

# **Making Connections on San Antonio's West Side: The Neighborhood Transformation/ Family Development Project**

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# Making Connections in San Antonio's West Side: The Neighborhood Transformation/ Family Development Project

## Introduction

Perhaps because of its economic and ethnic characteristics, San Antonio's "West Side" has long been under the microscope of policy makers, urban reformers and social researchers. The result of this scrutiny has been to add programs dealing with specific needs in what has been referred to as the eleventh poorest neighborhood in the country.<sup>1</sup> San Antonio's West Side was chosen in 1939 by President Roosevelt as the location of the first public housing project in the nation. Today there are more than 112 social service agencies with at least 252 programs located on San Antonio's West Side. This report attempts to describe the West Side in its many-sided complexity and characterize the various organizations that are working to address its many needs. What the report does not do is evaluate their programs. It is intended as a description of what the Annie E. Casey team found (and what it did not find) on San Antonio's West Side in meetings with key persons in the various organizations and agencies that reside and work there.

The approach we used was designed to identify the organizational activities in West Side neighborhoods through one-on-one meetings with representatives of organizations in seven constituency areas: education, economic development, housing, health, human services, faith communities and community organizations. During those meetings, the activities, networks and funding sources of each organization or agency were identified, with particular attention to activities directed at strengthening families. Interviews continued until the team identified a critical mass of organizational activity. This report briefly summarizes those programs identified by the team and the collaboration among organizations. While it is not a complete inventory of programs and organizations, we have presented something more than a sampling.

The reader will note that names of individuals who might direct or contribute to the activities of these organizations are not mentioned. That was deliberate. There are so many organizations working on the West Side that we would find it difficult at this juncture to name key persons for fear that some important ones would be left out.

We emphasize the organizational assets on the West Side. Giving recognition to the positive aspects through "asset mapping" is the first step in the long-term process of making connections in the neighborhood.

One last note on our approach. We do not identify *neighborhoods* at this juncture. We leave the question of what residents in these areas define as "the neighborhood" to be answered through personal interviews in the next phase of the process of *Making Connections*.

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on per capita income in 1995. Richard R. Tangum, *Avenida Guadalupe: 2020 Master Plan*. Division of Architecture and Interior Design, The University of Texas, San Antonio, Feb. 1, 1998, p 6.

## San Antonio's West Side

The area identified here as the "greater West Side" comprises a total 1998 population of approximately 148,000 residents in 22 census tracts that begin at the edge of San Antonio's downtown area, westward to Penn Road, south to just below US Highway 90 W and north to Culebra road. (See map: "San Antonio West Side" and Master Table). The focus of this report is particularly on what we are calling the "West Side corridor," which encompasses an estimated 1998 population of just over 50,000 in eight census tracts in the core of the greater West Side. This corridor area begins at the western boundary of the downtown central business district, stretches westward to Acme Road, bordered on the south by Guadalupe Street/Castroville Road and on the north by Commerce Street (Cesar Chavez Way). The corridor area has been expanded adjacent to downtown to include the census tract just north of Commerce street.

Most of the West Side residents are of Mexican origin. In 1998 an estimated 94 percent are identified as Hispanic, more than nine in ten of them of Mexican origin. The population is chiefly bilingual. While almost nine out of ten persons in the West Side corridor live in households where Spanish is spoken at least some of the time, 38 percent report that they speak English "very well." Two out of five of the households have been characterized by the Census Bureau as "linguistically isolated," that is, they have no one in the household who is fluent in English.

If one is to believe the 1990 Census report on nationality, eight in ten adults on the West Side were born in the United States and only 13 percent are not US citizens.<sup>2</sup>

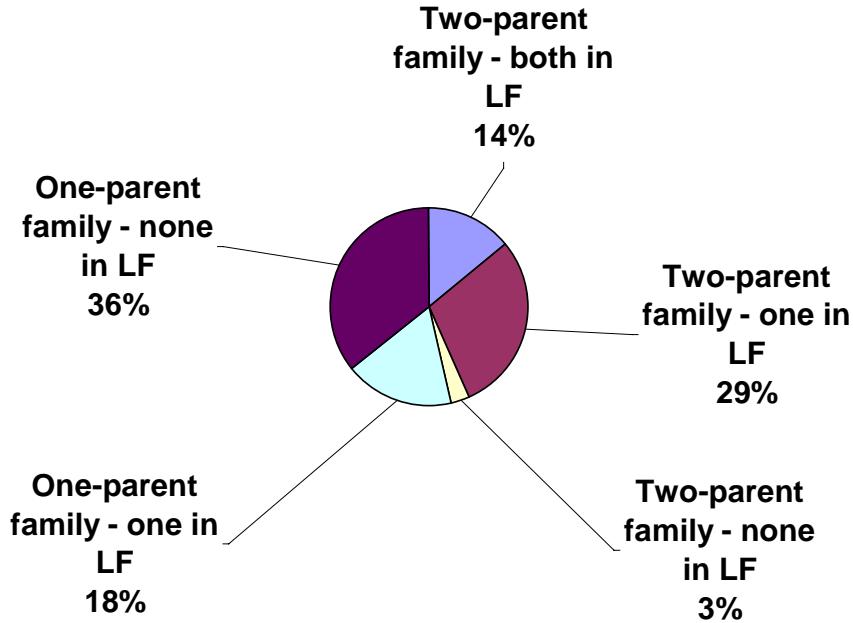
Characteristically, the West Side is a family-centered area. This is evidenced by the fact that more than eight out of ten of the almost 42,000 greater West Side households and the same proportion of the 14,000 households in the West Side corridor are identified by the Census Bureau as *family households*, a greater proportion than that of the city as a whole. Also, a majority of the families on the West Side (55 percent) have children under 18, twice as great as the percentage of families in the city overall. (See Master Table).

There are two other important characteristics that distinguish West Side families from those in the rest of the city. They are more likely to be one-parent families and they are less likely to be in the labor force. A majority of children under age 6 who live in the West Side corridor area are growing up in single-parent households and two in five of their parents are not in the labor force. The proportions of children in families with these characteristics in the city as a whole are much lower. One-third of all children under age 6 in the city are in families with only one parent and only 17 percent of children in the city are in families with no parent in the labor force. These differences have important implications for the type of organizational effort needed to transform neighborhoods on the West Side.

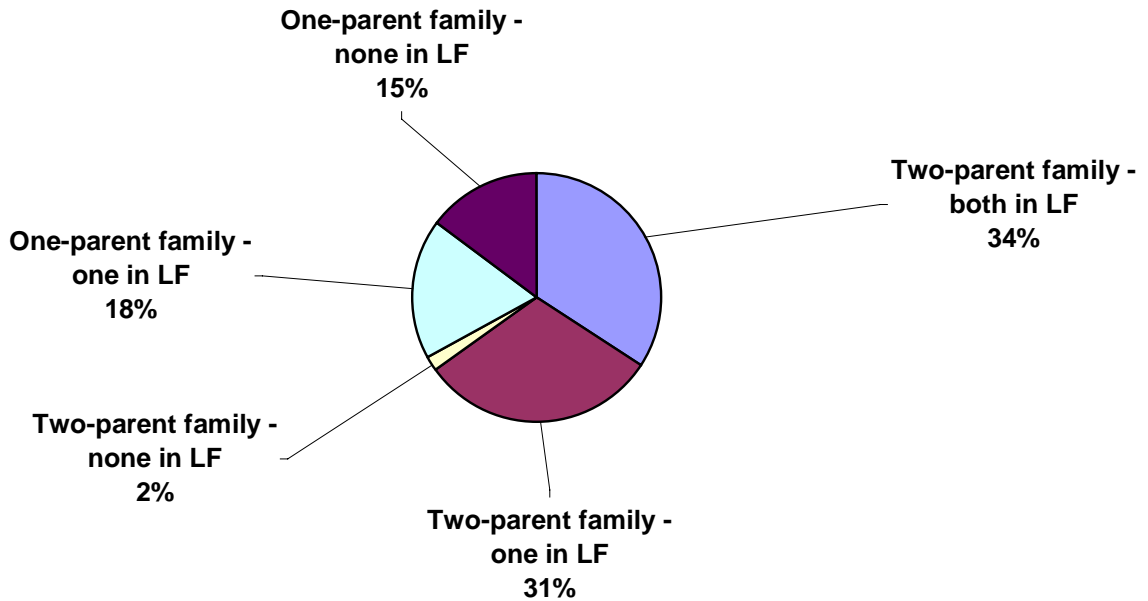
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<sup>2</sup> There is some evidence that people underreport their foreign born status.

### West Side Corridor Children Under 6 by Family Type and Labor Force Status: 1990



### San Antonio Children Under 6 by Family Type and Labor Force Status: 1990

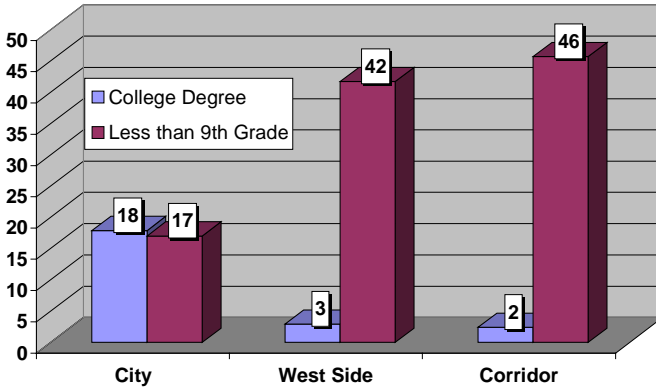


# Education Programs

It is important to note from an examination of 1990 census data that seven out of ten persons age 25 and older living in the West Side Corridor and more than six in ten in the greater West Side have not completed high school.

That is more than twice the 30 percent who have not graduated from high school for the city as a whole. Indeed, almost half of West Side corridor residents over 25 years of age have not completed a single year of high school and only one in fifty has a college degree. (See attached Master Table).

**Percent with College Degree and Percent Less than 9th Grade: 1990**



Education is the largest institution both in clientele and dollars spent on programs in San Antonio's West Side. This section discusses the range of educational programs found in the West Side that cover the entire life

cycle from cradle to grave.

## Pre-school Programs

The **AVANCE** Family Support and Education Program has for a quarter of a century provided classes on parenting skills to promote optimal child development and adult education for low-income mothers on San Antonio's West Side. Its core program is a 9-month course that meets once a week. A new AVANCE center is located near the Alazan-Apache Courts housing project and the Casey team identified no fewer than seven AVANCE programs in four different locations on the West Side. (See map of West Side Human Services.)



Since 1979 the Head Start Programs for San Antonio and surrounding areas have been run by **Parent/Child Incorporated**. PCI stresses parental involvement in early childhood education and involves parents as volunteers in the classroom, on field trips, at clinics and as bus transportation aids. Disabled children receive the full range of Head Start services. Children are served breakfast, lunch, and a snack each day and a registered dietician provides instruction to parents on selecting healthy foods and preparing inexpensive well-balanced meals.

Early Head Start involves teen parents of infants and toddlers up to age three in parenting classes, meal planning and preparation, and pre- and post-natal care. PCI collaborates with AVANCE in these Early Start classes and with San Antonio and Edgewood school districts in its Head Start programs. There are nine Head Start centers on the West Side.

**San Antonio ISD**

The boundary between San Antonio ISD and Edgewood ISD runs north and south along Cupples Road and divides the West Side into two almost equal parts. The near West Side falls within San Antonio ISD; the far West Side contains the entire Edgewood ISD. Inside the western boundary of what we refer to as the Greater West Side are several schools that fall within the Northside ISD.

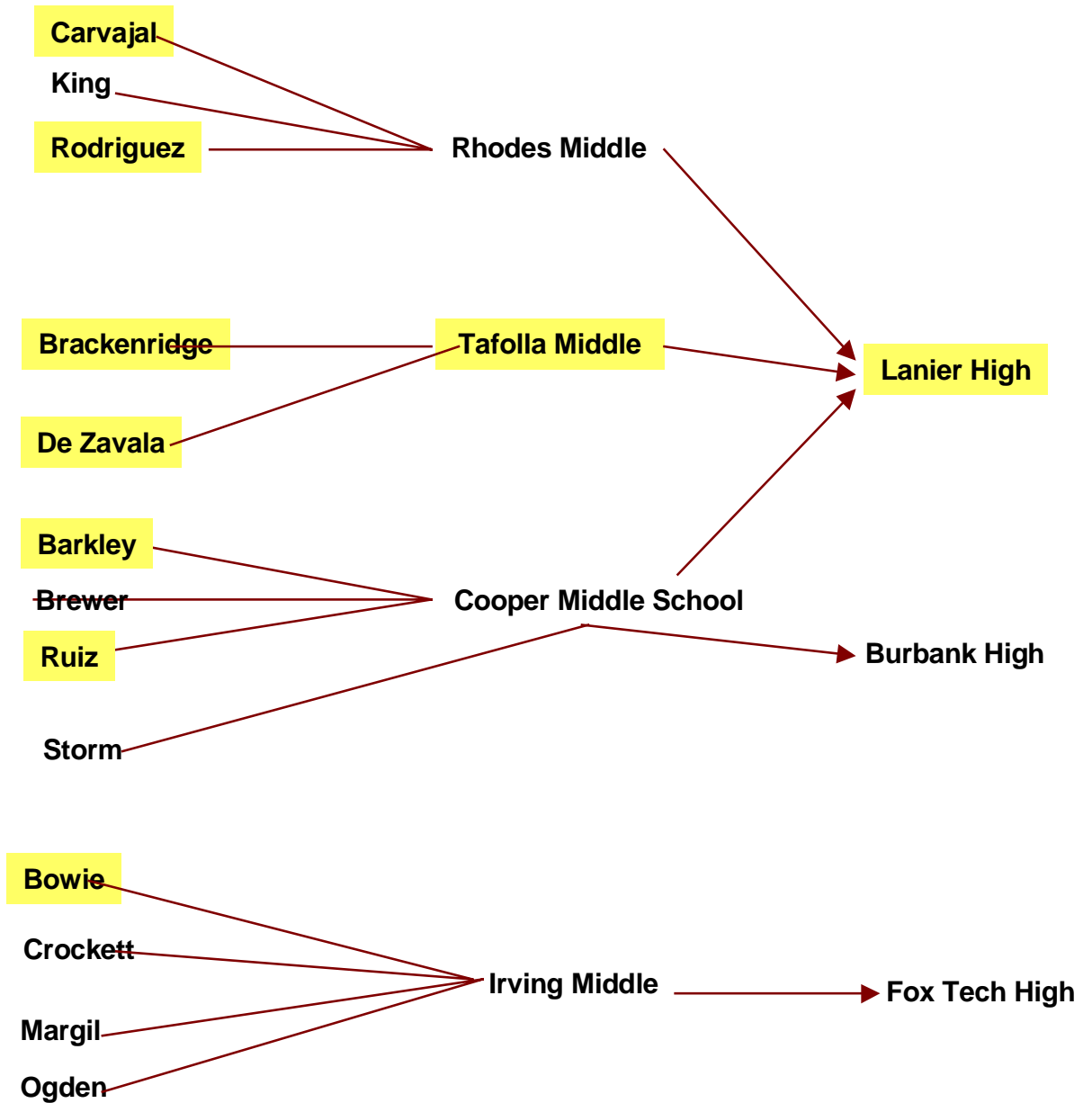
**Enrollment and Performance in San Antonio ISD West Side Schools**

