



# Annual Report

Report Date  
March 2005



## Colonias Development Council

1050 Monte Vista, Las Cruces, NM 88001  
Phone: (505) 647-2744 Fax: (505) 647-1462  
[www.colonias.org](http://www.colonias.org)

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!

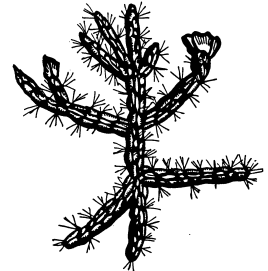
Drawings in this report are by Rini Templeton.

### Our Approach

CDC works with southern New Mexico's colonia residents to develop effective self help strategies to address their needs and accomplish their goals. CDC works from three assumptions. First, that people are acutely aware of their needs and resources. Second, that given the opportunity, people can take action to change conditions in their lives. Third, by working to build communities together people are empowered to

overcome obstacles that may previously have seemed insurmountable. Says CDC Executive Director, Diana Bustamante, "*We tell people, 'We didn't come to do the work for you, we came to show you a process through which you can do the work on your own.'*" This year, CDC's approach was validated when three senior staff members Diana Bustamante, Rubén Nuñez; and Mary Ann Benavidez were named

2004 Fellows in the Ford Foundation's Leadership for a Changing World Program. This program recognizes pioneers in developing innovative strategies for improving conditions in low-income communities.



### Community Organizing and Leadership Development

CDC's work depends on developing strong grassroots organizations in member colonias. CDC seeks to prepare community leaders to tackle community issues as they arise and to link these issues to broader social and political concerns. We work to develop leadership skills that allow a person who shows leadership in one area to go on and exert leadership in other areas as well. CDC works on issues of concern that are identified by community members

themselves. Historically, this has meant that CDC's work focuses on the following areas: community and economic development, youth, environmental justice, and immigration and civil rights. The year CDC worked with grassroots colonia groups in Salem, Milagro, Rincón, Rodey, Las Palmeras, Montana Vista, Chaparral, and Columbus. We also began to work with two *promotoras* or health outreach workers in Sunland Park. CDC provided 18

hours of organizing training to these *promotoras* and helped them develop a plan to provide outreach on solid waste and household pesticides. The women put on 30 presentations, reaching over 500 Sunland Park residents. This effort laid the groundwork for CDC to become involved in broader organizing efforts on environmental and health issues in Sunland Park. (Story continued on page 2)

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## Community Organizing and Leadership Development

*“When we work on infrastructure projects, we focus on helping colonia residents develop a process by which they can act to address the needs of their communities. The process is as important as the project.”*

Diana Bustamante,  
Executive Director

CDC also continued to expand its efforts in Chaparral. In July 2004, CDC learned that a group of 12 women working on economic development efforts in Chaparral had received \$400,000 from HUD’s Rural Housing and Economic Development Program (RHED). These funds will be used to construct a child care and economic development center in Chaparral. Another Chaparral group, *Vecinos*

*Unidos*, now has over 25 active members. The group is focusing on infrastructure issues, including gaining natural gas, and also on gaining incorporation of the community, and improving educational success rates among Chaparral youth. In the North, groups in Salem, Rodey and Rincón were active in working to gain better roads, more police protection, and more representation in local institutions. For example,

the group in Rincón is focusing on gaining more local representation on the local water board and on the school board for the Hatch Valley. Says organizer Mary Ann Benavidez: *“Getting more community representation on these institutions is our core goal for the next year. Gaining this representation is the only way colonia residents can ensure that their needs will be considered and acted on now and in the future.”*



## Community Development

In 2004, CDC continued to work with Las Palmeras and Montana Vista on the natural gas project CDC helped residents develop with partner organizations Tierra Del Sol (TDS) and Anthony Water and Sanitation District (AWSD). Residents wanted access to natural gas because many could not afford to heat their homes with propane. By the end of this year, large sections of Montana Vista were fully hooked up to natural gas. However, land easement issues prevented the project from entering Las Palmeras. Despite efforts to negotiate by CDC and its partners, it became clear the project would not be able to go into Las Palmeras. This was a big disappointment to the community, but it also galvanized residents to increase their organizing efforts around the various infrastructure issues in that community—especially the

need for hook-up to a working wastewater system. Achieving this will be the main goal of CDC’s organizing efforts in Las Palmeras over the coming year. This year CDC also continued to help coordinate the community outreach component of a \$67 million dollar county wastewater project. The project will result in 12 colonias being hooked up to working wastewater systems. To date, CDC’s efforts have helped lead to 16 colonia residents being trained and employed as processors and 3,000 households being signed on to the project. This exceeds CDC’s original goals. In late 2004, CDC also made an agreement with the Energy Center at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) that will expand efforts to bring energy efficiency to the colonias. In cooperation with the Energy Center,

