

[View in Browser](#)

NUESTRA COMUNIDAD

Mission Neighborhood Centers | Monthly Community Newsletter

Winter Issue | December 2020



CELEBRATING A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

Honoring 40 Years of Service

After more than 40 years of tireless work to advance MNC's mission and values, Santiago (Sam) Ruiz has announced that he will be retiring from his role as Chief Executive Officer.

During his tenure, Sam has been the driving force behind Mission Neighborhood Center's growth, impact, and sustainability as an organization. Sam's vision and leadership are characterized by what he refers to as, the "accountability factor." Through his leadership, certain values were instilled in MNC's organizational culture - a culture supported by accountability, first and foremost, to community.

From the intentionality underscoring MNC's recruitment processes, to MNC's Board composition, Sam's emphasis on cultivating cultural community underscored his vision. "It's not about building an empire," Sam shares, "it's about building a community. The most important

element in our work is our community; it requires everyone – the Board, the CEO, and our staff.”



Over the past four decades, what Sam has emphasized the most is sustainability for the organization. One of the strategies that he adopted from the onset, in terms of sustainability, was the concept of ‘land banking’ with a focus on generating much needed operating revenue in the event of a crisis or emergency.

“We were able to generate significant revenue from this process,” Sam explained, “while safeguarding valuable real estate assets, which MNC has owned since its incorporation over 60 years ago.”

“When land or property are purchased by a nonprofit,” Sam added, “it belongs to the community. That’s how we purchased the two lots, which are now 24th and Harrison and Casa de la Mision. Empowered to build 45 housing units of affordable housing for older adults, MNC will be able to bring seniors—who were ‘[Ellis Act-ed](#)’—back into the community, while putting money back into Latinx communities.”

Sam feels that these two capital projects are his most significant accomplishments, on behalf of the organization. Another project Sam feel quite proud of ‘putting on the map’ was another land-banking opportunity - in conjunction with MNC’s board, senior staff, and the community. Formerly the Mission Police Station at 1240 Valencia Street,

MNC purchased what is now being converted into an early care and education facility, with the potential to increase affordable housing for our community by 61 units by the end of 2021.

From his collaborative leadership style, to his guiding practice grounded in the [Settlement House Tradition](#); Sam has dedicated his career to growing our organization towards a sustainable future. He will be greatly missed by MNC's board, staff, and the diverse communities we serve.



Over the next several months, MNC's Board will continue conducting its search to find our next CEO. It is our priority to find another innovative

leader, with a true passion for MNC's mission and a deep commitment to empowering communities. Sam will be staying on in the capacity of a consultant to aid with the transition.

**Join me in wishing Sam the best of luck in his next chapter,
including a well-deserved holiday respite with family and friends!**

[Make a Tribute Gift](#)

MNC HAND-DELIVERS GRATITUDE THIS SEASON
Mission Community Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a time to give back, and our Mission community was busy this year doing just that. On November 23rd, Mission Neighborhood Centers was joined by over a dozen local organizations at the Mission Food Hub to ensure no families went hungry this holiday.

Dozens of volunteers, including MNC staff and CEO, Santiago (Sam) Ruiz, were onsite at the Hub packing, distributing, and hand-delivering food boxes City-wide.



MNC welcomed over 150 community volunteers, including 30 San Francisco Mission Fire Fighters and over 100 other community partners, who generously donated their time, funds, in-kind goods, and a bounty of food.

Over the span of 3 days, the Hub served 7,313 families and their children. Thanksgiving food boxes (pictured below) - packed with milk, eggs, turkey, bread, and corn flour - were distributed to families onsite, and hand-delivered to homes.



We are thankful for our partnership with the Latino Task Force's Mission Food Hub. Hub leader, and CANA Carnival CEO, Roberto H. (below) was onsite until late afternoon with MNC's own Sam Ruiz, visiting with families, helping to distribute food, and supporting home-deliveries of Thanksgiving food boxes to families and older adults who were unable to join us at the Hub.