	Enrollment Count		%Change	%Hispanic Students		% Passing TAAS in 1999			%Attend
	1990-91	1999-2000	1990-99	1990-91	1999-2000	All TAAS	Reading	Math	in 1999
<u>West Side Corridor</u>									
Lanier High	1,776	1,724	-2.9	98.1	98.2	50.3	72.1	59.6	90.3
Tafolla Middle	938	1,192	27.1	94.2	94.5	73.2	81.0	79.9	93.3
Barkley Elem.*	375	334	-10.9	98.7	99.7	72.9	78.4	85.8	97.5
Bowie Elem.	459	449	-2.2	98.0	97.6	50.7	57.7	59.2	97.2
J.T. Brackenridge Elem.	831	584	-29.7	98.1	95.7	45.6	58.1	62.6	96.5
De Zavala Elem.	596	627	5.2	99.3	99.4	45.1	57.3	62.1	97.0
Rodriguez Elem.	369	328	-11.1	100.0	97.8	51.1	65.0	59.6	96.6
Ruiz Elem.	322	229	-28.9	99.4	98.1	53.3	75.7	61.3	96.7
Corridor Total	5,666	5,467	-3.5	98.2	97.6	55.3	68.2	66.3	95.6
<u>Other West Side</u>									
Cooper Middle	595	512	-13.9	98.7	97.9	52.5	58.9	64.7	93.2
Irving Middle	796	927	16.5	96.5	95.4	68.8	77.2	78.7	94.7
Rhodes Middle	550	562	2.2	98.7	98.3	57.6	70.8	67.9	95.0
Brewer Elem.	583	517	-11.3	99.5	97.7	57.4	68.6	71.7	96.6
Carvajal Elem.*	468	394	-15.8	98.3	99.2	46.8	58.3	57.7	96.9
Collins Garden Elem.	711	670	-5.8	97.5	97.5	67.0	77.8	79.6	97.3
Crockett Elem.	873	854	-2.2	95.2	96.5	62.8	71.0	77.4	96.9
Huppertz Elem.	483	470	-2.7	95.9	93.2	78.0	86.0	83.4	96.2
King Elem.*	561	378	-32.6	96.8	96.7	63.4	72.9	74.1	96.5
Margil Elem.	480	417	-13.1	98.3	98.4	70.9	75.0	80.8	96.6
Ogden Elem.	714	710	-0.6	95.8	96.4	58.5	66.8	70.8	96.4
Storm Elem.	703	469	-33.3	97.9	98.5	50.9	59.1	69.1	95.5
Other West Side Total	7,611	7,033	-7.6	94.1	95.5	61.2	70.2	73.0	96.0
Total West Side	13,277	12,500	-5.9	95.6	96.3	58.8	69.4	70.3	95.8

Source: Texas Education Agency AEIS Multi-Year History Report and October Enrollment Report. Totals and averages of enrollment (but not TAAS) include Alamo and Navarro achievement centers, not shown separately.

\*Alliance Schools

# San Antonio Independent School District West Side Feeder School Chart



Indicates schools in West Side Corridor

**Enrollment.** The 1999-2000 enrollment in the 20 West Side schools within San Antonio ISD was 12,500, a decline of 777 students or 6 percent over the past decade. More than 96 percent of these elementary, middle and high school students are of Hispanic origin. That Latino concentration changed less than one-half of one point over the decade. (See table: *Enrollment and Performance in San Antonio ISD West Side Schools.*)

There were 5,467 students within the West Side Corridor area in 1999-2000, a decrease of 4 percent in enrollment over the decade. Some \$23 million of the district's 1997 bond program will go to safety, health, code and instructional support improvement at the seven elementary and middle schools within the West Side corridor.<sup>3</sup> One major change will be the building of a new combined Ruiz-Barkley Elementary School next to the existing Ruiz Elementary. Barkley, built in 1919, will be adapted for another educational use, possibly an Early Childhood program.

Lanier High now houses a magnet school in international business and banking with multiple work centers for advanced technology. It also offers a comprehensive college-prep curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

The twelve elementary and middle schools within the remainder of the West Side had an enrollment of 7,033 in the 1999-2000 school year and experienced an 8 percent decline in enrollment overall during the past decade.



**Performance.** Attendance rates have remained relatively high in West Side schools, averaging 96 percent. However, performance on the state-mandated Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests has lagged considerably behind the state average of 78 percent passing for all grade levels taking the tests. Half of the students at Lanier High passed all of the TAAS tests in 1999. Within the West Side Corridor, the percentage of students passing all TAAS tests ranged from 45 percent at De Zavala Elementary to 73 percent at Barkley Elementary and Tafolla Middle schools. Six out of ten students in the other West Side schools passed all TAAS tests. Passage rates ranged from 47 percent at Carvajal Elementary to 78 percent at Huppertz Elementary.

**Programs.** To boost performance levels in the district, San Antonio ISD has formulated a Parent and Community Partnership Network. The concept works on strengthening parent and community involvement in school governance.

<sup>3</sup> Richard R. Tangum, *Avenida Guadalupe: 2020 Master Plan*. Division of Architecture and Interior Design, The University of Texas, San Antonio, Feb. 1, 1998, p 31.

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication from Bobby Zamora, Director of Communications Office, San Antonio ISD, March 31, 2000.

The **Parent Academy** is a program developed by the San Antonio ISD that provides classes for parents on issues related to improving parent-student-teacher relationships. Classes are offered two mornings a week, on Thursday in English and on Friday in Spanish at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. A total of 53 parents of students attending West Side schools graduated from the Parent Academy in May of this year, 28 of them from schools within the West Side Corridor. There were as many as 224 West Side parents who attended at least one class or presentation of the Parent Academy, 122 of them from schools in the corridor area.

Parents can graduate to the **Parent Master Academy** for a more advanced curriculum offered once a month, but in this year's program only five were enrolled at that level throughout the district, only one of them from the West Side.

Parents identified as leaders in the PTAs of their respective campuses can attend the **Parent Leadership Academy**. Such leaders are also identified among those participating in the Parent and Community Council, a parent-run advisory body mandated under Title I. A total of 19 parents from throughout the school district have completed the 6-week course, \_\_\_ of them from the greater West Side.

To comply with the mandates of Senate Bill 1, the school district also offers a 40-hour training course in Collaborative Problem Solving, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution to parents and district employees. During the period 1996-1998, 120 parents, staff and other community members from throughout the district attended the course. To cover a wider audience, a 10-hour course in Conflict Resolution is included in the Parent Academy curriculum. During the 1999-2000 school year, staff was cut and the 40-hour course was not offered.

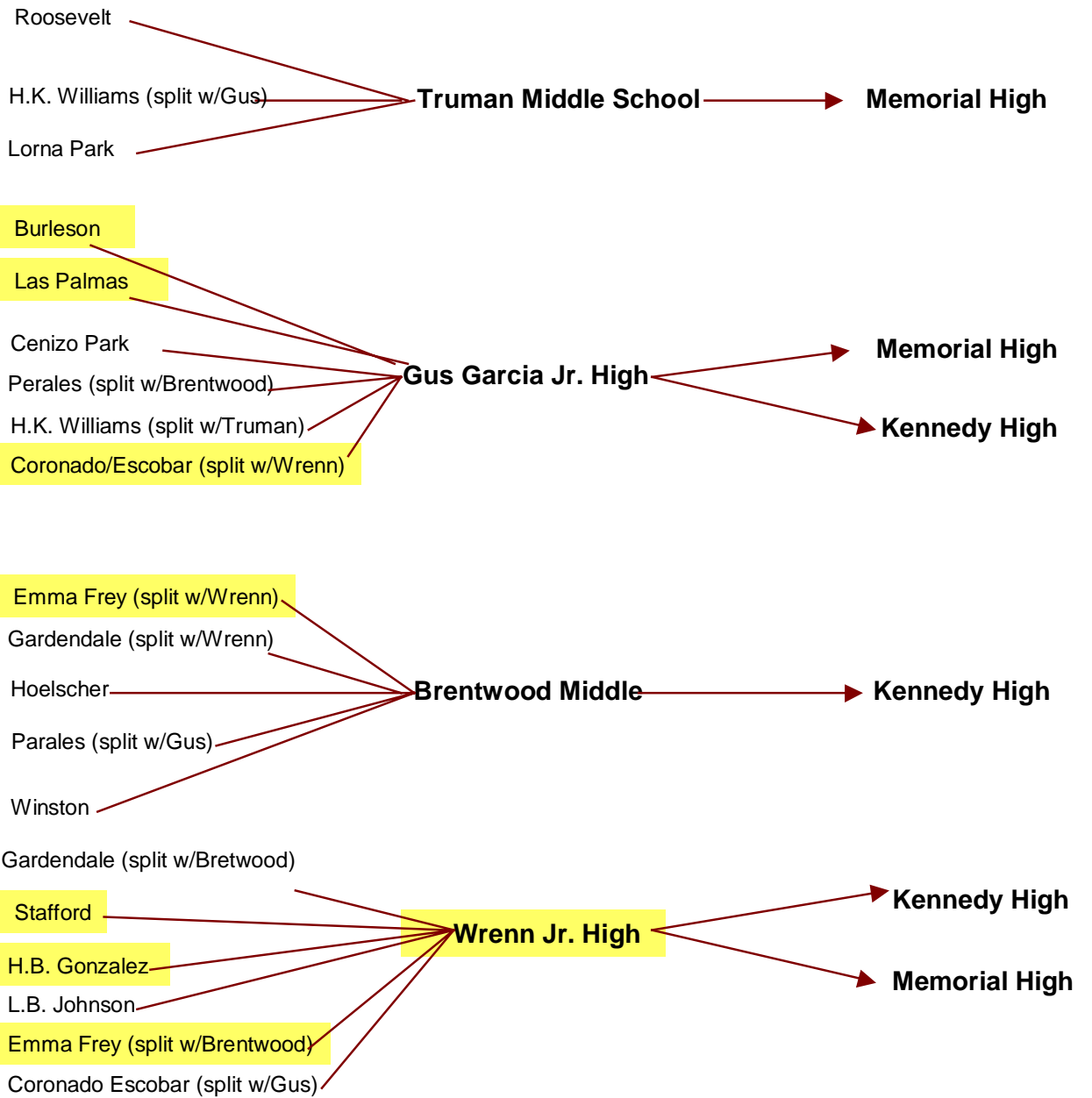
Community literacy programs are basically of three types in the San Antonio ISD: dropout recovery services, adult literacy and migrant education. Dropout recovery services include counseling, GED testing and collaboratives with social service agencies to provide educational alternatives. The Adult Education Program now has more than 50 community locations within SAISD for addressing community literacy through adult basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL), GED and citizenship programs. It collaborates with community-based organizations on the West Side such as Project Learn to Read, AVANCE, and Lincoln Centers. Migrant Education Even Start (MEES) is a federally funded family literacy program that integrates early childhood education, adult education and parenting education through a home-based program that targets migrant families. In 1998-99, a total of 112 children in 65 families were served through weekly visits of one and one-half hours over a period of 46 weeks.

## **Edgewood ISD**

Virtually all of Edgewood's students live within what we have referred to as the West Side. Edgewood was once identified as the poorest school district in the state in local property wealth. In 1968 wealth discrimination litigation was filed by Edgewood parents. They failed at the Supreme Court in 1973. Determined to continue the fight for equalization of wealth, the **Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)** filed on behalf of Edgewood parents in state court. They succeeded in 199\_.

Edgewood became both the symbolic and the real leader in reforming Texas' system of funding

# Edgewood Independent School District Feeder School Chart



Indicates schools in West Side Corridor

- \* All Elementary Schools feed into Accelerated Learning Center
- \* Both High Schools receive Accelerated Learning students

education. According to the court decree, no longer would the amount of dollars spent on education be chiefly dependent on a school district's property wealth.

**Enrollment.** Although the state court battle for reform of the educational funding system was won, the problems faced by Edgewood school district did not dissolve with state funding equalization. Declining enrollment has cost the district state education dollars. There were 1,992 fewer students enrolled in 1999-2000 than at the beginning of the decade of the 1990s, a 13 percent decline. Edgewood High closed its doors in \_\_\_\_ due to declining enrollment.

