Special THANKS

Dream Homes Community Members

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PARTNERED WITH:
The greatest opportunities for improvement of the social determinants of the Dream Home residents are:

1. **Education**
   - Residents could work with local education systems to promote education retention and graduation rates (K-16).

2. **Workforce Development**
   - Increase residents access to more affordable incomes.

3. **Access**
   - To safe recreation and healthy food

4. **Engagement**
   - Continued engagement through CHWs as facilitators

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In August of 2017, Loma Linda University Health Institute for Community Partners (LLUH ICP), the Desert Healthcare District (DHCD), and El Sol Neighborhood Education Center (El Sol NEC) joined on a unique collaboration, at the invitation of Cathedral City staff, to assess the health of residents living in the Dream Homes Neighborhood. Dream Homes is a historically disenfranchised neighborhood that was geographically situated on the border between Palm Springs and Cathedral City. This unique collaboration, within a Place-based Initiative (PBI), provided the framework to focus a health status assessment with the overall goal of using a community-based and community-led approach to determine the health status of residents and to empower residents in understanding and responding to the unmet health needs of their community. Five community health workers (CHWs) were recruited from the local community and acted as the implementers of the health assessment to ensure this was a community-driven assessment. While ICP provided the methodology to assess the health status of the population and graduate student support, it was the CHWs who had the trust of the community members and spent countless hours listening to and understanding the unique perspectives of the community. To facilitate community conversations focused on change, the local resident CHWs were trained at the San Manuel Gateway College Promotores Academy, to strengthen their health worker skills and community-based interactions. The CHW’s, with support of LLU researchers, and multiple Coachella Valley organizations supported the Dream Home’s transformation, clean-up, and establishing one communal voice. DHCD allocated funding for a comprehensive Community Health Assessment for the Dream Homes and its neighboring community. Building upon the success and lessons learned from a similar project in the Desert Highland Gateway of Palm Springs the project was designed. Using the community health workers model, community members from the Dream Homes community were identified, recruited, trained and empowered by the Loma Linda University Community Health Workers Academy. El Sol NEC, a community-based organization specializing in the use of community health workers to address the community needs, provided the day-to-day supervision and operations of the community health workers and the project. Once training was completed, CHWs then implemented a mixed methods quantitative and qualitative assessment of the community, revealing that hypertension and heart disease were the leading health concerns, followed by diabetes: All three of these conditions are part of the family of metabolic syndrome or “lifestyle disease.” Residents also identified two primary infrastructural issues in the community as top priority concerns: compliance with civil code in regards to landscaping, trash and neighborhood beautification needs and the need for an increased police presence to deal with safety concerns due to speeding cars and motorcycles for children walking to school.
As a result of the CHW trust-building and assessments activities, the neighborhood hosted a large health fair, organized neighborhood beautification efforts with Public Works, and had their first Civic Community Conversation meeting with city officials, law enforcement, and local businesses. This project allowed meaningful engagement with the community as major partners contributed their respective areas of expertise in order to increase the collective impact of each organization’s strengths. Most importantly, this illustrates the vital work of CHWs as critical partners in community organizing for positive change. It was the CHWs who ultimately organized with the community to take action to address health needs in the form of a health fair and in community forums. Through successful engagement, residents were able to reclaim a unified voice of the Dream Homes neighborhood for the current populations of people living in that area.

Community Engagement and EMPOWERMENT

COMMUNITY FORUMS

These conversations between Community Members, Community Health Workers and multiple Cathedral City Community Stakeholders allowed for discussion, trust-building and understanding related to past issues.

Resource List – CHWs created, distributed and discussed a list of specific resources for the Dream Homes Community. In their house-to-house visits many CHWs provided direct phone numbers to community members for individual resources.

“We need buy in from the community”
“Community buy in is very important to prevent problems such as graffiti and homelessness.”

- Community Stakeholder

Yard Maintenance PROJECT

Many residents expressed the need for assistance with beautification efforts. City officials suggested helpful programs. Bringing together community and city programs, CHWs facilitated relevant and responsive action in their community.
Community Priorities and ASSETS IDENTIFIED

Our Community HEALTH WORKERS

**Hilda**

“It was a great experience to work with the team to bring the community health fair and other events to connect with the community, it was very nice to see how we gain the community trust and have them open their doors to respond to all the questions on the survey. Most residents were very polite and cooperate very good.”

“Currently, I am still working as a caregiver implementing some of my learning skills. In few months I would like to continue my education hopefully at San Manuel Gateway College to improve my skills and knowledge to work more with my community. I love people and I can see there is a lot of need out there people always trust my confidentiality and ask me for help, I would like to contribute much more with the community to make it better each day.”

