



October 5, 2018 FFNF Highlights

Tec Centro

A program of SACA (Spanish American Civic Association)

Mr. Carlos Graupera, President and CEO

- Carlos Graupera and his wife, Rosa, founded SACA in 1973. They recently celebrated 45 years of service to the community.
- SACA seeks to provide solutions to challenges that weaken any community. SACA provides counseling, drug and alcohol prevention and treatment, treatment for sexually transmitted infections and recreational programming. Through these efforts the quality of life within Lancaster's Hispanic community has been improved greatly.
- SACA serves roughly 8,000 individuals yearly, of whom 85% are Latinos. Many live in Southeast Lancaster City. The southeast area of the City is no longer crime-ridden. In the 1960's police were kicked out. In the 1980's police were invited back.
- Housing in the southeast area has been an important component of SACA's success. Through a development corporation, approximately 12 new homes are built each year. To date 60 townhouses have been built in the City – approximately 20 new townhouses each year. SACA does not provide rental housing, only home ownership.
- The specific needs of senior citizens are acknowledged through a senior center known as El Centro Hispano, which provides social, educational, recreational and psychological services for area residents.
- Additionally, SACA operates TeleCentro, a bilingual educational cable television channel, as well as a bilingual radio station called Radio Centro. These outlets bridge ethnic, social, economic, cultural and lingual barriers through programming on local events and current issues pertinent to Hispanic residents. They also serve to educate, inform and entertain the public.
- A primary issue for SACA is workforce development. The success of the Hispanic community depends on the ability of individuals to be economically self-sufficient and upwardly mobile.

- Unemployment in Lancaster’s Hispanic community is at 27%. Under-employment is 45% or higher. Under-employment exists because people need further education in order to earn higher wages.
- There are two major impediments for many Hispanics – 1) Childcare and 2) Transportation.
- Opened in 2014, to address the need for workforce development, Tec Centro is a state of the art facility serving more than 1,300 individuals annually. To gain admittance, applicants simply ring a doorbell and are asked, “Do you want to succeed?”
- The facility was specifically created to provide the training and education needed for individuals to rise out of poverty. Poverty is generational.
- Refugees coming to Lancaster participate in programs at Tec Centro. Many are there for re-certification of their skills. (There are 200 foreign trained physicians living in Lancaster County. Most take the CAN training programs which leads to them becoming Emergency Room Technicians.) A CMA program is planned for the future. Refugees appreciate the opportunity to learn new skills. There is a happy trade-off between coming to the United States and losing their professional achievements in their home countries. Currently, there are 350 Puerto Rican families, displaced by the hurricane, living and working here in Lancaster.
- Tec Centro is the primary provider of bilingual education and skills training to low-income individuals with the targeted goal of seamless job placement. The unique importance of Tec Centro is to address not only the issue of unemployment, but also the issue of under-employment. Under-employment plays a significant role in the socio-economic challenges facing the City of Lancaster.
- Tec Centro collaborates with area community colleges and training programs to provide skill training programs that will lead to careers in high demand areas, including: allied health occupations, construction trades culinary arts, commercial and industrial building maintenance, and bank teller/customer service representatives. All participants receive career counseling and placement assistance. Graduates are placed in high-demand jobs and careers in the community.
- Tec Centro and SACA have undertaken a campaign to raise \$10 million dollars with an immediate goal of \$5 million to assist in funding the on-going operations and capital improvements at Tec Centro. This institutional endowment will enable Tec Centro to strengthen and grow programming in sustainable and strategically focused ways.