### Enrollment and Performance in Edgewood ISD Schools

	Enrollment Count		%Change	%Hispanic Students		%Passing TAAS in 1999			%Attend
	1990-91	1999-2000	1990-99	1990-91	1999-2000	All Tests	Reading	Math	in 1999
<u>Westside Corridor</u>									
Competency Based High	164	119	-27.4	97.0	98.3	20.0	80.0	14.3	55.0
Acceler. Learning School**		121			98.3	30.9	49.5	56.0	95.3
Wren Jr. High	630	463	-26.5	93.2	94.8	64.7	74.7	77.1	92.4
Burleson Elem.*	568	374	-34.2	98.8	99.1	66.9	74.6	79.4	96.8
Coronado/Escobar El.*	718	608	-15.3	99.4	98.9	68.0	75.4	80.5	96.7
Emma Frey Elem.	761	517	-32.1	99.5	98.8	57.6	68.8	72.2	96.0
H.B. Gonzalez Elem.*	406	454	11.8	91.4	97.5	61.6	75.0	76.6	96.7
Las Palmas Elem.*	517	202	-60.9	98.6	99.6	57.3	71.3	67.1	97.0
Stafford Elem.	714	604	-15.4	96.1	95.4	85.9	89.9	93.9	96.4
Corridor Total	4,478	3,462	-22.7	96.7	97.9	57.0	73.2	68.6	91.4
<u>Other Westside</u>									
Memorial High	1,008	1,329	31.8	97.2	96.7	63.2	80.2	70.9	88.7
Kennedy High	1,236	1,495	21.0	95.6	96.5	63.0	76.0	70.0	91.1
Brentwood Middle	553	663	19.9	92.4	94.0	77.2	84.0	87.4	93.7
Gus Garcia Jr. High	582	481	-17.4	98.8	99.6	68.2	78.5	80.7	92.3
Truman Middle	486	536	10.3	99.2	98.2	73.4	80.6	82.8	93.7
Cardenas Center***	115	108	-6.1	95.7	89.8				
Cenizo Park Elem.	528	366	-30.7	95.1	99.7	70.5	82.7	81.0	97.2
Gardendale Elem.	583	483	-17.2	99.7	99.4	71.4	79.8	80.8	97.1
H.K. Williams Elem.	657	556	-15.4	98.8	98.8	70.0	75.6	82.8	96.3
Hoelscher Elem.	421	430	2.1	97.1	96.9	86.6	92.4	92.5	97.2
L.B. Johnson Elem.	502	514	2.4	82.9	89.6	71.7	71.1	79.7	97.2
Loma Park Elem.*	807	816	1.1	99.5	98.6	80.1	88.7	87.4	96.4
Perales Elem.	704	523	-25.7	99.4	98.4	88.9	93.3	94.3	96.4
Roosevelt Elem.*	425	339	-20.2	97.6	98.2	75.4	82.6	81.0	97.2
Winston Elem.	769	648	-15.7	75.0	79.0	61.5	79.6	70.4	96.4
District Total	15,055	13,063	-13.2	95.7	96.2	70.2	79.8	80.6	93.9

Source: Texas Education Agency AEIS Multi-Year History Report and October Enrollment Report. Totals and averages of enrollment (but not TAAS) include Above and Beyond HS and Bexar Co. JJAEP, not shown here.

\*Alliance Schools

\*\*The Communications/Fine Arts Academy houses the Accelerated Learning School and Above and Beyond.

\*\*\*Cardenas Center is early childhood education and does not administer TAAS.

In the past two years funding was lost when students were drawn to private schools through a program that offered scholarships to students residing within Edgewood ISD

who would leave the neighborhood public school and apply for enrollment in any non-public school within Bexar County. The **Horizon scholarships** were made available to any Edgewood student in grades K-12 who qualifies for the federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program. Dr. James Leininger put up the money for the scholarships through his Children's Educational Opportunity Foundation. In its first year (1998-1999), the Horizon program drew 837 students with \$2,344,689 in scholarships. The second year drew 898



**Edgewood Fine Arts Academy Auditorium**

students at a cost of \$2,841,883 in scholarships. Students transferred to 58 different private and parochial schools in the San Antonio area.<sup>5</sup>

While declining enrollment has reduced the amount of state dollars for education in Edgewood public schools, it was not the worst of the district's woes. Taxable property values have actually declined in the area over the past decade. The state comptroller's valuation of taxable property

(after abatements) in Edgewood in 1988 was \$606 million; it had declined to \$504 million by 1996.<sup>6</sup>

**Performance.** Seven in ten Edgewood students passed all TAAS tests in 1999, somewhat below the state average of 78 percent passing. Eight in ten Edgewood students passed the Reading portion of TAAS and the same proportion passed the Math test. Performance on TAAS tests was lower in the corridor area than the rest of the West Side. Passing rates varied from 20 percent in the Competency-Based High School to 86 percent at Stafford Elementary.

**Programs.** With a high concentration of needy students, Edgewood has attracted a great deal of federal and private foundation dollars for special programs in education and has collaborated extensively with other organizations to develop innovative programs in education. While not all of these programs will be mentioned here, some of the more innovative and important ones are worth noting.

In 1998 the district received a five-year \$2.5 million **Title VII Bilingual** grant to review current bilingual research findings as a framework for developing a curriculum for Limited English Proficient students in grades from Pre-K to sixth. The grant runs until 2002.

The three high schools received a grant from the **Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund** to connect classrooms and develop a television and computer

<sup>5</sup> Communication from Teresa Treat, Program Director, CEO Foundation, May 24, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Estimates of market values provided by Rostam Kavoussi of Kavoussi and Associates, 301 S. St. Mary's Street, San Antonio 78205.

network in each of its high schools. At the same time a one-year grant of \$750,000 for **Technology Integration in Education** will provide teacher training in utilizing computer technology for on-line curriculum development in the elementary middle and high school levels.

**Alamo Community College District's West Side Center** is a joint effort between the Edgewood school district and the city's community college system to provide information to Edgewood students seeking enrollment in any of the four local community colleges. Staffed by a professional, it is located at Edgewood's Competency-Based High School on SW 40<sup>th</sup> Street. A year ago the Competency-Based High School was started to supplant the closing of Edgewood's Memorial High.

**After School Challenge Program** is a collaborative agreement between the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department and the Edgewood ISD making elementary and middle schools a safe haven until 5 p.m. each day after school. The district provides school professionals to supervise tutoring and recreation programs after school and other costs are covered by the city.



**Edgewood Students in Communication Arts**

(IAF) community organizations designed to strengthen neighborhood initiative is a unique approach to the city. Designation as an Alliance for local initiatives developed and parents.<sup>7</sup> Grants are awarded in local control and accountability. Factors and community leaders in a see tables above for a listing of

is allocated to Loma Park and grants in parenting skills, for staff 2000 was granted last year to six training for staff, teachers, parents

and community members too increase TAAS scores, parent involvement and home-school collaboration.

<sup>7</sup> In 1993 in response to the IAF state-wide constituency, the Texas legislature appropriated \$2 million for the Investment Capital Fund which is used to support Alliance Schools. In 1995 that fund was increased to \$5 million and then to \$8 million in 1997.

The IAF organizations are also the chief architects of the **San Antonio Education Partnership** with the cooperation of Mayor Henry Cisneros. In 1988 a collaborative agreement was reached between the city, school district superintendents, local college presidents and business and corporate executives to make available local college scholarships to students in economically disadvantaged high schools. Annually approximately 16,000 graduating seniors from ten designated high schools are offered tuition scholarships to local colleges and universities for up to eight semesters if they maintain an 80 average and a 95 percent attendance rate throughout high school.

In the twelve years the program has operated more than \$4 million in scholarships has been awarded to more than 3,600 students. When the program began only 19 percent of the graduating class of 1989 met the minimum standards of the agreement. Since then 57 percent of the graduating students have met the criteria of eligibility for the Partnership program. As many as 990 students received Education Partnership scholarships in 1998-99 and there are now \$2.76 million in scholarship commitments outstanding. Annual scholarship awards total approximately \$550,000.

Twenty-two percent of all Partnership scholarship dollars this year went to graduates of West Side high schools: Kennedy, Lanier and Memorial. Since the program began one in five scholarship dollars have gone to graduates of these schools.

The program seems to have had a measurable effect on high school student staying power. In the targeted schools single-year dropout rates declined from 14 percent to 3 percent and the graduation rate increased from 81 percent to 92 percent. The number of students from the ten target schools enrolling full-time in local colleges and universities increased 60 percent since the program began.

Area school districts and local colleges and universities are collaborating in preparing a planning model for developing strategies to increase Hispanic enrollment in local area colleges. The **Hispanic Higher Education Systemic Change Initiative** will culminate in a full proposal to the Kellogg Foundation.

### **Northside ISD**

Three middle and three elementary schools on the far West Side that are within the boundaries of the Northside Independent School District. One of these, the Northside Alternative Middle School is not listed in the table below. It has 28 students, 25 of them Hispanics.

**Enrollment.** Four thousand students from San Antonio's Greater West Side attend Northside ISD schools. Nine out of ten of these are of Hispanic origin. While the schools have become more Hispanic in their student composition, the decline in overall enrollment in these schools has mirrored the same rate of decline as Edgewood schools, approximately 12 percent over the past decade.

**Performance.** Student scores on the TAAS tests are somewhat below the state average. While 78 percent of all students passed all TAAS tests statewide, the average for West Side schools within Northside ISD was 67 percent passing. Similar differences were found for reading and math. Attendance rate for these same schools was the same as the state average.

**Enrollment and Performance in Northside ISD Schools on the West Side**

	Enrollment Count		%Change 1990-99	%Hispanic Students		%Passing TAAS in 1999			%Attend in 1999
	1990-91	1999-2000		1990-91	1999-2000	All Tests	Reading	Math	
<b>Greater Westside</b>									
Jones Middle	1279	1190	-7.0	76.4	84.3	67.4	78.6	78.9	93.6
Sul Ross Middle	1170	948	-19.0	84.3	89.7	60.0	70.0	74.0	94.2
Cable Elem.	572	508	-11.2	88.5	91.7	62.9	69.7	76.3	95.6
Esparza Elem.	751	746	-0.7	91.7	94.1	75.9	82.9	87.8	96.4
Passmore Elem.	826	629	-23.8	79.2	86.5	67.9	84.7	77.7	96.0
Total*	4,598	4,049	-11.9	84.0	89.9	66.8	77.2	78.9	95.2

Source: Texas Education Agency AEIS Multi-Year History Report and October Enrollment Report. Totals and averages of enrollment (but not TAAS) include Northside Alternative Middle School - South, not shown here.

\*Averages for percent passing TAAS are unweighted averages of schools.

**Colleges and Universities**

There are three institutions of higher learning on San Antonio's West Side, all of them four-year liberal arts institutions.

**St. Mary's University**, the oldest and largest Catholic university in Texas and the Southwest, was founded by the Marianists in 1852. Its total enrollment approached 4,200 in 1999-2000. Approximately two-thirds of the undergraduate and one-third of the graduate students are of Hispanic origin.

**Our Lady of the Lake University**, founded by the Congregation of Divine Providence, began its first college program in 1911 as a two-year curriculum for women. The University has been coeducational since now has more than 40 areas of specialization, offering five bachelor's degrees, five master's degrees, and two doctoral degrees. During the Fall 1999 semester, total enrollment was at 3,564.

**The University of Texas at San Antonio** dedicated its Downtown Campus next to Cattleman's Square in September, 1997. It now offers 18 on-site degree programs and features a 150-seat computer lab, the Metropolitan Research and Policy Institute, and a professional quality theater. During the Spring, 2000, 3,166 UTSA students attended at least some of their classes at the downtown campus location.<sup>8</sup> A majority (56 percent) of these students were Hispanic.

**Adult Education Programs**

In 1989 San Antonio voters passed a bond issue that provided support for literacy programs.<sup>9</sup> Since then the city has opened seven learning and leadership development centers (LLDCs) for adults that provide instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship, adult basic education (pre-GED), GED preparation, and job readiness. Four of those centers are located on San Antonio's West Side:

<sup>8</sup> The number attending only classes only at the downtown campus was 1,169 in Spring, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Roy Kaiser, director of the literacy programs for the city's Department of Community Initiatives, says that San Antonio is the only city he knows that has passed a bond issue specifically for literacy.

- Fr. Albert J Benavides Center, 515 Castroville Road
- Margarita Huantes Center, 1411 Guadalupe Street
- St. Mary's University Center, 3141 Culebra Road
- William C. Velasquez Center, 1302 N. Zarzamora



**Fr. Albert J. Benavides LLDC**

Community literacy

classes are held in as many as 238 sites throughout the city, at schools, churches, colleges, universities, businesses, community centers and libraries. In FY 1998-99 11,525 persons attended these classes, two-thirds of them West Side residents. This is a collaborative effort among the city, the San Antonio ISD and Alamo Workforce Development.

An Even Start grant of \$200,000 was awarded to Edgewood ISD for the period 1998-2002 to work with **AVANCE** in parenting education, early childhood development, intensive adult literacy and job readiness training. The program is available in six Edgewood elementary schools: Burlson, Coronado-Escobar, Emma Frey, H.B. Gonzalez, Las Palmas and Roosevelt.

**Alternative Schools and Educational Programs**

In addition to the public schools and several parochial schools in the Near West area, there are public charter and home schools. **La Escuela de las Americas**, a public charter school established by the Mexican American Unity Council, offers a curriculum for pre-kinder, kinder and first grade. La Escuela offers an accelerated school model with a dual-language approach to learning. The school received a \$148,500 grant in May from the Challenge Foundation.<sup>10</sup>

The **School of Excellence in Education** is located on the border between San Antonio ISD and Northside ISD. It has 520 students enrolled in pre-K through 9<sup>th</sup> grade. A grant for \$94,425 was made to the school by the Challenge Foundation in May.<sup>11</sup>

**Inner City Development**, a non-profit, all-volunteer neighborhood center that has offered programs for children and families for more than 30 years, only last year began to experiment with a home school for a dozen middle-school students.

<sup>10</sup> The Challenge Foundation is an Arlington-based family-founded group focused on educational reform. Balli, Cecilia, "Two Charter Schools Win Grants," *San Antonio Express-News*, May 26, p. 2B.

<sup>11</sup> Balli, Cecilia, *ibid.*

A program for working with youth developed under Inner City Development's alternative housing corporation is the **Family Creative Response to Conflict (FCRC)**. Teachers in the neighborhood middle schools identify youth that might benefit from after-school tutoring in conflict resolution. Parents may also elect to enroll their children in the program. Through a 6-week course in how to deal with conflict in nonviolent ways, the

### Cultural Arts Programs



**Teatro Guadalupe - Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center**

The West Side has traditionally been the cultural epicenter for Mexican immigrants in San Antonio. There are three cultural arts programs in this area that celebrate Chicano culture. The **Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center**, established in 1980 with major support from the city, offers music, dance, theater, media, literature and visual arts. The center's programs draws more than 100,000 spectators per year from throughout the city to its performances at the refurbished Guadalupe Theatre. The center offers after-school and weekend

classes for students in a variety of creative arts. Tentative plans for expansion at the Guadalupe street location include improved facilities for theater arts, new space for a dance program, visual arts, music and media arts.

**Centro Cultural Aztlan**, located at Las Palmas shopping center, has for more than two decades provided programs covering the full spectrum of the arts: poetry, creative writing, performing arts, music and the visual arts. Some of its programs include the Children's Workshops, Comic Book Art in the Schools, Youth Mural Project and Youth Creative Writing Workshops. Centro also publishes a quarterly journal of contemporary arts and letters, *ViAztlan*.

