treasure we share. Preserving the environment is perhaps the most important gift we can give to future generations.”

Mary Ann Benavidez
Community Organizer

Environmental Justice (Continued)

CDC also pursued its ongoing appeal of the decision by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to permit a third landfill in Chaparral. In December 2003, CDC and the community leaders who have spearheaded this effort learned that the New Mexico State Supreme Court has agreed to review the appeal. The appeal is based on the lack of environmental health assessment and social impact

consideration in the State’s landfill application process. The case has already drawn national attention.

A major focus of CDC’s environmental work this year has been building the capacity of colonia communities to address their environmental justice concerns. To this end, CDC, in cooperation with Southern Area Health Education Center (SoAHEC) helped

train 25 outreach workers in area colonias to serve as community environmental justice promotoras for their communities.

CDC hopes to build on our successes of the past year by expanding the program of clean-ups in area colonias and increasing training and organizing support to help communities create a better environment.

Our 2002-2003 Budget

Income	
Columbus Child Development Center	\$ 42,208.08
Contributions	\$ 29,020.82
Grants	\$443,347.40
Interest Income	\$ 115.97
Reimbursed Expenses	\$ 14,250.62
Rents	\$ 11,710.00
Total Income	\$540,652.89

Expenses	
Advertising	\$ 394.18
Continuing Education	\$ 669.00
Contract Labor	\$ 5,919.95
Equipment	\$ 9,480.87
Fundraising	\$ 5,617.50
Insurance	\$ 59,689.20
Interest	\$ 10,630.59
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,119.71
Operations	\$ 36,264.62
Professional Fees	\$ 6,336.21
Salaries	\$279,174.62
Supplies	\$ 31,641.79
Taxes	\$ 22,896.79
Transportation	\$ 22,100.97
Total Expenses	\$492,936.00



Our Board of Directors

President Rudolfo Chávez Chávez	Community at-large member
Vice-President Manuela Méndez	Montana Vista
Treasurer Diana A. Bustamante	Non-voting
Margarita Zúñiga	Chaparral
Delia Filerio	Las Palmeras
Juan Jaramillo	El Milagro
Marie González	Rincón
Carlos Corral	at-large member



Our Funders and Contributors

CDC is exceedingly grateful to have the support of so many foundations and individuals. Our work would not be possible without this generous support. THANK YOU!

Foundations and Organizations:

Albertson's Community Partnership Program, Basilian Fathers of Toronto, Ben and Jerry's Foundation, Bridge Builders Foundation, Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico, Marguerite Casey Foundation, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC), Daniels Fund, Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, Frost Foundation, Jade Tree Two Foundation, McCune Foundation, Needmor Fund, New

Generations Family Services, New Mexico Women's Foundation, Norman Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation, Solidago Foundation, Stocker Foundation, Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation, Tides Foundation, Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, and Wells Fargo Bank.

Individuals:

Mary Ann Benavidez, Sheila Black, Moira Black, Samantha Black, Jagan Butler, Diana Bustamante, Rita Carbajal, Irma Castañeda, Mary Jane García, Thomas Guerra, Elizabeth Gutiérrez, María Hernández, Jean Hanson, Esperanza Holguín, Ivan Izenberg, Louise Kahn, Louise Lockhart, Louis Luna, María de la

Luz Mora, Kilian Metcalf, Rubén Núñez, Carlos Ogden, Marianne Panes, Barbara Smith, Megan Snedden, Mary Taylor, Sisters of Mercy, Sherman Williams, Alicia Valenzuela, Beatriz Valencia, Elva Villegas, Brenda Villegas.

We also thank everyone who has purchased calendars, coffee, and raffle tickets or attended any of our fundraisers over the last year.

¡Mil Gracias!



CDC Staff: Building Organizational Capacity

One of CDC's goals is to build the capacity of the organization to be a better resource for colonia communities. Over the last year, CDC staff have visited other similar organizations and attended conferences that offered new and exciting perspectives on issues facing colonia residents.

Some highlights:

January, July, and August 2003: Rubén Núñez attended a series of meetings with human rights organizations along the border. These sessions were called *Tejiendo Alternativas* because the participants were working to find ways to educate themselves and their communities about the impacts of globalization and trade policies on the border region. The purpose of the meetings was to begin seeking alternative forms of economic development that will positively benefit residents of the border region.

June 2003: Sheila Black attended the *National Neighborhood Coalition's Leadership Summit* in Washington DC.

This reinforced the importance of networking with other grassroots organizations so that the needs of low-income people will not be overlooked.

September 2003: Diana Bustamante attended the *Strengthening Social Change Through Assessment and Learning Forum* in Montreal, Canada sponsored by the Pratt Institute for Community and Environmental Development, the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex, the Institute in Management and Community Development at Concordia University, and the Center for Community Change. The forum included representatives from social change organizations from over 15 countries. The purpose was to share and examine learning and assessment strategies for social change organizations so that they can become more effective in their work.

October 2003: Mary Ann Benavidez was invited by *CLINIC* to attend a

national conference on immigration in Washington, DC that raised her awareness of the barrage of assaults on civil liberties that are confronting immigrant populations in the U.S. today.

October 2003: Elva Villegas, Megan Snedden, Felipa Montoya, and Irma Castañeda attended the *Ms. Foundation's Institute for Women's Economic Empowerment* in Austin, TX. This was a great opportunity to talk with organizations from all over the country that are working on economic development projects ranging from cooperative development to workforce training, many of which are using a community organizing perspective.

December 2003: Mary Ann Benavidez, Elva Villegas, and Erica Contreras attended a meeting of the *Red Fronteriza de Mujeres* in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico that brought together representatives from organizations all along the border. The participants discussed how they could join together to work toward equality for women in all areas of life.



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We're on the Web!

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Support is Always Welcome!

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Colonias Development Council please send in this form or contact us at the numbers listed to the right. Thanks!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

_____ YES! I want to support the work of the CDC. I am enclosing the following amount: (Please circle) \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$_____

_____ I am interested in the work of the CDC but would like more information. Please contact me to set up a meeting.