

# A MODEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: THE RESIDENT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



Dana Richardson  
Refugee Forum  
February 16, 2016

# Presentation Outline

- Describe what the Resident Leadership Academy (RLA) is
- Describe how RLA informs and empowers local leaders to make change
- Profile local level examples of community change influenced by RLA and related outcomes
- Showcase a future training opportunity to connect our work

The Resident Leadership Academy is a curriculum-based, public health leadership program that empowers residents from under-served and under-resourced communities to make positive changes in their neighborhoods, especially as it relates to improving food and physical activity environments, and public safety in high need communities.



# RESIDENT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



Made possible by funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the County of San Diego.



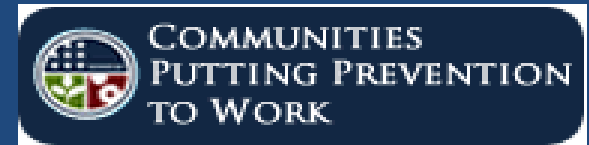
# Why is the RLA Model of Community Engagement Necessary?

- Resident-focused capacity building is fundamental to building healthy communities
- People that reside in high need neighborhoods are the community's most powerful and influential advocates for change
- Trained residents can immediately be integrated into coalition process and strategy implementation which legitimizes and sustains collaborative work
- Comprehensively and holistically training residents in the many ways we approach chronic disease prevention creates long-term sustainability

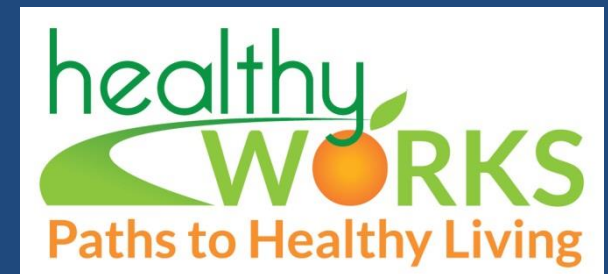


# RLA: Created in Partnership with San Diego County HHSA

❧ **October 2010 to April 2011:** A 25-30 person External Review Committee made up of public and private sector representatives oversaw the development and implementation of the curriculum.



❧ CHIP produced a 450-page RLA Participant manual consisting of 10 - 2.5 hour sessions & 10 prep articles



❧ **April 2011 – November 2011:** CHIP staff successfully facilitated 4 RLAs in North, Central, East, and South regions of the San Diego County.



# RLA: Curriculum Overview

SESSION 1: ORIENTATION

SESSION 2: COMMUNITY BUILDING PRINCIPLES

SESSION 3: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

BUILD A FOUNDATION FOR  
ACTION

SESSION 4: SAFE, WALKABLE COMMUNITIES; INCLUDING CRIME  
PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

SESSION 5: HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS

SESSION 6: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

SESSION 7: LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

SHARE EVIDENCE  
BASED STRATEGIES  
FOR COMMUNITY TO  
DETERMINE WHAT'S  
BEST FOR THEM

SESSION 8: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: NEEDS &  
OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT

SESSION 9: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:  
PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