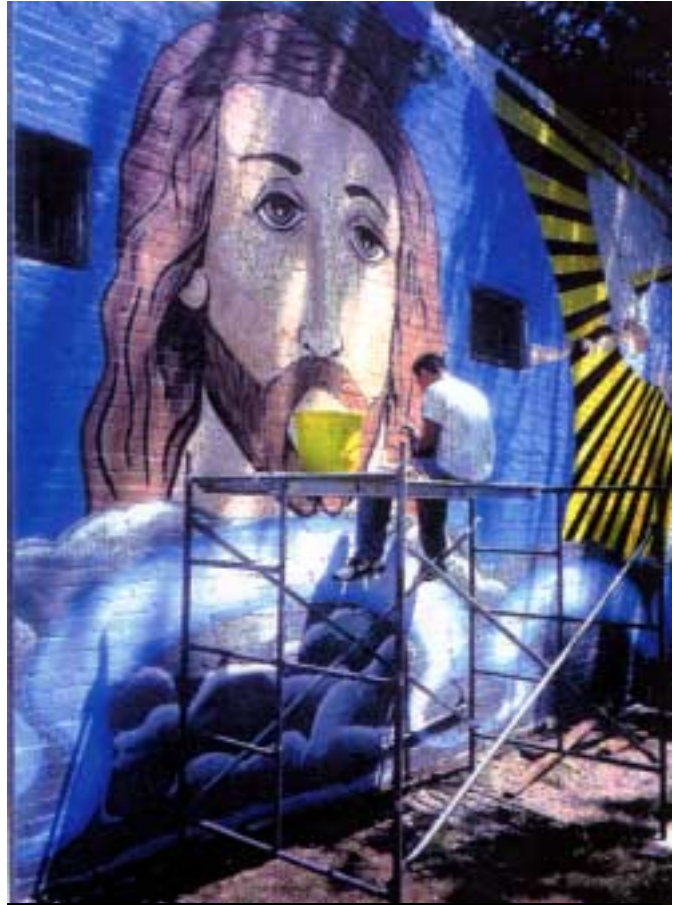
A more recent neighborhood arts program, **San Anto Cultural Arts**, grew out of the Inner City Development's Cultural Arts program begun in 1993 in the neighborhood near the Alazan-Apache Courts. A group of volunteer artists, some from the neighborhood, wanted to document, preserve and showcase the culture of San Antonio's West Side. To this end they developed several programs: a monthly community newspaper, *El Placazo*, with a distribution of 4,000; 14 major murals by community residents depicting life, culture and family values in the West Side corridor area; and several video-film documentaries made with neighborhood talent on aspects of neighborhood history and culture.

One of the long-term goals of the project was for neighborhood artists and writers to find the economic means to support themselves and their families through the development and use of their talents. San Anto receives support largely from donations to its annual Huevos Rancheros Gala. Several previous San Antonio mayors have participated in the event.

**Questions to be Answered**

There are a number of questions remaining about education on the West Side:

- What could we do to strengthen families in the West Side to help them be better able to be supportive and hopeful for their children’s educational opportunities?
- What can we do within the neighborhood to help promote educational opportunities for West Side children?
- What policies should existing public or private elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational institutions put in place to encourage West Side children to continue their education?



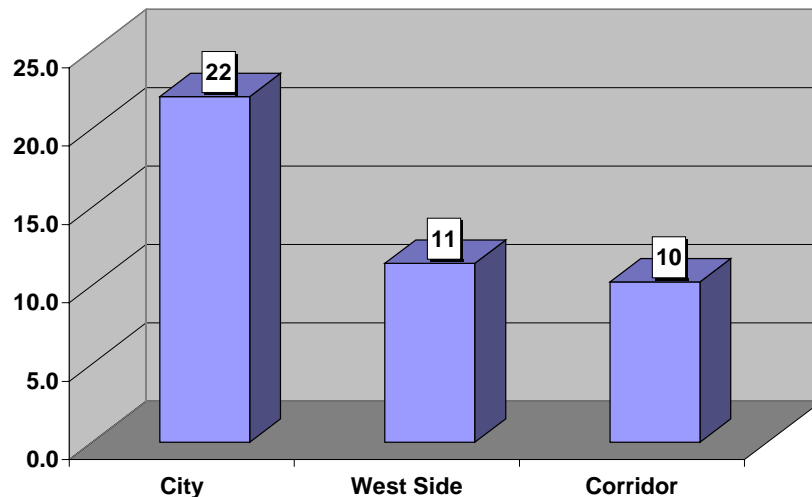
**San Anto Cultural Arts Mural on Near West Side**

## Economic Development

The need for more jobs on San Antonio's West Side is immediately evident from a glance at Census data on the area. In the West Side corridor area, per capita income in 1989--total income of residents in the area divided by the number of persons--was only \$4,355, less than half the city average of \$10,884. Half of all persons (51 percent) live below the official poverty level, twice the 23 percent for the city as a whole. Fewer than half of all males (47 percent) over the age of 16 worked at all in 1989; only three out of ten females of the same age group worked, half the city average for women. Among those in the labor force in 1990, 17.1 percent were unemployed, twice the city average unemployment rate. (See Master Table.)

More recent data on business establishments on the West Side also reveal an economically underdeveloped area. In 1998 the West Side corridor had 10 business establishments per 1,000 population; for the greater West Side the ratio was not much better--11. The average for the city was 22. (See Master Table.)

**Businesses Per 1,000 Population: 1998**



The argument might be made that residents of the suburbs also have few commercial establishments in their neighborhoods. They simply commute to work. On the West Side, commuting is not so easy. More than one in three households in the corridor area and one in four on the greater West Side have no vehicle available at all. While working residents of the West Side corridor are four times as likely as the average worker in San Antonio to use public transportation to work, only 16 percent of them do so. (See Master Table.)

In one sense it is encouraging to see that only one in three women with children less than 6 years of age in the West Side corridor are in the labor force. That figure would seem to evidence the strengthening of the bond between mother and child. But when one realizes the lack of financial resources available for mothers to buy the basic necessities for their children, the picture becomes less positive. As many as nine in ten female householders (no male present) with children under age 5 live below the poverty line.

One does not need to look at the numbers to arrive at the same conclusions about the economy of the West Side. A quick windshield survey of the West Side reveals at once the absence of any substantial commerce or industry. In times past the Union stockyards just west of the downtown business district was the center of commerce and trade for ranchers

in South Texas. While it remains one of the centers of activity for the local meatpacking industry, other industries such as medical treatment and technology and tourism have become more prominent in San Antonio. An infrastructure revitalization effort is underway along Frio City Road next to the new University of Texas at San Antonio Downtown campus. Another source of commerce is the produce terminal, on Zarzamora and Laredo streets just south of Apache Creek.

Driving farther westward, our windshield survey reveals mostly residential property interspersed with spots of small strip centers, quick-stop stores, small restaurants and icehouses.

Traveling south of the West Side Corridor along Hwy 90W one encounters at least one significant industrial plant. Levi-Strauss Co. has been a major employer of West Side



**Las Palmas Community Service Center**

residents for 25 years. For the past decade it has also served as a reminder of how quickly jobs can evaporate when corporations decide to tighten their belts. When in February 1990 Levi-Strauss decided to down-size their operations by closing one of their three San Antonio plants, half of all employees were laid off, a loss of 1,115 jobs. In October of 1999 another 150 employees were laid off.

**Las Palmas** is one of only two commercial concentrations that might qualify as shopping centers on the West Side. While its history has been a roller-coaster ride, there is reason to be optimistic about its future. The number of merchants doubled from 16 to 33 over the past decade. One-third of the merchants are public agencies or non-profit organizations. Two major commercial anchors have located there: a large HEB Food Store and a Luby's Cafeteria.

With the closing of Kelly AFB by 2001 the West Side will lose its largest single employer. Kelly AFB is located adjacent to San Antonio's West Side. As Kelly transitions from a military base to an industrial park, the **Greater Kelly Development Corp.** will attempt to replace lost military jobs with 11,500 private-sector positions. The task involves attracting new companies to the facility, among them Boeing, Lockheed Martin Corp. Many Kelly workers will stay, performing some of the same jobs under private operators. Others will need further training to qualify for different jobs.

As new employers are brought to the site, additional training will be required for workforce development. **SER Jobs for Progress** has been operating one-stop centers under a \$6.2 million contract with Alamo Workforce Development Board to provide services for job searches, training referrals and other employment services to both job seekers and employers. One of their nine one-stop career centers is located at the Southwest Campus of St. Phillip's College on Quintana Road, south of Hwy 90. The Texas

Workforce Career Center matches employers and job seekers by giving them an opportunity to access information about the local employment and training environment.

The **Texas Workforce Center** that serves most of the West Side is at 2538 Castroville Road. In the first five months of this year that center has received 2,662 new applicants, made 10,035 job referrals and 4,074 persons have reported they obtained employment. The staff of TWC assisted directly in the placement of 279 persons in jobs since the beginning of the year.<sup>12</sup>

As one-stop centers, the Texas Workforce Centers either provide or refer to other agencies the full range of job-related needs: self-assessment tools, computer programs, typing tutorials, resume writing, labor market information, career consultation, internet access, education and training information, job matching and referral, job search seminars, interviewing tips, career assessment aptitude testing, English as a Second Language, literacy programs, general education diploma and child care referral and assistance.

The list of services to employers is at least as lengthy: customized recruitment, screening and referral of qualified workers; local and statewide market information; on site recruitment assistance; information on federal/ state employment laws and legal issues; computerized job posting; clerical skills testing; interviewing offices; assistance in restructuring and downsizing; on the job training; referral to skills and aptitude testing and to education and training services; unemployment insurance and tax information; assistance with employer-operated work and family support programs; and assistance in hiring and retaining older workers.

**Project Quest** recruits, trains and develops adults to fill employers' needs for skilled workers. All Quest applicants must have a high school diploma or GED certificate and reside within the San Antonio City limits. Interviews are conducted in more than a dozen locations in the city. Their main office is on Frio City Road, across from the UTSA Downtown campus. In 1999 there were 604 participants served by Quest, 207 of them at the main office.

The **San Antonio Business Development Fund** is a multi-bank community development corporation, established in 1994. Last year the Fund established the San Antonio Business Development Corporation, a non-profit corporation with the goal of cultivating business development within Loop 410. The SABDC plans to distribute \$10 million over the next decade in small business loans ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000 to create employment opportunities within the inner city. Its initial focus will be on federally designated commercial corridors within the inner city. On the West Side, these would include the Avenida Guadalupe area, Cattleman's Square and Kelly Air Force Base. The SABC plans to team up with corporate, institutional and government loan programs to create a more cohesive lending campaign. Commitments for funding the loans have been made by BankAmerica, the Enterprise Foundation, H.E. Butt Grocery and Fannie Mae.

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<sup>12</sup> Compiled from reports supplied for 2/1/00 to 6/1/00 by Lynn Smith, Texas Workforce Center manager, 2538 Castroville Rd.

**El Parian Market**, completed in 1991, was an attempt at encouraging the growth and development of small businesses on the near West Side across the street from Guadalupe Plaza. The original plan was to attract local produce and currio vendors to a neighborhood open-market-style facility. After almost ten years, El Parian did not catch on as planned. Currently it is mostly occupied by about a dozen small businesses and four or five not-for-profit service agencies. The inability to attract successful small businesses to the market might be attributed to the lack of tourist access after a plan for running a trolley from the Mercado across the tracks was scuttled. Failure of the market concept may also be the result of a general lack of expendable income in the area.



**Guadalupe Plaza**

There are plans for commercial development of the property across Guadalupe Street from J. T. Brackenridge Elementary School. In the **Avenida Guadalupe Association** master plan this four-block area between Alazan Creek and Guadalupe Plaza is envisioned as "a place for festivals, craft shops, artist studios, architectural and interior design offices, galleries, restaurants and a farmers' market".<sup>13</sup> The property study and cost analysis has been completed and acquisition of parcels is underway. But, the master plan suggests, "Avenida Guadalupe needs a stronger direct connection to Market Square and downtown."<sup>14</sup>



**Alazan-Apache Courts Under Redevelopment**

This same area has become the focus of the **West Side Improvement Network (WIN)** and plans for redevelopment have changed somewhat from the earlier design developed in the Avenida Guadalupe Master Plan. WIN emerged out of a West Side Housing Summit held in November of 1998.

Some 25 different housing, financial institutions and neighborhood economic development organizations

In the heart of the near West Side is the **Mexican American Unity Council**, a community development corporations established in 1967 to promote economic

<sup>13</sup> Richard R. Tangum, *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Richard R. Tangum, *ibid.*, p. 11.

development in the low-income Hispanic neighborhoods of San Antonio. The **MAUC Center** provides a home for a number of not-for-profit organizations.

The **MAUC Micro Marketing Resource Center** assists micro enterprises with a comprehensive support system. It is a membership-based organization of small business owners, providing help in marketing their services or products, financial management and access to financial capital. MAUC collaborates with **ACCION Texas** in making small loans available to micro enterprises. Funding for the center is made available in part through the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

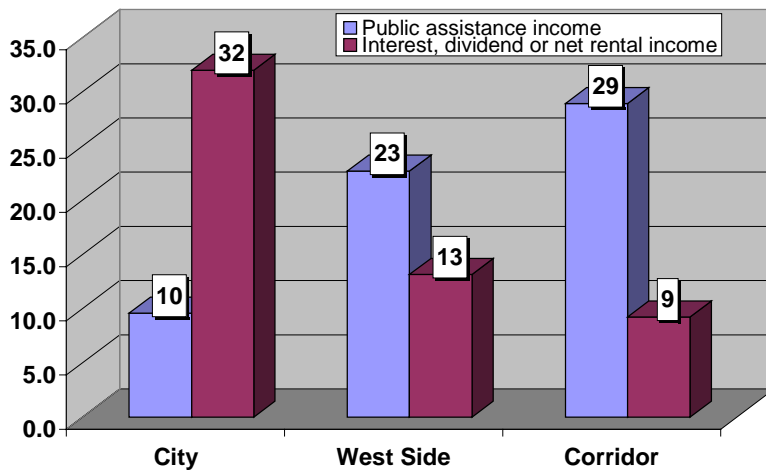
**MAUC Industries** was established as a for-profit holding company of the Unity Council. It operates **MAUC Realty** for real estate development and management of MAUC-owned properties.

