



CDD NEWS

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El Sereno Celebrates New Home For Community Center *Three years since ground breaking and countless years of hoping.*

A celebration to mark the grand opening of El Sereno's new Barrio Action Youth and Family Center was festive and exciting for everyone involved. The beautifully constructed, three-story, 34,000-square-foot building is the new home for Barrio Action, which has provided social services, primarily directed to youth, in Northeast Los Angeles for 25 years.

Two million dollars in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were used to build the \$7 million structure. The Community Development Department (CDD) administers block grant funds, and the department's Neighborhood Development (ND) group oversaw funds for this structure. Staff from the ND unit insured funding followed CDBG federal guidelines that require money must assist those in need. Like many of CDD's programs, Barrio Action has programs that help at risk youth and their families to achieve self-sufficiency.

The new facility is especially significant to Mayor Villaraigosa. Three years ago, days shy of being sworn in as Mayor of Los Angeles, he took part in the groundbreaking as the area's City Councilman. The Mayor said the project, originally budgeted at \$1 million, went up "because we expanded our vision. El Sereno deserves the services offered to all the communities of Los Angeles." The current City Councilman, José Huizar, was the event's Master of Ceremonies. He added construction funds to the project in order to include a constituent center, police services, and meeting spaces for the Neighborhood Council. It's now a multi-use facility.

Recalling the long process to get the center underway, Barrio Action Youth and Family Center Executive Director Tammy Membreño said, "We've had ten years of work by many people. We've looked forward for many years to have a permanent home. This is a place of hope."

Paying homage to the center's focus on community youth, California Senate Majority leader, Gloria Romero said, "The ultimate goal in this community is to stay in school, do your best and get your high school diploma. This is a place that's open to anyone and everyone who has a dream."



Barrio Action Youth and Family Center groundbreaking, June 2005.



Councilman Jose Huizar (District 14) shares a laugh with Barrio Action Youth and Family Center Executive Director Tammy Membreño.



Mayor Villaraigosa entertained the crowd as he sang with a mariachi group.



Aztec dancers performed during a special blessing ceremony.