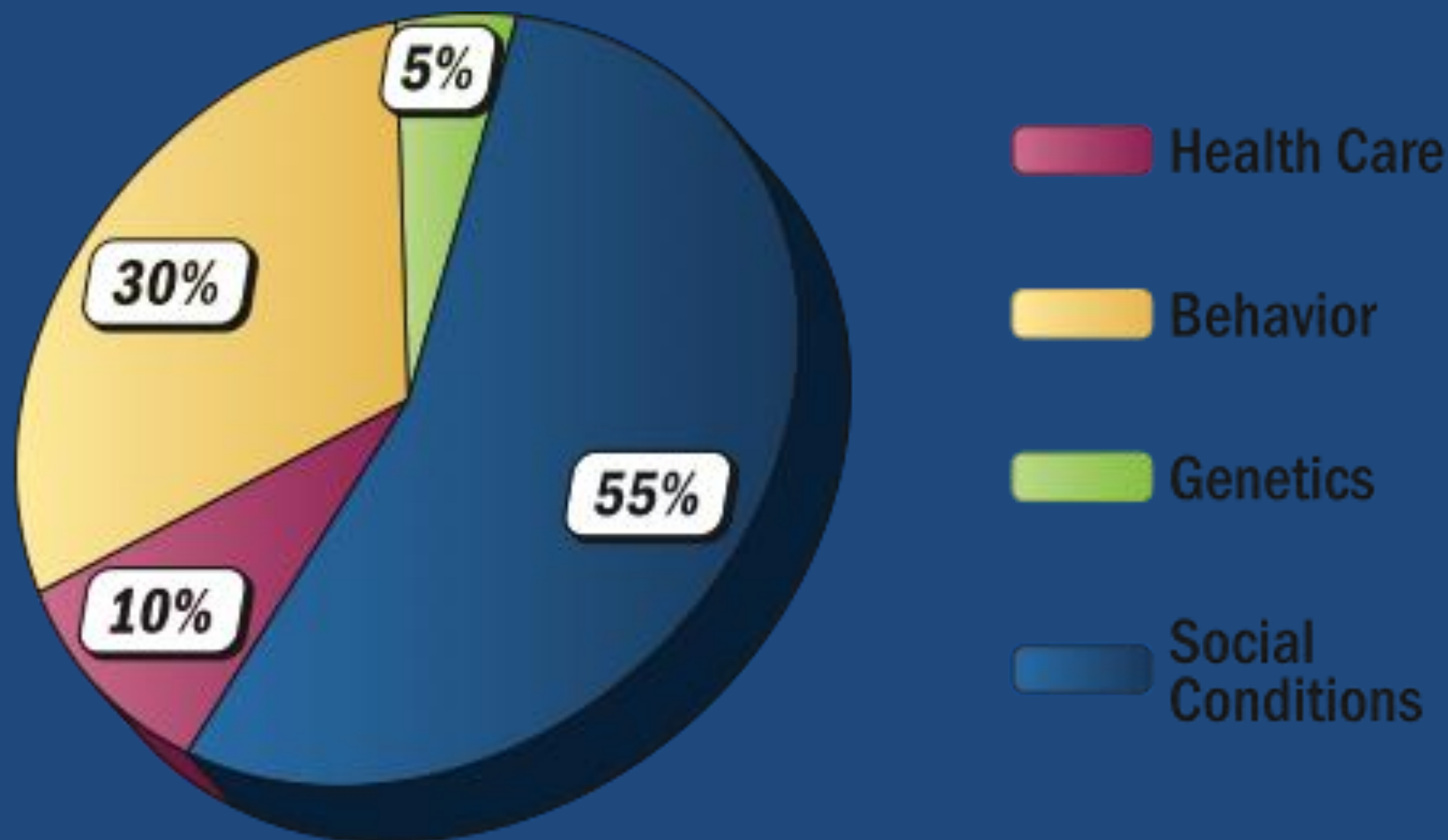
SESSION 10: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:  
EVALUATION & CELEBRATION

FACILITATE THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD'S SELF  
DETERMINATION:  
MOBILIZE DATA, ASSIGN  
GROUP ROLES, DEFINE  
WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS  
LIKE, DEVELOP ACTION  
PLAN, & CONDUCT SMART  
CELEBRATION

# 2011 HIGHLIGHTS

- 54 RLA Graduates across four (4) communities launched 13 community-level change campaigns
- 78% of participants demonstrated an increase in knowledge & leadership capacity to make positive change in neighborhoods
- A majority of RLA pilot sites were more diverse and/or intergenerational
- Key Outcomes: (a) Made enhancements to the People's Produce Farmer's Market in SESD; (b) Led campaigns to improve pedestrian and traffic safety around elementary schools; (c) Created pocket farms and community gardens; (d) Continue to advocate for aesthetic enhancements at public parks

# WHAT DETERMINES HEALTH STATUS?



**Source:** [senatorfeldman.typepad.com/senator\\_dede\\_feldmans\\_blo/2009/03/focus-on-health.html](http://senatorfeldman.typepad.com/senator_dede_feldmans_blo/2009/03/focus-on-health.html)



# ONE NATION, MANY HEALTH OUTCOMES

## HEALTH DISPARITIES

Differences in health outcomes between groups of people, which usually may be based on genetic variations

Examples  
sickle cell disease and  
skin cancer rates

## HEALTH INEQUITIES

*Avoidable* differences in health outcomes that are generated by unequal access to resources and/or uneven exposure to risk

Examples  
obesity, type 2 diabetes,  
heart disease, asthma

# HOW DO ENVIRONMENTS MATTER?

## COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY

- Parks
- Sidewalks
- Grocery Stores
- Financial Institutions
- Better Performing Schools
- Good Public Transportation