Just recently an \$11 million five-year **Youth Opportunity Grant** was awarded by the Department of Labor to improve the employability of San Antonio West Side and East Side youth between the ages of 14 and 21. The grant was the product of a consortium of the Alamo Workforce Development Board, the Community Initiatives Department of the City, the Alamo Community College District, the San Antonio ISD and Edgewood ISD. The goals of the project are:

- To facilitate a high-skilled work force;
- To link academic, occupational and job development;
- To develop internships and apprenticeships;
- To strengthen the link between literacy and job training; and
- To provide supportive services such as child care, health care, transportation and emergency assistance.

Job placement and follow-up services will be provided to every youth enrolled in the program. The goal is to reach 2,640 in-school youths and 1,187 out-of-school youths. The program would be administered by the city's Department of Community Initiatives (DCI).

**Percent Households with Public Assistance and Percent with Investment Income: 1989**



Another program administered by the DCI is **Advocates Striving to Create Edgewood Neighborhood Development (ASCEND)**. ASCEND administers a \$4.9 million Department of Labor grant training and support services for Welfare-to-Work clients with learning or

other disabilities. ASCEND and Terra Genesis Housing, a non-profit real estate holding company, have proposed the Families S.A.V.E. program to provide the working poor assistance in building Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) as well as support, job training, counseling and educational services on the West Side. Texas Aid to Needy Families (TANF) clients make up about 70 percent of Welfare-to-Work clients; 30 percent are working poor. The Families S.A.V.E. program is directed at those working who express an interest in achieving self-sufficiency.

ASCEND is also engaged in developing plans for a **Cooperative** or a **Community Development Corporation (CDC)** within the Edgewood community, providing families an opportunity to take a leadership role in local economic development and community planning.

### **Questions to be Answered**

There are many perplexing questions that remain concerning West Side economic development:

- What can we do to strengthen families to help them have better access to higher economic opportunities and to livable incomes?
- What infrastructure and growth generators are needed in West Side neighborhoods to spur economic development? What support systems do residents need to establish their own neighborhood businesses?
- What policies and procedures should financial and business institutions, governmental agencies, schools, and churches implement to encourage and provide West Side families access to livable wages and more economic opportunity?

# Housing

San Antonio's West Side housing market is a study in contrasts. The West Side corridor has the greatest concentration of public housing projects of any area in the city and the high demand for public housing is evidenced by the long lists of those waiting to get into public housing and the lower than average vacancy rate in rental units. At the same time there is a large percentage of single-unit housing and a relatively high rate of home ownership on the West Side.

As one might expect from its proximity to the center of the city and its concentration of large public housing projects, the West Side corridor is almost three times as densely populated as the city overall. In 1998 there were 8,138 persons per square mile in the West Side corridor, 6,030 persons per square mile in the greater West Side and, by contrast, 3,066 persons per square mile within the city limits. This relatively higher population density of the West Side is also evidenced in the figures on average household size for 1998: 3.6 persons per household in the West Side corridor, 3.5 persons per household on the greater West Side and 2.8 persons per household in the city as a whole. (See Master Table)

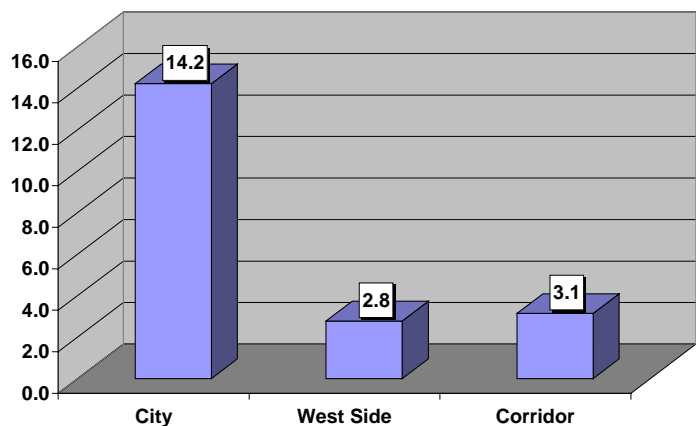
Even with all its public housing projects, the 1998 housing stock on the West Side was comprised of a relatively high percentage of single-family units: eight in ten housing units in the greater West Side compared to fewer than two in three for the city as a whole. Furthermore, according to the 1990 Census, six out of ten housing units on the West Side were occupied by persons who own or are buying, greater than the 54 percent average home ownership rate for the city. (See Master Table).

While both the need and demand for housing are great on the West Side, the supply of housing and the ability to buy are not keeping pace. The increase in housing stock on the West Side during the period 1990-1998 was only 3 percent, about one-third the rate of increase for the city as a whole. Home purchase mortgages in 1996 on the West Side were applied for at a rate of 42 per 1,000 units of existing housing, considerably below the city average of 74 per 1,000 units.

Furthermore, the few applications made for purchasing homes on the West Side were asking for loans of less than one-third the average mortgage value applied for in the city as a whole. Finally, the approval rate on the West Side (49 percent) was less than the city average approval rate (62 percent). (See Master Table).

Normally, one would expect from the high rate of home ownership on the West Side that the picture for home improvement mortgages would be much better. It is actually

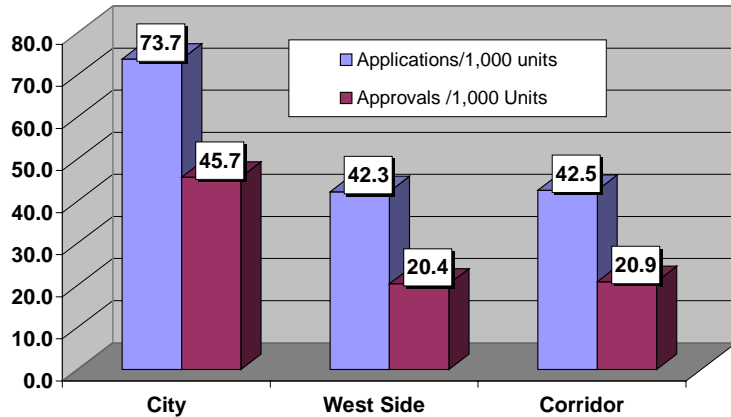
**Percent Housing Units Added 1990-1998**



worse. Only seven applications were made in 1996 for every 1,000 housing units in the West Side Corridor and 11 per thousand in the greater West Side. That compares to 19 per thousand applications made for home improvement loans in the city as a whole. (See Master Table).

One might also expect from the low-income levels of West Side residents that the percentage of households receiving public assistance for their housing needs would be greater than it is. In the West Side Corridor some 1,516 households, slightly more than one in ten, are in public housing projects and only 16 percent are receiving housing assistance of some sort. Those receiving housing assistance make up 12 percent of the households on the greater West Side. The city average is 5 percent. (See Master Table).

**Home Purchase Mortgage Applications and Approvals Per 1,000 Units: 1996**



The city average is 5 percent. (See Master Table).

Although the current numbers are not encouraging, a gradual transformation in housing is taking place on San Antonio's West Side. In the Corridor area overcrowded public housing and small shotgun houses side-by-side in narrow lots are giving way in growing pockets to single-family homes. In the past three years, the San Antonio Housing Authority has undertaken an effort to reduce the number of project public housing and shift subsidies to those who occupy Section 8 housing in locations throughout the city, most within the Loop 410 area.<sup>15</sup>

The **San Antonio Housing Authority** is the largest housing provider in San Antonio. In 1995 SAHA received a \$48.2 million Hope VI Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program Grant from HUD to completely revamp Mirasol Homes, located in the center of the West Side Corridor. All 500 existing units will be demolished and 206 new public housing units of various types--townhouses, multifamily cottages, single-family homes and one-bedroom apartments--will be built at the Mirasol site. An additional 294 units of replacement housing will be built at seven off-site locations. As many as 152 of them will be single-family homes that will be made available to public housing residents under lease-purchase agreements. Another 56 public housing units for the elderly are currently being built at two other West Side locations.

During the past two and half decades, the **San Antonio Development Agency** (SADA) has cleared several areas for redevelopment in the West Side Corridor. Several private builders and not-for-profit housing organizations have built substantial single-family homes affordable for West Side residents. With modest goals and little funds **Habitat for Humanity** built its first home in the U.S. with participation of the homeowner in this neighborhood in 1973. They recently dedicated their 100<sup>th</sup> home in San

<sup>15</sup> San Antonio Housing Authority current records on Section 8 housing by census tract.

Antonio, most of them on the West Side. The newly built homes gradually began to occupy spaces where two small two- or three-room homes were condemned and cleared.

When the San Antonio Housing Authority receives its home funding the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 15 percent of that funding is now set aside for **Community Housing Development Organizations** (CHDOs), housing non-profits in which one-third of their board members are residents of the service area. Currently there are ten CHDOs certified by the city. For next fiscal year \$1 million of the \$7 million that SAHA receives from HUD will be available for CHDO funding without restrictions. Some of the CHDOs involved in home building in the West Side are Neighborhood Housing Services, San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation, Our Casas Resident Council, and the U.U. Housing Assistance Corporation.

The key to the success of affordable home builders into the west side market is their ability to make funding available to first-time home buyers, sometimes in creative ways. Tax credits can be obtained through Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) financing. A non-profit can take advantage of 501C(3) bond financing and the Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) program. The Community Reinvestment Act has also gone a long way to goading banks into providing loans to homebuyers in low-income areas. At audit time, banks must show that a certain percent of their financing goes to persons that are below 80% of the local median income.

It has only been during the past decade that non-profit housing organizations emerged as a major industry on San Antonio's West Side. In 1988 through the combined efforts of community groups, several affordable housing developers and the city council under the leadership of Mayor Henry Cisneros, formed the **San Antonio Housing Trust** (SAHT).



Near West Side Vacant House

Capitalized with \$10 million from the city's sale of the cable TV franchise, the SAHT conducted its first competitive funding round in 1990 with \$1 million in interest earnings. Six more competitive founding rounds were conducted during the period of 1991-1998. New legislation permitted the city to contract in 1996 with the San Antonio Housing Trust Investment Corporation to convey surplus city property to affordable housing developers.

**San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation** (SAAHC) was formed in December 1993 by a neighborhood organization that had been active in family and children's issues in the West Side Corridor since the late 1960s, Inner City Development. It began constructing homes in 1995 and in only five years it has grown to a staff of 20 full-time and eight part-time persons. SAAHC has built and sold more than 80 homes and a 92-unit apartment. It is currently building a 136-unit apartment complex (its first project outside

of Loop 410) and 62 homes in a West Side subdivision with the Neighborhood Housing Service. It also owns more than 2,000 apartments in San Antonio.

SAAHC is somewhat unique among non-profit housing providers in San Antonio in that it is not dependent on public subsidies for staff and overhead. Furthermore, while SAAHC uses public funds for soft seconds, the majority of its home mortgages come from private lenders, such as the San Antonio Credit Union, Bank of America and the Broadway National Bank. There are no fewer than 20 different investors in SAAHC projects.

Three successful neighborhood developments by non-profit housing organizations are found in the West Side Corridor. In 1997 **Habitat for Humanity** created Florencia Plaza just west of Holy Cross High School. They constructed 35 single-family homes with participation by the homeowners.

In 1998 San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation completed a 92-unit apartment complex on West Commerce Street across from Our Lady of the Lake University, **Lago Vista Apartments**. Most of the apartments in the five three-story walk-up stucco buildings have a view of the river (an extension of Elmendorf Lake) on the north side of Commerce Street. With the demolition of more than 200 public housing units in the



**Lago Vista Apartments - Commerce and 24<sup>th</sup> Street**

neighborhood by SAHA under its Hope VI program, residents with Section 8 certificates were seeking to relocate. Lago Vista is the first new construction, multi-family development in the area in the past 30 years. Twenty percent of the units targeted very low-income households and three out of four of the units were held for households with incomes of less than 60 percent of median income. Seventeen of the units on the first floor are handicapped adaptable. A half-

time employee with a Master of Social Work degree is the service coordinator at the apartment complex.

Neighborhood Housing Services and the San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation recently cooperated in the construction of **Villas de San Antonio** near the corner of General McMullen and West Commerce streets. The Villas are 62 single-family homes, the first residential TIRZ in the city. They also have funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank and a matching grant from Norwest Bank.

SAAHC also proposes the creation of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone for the **Rosedale Community Development Project**. The project allows private developments of several kinds: (1) 64 new homes for first-time homebuyers with incomes below 80% of the local annual median income; (2) a 90-unit apartment complex; and (3) a residence for

30 seniors. Total cost of the TIF project will be \$3.3 million. This is a collaboration between the San Antonio Housing Trust Foundation, the city, the county, the University Health System, Alamo Community College District and the Edgewood ISD.

**Our Casas Resident Council** is a community housing development organization that organizes and assists public housing residents in business and home ownership and self-governance. Ten homes are being built in the West Side Corridor. Six have been completed and sold. Funding has been obtained from the Enterprise Foundation, USAA Federal Savings Bank, Broadway Bank, the City of San Antonio, Neighborhood Housing Services and the San Antonio Area Foundation.

**Avenida Guadalupe Association** (AGA) includes the eastern half of the West Side Corridor in its a 20-year master plan.<sup>16</sup> The plan projects a craft and market district, rehabilitation and infill housing, a senior citizen housing complex and medical district with the University Center for Community Health/Texas Diabetes Institute as its anchor.

The AGA for the past two decades since it was chartered has been instrumental in obtaining Community Development Block Grant funds for projects in the area, including a 50-unit housing complex for the elderly (San Jacinto Senior Housing), the Guadalupe Plaza and El Parian Business Incubator Program. While almost full occupancy has been achieved in El Parian, most of the occupants are not private entrepreneurs as was hoped. The spaces there are occupied by non-profit and public service agencies.

The Dept. of HUD recently announced a \$4.1 million grant for Avenida Guadalupe to build 59 units of low-income housing apartments for seniors on a 10 acre site owned by the San Antonio Housing Authority. The complex, which has funding from a number of other sources, is planned as a gated complex with a community center and garden and large balconies attached to the apartments. In the next phase of its plan for the area, the AGA will build 21 affordable single-family homes. The third phase will consist of a respite care facility for seniors living with their children, who may need to travel extended distances without them for vacations or business.