CDC will provide four energy efficiency trainings to area colonia residents and help administer a loan program that will allow area colonia residents to purchase new energy-efficient refrigerators and/or other appliances. Older refrigerators often account for up to 50% of a monthly electric bill. This new initiative has the potential to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy costs in member colonias. CDC also helped individual colonias advocate with County and State to address infrastructure and other needs. Over 12 meetings with County and State officials took place in 2004. These efforts helped Chaparral gain its own high school, Placitas and Salem gain new housing, Rodey gain paved roads and streetlights, and Rincón get help in addressing local flooding problems.

*“When we work with colonias on infrastructure projects, we encourage residents to build contacts and develop a process that helps the community work to complete specific infrastructure projects and develop a climate that ensures that future infrastructure needs will be addressed. This is how we work to turn projects into organizing opportunities.”*

Ruben Nuñez  
Executive Director



## Child Care/ Economic Development Initiative

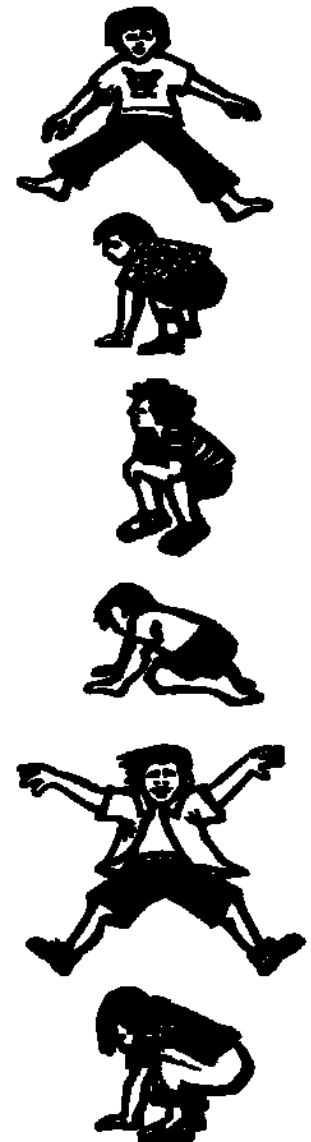
**Columbus:** Since June 2002, CDC has been helping manage the Columbus Child Development Center, the first licensed child care center developed under CDC's Child Care/Economic Development Initiative (CC/EDI). In 2004, staff worked hard to build the financial sustainability and organizational capacity of the Center. A major challenge remains dealing with the seasonal nature of employment in Columbus, a community composed primarily of agricultural workers. During the growing season, Center enrollment is consistently at or above capacity. However,

enrollment tends to fall in the winter months when most families do not have work. Center staff has been developing plans to cope with this seasonal drop in enrollment. One idea is to start a free after school program for older children that focuses on literacy issues. The Center has also been expanding its health outreach activities in Columbus. Under a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, one staff member is being trained to serve as a family health outreach coordinator. She will work to link families with necessary health resources and to increase the

identification of health and developmental issues in Columbus's children. The Center also took the lead in coordinating local events for the first ever Border Binational Health Week (BBHW). In BBHW over 6,000 health events were held on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico Border. Center staff more than did their part, coordinating a health fair, a teen dance at which HIV and other health training were provided, and a day of community health workshops. Over 600 children, youth, and adults from Columbus and Palomas, Mexico participated in these events.