Dozens of staff from each of MNC's five program divisions were onsite participating with volunteers.



MNC's Mission Girls program (above) picked up 50 turkeys and food boxes.



Our Youth Services Division (above) picked up 85 turkeys and food boxes.



Healthy Aging/Disabilities Services (above) picked up 60 turkeys and food boxes.



MNC's Children's Services and Family Resource Centers Divisions (above) coordinated onsite distribution for 280 families who came with bright smiles to pick up food boxes and school supplies for their children (also donated by the Food Hub). It was heart-warming to connect with our families and their children!



Find out how you or your organization can support MNC programs, which empower families living on the margins. Visit us [online](#) today!

Volunteer with Us!

BRIDGING THE GAP FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS

Equity and Social Emotional Learning

One of the biggest challenges facing MNC teachers during the coronavirus pandemic is supporting our students who are already at a disadvantage. While remote learning can be difficult for any child, students impacted by generational poverty faced unique challenges this year as the Bay Area shifted to distance learning.

The vast majority of our families and children experience a profound lack of equity where education and distance learning resources are concerned. This division—between students with access to digital media and those without—predominately impacts our low-income students of color.



Monique Nieto, Social Emotional Specialist in MNC's Children's Services Division, is responding to this divide by approaching distance learning through an equity lens. In support of our distance learning teachers, Monique provides students with social emotional lesson plans designed

to prevent learning loss and bridge the gap for students of low-income households.

Monique rotates activities weekly to keep students engaged - from reading stories with a focus on emotions, to demonstrating calming techniques through yoga, and engaging students in recognition games. Games encourage healthy brain activity in children of all ages and are particularly useful in frontal lobe development - responsible for executive functioning skills.



Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs help create positive changes in children's social and academic skills, including exhibiting empathy, accountability, and strengthening resilience. In promoting social and emotional development in the classroom, MNC's students are also able communicate their feelings and develop the capacity to self-soothe (regulate emotions) utilizing various techniques.

Our classrooms are as diverse as the children we serve. Our SEL Specialists, like Monique, are dedicated to creating welcoming learning environments, and work with teachers to make culturally responsiveness adaptations when needed.

Read more about how staff like Monique are ensuring equitable access to education, visit MNC's [Children's Services page](#).

Learn More!

MNC CELEBRATES STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS**Recognizing 30 Years of Service**

This month marks 30 years of employment for Delmy Corleto, Health and Nutrition Coordinator in MNC's Children's Services Division. Delmy was introduced to MNC as a Head Start parent, she also participated in MNC's Parent Policy Council, and jumped at the chance to join MNC's team when a 'Home Base Visitor' position opened up. Delmy still holds this position today, and continues to be an essential member of MNC's Health/Nutrition and Mental Health/Disabilities teams.

Delmy feels grateful to be a part of an organization that makes a real impact on children and families, and has seen a lot of change over the past 30 years. When she first started, MNC served less than 300 children across a handful of sites - all of which were part-day programs. Since then, Mission Neighborhood Centers has grown to serve over 400 children, across 10 sites with full-day programming.



Over the past 3 decades, Delmy has witnessed MNC's mission in practice - both internally and externally. She feels truly supported by MNC and feels thankful for the opportunity to impact children and families in the work she does. In looking back at the past 30 years, Delmy sees how much she has grown. "MNC is a family," she says; "it's an honor to be a part of MNC."

Congratulations Delmy, we're so thankful to have your on our team!

WISHING STAFF A HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Acknowledging Milestones

For over 60 years, Mission Neighborhood Centers has been dedicated to promoting leadership skills, which empower families to build strong, healthy, vibrant neighborhoods. Everyday, we acknowledge and appreciate the foundation of our success, which is built upon the commitment of our amazing staff! Many of you have been with us for years, others, decades.

This month, we celebrate work anniversaries of 20+ years!