The AGA has also convened the West Side Housing Summit, bringing together housing organizations to discuss plans for San Antonio's near West Side in late 1998. Twenty-four barriers and thirty-four solutions were identified. Out of this initial meeting



**Part of Win Target Area on Guadalupe Street**

the **Westside Improvement Network (WIN)** emerged, a consortium of housing organizations, financial institutions and community organizations concerned with collaborating to redevelop the portion of the West Side Corridor closest to the corner of Guadalupe and Brazos streets. The idea was that one organization would provide the land, another the building materials, a third the potential homebuyer and other

<sup>16</sup> Richard R. Tangum, *ibid.*

innovating financing. Their first project was a discussion of two areas slated for acquisition and redevelopment in the Near West area by the Avendia Guadalupe Association: just east of San Fernando Cemetery a senior housing complex is planned; and just east of the Guadalupe Theatre, the commercial area for the craft district incubator and office complex.

Perhaps the greatest change occurring over the past decade for the poor on San Antonio's West Side is the depopulation of public housing complexes and the transfer to the Sec. 8 tenant-based program. Congress in recent years has subsidized virtually no net additions to the stock of federally subsidized developments, relying instead on Section 8 certificates and vouchers for any increase in the total pool of low-income housing assistance. The Section 8 voucher program supplements what very low income families and individuals can afford to pay for housing in the private market. Participants generally contribute a percentage of their monthly income toward housing costs with the Section 8 program making up the difference--up to a locally defined "payment standard." The idea is that tenant-based assistance should enable recipients to choose moderately priced housing of the type and location that best meets their needs. But the program is built on the assumption that housing will be available for those with vouchers. Increasingly, local housing authorities and low-income advocacy organizations report that Section 8 families are having problems finding housing.<sup>17</sup>

As of 1998 approximately 16 percent of the households in the West Side corridor area and 12 percent on the greater West Side were receiving housing assistance. Among those receiving assistance, the percentage with Sec. 8 vouchers had increased from 32 percent to 37 percent by February of 2000.

### **Questions to be Answered**

Some of the questions that remain to be answered on housing include:

- What support systems need to be in place to assist families with their personal housing needs?
- How do we encourage and support neighborhoods to seek and acquire better housing?
- What policies promote and sustain quality affordable housing on the West Side?

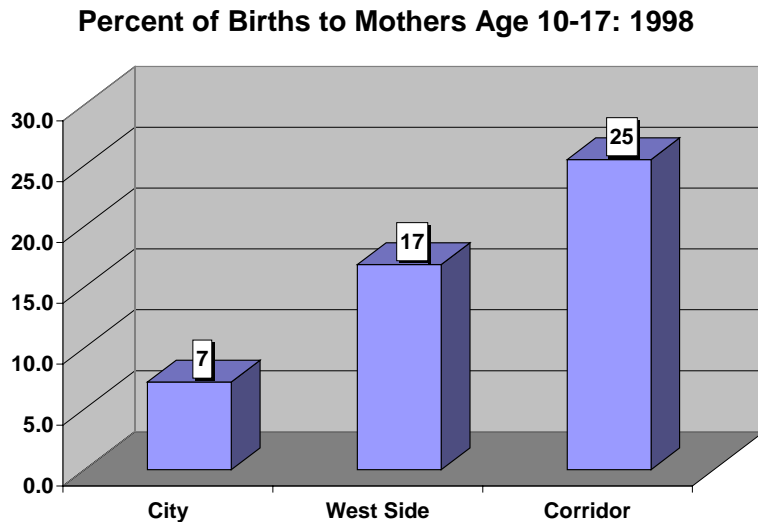
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<sup>17</sup> Mary Austin Turner, Susan Popkin and Mary Cunningham, *Section 8 Mobility and Neighborhood Health: Emerging Issues and Policy Challenges*, Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, April 2000, pp2-4.

## Health Care

Maternal health statistics for 1998 trigger no unusual cause for concern about the health of babies born on the West Side when compared to the city average. Infant mortality rates are about the same on the West Side as in the city overall, even lower than the city average in the West Side corridor. Percent of births that are considered low weight is not very different from the city average. Percent of births that received late or no prenatal care is somewhat greater on the West Side (21 percent compared to the city average of 15 percent).

What is worth noting is the difference in percent of all 1998 births that are to school-age mothers (age 10-17). While births to mothers younger than 18 comprise 7 percent of all births in the city, the rate is 26 percent of all births in the West Side Corridor and 17 percent of all births in the greater West Side. Also the percent of births to single mothers is higher on the West Side (39 percent) compared to the city average (31 percent).



The school districts also offer their own programs for pregnant youths and regular electives on parenting. **San Antonio ISD's Parenting Education Program** curriculum enrolls from 55 to 70 youths from Lanier High in their parenting classes each year.<sup>18</sup> The parenting education classes are followed up by visits from social workers assigned to the schools.

Social workers do casework among pregnant students in the middle schools as well. As many as 15 cases were identified in three of the middle schools on San Antonio's West Side--Rhodes, Cooper and Irving middle schools. Other cases may not have been identified because parents withdrew their children from classes upon discovering their pregnancies.<sup>19</sup>

Primary public health care provider organizations located in the West Side Corridor are the University Health System Downtown, on the northeast boundary, University Center for Community Health, Diabetes Center at 701 S. Zarzamora on the western boundary, and SA Metropolitan Health Department with clinics on Guadalupe street at El Parian, Guadalupe Center Clinic at 1801 W. Durango and the Buena Vista Clinic, 2322

<sup>18</sup> In 1998-99, the number enrolled in the PEP program at Lanier High was 68, in 1999-2000, it was 57.

<sup>19</sup> Correspondence from Gladys Baker, Director of the Pregnancy and Parenting Program, San Antonio ISD, May 30, 2000. She received no response from Tafolla Middle School at this time.

Buena Vista. The Metropolitan Health Department operates Las Palmas Clinic, Old Highway 90 Clinic and is planning a clinic at the Mirasol Housing Development Project on Gen. McMullen Drive.

Other health care organizations in the area include Christus Santa Rosa Community Outreach, The American Cancer Society, Barrio Comprehensive Family Health Care and the South Texas Health Research Center.

**University Health System (UHS)** Downtown is the oldest public health care facility inside of Loop 410. Some 25 years ago it was the Trauma Center for all of Bexar County and the outlying community. With the transfer of the trauma treatment function of the old Brady Green Hospital to the Medical Center Complex in the northwest quadrant of the city, the University Health System now fills the role of being the primary family health care provider for West Side residents. UHS also provides mental health services for adults at this site. Care Link is a financial assistance program that helps pay the cost of medical care members cannot pay. The majority of members are zip code 78207.

The **University Center for Community Health Diabetes Center** is a new state of the art diabetes treatment center with a citywide service area. This facility was strongly advocated for by various community entities and particularly by Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) due to the high incidence of diabetes in the immediate community and inside of Loop 410.



**University Family Health Center - Southwest**

**San Antonio Metropolitan Health Department** sponsors several clinics on the West Side.

- **Guadalupe Center Clinic** provides adult general health services. Buena Vista Clinic is a Women, Infants and Children (WIC) service provider, the fourth largest in the city.
- **El Parian Clinic** is also a WIC service provider.
- **Las Palmas Clinic** is a full-service clinic, which provides adult health care, case management, family planning, immunizations, WIC and well child programs (Texas HealthSteps).
- **Old Highway 90 Clinic** provides almost the full range of health services, but without WIC or dental.
- **Mirasol Clinic** is being rebuilt as a combined full service and dental provider. Upon completion of Mirasol Clinic, Las Palmas Clinic will provide only WIC services.

Other healthcare related organizations working in the West Side are the **South Texas Health Research Center** and the **Medical Hispanic Center of Excellence**, both under the auspices of The University of Texas Health Science Center. **Christus Santa Rosa** collaborates with Our Lady of Good Council Catholic Church through its Parish Nursing program.

**University Family Health Center - Southwest** is a relatively new facility probably no more than five years old. Located in the center of the West Side Corridor, it provides a full range of outpatient family health services, adult and pediatric care, similar to services provided by UHS - Downtown.

The **Center for Health Care Service/West Side Mental Health Clinic** provides adult outpatient mental health services to the southwest quadrant of the city. A person must meet a priority population definition as required by the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation: any person with a serious and persistent mental illness, such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar depression. Services provided include psychiatric evaluation and consultation, counseling, medication education and management, service coordination and family support and education.

The **Child and Family Mental Health** program of the **Mexican American Unity Council** offers comprehensive, bilingual and culturally sensitive mental health services for Bexar County residents who meet the criteria for short term counseling. Intake is provided without appointment three days a week.

**Christus Santa Rosa** has established five community outreach programs to meet the needs of the medically under-served in neighborhoods throughout San Antonio and will evaluate on-going the need for services and the potential for creating services to meet those needs.

Current programs of Christus Santa Rosa in the Near West include:

- Targeted Case Management for high risk teen mothers and infants less than a year old;
- WIC program of nutritional education and food to women with infants;
- Senior Outreach, which collaborates with other organizations to provide vision and blood pressure screenings as well as health education for people over 55 years of age.
- Parish Nursing, which provides weekly nursing services to homebound residents;
- Community Health Watch, which conducts referrals for health education, medical, dental, eye care and social services. This program also supports a neighborhood rejuvenation project that repairs and renovates homes using volunteers.

The **American Cancer Society** provides educational services and literature on cancer prevention, support counseling to persons undergoing cancer treatment, and donates supplies used in treatment and social service referrals as needed.

The **YWCA** (503 Castroville Road) in its Encore-Plus Program offers outreach, referrals and presentations to women about breast and cervical cancer to promote early

detection and regular screening. Women without insurance and below 200 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for the educational program if they are at least 20 years old and for the screening if they are at least 50 year old.

**Barrio Comprehensive Family Health Care Center** serves the entire West Side with medical services, prenatal and postnatal care, pediatric acute and well-child care, adult and geriatric services, immunizations, annual physical exams, hearing and vision testing, podiatry, and Texas Health Steps.<sup>20</sup> Other services include pharmacy, laboratory, X-ray, a continuum of health education programs, including maternal and child health education and WIC. Service arrangements are being planned with the YWCA and the West Side YMCA. In 1998 more than 18,000 persons from the West Side service area used the Barrio Clinic at least once. Nine out of ten of these patients were below 150% of the poverty level and three out of four of them were uninsured. While the number of Medicaid patients decreased slightly from 1997 to 1998, there was an 11% increase in the number of patients served who were not insured at all. That was also the year that the Congress appropriated an additional \$100 million to community health centers nationwide. Barrio Clinic's annual budget now exceeds \$5.6 million.

**SA MetroHealth** is also involved in a five-year project sponsored by the National Institute of Health to conduct an environmental study in the Edgewood school district to assess factors contributing to the health care status of area residents.

**South Texas Health Research Center** has as its mission research, education, health promotion, disease prevention and health policy development. In the West Side it has developed a cadre of outreach volunteers based on a block captain model to disseminate health literature and materials. Edgewood school district has been a target area of its various health education and outreach projects. The center publishes a bilingual health magazine, *A Su Salud*, distributed by volunteers throughout their target areas. Magazines are left in clinics, salons, and other venues where people are likely to read them.

The **Medical Hispanic Center of Excellence (MHCE)** is not a service program, but is included in this report it has long range implications for health service in the areas being considered. MHCE is conducting an outreach recruitment initiative for high school students that wish to pursue a career in health care. The schools targeted through this recruitment initiative on the West Side are Lanier, Kennedy and Memorial High Schools.

### Questions to be Answered

- What approach insures that families are treated as a complex and integrated whole by health service providers?
- What would provide more information, better access, affordability, and stronger support to families in the area of health care?

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<sup>20</sup> While the Barrio Clinic provides services chiefly to the West Side, it has recently expanded its service area to take in a large portion of the East side of the downtown area.

## Human Services

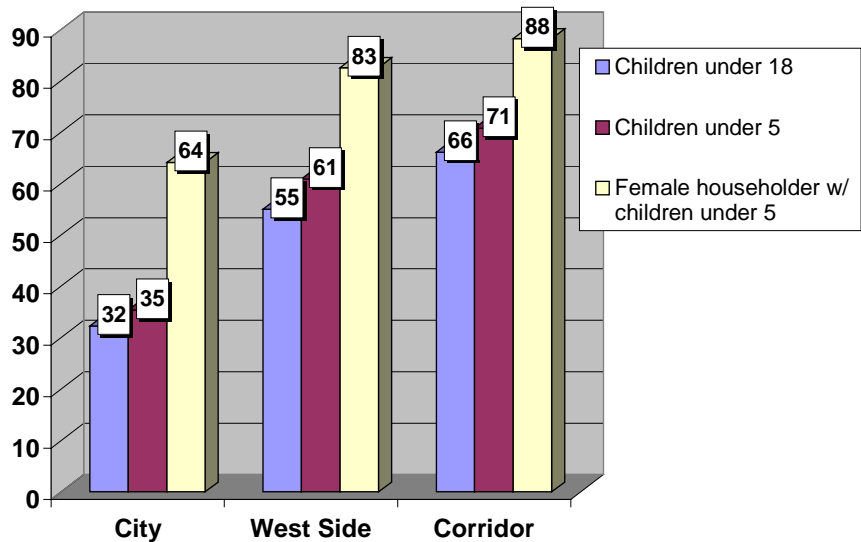
A number of characteristics of the West Side make that area the focus of a wide range of human services programs. The West Side is a very child-centered area. A West Side home is more than twice as likely to have children living in it than the average household in the city. But the parents in West Side home are less likely to be engaged in the work force and, if in the workforce, are more likely to be unemployed than those in the rest of the city.

A child's chance of being poor increases if:

- the child lives on the West Side;
- the younger the child;
- the father is absent from the home.

The chances of a child being poor are almost nine in ten if the child lives in the West Side corridor, is less than five years of age and is growing up in a home without a father present.

**Percent Below Poverty: 1990**



### Family Services

A number of agencies have undertaken family services as their primary mission. The **Benitia Family Center** is a multi-service facility that deals primarily with families on San Antonio's West Side. As its stated mission, "the Center strengthens and restores the integrity of families, especially the poor Hispanic families residing in the West Side of San Antonio."<sup>21</sup> Its programs include adult literacy, individual and family counseling, programs for youth--especially those at-risk ages 9 to 13--and citizenship and literacy classes for adults. During 1999, 125 families were served in its counseling program and 275 adults were served in the literacy program, most of them within the Edgewood school district area.