**GOOD  
HEALTH  
STATUS**

**POOR  
HEALTH  
STATUS**

contributes to health  
disparities such as:  
Obesity  
Diabetes  
Asthma  
Infant mortality



## LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

- Fast Food Restaurants
- Liquor Stores
- Limited Public Transportation
- Unsafe/Limited Parks
- Poor Performing Schools
- Increased Pollution; Toxic Waste Sites

# Key Players to Know

- Mayors
- City Council members
- Commission members (voting and non-voting)
- City Staff of ALL types-aides, department staff, etc.)
- City Planners
- City Managers
- City Attorneys
- City Redevelopment Agency Staff

**If working on state-wide policy, the target list of key players extends to state and senate representatives, governors and their staffers/aides, etc.**



COMMUNITIES LEADERS  
TAKING ACTION ...

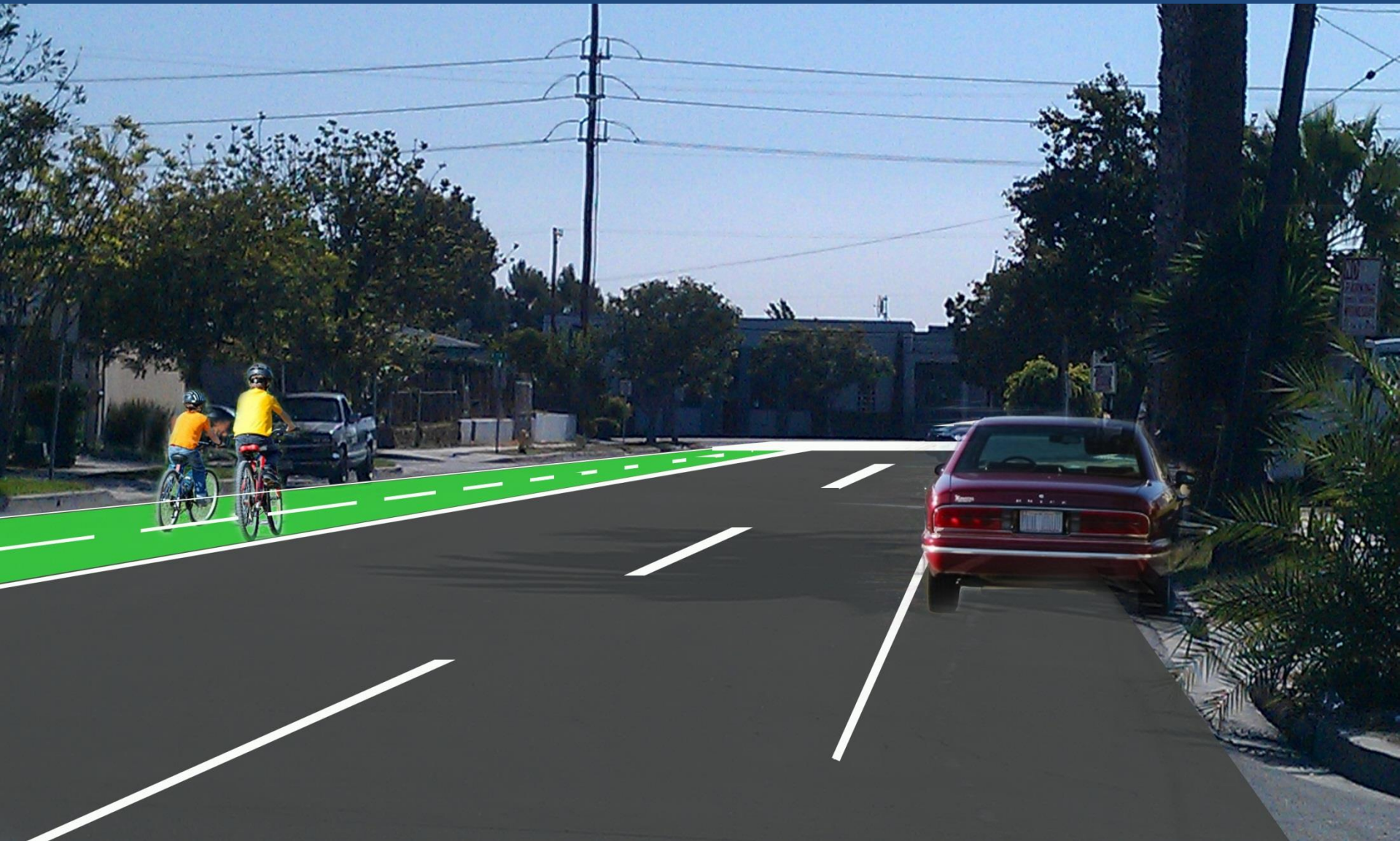


# BEFORE: Kimball Elementary School Area

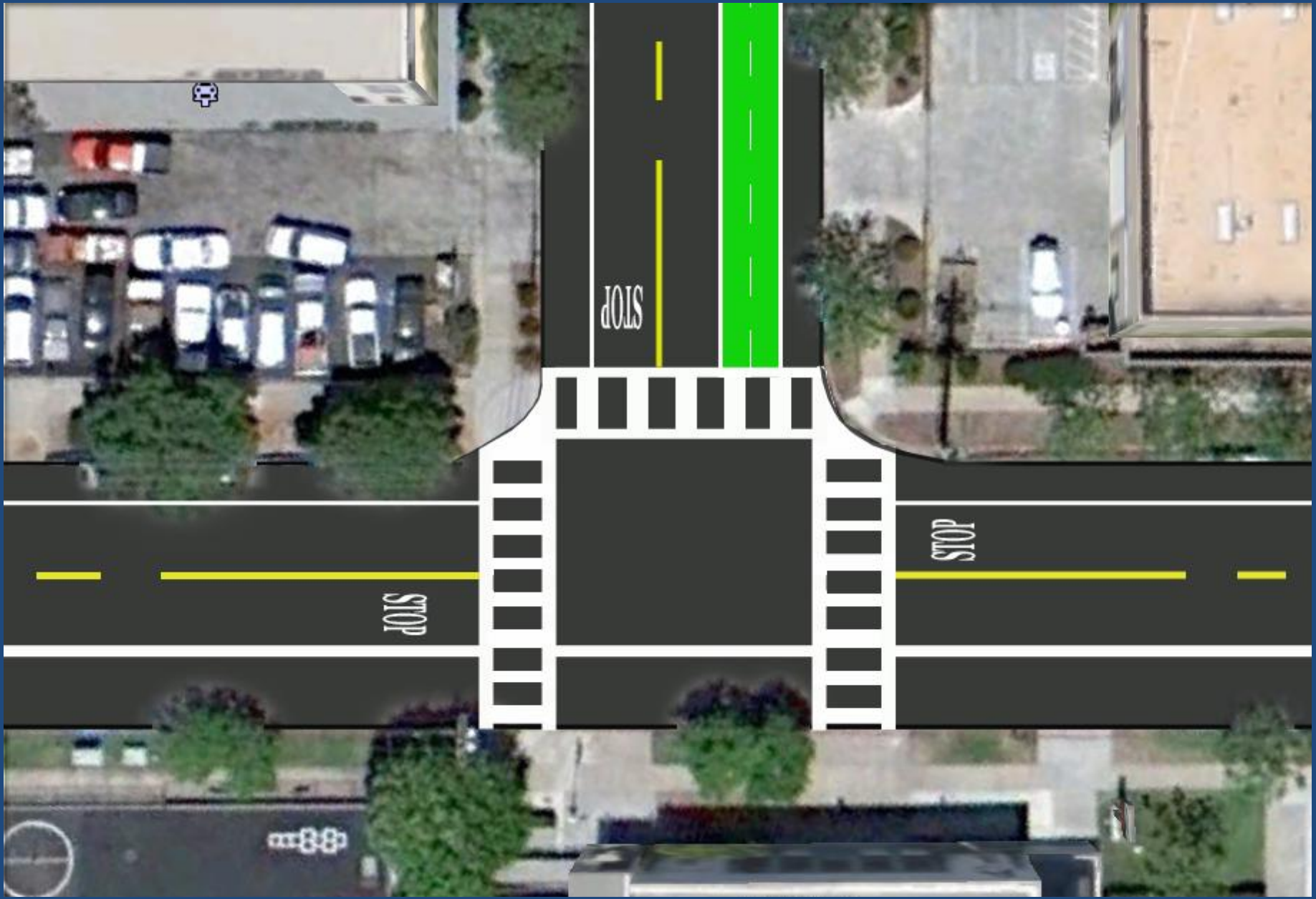




# AFTER: Kimball Elementary School Area



# AFTER: Kimball Elementary School Area





# AFTER: Kimball Elementary School Area



# Joe's Pocket Farm: Events, Hard Work & Fellowship

The Resident Leadership Academy of National City invites you to participate in

Joe's Pocket Farm

## Rancho Roots Fest!

*"Creating healthy community one seed at a time"*



**Come cultivate, participate and celebrate!**

**Sunday, April 1, 2012**

**9:00am-12:00**

Cultivating, planting fruit trees, vegetables, herbs & seeds.

