

OUTCOMES FROM JUNE 4, 2009 MENDING POVERTY CONFERENCE

On Thursday, June 4, 2009, more than 100 people attended the ***Second Annual MENDING Poverty Conference***, held at the headquarters of MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity) in Pacoima. The daylong conference was focused on *Finding Solutions: Action & Advocacy in Hard Times*, this year's theme.

The conference focused on what nonprofits serving poor people can do to survive and thrive during the recession ... with particular attention to innovative approaches to fundraising, nonprofit operations and advocacy. Each of the keynote speakers and workshop panelists shared a perspective on action and advocacy in these current hard economic times.

Opening keynote speakers Morley Winograd (University of Southern California) and Mike Hais (Frank N. Magid & Associates) talked about technological approaches, and about the changing demographics of the community with the arrival of the Millennial generation in the workplace. Their talk was based on their new book, *MySpace, YouTube & the Future of American Politics*.

After a Networking Break so conference participants could connect with each other, three Solutions Workshops were presented - (1) *New and Timeless Strategies for Approaching Individual Donors*; (2) *Programming, Management and Financing Solutions That Work in Hard Times*; and (3) *Public Policy: Using Advocacy Strategies to Fight Poverty*. Speakers ranging from Lawrence Welk Foundation Vice-President Shirley Fredricks to Community Clinics Initiative Director Jane Stafford to Los Angeles City Councilmember Richard Alarcon provided their diverse views on these subjects, all with a practical bent. Graduate students from local universities summarized these workshops in a brief "shout out" session at the end of the conference.

The lunch keynote speech was provided by Professor Manuel Pastor of the University of California. His talk concentrated on both the impact and opportunities for low-income communities and nonprofits coming from LA's economic crisis. Many of the ideas he shared also are reported in his new book, *This Could Be the Start of Something Big: How Social Movements for Regional Equity Are Reshaping Metropolitan America*.

The conference's hosts were *MEND* and *Valley Nonprofit Resources*, with a group of sponsors – The California Wellness Foundation, Southern California Edison, Kaiser Permanente,, The California Endowment, United Way, the Office of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and the Office of City Councilmember Richard Alarcon. An 18-member Planning Committee, chaired by Diana Bonta of Kaiser Permanente and Alicia Lara of United Way, guided the conference from beginning to end.

The conference evaluation showed that 98% of participants rated the conference "outstanding" or "very good," and 80% thought it was "highly relevant" to their organization's work. As requested by participants, conference materials are available for free downloads at www.valleynonprofitresources.org (Community Voice section).

We would like to hear from you if you have any other ideas about implementing what was learned at MENDING Poverty 2009, or about how to shape a successful conference day for MENDING Poverty 2010, which is already in the works!

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