

OPPORTUNITY CENTER

QUICK

UPDATE

SPRING 2003



Community
Working
Group

A COMMUNITY RESPONSE
TO HOMELESSNESS

The mission of the Opportunity Center is to promote human dignity both by providing for very basic needs of persons in our community, and by offering them the opportunity to find housing and a stable life. The center serves the entire community as it responds to the problem of homelessness and poverty, which affects everyone.

OPPORTUNITY CENTER PLANS APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL IN 8-0 VOTE

"I believe this will be a gift to this community...and I'm proud to vote for it," said Palo Alto City Council member **Bern Beecham**, before adding his vote to a unanimous City Council approval of the Opportunity Center final plans. The project has now cleared the final hurdle in the city approval process, without having one negative vote cast against it during any of the five public hearings to consider it by the Architectural Review Board, the Planning and Transportation Commission and the City Council. The final vote for approval also included \$750,000 in funding.

"I'm told that this is somewhat unusual for a development project in Palo Alto," said **Dr. Donald Barr**, the President of the Community Working Group (CWG), with a note of humor. The CWG is the group that coordinates the consortium of partners that will build and operate the center.



Bern Beecham

The public testimony included only one person who spoke against the project. Most notable among supporters was **Dr. David Druker**, CEO of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, who had previously stated his opposition. The CWG and the Medical Foundation signed a written agreement governing the security issues that had concerned the Medical Foundation. "This process

of problem-solving was attended by the highest level of civility and collaboration," said the attorney for the Medical Foundation.

Phyllis Cassel, Chairperson of the Planning and Transportation Commission, made mention of the architectural "mark" that the project will make on the community, due to the unique design by **Rob Quigley**, the architect of the project. "Rarely do we have a chance to be dealing with Architecture with a large 'A.' Due to the unique nature of the design and the architect, this will be a lasting legacy to the community."

Many council members made mention of how fortunate the City is to have a project that will combine Federal and local public funds, along with gifts from private citizens, that will enable the creation of 89 units of sorely needed housing, along with homeless services.

Perhaps the most poignant testimony of the evening came from **Norm Carroll**, who is a representative of the unhoused community: "This will prevent people from being unhoused; we've got to get them off the streets. For some—probably for me—it'll help me survive. We need less competition out there."



Stanford Students Dance for the Opportunity Center

Students living in the Lantana House, the public service focus house at Stanford University, are enthusiastically planning a fundraiser for the Opportunity Center. **Don Barr** met with a group of students on March 5th to share with them the background and current efforts of the CWG to develop the Opportunity Center. Students then used the meeting afterwards to brainstorm about the proposed fundraiser: a campus-wide dance or a dance-a-thon to be held sometime in late May on campus. As **Al Camarillo** (Resident Fellow at Lantana House and Miriam and Peter Haas Centennial Professor in Public Service) explained:

"Lantana House residents want to organize a dancing-related event that will help raise funds for the Opportunity Center campaign and bring attention to students, faculty, and staff on the Stanford campus about this important effort to assist homeless people in our nearby community." Student involvement is so worthwhile in many aspects of this project from fundraising to exploring the issues of homelessness through classes and community service to volunteering in health care and more once the Center is up and running.

IN BRIEF:

News and Notes about the Capital Campaign

We welcome **Larry Klein**, former Mayor of Palo Alto, as our newest member of the Honorary Committee. The Major Gifts Committee has just welcomed several new members, including **Karen Stiller**, the Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, and **Trina Lovercheck**, former member of the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission. Larry is helping spearhead a gathering in April at the home of **Guy Blase**, Campaign Co-Chair. This occasion is one in a series of cultivation events organized by the Major Gifts Committee. In January, **Stephen and Anne Galli**, and **Ann and Sam Gordon** hosted a gala at the Galli house in Portola Valley, attended by approximately 35 people; **Hans and Elizabeth Wolf** were the guests of honor, and Hans gave an address about how financially supporting the Opportunity Center reflects his dreams for our community... At a similar event in December, keynoters **Thomas Ehrlich**, President Emeritus of Indiana University and former Dean of Stanford Law School, and **LaDoris Cordell**, Stanford Vice Provost and retired Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge, addressed a group of supporters. LaDoris is a CWG Board Member and honorary Co-Chair of the Capital Campaign, along with **Susan Packard Orr**... In March, **Rose Jacobs Gibson**, President of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, addressed a group of donors; **John Morgridge**, Chairman of the Board, Cisco Systems, was unable to speak at that event but will reschedule for a future event. To find out how you can host a gathering at your home, business or club, please contact Jeff Vamos at 650-325-6563, x103.

Faith Community Swings into Action

Several congregational campaigns are now in full swing. **First Congregational Church of Palo Alto** has reached its stated goal of \$50,000 and is still going! **All Saints Episcopal Church** has raised \$35,000 of their \$50,000 goal. **Grace Lutheran Church** will give a \$24,000 gift as part of their 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign. **First United Methodist Church** has raised a quarter of their \$30,000 to \$40,000 goal. The collection from the two Easter services at **Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto** will be dedicated to the Opportunity Center. Other active congregations include: **St. Marks Episcopal Church**, **First Christian Church**, **Trinity Episcopal Church**, **Congregation Etz Chaim** and **Congregation Kol Emeth, Friends**, and **Ladera Community Church**. We are also at work forming a Jewish Community Caucus and an Episcopal Caucus. Special thanks for the amazing work of the Faith Community!



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What's Next?

This month we will be submitting a \$5.5 million request to California's Multi-family Housing Program, which was funded through Proposition 46. These awards are very competitive, with many organizations throughout the state applying. In June, we will submit an application for \$5.2 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the last major funding from our projected public sources. Should we fail to secure funds from either source, we will apply for funding in the next cycle, thereby delaying the project a few months.

One of the selection criteria for these public funding applications is related to having sufficient funding in place for the project to be considered ready. Therefore, the more contributions we can secure through our capital campaign prior to applying for these public funds, the higher our applications will be rated. So if you have been thinking about your gift to the Opportunity Center, now would be a great time to make the donation. Our architects are busy preparing the final design development plans, and we anticipate that construction will begin early next year. The construction completion date at this time is projected to be November 2005.

Please Contact Us:

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Get On Our Mailing List:

If you know of people who may be interested in the Opportunity Center project, we'd love to put them on our mailing list. Let us know by giving us a call or an email.

Visit www.opportunitycenter.org
for more information.