**12:00-4:00pm**

**Grand Opening Celebration**

Music by Olmeca Roots and Todo Mundo

Azuriah Capoeira, Yoga and Art

**Where:** Joe's Pocket Farm | Northeast Corridor to South East San Diego  
210 North Q. Avenue | National City, CA 91950

**Attire:** Comfortable clothing, closed toed shoes, hat, and sunscreen and gloves if you have them

**For more information and to RSVP, please contact**  
Resident Leadership Academy of National City

Amanda Cheyney  
amandacheyney@hotmail.com  
(619) 990-4794

Janice Luna Reynoso  
janice\_reynoso@yahoo.com  
(619) 972-2091

Made possible by funding from the  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, through the County of San Diego.



**Community Support:** Mundo Gardens, YALLA, Suntricity Solar Power, Refugio Roots Music, Olmeca Roots





# Joe's Pocket Farm: Enjoying the Land & Sharing Our Story





# Pedestrian Safety & Walkability: Laurel Elementary School













# Southeastern San Diego Farmer's Market





# Southeastern San Diego Farmer's Market





# 2012 HIGHLIGHTS – Show & Prove

- Finished CPPW (March 2012): (a) Created the RLA Trainer Guide (125 pages), (b) Created 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the RLA Participant Manual in English & Spanish
- Business Development & Marketing Plan: Created RLA marketing materials, and defined a cost structure for RLA replication at new sites
- Worked with CCPA and Prevention Institute to complete 6 community engagement in public health trainings across CA (Fortuna, Oakland, Santa Ana, South LA, Sacramento, showcasing RLA as a replicable model)
- Earned 3 new contracts for RLA implementation in FY 2012-2013: Central Santa Ana, CA (Madison Park); San Diego – City Heights; Lemon Grove, CA

# 2012-13 HIGHLIGHTS – Show & Prove

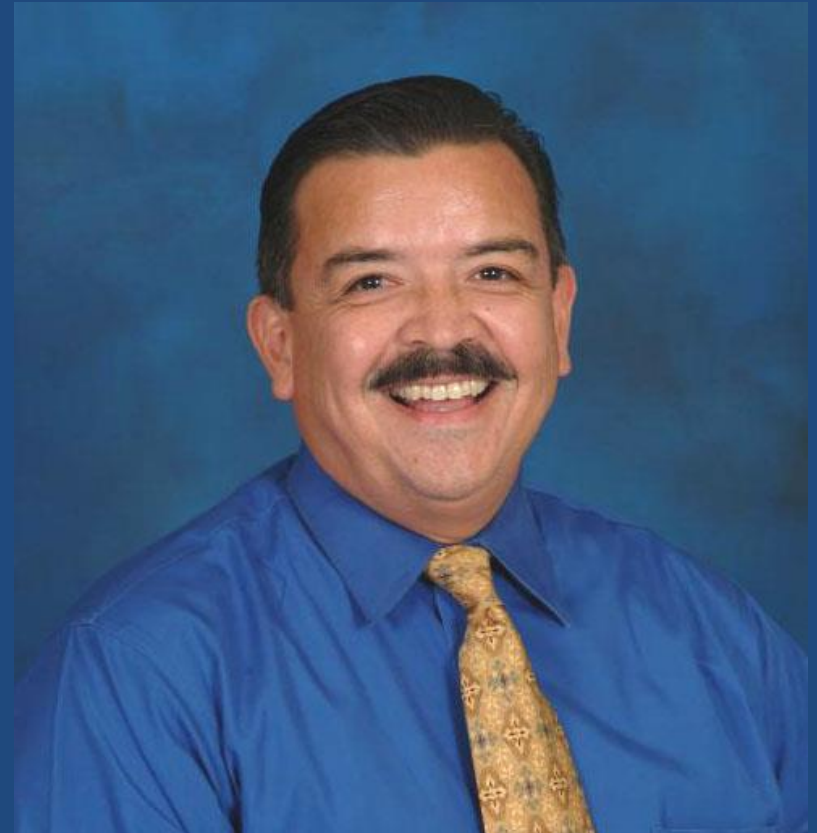
- Successfully completed RLAs in Central San Ana (Orange County) and City Heights - San Diego (TCE Building Healthy Communities); Lemon Grove (KP HEAL Zone). Working on all 3 RLA (in/out) of County at the same time.
- DISTINCT REALIZATION: The RLA process was not only meant to attract the participation of persons of a low socioeconomic status that generally needed more preparation, guidance, and mentorship in order to achieve a better quality of life, ... but (oddly enough) the RLA also attracts and adequately serves the evolving needs of a trending population of persons with jobs and education that find value in the common good and building a real sense of community.