**Lydia**

“I am a Community Health Worker with the desire to make a change in our community, I have experienced an opportunity with education, opening my eyes to the needs of so many people how social determinants can affect the health of a person, also, the importance of sharing the information and educate our community, so they can choose to make a difference in their health. My past, work history, was with retail as an Assistant General Manager/Operations for 20 yrs., I never thought I would find a job that I would love and enjoy as I did with retail. I have as a Community Health Worker. I love sharing the knowledge I have been blessed with.”

“I am currently working as a Community Health Worker with Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) Palm Desert, Ca. (Health Homes Program). I also continued my education with Loma Linda University San Manuel Gateway College in the extensive IEHP Cohort (includes First Aide Behavioral Health, Clinician, and Community Health Workers.) Also, when time allows assist with El Sol Asthma Project.”

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“I love sharing the knowledge I have been blessed with.”

-Lydia
In summary, the health of residents could be greatly improved through an intentional investment in the social determinants of health: access to education, access to a livable wage, access to affordable health care, and access to health-supporting resources. Access could be intentionally increased by community partners and civic agencies.

The primary issues identified by residents through both qualitative and quantitative surveying are listed below:

- medical services are not accessed regularly as urgent care or emergency care was the predominant type of medical services represented in the community;
- heart disease and hypertension are the greatest health risks with diabetes as second;
- poverty limits the access to healthy lifestyle choices, compounding disease and risk factors;
- lack of access to a safe park or recreational facility for exercise.

SAFETY

When CHWs asked adults in the community if they felt safe, many cited physical safety issues related to traffic, dust, and one community member said: “We need to make a plan on what to do for safety.” When the youth at the local school were surveyed, they shared similar concerns to adults. Many of the key informants recognized crime rates were declining and that the Dream Homes Neighborhood was entering into a time of community-building and engagement with city resources like police, schools, and other resources in new ways.
Looking AHEAD

Two of the Cat City CHWs were employed full-time by IEHP and are serving their community as employees of a local health care organization in the Coachella Valley.

One of the Cat City CHWs was employed with El Sol NEC.

One of the CHWs was elected to the DHCD board to allow her to represent her community.

Two of our CHWs aspire to continue training at the San Manuel Gateway College and beyond.

All our CHWs remain connected with project stakeholders.

Initially community Stakeholders focused on the need for community participation and changes in group interactions (between community members, city officials, local businesses, and other organizations). Community comments focused on a list of priorities that they felt would improve their families, homes, and overall health. When assessing health indicators the findings can be viewed with respect to what socially determines health outcomes.

When asked about monthly expenses, 53% of residents shared that half or more of their paychecks were going towards monthly rent, which is categorized as “severe rent burden” by Housing and Urban Development when 50% or more of income is spent on rent. Residents also shared that saving monthly income was challenging, as 57% of residents were not able to put any money into any type of savings. When asked about the ability to afford the monthly essentials like food or other costs, 25% said they had difficulty buying the essentials. With 1 in 4 residents struggling to cover basic essentials and a little over half of residents using more than half their income to stay housed, the economic challenges faced by residents are a primary compounding factor on their health.

Over 50% of the respondents spent more than half of their income towards housing.

The majority of residents use their own vehicle for transportation but in interviews and focus groups residents added that there is a need for improved public transit services, and transport services for the disabled.

“We [need] Programs to help with housing cost.”
- Community Participant

“Dream Homes neighborhood is no longer low to moderate income, so Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds can no longer be used. An income survey is needed.”
- Community Stakeholder
"People think Dream Homes is a community for low-income families; poor people. I like my home and my husband and I have good jobs. We like where we live."
- Community Participant

ECONOMY/EMPLOYMENT

"We need more jobs and better salaries."
- Community Participant

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1 in 4 respondents are struggling to cover the basic essentials

"I worked at a very young age so my body isn’t in great conditions to work."
- Community Participant

*Less than half of the residents answered.
A majority of those surveyed both identified with and would like to continue using the name ‘DREAM HOMES COMMUNITY’. Some had other suggestions such as Dream Homes Country Club, Agua Caliente Community, or Cathedral City/Dream Homes Estates.

Community Residents provide water at the end of the day for the CHW team members.

An evening view from the Dream Homes Neighborhood.

The average incomes of the Dream Homes residents correlate to their educational attainment: for the Dream Homes community, 1 in three residents never graduated high school, 1 in three residents have a high school diploma, and only 1 in three residents have some college or a college degree. Many of the challenges faced by residents of Dream Homes are evident by the income and educational attainment gaps, a relationship that is consistent across low-income communities.