Maria Rodriguez (20 yrs., 10 months); Rosa Angelica Macias De Canchola (20 yrs., 3 months); Maria Villalobos (21 yrs., 2 months); Mariana Romero-Silva (22 yrs.); Amanda D. Narvaez (24 yrs., 11 months); Yolanda T. Melara (28 yrs.); Mercedes Uriarte (28 yrs., 8 months); Delmy Corleto (29 yrs., 11 months); Theresa Sanchez-Perez (34 yrs., 10 months); and Blanca Velasquez (37 yrs.).

Join our Team!

WELCOMING DISTINGUISHED BOARD MEMBERS

Growing our Governance Team

As we embark upon the new year, Mission Neighborhood Centers is pleased to announce the appointment of two new members to its Governance Board. These two individuals have joined a dynamic group

of 12 innovative leaders who are making an impact in the nonprofit, social services sector. Their addition to MNC's board will help to better position the organization as a leader in providing educational and social services to Latinx communities. They will also be key in implementing MNC's strategic imperatives in 2021.

Join us in welcoming José Cartagena and James Quadra!



ABOUT JOSÉ: José Cartagena is the Senior Program Director of Catholic Charities' Homelessness and Housing Services, and has held a wealth of positions within Catholic Charities including Housing Case Manager, Housing Specialist, Program Manager, and most recently, Program Director for the Homelessness Prevention and SF HOME Programs. Mr. Cartagena's affinity with the Latinx community is informed by his lived experience fleeing EL Salvador in 1980, his passionate community activism for Central American refugees, and his nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by housing insecure families and individuals living on the margins. His work as an advocate has historically centered on housing, beginning with his first assignment as a Housing Advocate for the Central American community in 1987. He's been instrumental in developing partnerships with funders and community nonprofits across San Francisco.

ABOUT JAMES: James A. Quadra is a trial attorney with extensive litigation experience in class actions and cases involving employment issues, unfair business practices, business disputes, civil rights, legal malpractice, police misconduct, municipal law, catastrophic injuries and wrongful death. He has handled cases, which have drawn national

attention, has been interviewed and quoted extensively, and has appeared on *Larry King Live*, *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren*, KGO-7 News, and KDTV-14 News. In addition to serving on Mission Neighborhood Center's board, Mr. Quadra is the Chairperson of the San Francisco Unified School District's Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee and the President of the Board of Directors of the Buen Día Family School. He has deep roots in the Latinx community, is fluent in Spanish, and has handled cases with counsel in Spanish-speaking countries.

Meet our Board!

ANNOUNCING OUR INTERIM CEO

MNC Leadership Transition

On behalf of Mission Neighborhood Centers' Boards of Directors and Leadership team, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Chief Financial Officer, Sebastian Alioto, as MNC's Interim Chief Executive Officer.

In preparation of the forthcoming retirement of MNC's CEO, this interim CEO position was created to take on MNC's general organizational and leadership responsibilities. We are excited that Mr. Alioto has agreed to serve in this capacity as MNC continues to implement our transition plan to find a permanent CEO.



MNC's current Senior Leadership Team (above, left to right)—comprising Chief Program Officer, Liliana Rossi; Chief Operations Officer, José A. Rodríguez; and (now) Interim-CEO/Chief Financial Officer, Sebastian Alioto—will work in tandem to oversee general

operations, policy-setting and decision-making related to finances, programs, operations, and administration until a new CEO is appointed.

Meet our Leaders!

ANNOUNCING WEBSITE LAUNCH

Increasing Visibility of MNC's Programs

After nearly a year of hard work and dedication, Mission Neighborhood Centers is delighted to officially announce the launch of our [brand new website](#), a project spearheaded by MNC Human Resource Generalist, Paula Ayala.



Our goal with this new website is to provide our community with an easier way to learn about our services and programming. The new website is creative, interactive, and provides a comprehensive overview of the Mission Community.

Current and prospective clients will find useful information about MNC's five distinct service areas on the homepage, with updated location and contact information for program managers and division directors. MNC will be constantly updating our website with content, up-to-date health and safety information, events, articles, newsletters, special announcements and client successes.