*"Recently, I got some feedback that made me feel great about what we're doing. One of the teachers at the Columbus Elementary School said she'd noticed that the kids at the Center are better prepared and do better work at school than kids who aren't enrolled. That really made all of our hard work feel worthwhile."*

Brenda Villegas  
Center Director



**Chaparral:** In 2004, the Chaparral child care group *Luz en el Desierto* and the sewing group *Mujeres Aprendiendo a Coser* joined together to form a single organization to pursue their dream of gaining a building in which to house their projects. The new organization, which is called *Centro de Desarrollo Familiar de Chaparral*, set about pursuing various strategies to gain a building. The women explored buying a modular building that they would renovate using sweat equity. They also continued, with CDC's help, to write grants to the Federal government and other sources to gain the needed

funds to build a larger building. The woman wanted a building large enough to house a child care center, a small business "incubator" space for the sewing collaborative and other community groups, and classroom space for community education on topics such as computers and financial literacy. In June 2004, *Centro de Desarrollo Familiar* received the wonderful news that the grant they had written to HUD's Rural Housing and Economic Development Project (RHED) had been approved. After three years of trying, they had been awarded \$400,000 to construct their proposed building. The group is now

working to build its organizational capacity and prepare for the challenge of constructing their dream building. Says Megan Snedden, *"This is a dream come true for these women and shows the importance of sticking with a project. There are many challenges ahead, but now we have the confidence to keep going and meet them head-on. We envision creating a Center that will be a vital new community resource that will truly benefit the people of Chaparral."*



*"We are making so much progress, we sometimes can hardly believe it ourselves. Our sewing has improved so much, and we are making many new products. We are even learning to knit. We are also making progress in other areas. Our organization is more united now, and we are learning computers and other skills that will help us in the future."*

MAAC members

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*"The issue is how our youth can be brought into organizing efforts on health, school reform, and environmental justice"*

Ruben Nuñez  
Lead Organizer



## Other Economic Development Efforts

**Mujeres Aprendiendo a Coser:** In addition to gaining funding for a building, *Mujeres Aprendiendo a Coser* had an exciting year in other ways. The women worked to do market research, develop new products and build their skills. Highlights included selling their products at the Rag Rug Festival in Santa Fe, which was sponsored by the New Mexico Women's Foundation (NMWF).

NMWF have been loyal supporters of *Mujeres Aprendiendo*. The group has also continued to support the weaving collective in Chiapas by purchasing hand weavings from the Chiapas women which MAAC members have used to develop products ranging from potholders to children's dresses. *"We see this relationship as women helping each other," say the members of MAAC*

**Financial Literacy and Tax Preparation Services:** Megan Snedden, Elva Villegas, and Erika Contreras held a trial run of their financial literacy training series for six employees of the Columbus Child Development Center in October 2004. Participants called the training *"well-organized and extremely helpful."* CDC plans to hold more such trainings in communities over the coming year.

## Youth Organizing

In 2004, CDC repeatedly searched and failed to find a qualified youth organizer to take over our Youth Organizing Project. As a result, we have decided for the time being to combine youth activities with our adult organizing activities. Activities that focused on youth this year included the successful Youth Dance/

HIV Training held as part of the Border Binational Health Week events organized by Columbus Child Development Center staff. Youth have also played a large role in the program of community clean-ups coordinated in the North by Mary Ann Benavidez. Groups in Chaparral also included youth in their work

to gain a new high school for Chaparral. Future work involving youth includes plans to develop an equity report card and training on the schools for parents and youth in the Hatch area to improve local academic outcomes. Our hope is that youth and their parents can work together to bring about needed changes in these areas.

## Immigration and Civil Rights

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

rights committees in specific communities. In October, CDC organizers helped the *Red* coordinate trainings in Las Palmeras and Chaparral, eaching over 40 local residents. CDC organizers also supported "human rights" committees in Anthony and Chaparral. CDC also formed an important new alliance with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).

AFSC is a Quaker organization that works nationally and internationally to protect human and civil rights. Under the agreement, CDC will serve as a sub-committee of AFSC in southern New Mexico and work to document immigrant abuses and to provide "Know Your Rights" training as part of AFSC's national program, Project Voice, which focuses on



## Immigration and Civil Rights (Continued)

bringing immigrant voices into national policy debates on immigration and civil rights, etc. Over the coming year, CDC also plans to continue to work with the Office of Catholic Social Ministry (OCSM) to provide civil rights training and organizer support on an as-needed basis to communities within the ten counties of southern New Mexico outside CDC's traditional scope of work. This year, CDC also hired a new organizer with substantial experience on civil rights, farm workers, and voter education.