The Agua Caliente Elementary School is an incredible community asset and is seen positively by the community as 92% of residents were satisfied with the communication they had with teachers.

“Would like to see a community center.” – Community Participant

“1 in 3 respondents did not graduate high school”

EDUCATION

CHWs conduct house-to-house visits in their neighborhood.
**Health/Physical STATUS**

- **24%** Better
- **61%** About the Same
- **14%** Worse

Compared to ONE YEAR ago, would you say YOUR HEALTH is BETTER, WORSE or about the SAME?

**Health SERVICES**

“I go to Mexico for dental work.”
- Community Participant

Where do you go when you are sick and need MEDICAL TREATMENT?

**Health BEHAVIOR**

- 36%
- 22%
- 19%
- 9%
- 14%

54.4% of the survey respondents engaged in moderate exercise 2 times or less and 73.1% of the respondents reported they had a full serving of fruits and vegetables less than 2 times per day.

Through community empowerment and mobilizing, the residents of the Dream Homes community can improve their health by improving the safety, resources, and support of their community. One of the most encouraging factors about lifestyle diseases is once people increase their access to health resources they are able to improve their health with consistent, persistent, and day-to-day changes. It is incumbent upon the community partners and civic partners of the Dream Homes community to increase the equity and access to resources for this community to encourage an increase in health.

“We'd like a wellness policy [in conjunction with] the district, parents, and Nutrition [Departments].”
- Community Stakeholder
Health/Physical STATUS

Taken together, the three top diagnostic conditions (Hypertension, Heart Disease and Diabetes) are often associated together as metabolic syndrome and are co-morbid, or occurring together in populations where access to affordable healthy food, safe places and time to exercise, and other resources that support healthy choices are scarce.

Compared to ONE YEAR ago, would you say YOUR HEALTH is BETTER, WORSE or about the SAME?

- 24% Better
- 61% About the Same
- 14% Worse

Health SERVICES

“[I go] to urgent care for bronchitis every year around February.”
- Community Participant

Where do you go when you are sick and need MEDICAL TREATMENT?

Health BEHAVIOR

“[I don’t walk around a lot.]”
- Community Participant

Less than 1 time/week
1 to 2 times/week
3 to 4 times/week
5 times/week
More than 5 times/week

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### Community Priorities and ASSETS IDENTIFIED

#### PRIORITIZED NEEDS

- **PARK**
  - "We need a park."
  - "More activities for the youth."

- **POLICE PRESENCE**
  - "We need more security here."

- **SPEED BUMPS**
  - "Speed bumps need to be added."
  - "Cars race every day."
  - "Dangerous for children."

- **SAFETY/LESS CRIME**
  - "Does not feel safe at night."

#### ASSETS

- **CV LINK**
  - "CV Link is cool."

- **LONGTERM RESIDENCE**
  - "We have many long-term residents."

- **IMPROVED SAFETY/POLICE PRESENCE**
  - "Neighborhood security has improved."
  - "Used to be dangerous but is calm now. Feels safe to leave door open."

- **COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS**
  - "I've seen improvements keep up the great job!"
  - "New school is a plus."

### Our Community HEALTH WORKERS

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Image Source: http://www.discovercathedralcity.com

This illustrates the vital work of CHWs as critical partners in community organizing for POSITIVE CHANGE.

Community Engagement and EMPOWERMENT

COMMUNITY FORUMS

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Executive SUMMARY

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Community Health Fair: This CHW initiated and led Health Fair provided free health screenings and health education to participants.
The greatest opportunities for improvement of the social determinants of the Dream Home residents are:

1. **Education**
   - Residents could work with local education systems to promote education retention and graduation rates (K-16).

2. **Workforce Development**
   - Increase residents access to more affordable incomes.

3. **Access**
   - To safe recreation and healthy food

4. **Engagement**
   - Continued engagement through CHWs as facilitators

What employers say about their wellness program:

- 67% Reported increased employee satisfaction
- 66% Reported increased productivity
- 63% Reported increased financial sustainability and growth
- 50% Reported decreased absenteeism
- 45% No
- 55% Yes
Special THANKS

Dream Homes Community Members

John A. Corella
Engineering, Public Works
City Engineer / Public Works Director
Cathedral City

Vincent Lopez
Community Development, Engineering
Senior Administrative Analyst
Cathedral City

Deanna Pressgrove
Community Development, Public Works, Environmental Conservation
Cathedral City

Alejandro Espinoza
Program Officer & Outreach Director
Desert Healthcare District

Eric Antuna
Principal
Agua Caliente Elementary School

Leticia Olvera
Project Manager
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center

Alex Fajardo
Executive Director
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center

PARTNERED WITH:

Palm Springs
Cathedral City
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center