Dear Friends,

As the Multicultural Institute opened in 1991, I said, “Although we are a diverse populace, we are not prepared to embrace diversity.” At the Institute we set as our purpose promoting diversity, community, and social change. We accompany immigrants in their transition from poverty and isolation to prosperity and participation, and 24 years later, that remains our mission.

In this returning issue since 2005 of our newsletter, MI Links, we highlight the Day Laborer/Jornalero Program. It is a major component of our LifeSkills Program, which also supports community members needing better health-care access, and assistance with finding the best immigration services through the Health/Immigration program.

Future issues of MI Links will focus on other programs of the Multicultural Institute, including Mentoring for Academic Success, and the Spanish GED preparation.

We will also take every opportunity to illustrate how various programs of the Institute strengthen our community by collaborating with external organizations.

I hope that this newsletter, as it opens a new way to communicate with you, our supportive friends, will bring you pride in our work. We rely on your support, and I thank you for it.

Sincerely,

Rigoberto Caloca-Rivas, OFM,Ph.D.
Executive Director

A Successful Life Skills/Day Laborer Program

The Life Skills/Day Laborer program has been an integral part of MI for 13 years. Last year alone MI served 2,241 day laborers and other low-income individuals at all three locations. This is not counting the family members of these individuals that MI’s work reaches.

The main goal of this program is to assist day laborers in their transition from isolation to participation in the work force. MI works very hard in bridging employers and day laborers for short-term and sometimes even permanent jobs. A total of 670 job placements were made last year and a total of 244 employers registered with MI. MI continues to advocate for a fair wage of $15 an hour for all employers that hire through MI. It has been positively accepted and many employers often decide to pay more.

Thanks to Alameda County Food Bank and Second Harvest, individuals can also obtain produce, meats, grains, canned goods, and hot meals that they don’t usually have access to, through the MI food distribution. Last year a total of 5,927 grocery bags/hot meals were distributed at the three locations.

MI staff does street outreach Monday-Friday mornings offering assistance in connecting day laborers to basic health care through events organized by MI and health needs through referrals and workshops (see page 3). MI staff also provides legal and immigration referrals and workshops through this health and immigration component of the Life Skills program. MI also currently has 15 day laborers housed in the North Fair Oaks housing units.

Day laborers on San Pablo Ave. in Richmond waiting for work in front of Home Depot.

A day laborer building a fence for a neighborhood project.
Navidad Jornalera 2014
In the Holiday spirit with the day laborers at all three MI sites!

Christmas is the time to enjoy with family and loved ones. Unfortunately, for the majority of day laborers, their families are in other countries or not with them physically. MI continues to provide a space where day laborers can feel appreciated and among family during the holiday season.

Navidad Jornalera/ Day laborer Christmas was celebrated at all three MI locations: West Berkeley, Richmond, and North Fair Oaks. This was the first year that this event was done at the Richmond site and it was a true success! In total MI served 232 day laborers and family members.

Many volunteers showed up to support these events including the San Mateo County Sheriff Department which not only helped distribute food in NFO but also provided toys to all the children who attended the party.

MI hosted a Christmas lunch which included traditional tamales, rice and beans, with salad. MI distributed Christmas presents to all day laborers and families that attended, as well as other helpful and vital gifts, such as blankets, sleeping bags, and tools.

Overall, it was a wonderful time spending the holiday season with all the day laborers and families. Check out our quick video on MI’s Youtube channel to view some of the pictures from the parties!

https://www.youtube.com/user/MIest1991

A Satisfied Richmond Employer
By: Rudy Lara; Richmond DL Program Director

The expansion of MI services in Richmond has proved positive. MI’s Richmond office has only been open two years and we already have a great presence among the day laborers searching and waiting for jobs outside of Home Depot on San Pablo Ave. MI staff does regular street outreach and has 194 day laborers registered this fiscal year thus far. Linking these men with fair wage jobs is very rewarding. It is a great feeling to receive positive follow up emails from satisfied employers like the one below:

“We had a great experience with the day laborers. They were prompt, friendly, hardworking, and pleasant. They did a great job. We would definitely hire them again if we have another job that comes up,” -Chloe.

She was more than happy with the job performance and paid both day laborers $18 an hour. She is one among many satisfied employers we encounter.

Holiday Food Box Giveaway with the Lions Club

A wonderful collaboration brought together the West Berkeley Lions Club and MI this holiday season. On December 22nd, the Lions and MI came together and distributed 50 holiday food boxes, enough to benefit over 200 low-income individuals. The Lions Club donated all the ingredients necessary for this delicious Christmas meal, which included a 10-12lb turkey, stuffing, potatoes, pumpkin pie, and dinner rolls. The Lions came and helped pack the boxes, as well as distribute them at MI’s Berkeley office. Thank you Lions for all your support and generosity!
Thanksgiving Celebration

On Thanksgiving Day, MI hosted the traditional Day laborer Thanksgiving lunch and soccer tournament. 50 generous volunteers came to the James Kenney Recreation center to help. A delicious meal was prepared and distributed for over 100 day laborers.

Above Photo: The lunch taking place.
Right Photo: Some of the MI staff and volunteering gathering for a selfie.

MI Helping Reach a Healthier Life Style

Last year, MI provided 390 legal and immigration referrals and 1,284 health referrals/services. Thanks to various partnerships MI is able to set up health events and screenings for the day laborers. With the new Affordable Care Act (ACA), MI expanded its health services to more of the Alameda County low-income communities.

MI provided 4 ACA workshops in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente during the 2014 enrollment period. The workshop attendees were informed on the various coverage plans, requirements, given quick descriptions, as well as how and where to get enrollment help. MI presented a workshop to the day laborers about the different ways to get health coverage since many of them aren’t eligible under ACA. HealthPAC turns out to be the best option for most of them.

MI continues to help them attain referrals to free or low-cost services. The partnership with Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless Mobile Van is key in providing these services.

MI strives to help the community get health coverage to live a healthy life style with regular check-ups.

The Multicultural Institute is a tax-exempt, charitable, nonprofit organization. Donations and contributions are tax-exempt as allowed by law.
Federal Tax ID# 91-1823468
Our MISSION

We accompany immigrants in their transition from poverty and isolation to prosperity and participation.

Our VISION

We envision a community in which immigrants, regardless of their immigration status, are embraced and valued in the communities in which they work and live.

Take a Closer look and Learn more about MI

Take a closer look at MI on our website. Here you can learn more about all our programs as well as register for them if you are interested. You will find multiple publications concerning MI’s work and the people we serve. Also, read our quarterly bulletins and take a look at all the most recent Youth Writing Festival Anthologies.

Find out how to be part of our mission and vision by donating or volunteering. Visit our website today! Click on the link below.

MI now has a Youtube Channel you can subscribe to! See more about us as you get an insight in the lives of the day laborers and others MI serves.

Catch a glimpse of MI events and the work MI does through the different videos MI uploads.

It’s simple! Just look up Multicultural Institute on Youtube and subscribe or click the link below.

Questions or comments?
Contact Mirna Cervantes: Newsletter Editor at 510.848.4075 ext.3 or mirna@mionline.org

http://mionline.org/

https://www.facebook.com/MI.Multicultural.Institute

https://www.youtube.com/user/MIest1991

Our VALUES

Dignity of each person – promoting respect and communication.

Social Equality – believing that resources should be shared by all.

Transparency & Integrity – good stewards of all gifts given to us.

Community Involvement – giving a voice to those we serve.

Simplicity & Flexibility – keeping our work efficient and effective.