

LA CASA NORTE

Chicago, Illinois

SEVENTEENTH

Maxwell Awards
of
Excellence

2007

Solid Ground Supportive Housing Program

Solid Ground's male focused, bilingual services, and multicultural emphasis are distinct in the homeless youth service provider arena and are tailored to the predominantly Latino and Black youth who are served by this program. Overcoming barriers of racism and language, this project fosters pride in the culture and an understanding that violence is never a good alternative to poverty.



Solid Ground's service strategies that incorporate both sanctuary and harm reduction models, are designed to reduce long-term trauma related symptoms of youth that place them at risk for violent behavior, poor adjustment, and serious mental health difficulties. This approach encourages safety and independence from the moment they enter the house and continues with follow up care once they exit the program.

The design for Solid Ground came after La Casa Norte staff visited multiple sites that served youth throughout the country. La Casa was intentional about the design and needed the architecture to reflect the culture and values of residents and staff while facilitating the development goals for the youth.

Some of these design features include the necessity of each youth having his own bedroom to facilitate positive development, and teaching residents the importance of maintaining independent housing. Other features include the use of natural light, recycled materials, and bright colors to make the space warm and inviting. The rooms are asymmetrical to distinguish the from the cold, harsh look of other homeless housing.

The project was funded with a mixture of grants from HUD, the Federal Home Loan Bank, the Chicago Department of Housing, and the Illinois Housing Development Authority. Additionally, Illinois State Senator del Valle successfully lobbied for increased funding for capital funds for the project.

Solid Ground residents actively participate and make a difference in their community, further preparing them to become healthy sons, fathers, and husbands.

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SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

Founded in 2001, La Casa Norte's mission is to providing a safe and nurturing environment for homeless and abandoned people, where they will benefit from a comprehensive program of education, guidance and counseling in a community setting.

FUNDING FOR SOLID GROUND

- Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta
- Illinois Housing Development Authority
- HUD
- Chicago Department of Housing
- Project Rush

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO SERVICE DELIVERY

- Effective staff-client partnerships
- Working with a youth lead council
- Providing individual bedrooms for residents



BOARD LEADERSHIP

Board President: Russ Beck

Vice-President: Mario Ortiz

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

STAFF LEADERSHIP

Executive Director: Sol Flores

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IN 1988, TO COMMEMORATE FANNIE MAE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY, the Fannie Mae Foundation announced the Awards of Excellence Program, which seeks to encourage and recognize non-profit organizations working to develop and maintain housing for low-income Americans. The program also is intended to encourage more corporations and foundations to be involved as funding and investment partners. The Awards were renamed in honor of David O. Maxwell, who retired in 1991 after 10 years of service as chairman and chief executive officer of Fannie Mae and chairman, Fannie Mae Foundation.

FOR THE 17TH MAXWELL AWARDS PROGRAM, the Foundation, in collaboration with the Partnership to End Long Term Homelessness is awarding up to \$75,000 to each selected nonprofit organization.

THE FANNIE MAE FOUNDATION creates affordable homeownership and housing opportunities through innovative partnerships and initiatives that build healthy, vibrant communities across the United States.

THE PARTNERSHIP TO END LONG TERM HOMELESSNESS was created to galvanize the philanthropic leadership and dollars needed to end long-term homelessness in America. Serving as an open knowledge network for funders, the Partnership shares strategic thinking, wide-ranging experience, and expertise to prevent and address