We would also like to thank our amazing staff at Mission Neighborhood Centers who dedicated their time and energy to making this site what it is. Specially, MNC Human Resource Generalist, Paula Ayala, Chief Operating Officer, José Rodriguez, and [SquareVault.com](#) consultant, Nathan Levine et. al.

Congratulations on all your hard work!

Visit us Online!

WELCOMING OUR NEW GRANT WRITER

MNC is pleased to welcome Grant Writer, Candy Marie Bickett, who joined our Fund Development team in Fall this year. Candy Marie comes to us from Felton Institute, where she served as the agency's Grant Manager, growing mental and behavioral health programs across five counties. Prior to Felton, she served as the Grant Manager at Lincoln Families, and Prospect Development Manager at HealthRIGHT 360.

Candy Marie is excited to serve in this role, supporting MNC's development and leadership teams, as well as program staff. Candy Marie's role will be pivotal in supporting MNC's leadership team to grow our revenue portfolio and steward donor relationships.

Join us in welcoming Candy Marie to the team!

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR SUPPORTERS

Thanking our Generous Donor Communities

Mission Neighborhood Centers is very fortunate to have strong relationships with our local community partners. Every holiday season, we receive an outpouring of generosity, and this year is no different. MNC counts on our local businesses and organizations to support our annual gift drive - benefiting children of low-income households with culturally, linguistically, and gender responsive holiday gifts.



We are so grateful for the [Family Giving Tree](#) and the [Bar Association of San Francisco](#) - both of which have been a part of the MNC family for over a decade. We feel especially fortunate this year to have received nearly 500 gifts - with 200 donated by the Family Giving Tree and another 200 donated by partner organization, [GLIDE](#), from the [Glide Toy Wonderland program](#).

In light of the national pandemic, MNC is implementing this year's gift drive as a socially distanced program. Participating families with children will be invited to pick up gifts mid December (dates TBD), and our Family Services Specialists are registering high-risk families who need more support around the holidays.

This year in particular, our gifts symbolize love, hope, and magic for our communities. Please show your support this holiday season, through gifts in-kind (games, art supplies, recreational equipment, books), gift cards for stores where families may buy essential items, or by [making a donation](#) today via our website.

Thank you for supporting us, so we can support our families!

[Donate Now](#)

A CALL TO ACTION

SUPPORTING LATINX COMMUNITIES ***The Praxis of "Nuestra Comunidad"***

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrust communities across the Bay Area into a public health emergency. In San Francisco alone, there have been over 17,600 (11 Dec, 2020) cases reported to date, with 165 deaths attributed to the virus.

The gaping hole in our tattered social safety-net is widening, and long-standing systemic inequities have been exposed. While essential workers of color represent the backbone of our economy, disproportionate disparities place our communities at heightened risk.

For the past 9 months, the virus has engendered fear among our City's most vulnerable residents, exacerbated multidimensional impacts of structure violence, and challenged health care professionals serving our hardest hit neighborhoods.

As individuals, as community stakeholders, and as direct service organizations, it is both our challenge and our privilege to support our black and brown sisters and brothers when they need us most. To provide the highest quality services, and the best possible care, to the widest spectrum of residents, and to do so with the knowledge that we are taking care of the very individuals who are taking care of us – *Nuestro Comunidad*.

Mother Theresa diagnosed the ills of the world as a lack of community, "if we have no peace," she writes, "it is because we have forgotten we belong to each other." No sentiment more poignantly embodies *Nuestra Comunidad* than the notion that we belong to one another. Now, more than ever, we must cultivate the type of community that *all* our City's residents might recognize as their own.

We each have an essential role to play. We're counting on you.

Get Involved Today

Copyright © 2020
Mission Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
All rights reserved | Monthly Newsletter

Mission Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
362 Capp Street | San Francisco, CA 94110
P: 415.206.7752 | F: 415.647.6911
www.mncsf.org | info@mncsf.org

UNSUBSCRIBE



[One-click Unsubscribe](#)