**Catholic Charities** offers a wide range of child and family services at two West Side locations: adolescent pregnancy and parenting program, adoption program, citizenship application assistance and legal services to immigrants and refugees, counseling for individuals, couples and families and crisis intervention to assist in rent, utilities and achievement of self-sufficiency.

<sup>21</sup> Pamphlet on Benitia Family Center provided by Sister Carmen Sanchez, LMSW-ACP, Director.

The **Madonna Neighborhood Centers** "provide comprehensive services for children, families and the elderly with special emphasis on the socially and economically disadvantaged."<sup>22</sup> Established in 1939 by the Sister of Divine Providence, Madonna offers a day care program for children age 1-13, an after-school program for children age 5-13, summer recreation program, and emergency assistance of food, clothing, furniture and assistance with rent and utility payments. Their service area is chiefly within the Edgewood school district boundaries.

**Guadalupe Community Center** is a family enrichment center that provides emergency food and clothing, prenatal care for expectant mothers, a Head Start Daycare Program, various activities for youth, intervention counseling and courses for adults. Their programs for youth are designed to build self-image and character. Some are after school and weekend programs, others are part of the summer day camp. The center has a cultural dance school, community service projects, team sports and family nights.

**Inman Christian Center** offers child care services for infants, pre-school, and school



**Inman Christian Center**

age children, substance abuse prevention, residential treatment program for young toxicant-inhalant abusers, counseling, parenting and family education programs activity and support groups for teens and other social services.

**Hispanic Community Center** provides counseling and social services. Psychotherapy services are available for individuals, groups and families for a wide

range of problems. Their Vista Program provides low-cost immigration document preparation. Their Hispanos de Oro provides a venue for a weekly resale program where senior citizens and low-income single parent families can sell their wares for extra income.<sup>23</sup>

**Inner City Development** is an all-volunteer neighborhood center that has maintained after-school and summer recreation and learning programs for children and families since 1969. The center also provides emergency food for families and clothing for children. It has spun off an alternative housing program, San Antonio Alternative Housing, (see housing section) and a cultural arts program for youth, San Anto Cultural Arts (see education section).

The **Good Samaritan Center** offers a variety of adult and family programs, GED, job training and placement, auto mechanics, recreation, weight training and mediation services for persons 12-25 years of age.

### **Homeless Shelters and Child Care**

<sup>22</sup> Pamphlet provided by Madonna Neighborhood Centers, San Antonio, TX.

<sup>23</sup> United Way, *Community Assistance Directory*, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, 1998, pp. 171-172.

Our search of the West Side area revealed only one center for the homeless and a home for homeless pregnant women. The **San Antonio Metropolitan Ministry (SAMM) Shelter** (301. S. Frio Street) provides emergency shelter and services, transitional shelter and services and single-family transitional housing for the homeless. Emergency overnight shelter is provided at 910 W. Commerce on a first-come, first-served basis from 5:30 to 6:15 daily. There is no limit on the number of nights, but overnight guests are required to leave the building at 6 a.m. each morning.

For families and individuals who wish to find a regular place of residence, the SAMM Shelter has a list of priority guests who share daytime privileges in the building, meals, showers, laundry and clothing closet. Social services, a health clinic, day labor, job referral, legal assistance and some day care are also available. Up to 15 family rooms are available for families of three or more persons. Dorm beds for employed married or single adults or persons awaiting entitlements or pending housing are also available. Finally two rooms and ten dorm beds are reserved for "medical" cases referred by doctors or hospital social workers.

**Guadalupe Home** is a home for homeless pregnant women of all ages from throughout the state, assisting them to become self-sufficient.<sup>24</sup> Their programs include classes in nutrition and prenatal care, life skills, money management, Guide to God, parenting and child development.



**Providence Home and Family Services**

**Providence Home and Family Services** provides a special care facility for children who are HIV positive or have AIDS. They offer day care for children 18 months to 6 years old who are infected or affected by the AIDS virus as well as residential care for children 0-13 years who are HIV positive or have AIDS. They also provide respite care and community outreach for families living with

AIDS.

**Violence, Crime and Drug Programs**

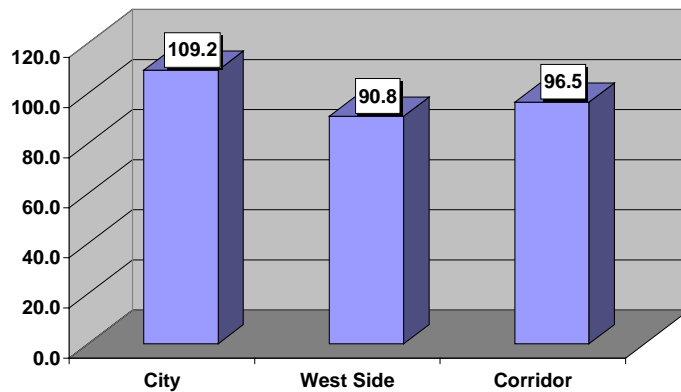
The West Side does not show up on the Uniform Crime Report statistics as a high-crime area. In fact, the overall crime rate for the West Side is lower than the city average in regard to both felony misdemeanor offenses. A closer look at individual categories of crime reveals the West Side had a murder rate, which was twice as high as the city average and slightly higher than average assault figures in 1998. (See Master Table)

<sup>24</sup> United Way, *Community Assistance Directory*, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, 1998, p. 168.

Several programs address the problems of crime, violence and drugs on the West Side.

The **78207 Community Youth Development Program** has as its goal the reduction in juvenile crime in the 78207 ZIP code area. The program is funded through a grant from the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. It focuses on youth in the middle schools that feed Lanier High School helping them work through transitional issues, family issues and peer issues that will effect their ability to do well in life.

**Total Offenses (Felonies + Midemeanors)  
Per 1,000 Population: 1998**



**Bexar County Detention Center Ministries** provides assistance to inmates and their families in addition to the various ecumenical religious services it provides.

Several programs are administered by the Bexar County Sheriff's Office: **DARE Program, Gang Unit** and **Crisis Intervention**.

**PEACE Initiative** of the Benedictine Resource Center establishes a network of 45 organizations concerned with domestic violence. The network meets monthly with eight working committees to coordinate and share information on family violence issues.

There is also the **Los Ninos Substance Abuse Prevention** program at the Inman Christian Center.

**Family Creative Response to Conflict** is an after-school program for at-risk middle-school youths run by the San Antonio Alternative Housing Corp. The goal of the program is to assist West Side youth and families in reducing the level of interpersonal and situational violence within their community. During the 1998-1999 program year, some 192 youth ages 9-17 were engaged group training in conflict resolution, communication, cooperation and other basic life skills. Youth who have completed the six-month conflict resolution program are invited to train an additional six weeks as peer mediators.<sup>25</sup>

**JOVEN** offers special programs for youth at risk of delinquency, school failure, gang involvement and substance abuse. Their programs include counseling services, case management, referrals, home and school visits and alternative school programs.

**San Antonio Fighting Back** is a citywide effort begun a decade ago by United Way to combat crime and drugs. The program attempts to reduce drug-related crime by facilitating the implementation of the Weed & Seed Community Policing Coalition Initiative funded by the Department of Justice. Recently, the Robert Wood Johnson

<sup>25</sup> Bree Steitle, "Final Report: San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation's Family Creative Response to Conflict Program, 1996-1999," San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation, June 1999.

Foundation awarded a \$1 million grant to SAFB. Plans are being developed to use the funds for a drug treatment facility, continue efforts to curb drug-related crime and work with after-school programs in which children are taught life skills.<sup>26</sup>

**Victor Fellowship** has for more than three decades worked on curing drug addiction. Their Christian Growth Center, 1030 SW 39<sup>th</sup> Street, has a residential program for addicts that provides counseling, spiritual therapy, referral guidance and assistance. The center also makes drama presentations to churches, schools and community groups.

**San Antonio Baptist Association** maintains the Alazan-Apache Creek Mission Center to address violence, drugs, gangs, school dropouts and teenage pregnancy in low income housing areas.

**Youth Programs**

Other programs for youth provide alternatives to crime and drugs and thus serve as a delinquency-prevention programs.

**Life Directions** provides youth peer motivation, family retreats, adult to teen mentoring, neighborhood enrichment and life search weekends for families of youth attending Lanier High School.

**Calderon Boys and Girls Club** is open to West Side youth ages 6-17. The Club provides a wide range of educational and tutorial programs, recreation, arts, music, drama,



**Calderon Branch – Boys and Girls Clubs**

computer assistance and a teen center.

**Communities in Schools** offers a variety of programs to youth, chiefly those who are at risk of failing academically or socially. It Mentor Program provides one-on-one adult guidance of at least one hour per week for an entire school year to students grades K-12. Its Parent Involvement Program offers classes in GED, Parental Enhancement Workshops,

computer literacy and English as a Second Language. Its Ropes program provides an adventure-based outdoor learning experience challenging problem-solving abilities and promoting group cooperation. The CIS programs on the West Side are at: H.B. Gonzalez Elementary, H.K. Williams Elementary, Loma Park Elementary Truman Middle School, Wren Jr. High, Gus Garcia Jr. High and Memorial High.

The **Downtown Youth Center** offers recreational activities, meals, personal counseling and educational programs to at-risk youth ages 6-18 who might otherwise congregate on downtown streets.

<sup>26</sup> Amy Dorsett, "Agency receives \$1 million grant," *San Antonio Express-News*, May 25, 2000, p. 1B.

The **Avenida Guadalupe Girl Scout Center** at El Parian offers after school programs and activities for girls ages 5-17 and training for adult scout leaders. The programs include summer activities and weekend events for girls who live on the west and south quadrants of the city.

The **San Antonio Bar Association** has developed a program for youths designed to reduce the number of school disciplinary incidents in Bexar County. Amigos in Mediation (AIM) is a peer mediation program offered to elementary, middle and high school students for managing disputes and improving conflict resolution skills of staff. School staff from San Antonio ISD, Edgewood ISD and Somerset ISD began training for the programs in January, 2000. Members of the San Antonio Bar Association will serve as advisors to the student mediators and consultants to the school AIM coordinators.

The **YMCA** and **YWCA** provide a variety of programs for youth, daycare and timeout for parents programs, most requiring membership or fees. The free programs for West Side youths only are mentioned here.

The YMCA (2900 Ruiz) offers an Extended Day Car Collaborative for students in the Rodriguez and Hoelscher elementary schools is an after-school enrichment program.

**Mi Carrera** is a YWCA (503 Castrovilla Road) program for girls in grades 6-12 in San Antonio, Northside and Edgewood school districts who are at risk of dropping out. The students are exposed to employment opportunities beyond high school and motivated to stay in school.

During the summer free lunches are served daily at Lincoln, Mirasol and Cassiano Public Housing Projects for children ages 1-18.

### **Programs for the Elderly and Disabled**

The **Repair and Modification Program (RAMP)** assists the elderly and disabled with needed home repair. It was initiated by Habitat for Humanity and is now administered by the San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation. From June 1-Dec. 31, 1999, the program assisted 170 persons, mostly West Side residents who are disabled or elderly, by building ramps, grab bars, repairing or replacing floors and roofs, and repairs that improve access in their own homes. The program charges for cost of materials plus a



**Repair and Modification Program (RAMP)**

small service fee.<sup>27</sup>

The **National Association for Hispanic Elderly - Project AYDA** provides older low-income persons with part-time subsidized employment in community service work with nonprofit agencies. Applicants must be 55 or older and live in Bexar, Dimmit or Atascosa county and meet Department of Labor guidelines.

Several West Side neighborhood centers have developed residential and/or day programs for the elderly, bringing seniors together for weekly meetings, recreation, lunches, field trips and arts and crafts:

- **Madonna Neighborhood Center**
- **St. Agnes Senior Center**
- **Inman Christian Center**
- **Bethel Senior Center**
- **Guadalupe Community Center**
- **San Juan de los Lagos Senior Center**

#### **Legal Assistance**

**Bexar County Legal Aid Association** (West Side Office, 803 Castroville Road) provides legal advice and representation to indigent persons in civil cases as well as community education. This office also houses the **Bexar County Renters Guild**, which provides information with no fee to low income persons on disputes between landlord and tenants.

For those ineligible for assistance from Bexar Co. Legal Aid, the "working poor" or elderly not qualifying for legal aid, legal services are provided by the **San Antonio Community Law Center**, on a sliding scale fee based on ability to pay.

**Catholic Charities** assists legal permanent residents become U.S. citizens by filing applications on their behalf, administering Naturalization exams serving as an intermediary in dealing with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. They provide information and services on immigration law and representation in immigration court.

**Child Advocates, San Antonio**, provides trained court-appointed volunteers to advocate permanent homes for abused and neglected children in foster care. The recruit and train volunteers twice a year to work as court-appointed special advocates. The advocates do fact finding for the judge to represent the dependent, neglected or abused children referred through the Texas Dept. of Protective and Regulatory Services.

Since 1994 the **West Side Resource Council** has maintained a network of about nineteen member social service agencies working to improve coordination and efficient use of resources in the area. The council meets monthly.

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<sup>27</sup> Robert Brischetto, "An Evaluation of the Repair and Modification Program (RAMP) of San Antonio Alternative Housing Corp.: June 1- Dec. 31, 1999," the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation, February 28, 2000.

### **Questions to be Answered**

- How can human service programs coordinate their services and focus on family needs? At what levels should families be involved in the planning and decision-making process?
- How can neighborhood information systems facilitate the coordination of services and be family friendly?
- In a public policy environment that seeks greater efficiency, how can successful coordination and cooperation be achieved among the many human service agencies working on the West Side? What policies and strategies are needed to bring agencies and neighborhood organizations into relationship with one another to network their resources?

## Community Organizations

Perhaps the most essential ingredient to neighborhood transformation is the effective participation by resident families in the revitalization process. This principle has been recognized and adhered to in all neighborhood efforts that have succeeded.

