

## **Progress Report**

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To: Burgess Fund

Subject: Community Work Update

For the period of: June 2015-January 2016

### **June**

The month was dedicated to providing one on one support and create a welcoming environment and meet future leaders within the community. I began offering English Conversation Classes on June 22 with the help of Mary, an amazing intern who was provided by the Forest Foundation.

This was also a time for me to create connections with organizing bodies that already exist in Revere such as Revere Youth in Action and the Office of New Revere Residents and to also create new relationships and visibility for WEE with new organizations like the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition, Black and Pink and Jobs with Justice. This helped me recognize future support groups like the First Congregational Church.

### **July**

I fully focused on our conversation class in order to have fun topics and recruitment. The purpose for our English Conversation Class was to become more visible in the community and also help women who have a higher level of English and do not have the opportunity to further practice their English skills since our ESOL program can only teach up to level 2. Four migrant women attended class on a regular basis and out of those four Ana seemed the most enthusiastic about becoming more involved with the community and tend to social justice issues like rent increase.

July was also a time to create one on one relationships with our members. Whether it was by helping one of our newest ESOL members who recently got pregnant and needed help navigating the health insurance world in order to receive care or conduct a mediation between Ana and her elderly father who was having problems adjusting to a new country and a new way of living very different than in El Salvador.

Revere Farmers' Market began operating on July 17th and we began using it as a resource to promote Women Encouraging Empowerment by looking for people who might be interesting in volunteering and or becoming a member.

I believed that with the help of the Farmer's Market and our conversation classes we had enough visibility to begin having community meetings at our office and with the help of Mary we began

promoting and flyering. The purpose was to discuss what the community viewed as imperative issues that should be addressed first and meet me, a community organizer, in a small group discussion. Sadly, we were not able to have any attendants during the two times we tried rescheduling our meeting.

## **August**

Began work to re establish our Mothers' Round Table where migrant mothers and future moms can come together and discuss topics affecting their everyday lives and how to maintain the essence of their culture on to their children growing up in a country and culture that shares different beliefs. Unfortunately, just like our community meetings, we did not receive any response from community members.

I also continued my one on one work with Anna whose situation had become a little better with her father who needed help getting his driver's licence and helped her get hired as a childcare provider in the Revere Community School. I did not receive a community interest to work on social justice issues but I did began to receive individuals seeking for help applying to jobs, resources to food pantries and English classes. I met this members by attending "Neighbor Circles" hosted by the Neighborhood Developers.

## **September / October**

Has been a time to reevaluate our efforts. It has been difficult to acknowledge that our community lives in such an aggressive environment that it is very difficult for them to trust and feel safe to share what their difficulties are.

September has also been a very difficult month in terms of one on one cases. The member whom I was able to help receive medical care due to her pregnancy has been facing Domestic Abuse this whole time and was finally able to go pass her abuser and reach out to me for help because she was in need of urgent medical care. Another member, who is an elderly woman, is also facing eviction from her home of 15+ years and her son is facing the risk of deportation due to an incident that occurred 5 years ago. We have been trying our best to be as resourceful and helpful in both of this cases; while at the same time respecting the decisions our members have chosen to take care of themselves and their families.

## **November / December**

Coming to the conclusion that our community is not yet prepared to address serious issues, I am beginning to believe that maybe catering to the need of a community space where members can come and interact with one another by doing fun and healthy activities.

Time and energy will be dedicated on creating a formal curriculum focused on the “Know Your Rights Toolkit” that Women Encouraging Empowerment was able to create with the help of Casa El Salvador and Boston College. The curriculum will be used to have a formal 3rd level conversation class. We are also contacting different venues like a yoga instructor that caters to women of color who have experience trauma to lead a class every Friday night. This way women in our community can begin to feel safe in our office and probably will become interested in becoming more involved.

Also, we will re establish communication with women like Malika McDonald, from our “Meet Your Revere Muslim Neighbor”, who expressed interest on creating a group for Muslim women to come together.