Veronica Carmona comes to us from the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project where she served as regional liaison. Veronica has big plans to expand CDC's farm worker organizing work. She is talking with Southern New Mexico Legal Aid (SNLA) about coordinating a long-planned popular education campaign on pay documentation and workman's compensation. She is also discussing with Carlos Marentes of the El Paso-based El Centro De Los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos how the two

organizations can collaborate to carry out a regional campaign on pay documentation that will inform farm workers of their rights and document any violations of labor laws pertaining to farm workers. Veronica Carmona says there is an enormous need for this work. "We need to act so the rights of farm workers are protected," she declares.

*"I am excited that with the new partnerships CDC is forming, we can finally begin to truly achieve our core goal of building a rights network or safety net which helps ensure that the civil rights of southern New Mexico's Latino population are protected in all the key areas of life."*

Diana Bustamante  
Executive Director



## Environmental Justice

Environmental justice issues continue to be a pressing concern in the colonias. This year CDC continued to pursue its appeal of the Chaparral Landfill Decision. Three years after the community of Chaparral organized to oppose the landfill, the case was finally heard by the New Mexico State Supreme Court on June 14, 2004. CDC Executive Director, Diana Bustamante, and 7 members of the Chaparral community who had led opposition to the proposed landfill, attended the hearing. The New Mexico State Supreme Court Justices appeared impressed by CDC's

contention that the problems with the state landfill application process are: 1) Community input is given no real weight in the decision-making process; 2) There is no consideration of social impact; 3) There is inadequate environmental health assessment and no method of considering the cumulative effect of many landfills or waste facilities on a community. A decision is still pending, but CDC is pleased that we have managed to bring significant publicity to bear on the issues of waste sites in New Mexico and their impact on the State's low-income and ethnic

communities. CDC also continued working with the Environment and Health Coalition (EHC) a spin-off off the New Mexico Wastewatch Project to gain the adoption of the Precautionary Principle. This principle revises the way environmental risk is assessed, creating a more community-centered process. CDC also continued the Colonia Clean Environment Program. Since April 2003, this program has resulted in 17 clean-ups being held in 7 communities, involving over 600 residents. CDC has also provided (Story continued on page 6)

*"What excites me is how people are taking action to improve their environment. For example, we started talking about a community garden in Rincón, and now the people in Rodey want one. That tells me they feel they have the power."*

Mary Ann Benavidez  
Community Organizer



*“The networks CDC is joining will help southern New Mexico’s colonia residents be better able to speak out about their environmental needs. For me, this participation is what has been missing in the environmental policy debate—not only in New Mexico, but in the U.S.”*

Diana Bustamante  
Executive Director

## Environmental Justice (Continued)

training on environmental codes, solid waste and pesticides in 5 communities, reaching over 500 colonia residents. CDC is also expanding its environmental work through a new partnership with the Energy Center at the University of Texas in El Paso. Through this partnership, CDC will collaborate with UTEP to provide energy efficiency training to colonia residents and will help administer a

loan fund designed to allow colonia residents to replace old energy-guzzling appliances with more energy-efficient ones. Through the loan fund and by providing energy efficiency training, CDC hopes to increase energy efficiency awareness and practice in area colonias. The goal of this initiative and CDC’s other environmental justice training efforts is best

expressed by Mary Ann Benavidez who says: *“Our goal is to give residents the knowledge and resources to define what a concept like environmental justice means on the ground in each community, and what action each community can take to make it happen.”*

## Our 2003-2004 Budget

### Income

Columbus Child Development Center	\$ 90,963.06
Contributions	\$ 7,034.11
Grants	\$353,066.75
Interest Income	\$ 403.25
Reimbursed Expenses	\$ 47,554.91
Rents	\$ 16,860.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$515,882.08</b>

### Expenses

Advertising	\$ 117.29
Continuing Education	\$ 2,582.50
Contract Labor	\$ 5,919.95
Equipment	\$ 5,766.35
Fundraising	\$ 1160.28
Insurance	\$ 46,243.40
Interest	\$ 11,352.51
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,119.71
Operations	\$ 45,785.04
Professional Fees	\$ 24,022.49
Salaries	\$315,576.52
Supplies	\$ 29,042.70
Taxes	\$ 27,026.98
Transportation	\$ 21,000.88
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$537,716.59</b>