San Antonio Mayor Howard Peak acknowledged that principle more recently when in 1998 he formed the **Community Revitalization Action Group (CRAG)**. The CRAG notes:

that the residential and commercial growth of the past two decades in the Greater San Antonio area has been vigorous, yet disproportionate. That growth has enhanced the tax base, provided jobs, and created new homes for thousands of residents. It is also true, though, that as that expansion has taken place, inner city neighborhoods have experienced population depletion, declining housing stock, inadequate infrastructure improvements, divestment by the business sector, stagnation of new employment, and very low family incomes.<sup>28</sup>

The CRAG approach emphasizes neighborhood involvement in the use of city resources to spur the investment of public and private capital in the creative revitalization of neighborhoods.<sup>29</sup> But for the revitalization effort to work, residents have to be effective advocates of the transformation of their neighborhoods. The chief task of the Casey team was to identify those groups that most willing and able to engage resident families in the neighborhood transformation process.

The approach of rebuilding communities from within recognizes that the residents own "ideas, skills and organizing abilities are a foundation on which investments of private capital can build residential and commercial projects."<sup>30</sup> Admittedly, it is not easy to sell the idea of investment on the West Side to the business community. They are used to experiencing the best return on their investments outside of Loop 410. CRAG recognizes that the "City can play a leading role in creating innovative incentives for private investment."<sup>31</sup> The City can also contribute the sophisticated integrative planning that is necessary for neighborhood revitalization to take place, linking public works projects with community plans, utility improvements and economic reinvestment. For this to happen the City must make sustain a long-term commitment to transforming inner-city neighborhoods, a commitment that does not dissipate with the election of a new council. Powerful neighborhood groups will be key to sustaining the City's role in neighborhood transformation.

Unquestionably the most powerful neighborhood-based organization on the West Side has been **Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS)**. Nine of the ten parishes within the West Side corridor area are members of COPS.

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<sup>28</sup> Community Revitalization Action Group, *Revitalization: Partnership for Community, Final Report to the Mayor and City Council*, June 23, 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Community Revitalization Action Group, *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Community Revitalization Action Group, *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Community Revitalization Action Group, *ibid.*, p. 6.

COPS recently celebrated 25 years as a local Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) community organization. Its sister organization, **Metro Alliance**, resulted from a merger in 1989 of the **Metropolitan Congregational Alliance** (MCA) and the **East Side Alliance**, both IAF organizations operating in different parts of the city. The main focus of the IAF organizations has been leadership development through an understanding of power and the ability to organize neighborhoods. The IAF constituency comes mostly from the Catholic parishes, but also from congregations of other faiths. The COPS/ Metro Alliance congregations now number forty-six in San Antonio.

Community leaders in COPS and Metro Alliance have always been most active on issues affecting residents of its neighborhoods: basic needs such as housing, water, education, safety, economic development and jobs. They are the chief architects of the Alliance Schools Initiative and the San Antonio Education Partnership, both innovative programs to improve educational opportunities for youths and parental involvement in education. In their "Walks for Success," teachers, parents church members and administrators spend a Saturday engaging parents and other members of the community in conversations about the neighborhood school. They have promoted Project Quest, a job training and placement program.

COPS/ Metro is currently promoting the allocation of a portion of the sales tax to create a fund for education, job training and after-school programs that could generate between \$16 and \$17 million a year.

IAF organizer Ernesto Cortes learned very early while conducting his interviews with San Antonio leaders that the churches provide natural constituencies for neighborhood organizations. Churches have provided the support systems that families turn to for social networking, in times of need for food, money, clothing, referrals and counseling. Of course, since most of the residents of the three sections we have examined speak Spanish as their primary language, the ministries and social services provided by the faith communities must also be bilingual and bicultural.

Other logical candidates for community involvement in neighborhood transformation are the various neighborhood organizations. Some years ago the city manager set forth a process whereby neighborhood organizations could register as an official neighborhood organization, draw their own boundaries and set forth the goals that they had for their organization. This process allows for overlapping neighborhood boundaries and here today, gone tomorrow efforts at neighborhood organization. The establishment of official neighborhood organizations has not occurred to any great extent on San Antonio's West Side. Where neighborhood organizations have been established there, they have not always been sustained as effective action groups. Often a neighborhood group would emerge when there was some external or internal threat to safety or property values and become inactive when the crisis subsided.

Four official neighborhood organizations have at one time or another emerged on San Antonio's West Side:

**Avenida Guadalupe:** Bounded by W. Commerce Street to the north, S. Laredo Street to the south, Alazan Creek to the east and S. Zarzamora to the West.

**Las Palmas:** W. Commerce Street to the north, Castroville Road to the South, SW 24<sup>th</sup> to El Paso and SW 26<sup>th</sup> to Castroville Rd. on the east and S. General McMullen to the west.

**Westlawn:** W. Commerce Street to the north, Jewett to the south, S. General McMullen to the east and S. San Joaquin to the west.

**Memorial Heights:** Culebra Road to the north, W. Commerce Street to the south, N. San Joaquin Avenue to the east, and NW 36<sup>th</sup> street to La Hacienda then Esmeralda to the west.

We were not able to ascertain whether these organizations are currently active.

### **Questions to be Answered**

- What family issues are effective for neighborhood transformation?
- How can we improve residents perception that positive changes will occur because of their participation in neighborhood organizations, surveys, focus groups etc.?
- What coordinated organizing efforts will insure that resident needs in education, employment, health care, health care and housing are incorporated into policy changes

## Faith Communities

When people of the West Side are asked "Where do you live?," the response is frequently a parish name. The church has become an important anchor of family life. It was not just by random choice that Industrial Areas Foundation began forming Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) 25 years ago on San Antonio's West Side around parishes.<sup>32</sup>

### Roman Catholic Parishes on San Antonio's West Side

	Date Founded	Number of Families	Sunday Attendance
<b><u>West Side Corridor</u></b>			
Our Lady of Good Counsel*	1952	1,800	895
Our Lady of Guadalupe*	1911	250	1,119
Sacred Heart*	1899	1,386	1,127
San Fernando: San Francesco di Paola*	1927	125	353
San Juan de los Lagos*	1952	600	1,293
St. Agnes*	1923	1,300	694
St. Alphonsus*	1925	650	855
St. Gabriel*	1958	780	557
St. Jude*		2,000	1,140
St. Timothy	1952	<u>1,400</u>	<u>525</u>
Total West Side Corridor		10,291	8,558
<b><u>Other West Side</u></b>			
Christ the King*	1928	500	694
Holy Family*	1963	1,300	850
Holy Rosary*	1948	1,600	835
Immaculate Conception*	1933	400	513
Immaculate Heart of Mary	1912	292	1,299
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (Little Flower)	1926	2,000	1,633
St. Dominic	1973	1,400	2,066
St. Henry*	1904	1,500	573
St. John Berchmans	1910	2,000	1,193
St. Martin de Porres	1964	853	1,203
St. Stephen	1953	<u>1,100</u>	<u>460</u>
Total Other West Side		12,945	11,319
Total West Side		<u>23,236</u>	<u>19,877</u>

\*COPS/Metro Alliance Congregations

	Western Urban Deanery
	Northwest Urban Deanery
	Central Urban Deanery
	North Urban Deanery
	Southwestern Urban Deanery

The **Western Urban Deanery** of the San Antonio Catholic Archdiocese comprises twelve parish communities, eleven of which are located in the greater West Side and seven

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the founding of COPS see: Mary Beth Rogers, *Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics*, Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1990.

of them in the West Side corridor. The **Northwest Urban Deanery** is comprised of nine parishes, six of them on the greater West Side and two within the West Side corridor. Two West Side parishes fall within the **Central Urban Deanery** and the **North Urban Deanery** and **Southwestern Urban Deanery** each have one parish within the greater West Side.<sup>33</sup>

A West Side parish serves an average of approximately 1,100 families. In all an estimated 23,236 families are enlisted in West Side parishes, 10,291 of them located within the West Side corridor area.<sup>34</sup> Attendance figures collected by the Archdiocese for the weekend of March 25-26, 2000 show that approximately 19,877 persons in West Side parishes attended Mass, 8,558 of them within the West Side corridor.



Archbishop Patrick F. Flores called together the First **Synodal General Assembly** on September 7, 1996, beginning a five-year action plan for implementing a call to evangelization.<sup>35</sup> The lynchpin in the plan developed by the Synod is the strengthening of family life. Some of the programs developed to accomplish this are:

- **Family Evangelization Workshops** beginning in July of 2000 and continuing into February of 2001.
- **Effective Fathers Seminars** in October of 2000.
- **FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couples Communication, Understanding and Study) Workshops** for engaged couples.
- **UNITAS**: a seven-session marriage program sponsored by parishes.
- **Retrouvaille...Rediscovery**: a process whereby couples who think they have less than a complete marriage engage in a "marriage encounter" weekend followed by several sessions of counseling.
- **Single Parent Day Celebration**. As many as 153 single parents with 108 children gathered at St. James the Apostle Church for a listening session, two enrichment sessions and more than forty exhibits on family services, programs and support. Eleven of the participants were from within the West Side corridor.

In addition to the programs that focus specifically on strengthening marriage and family life, the **Archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry** conducts training and continuing education of adults as parish

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 103-104.

<sup>34</sup> Figures on family enrollment by parish are taken from the *1999 Official Catholic Directory: Archdiocese of San Antonio*, San Antonio: Today's Catholic Newspaper.

<sup>35</sup> *Documents of the Fifth Archdiocesan Synod*, San Antonio, Texas, May 31, 1998.

youth ministry leaders, certifies coaches involved in the CYO Sports Program, and sponsors Youth Ministry Network meetings to support parish youth ministry coordinators.

But the most effective work with families is carried out on the parish level. It is on the parish level that structures providing support and services to families are developed. Six parishes from the Western Urban Deanery collaborate in the **West Side Catholic Schools Coalition**. The Western Urban Deanery is now coordinated by the pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in the near West Side. The deanery will be soon launching an intensive outreach effort to provide families religious and social services. In addition to the parishes and their priests there are numerous members of religious communities scattered throughout the West Side. Their ministries can be found in the various West Side churches, hospitals, schools, colleges and human service non-profit agencies. Many of these organizations are reported in other sections of this document.

Catholic communities and organizations with an abiding presence on the West Side include:

- **Mexican American Cultural Center** - providing language and cultural training for West Side ministries.
- Several religious communities that reside on the West Side, including: **Cordi-Marian Sisters, Missionary Sisters of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (MJMJ), St. Ann Community, San Luis Community, Scott House, Lucy Cottage, the Our Lady of the Lake Convent, Casa Maria, Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco, Casa Benitia, Hermanas Catequistas Guadalupana, Assumption Seminary and the Missionhurst Formation Community.**
- **The Bexar County Jail Ministry: Shalom** - providing programs in jail and outreach to families of inmates. The jail programs include daily chapel services, pastoral counseling, Twelve Steps to Spirituality (modeled after the Alcoholics Anonymous program), Bible studies, and Alpha Program (a faith development program).
- **Catholic Schools.** There are four elementary schools administered by the Archdiocese through the parishes: Holy Rosary, Little Flower, St. John Berchmans and West Side Catholic School. In addition, there are two private elementary school run by Catholic religious orders: St. John Bosco and St. Martin Hall. Holy Cross High, run by the Holy Cross Brothers, is the only Catholic high school on the West Side.
- Social services are provided to West Side residents through a number of Catholic non-profit agencies: **Catholic Charities, Benedictine Resource Center, Center for Legal and Social Justice, Benitia Family Center, Madonna Neighborhood Centers, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry of San Francesco di Paola Catholic Church, Guadalupe Home and Blessed Sacrament Kindergarten and Day Care, to mention a few.** (Some of their programs are discussed in detail under Human Services Programs section of this document.)

There are also numerous non-Catholic churches on San Antonio's West Side. **Alazan-Apache Creek Baptist Mission** at El Parian Mall in the near West Side is staffed and supported by the **San Antonio Baptist Association**. Their programs address problems of violence, drugs, gangs, school dropouts and teenage pregnancies. They in turn network with AGORA Ministries, Trinity Baptist Church, First Baptist Church and Baptist Children's Home Ministries to assist families in the Alazan-Apache Creek area. Funding from the Trinity Baptist Church and First Baptist Church combined with private grants support after-school, music, pastoral care ministries, teen support, mentoring and senior adult programs.

The **Baptist Children's Home Ministries** runs a leadership development program in the same neighborhood for teens in grades 6-8. Decisions for Life prepares young teens in decision-making skills and self-esteem. This is one of the programs that addresses the problem of sexual activity before marriage in a positive way by teaching goal setting, communication, teamwork and similar life skills.

The **Christian Women's Job Corps** of the San Antonio Baptist Association offers a 10-week session on personal discovery, culture, education, health and nutrition, family and child care, money matters, communications skills, computer training and career planning.

**House of Neighborly Service** in the heart of the West Side corridor is operated by Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church. They provide after school care, summer full-time day camp, and meals to residents



West Durango Apts – Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church

of the West Durango Plaza Apartments (84 units). They also conduct a mentoring and tutorial program for children from Crockett Elementary school. Their **Advocates Educational Center** conducts monthly sessions on such topics as family needs and family law. They also run the Compadres Network of men mentoring the sons of single mothers. The **Mennonite Volunteer Service** participates in their programs as do various local Presbyterian churches.

The Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church also took the lead for a time in coordinated a network of *comunidades*

*de base* or small Christian communities, sometimes referred to as house churches. While these small groups were ecumenical, most were comprised of Catholic families. Today, *comunidades* can be found in a number of parishes on the West Side: San Juan de los Lagos, St. Agnes, Sacred Heart and Holy Rosary parishes. They meet regularly--usually every two weeks--at the home of one of their members, share *noticias* (news) about what is happening in their neighborhoods and where they can provide assistance to families in need, and pray. There is now a Christian Communities Center at 114 Park, off Nogalitos.

An incomplete list of West Side non-Catholic churches might include:

- **Templo Sion Asembleas de Dios**
- **Iglesia Casilles de Dios**
- **Iglesia Bautista Central**
- **Templo Bethel Asamblea de Dios**
- **El Templo Cristiano**
- **Christian Outreach Church**
- **Praise Chapel Christian Fellowship**

- **Iglesia Bautista Fundamental El Buen Pastor**
- **Victory Temple**
- **Iglesia de Cristo**
- **Iglesia Bautista El Calvario**
- **Prospect Hill Church of God**
- **New Life Christian Center**

### **Questions to be Answered**

- What are the neighborhood issues of greatest concern to the various faith communities?
- What is the potential for coordination among the various faith communities in forging a family-strengthening agenda for the West Side?