## Our Board of Directors

### President

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### Vice-President

Manuela Méndez

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Cruz Fébres

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### Community

at-large member

Montana Vista

Non-voting

Chaparral

Las Palmeras

El Milagro

Rincón

at-large member

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, Marguerite Casey Foundation, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC), Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico, Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, Con Alma Health Foundation, Daniels Fund, Doña Ana County, Environmental Protection Agency, El Paso Community

Foundation, Frost Foundation, Las Cruces Community of Christ, McCune Foundation, Needmor Fund, New Generations Family Services, New Mexico Community Foundation, New Mexico Women's Foundation, Norman Foundation, Open Meadows Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation, Puffin Foundation, Raskob Foundation, Ronald McDonald Foundation, Solidago 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, Denise Chávez, Dr. Rodolfo Chávez-Chávez, Christine Eber, Mary Jane García, Jean Garcia, Nancy Greene, Thomas Guerra, Duncan Hayse, Esperanza Holguín, Louise Kahn, Evi Licon, Louise Lockhart, Louis Luna, Judy Messal, Veronica Moran, María de la Luz Mora, Nora Naughton, Rubén Núñez, Carlos Ogden, Nancy Oliver, Marianne Panes, Kari Richer, Barbara Smith, Megan Snedden, Jamie Speyer, Mary Taylor, Elva Villegas, Brenda Villegas, JoAnn Weiss, Connie Voisine.



## CDC Staff: Building Organizational Capacity

This year CDC staff focused on building organizational capacity by strengthening our alliances with other organizations and networks of organizations working to achieve similar goals. What makes networking like this so important? Meeting other organizations gives CDC staff and community leaders the chance to exchange information and experiences, learn from what other groups are doing, and gain much-needed positive reinforcement about why the work we are doing matters. Building alliances, also increases CDC's policy advocacy capacity and helps residents express and take action on the needs, challenges, and dreams of their communities.

Some highlights:

In 2004, CDC repeatedly came together with the eight organizations convened by the Marguerite Casey Foundation. The organizations together formed the *Sin Fronteras Collaborative* and committed to sharing best practices, cross-training, supporting each other's work, and agreeing to focus on similar

policy goals. The *Sin Fronteras* organizations are all community change organizations that work with immigrant, predominately Latino communities. To date, the groups that make up *Sin Fronteras* have held the following exchanges with CDC:

\*On August 13-14, 2004, *Sin Fronteras* Organizations New Mexico Voices for Children (Albuquerque, NM), and Clinica Oscar Romero and Latino Health Access (Los Angeles, CA) came together with CDC staff in Las Cruces to share best practices in community organizing, policy advocacy, and approaches to economic development projects. CDC provided a training on community organizing and New Mexico Voices for children provided a training on grassroots policy advocacy.

\*On September 23-24, the groups of *Sin Fronteras* came together through Marguerite Casey and OMG (OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, Philadelphia, PA), which is facilitating

the learning cluster process for a session on funding. At that session *Sin Fronteras* organizations agreed to share funding expertise and resources.

\*On December 13-16, 2004, CDC Lead Organizer, Ruben Nunez and Organizer Mary Ann Benavidez traveled to MacAllen, Texas to provide training on community organizing to two *Sin Fronteras* member organizations there, AVANCE and ARISE. They gave community organizing and power analysis training to 70 community members involved in AVANCE, and to 60 women involved in ARISE. Reviews of the training were uniformly positive. One participant declared: "*The session on Power Analysis was life-changing!*"

Being in *Sin Fronteras* has given CDC staff and community members the opportunity to learn from other communities facing similar challenges and to develop new best practices and new approaches to old problems. May this collaborative continue to be a source of education and inspiration!



**Colonias  
Development  
Council**

1050 Monte Vista  
Las Cruces, NM  
88001

Phone:  
(505) 647-2744

Fax:  
(505) 647-1462

E-mail:  
sheilafblack@hotmail.com

**We're on the Web!**

*See us at:*

**[www.colonias.org](http://www.colonias.org)**

## **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.