# Central Santa Ana (Orange County, California)

**Jose Rea – Santa Ana RLA (2013)**

**Employee: Director of Medical Residency Programs, University of California, Irvine Medical School**

“One of the strengths of the RLA training is its curriculum. The diverse topics covered over a period of 14 weeks allowed the MPNA residents, our community experts, to interact among themselves, identify top concerns, discuss community conditions and learn about the required steps and different approaches to effectively change and influence policy and system changes.”



# City Heights

## **Sandy Weeks – City Heights RLA (2013)**

**Employee: Account Manager, California Federal Bank**

The RLA uniquely brings together a mosaic of leaders that reflect the rich diversity of the neighborhoods and empowers them to take a more active role in their communities by providing them with the tools to effectively work with civic, government and community organizations to implement change.

The RLA offers graduates a forum (a voice) in which residents can assist in the planning and improvement not only in their neighborhoods but provide guidance and assistance to ensure that their unique cultural issues in both health and social concerns are addressed with sensitivity and compassion.



# Lemon Grove

**Denise Strattman – Lemon Grove RLA (2013)**

**Employee: Uncompensated Care Division,  
Sharp Healthcare**

RLA has taught us how to make healthier choices, not only for ourselves but for our families as well. In addition, it has taught us how to get up, get out and get active.

Would you recommend RLA to a friend? If so, why? Yes, absolutely! All of our RLA members didn't know where to go and how to start getting involved in our community until we stumbled across RLA which has been a whole new movement for us and a new found family.





## 2013-2015 HIGHLIGHTS - Influencing the Field

- Summer 2013: CHIP was commissioned by County of San Diego HHSA to create the RLA Train the Trainer Workshop Series, 4 non-consecutive days (8 hours/day)
- Completed 4 RLA Train the Trainer Workshop Seminars in San Diego County. Total certified: 60 RLA Trainers
- RLA has been replicated at least 27 times in San Diego (urban/rural areas).
- Established a RLA Council that meets on a bi-monthly basis which spans participation of CBOs across all 6 regions of San Diego County

# Non-County Funded RLAs in San Diego

- ✓ Southeastern San Diego
- ✓ Mountain Empire (unincorporated)
- ✓ Julian
- ✓ Oceanside
- ✓ National City
- ✓ Chula Vista

# General Outcomes / Final Thoughts

- RLA is a mainstay in San Diego County.
- There are RLA certified trainers and participants who are now members of City Council, Community Planning Groups and serve as middle management + directors of public and private organizations.
- A tool like the RLA, can inspire real leadership as well as behavior change.
- The greatest blessing was experiencing the *transformative feeling of building real trust* across a wide diversity of people I never knew before.

# Current RLA Efforts



## Learn how to build leaders for community improvement

### Seminars for Facilitators of Resident Leadership Academies

**What:** Community leaders and community-based organization staff will gain knowledge and skills to facilitate their own Resident Leadership Academy (RLA). RLAs are an authentic way to engage residents to bring positive changes to neighborhoods across the county. RLAs provide powerful leverage to advance the County's *Live Well San Diego* Initiative and realize healthy, safe and thriving lives for all.

**Goal:** Upon completion of this non-consecutive, free 4-day intensive training, you and your organization will be poised to implement a community-based Resident Leadership Academy (RLA).

**Who:** We are selectively inviting local leaders and community-based organization staff who are passionate and already active in low-income communities in San Diego. Every participant is expected to make a commitment to initiate an RLA soon after the training is completed.

County Operations Center (COC)  
5550 Overland Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92123  
Medical Examiner Training Room

Wed, Nov 4, 2015; Tues, Nov 10;  
Wed, Nov 18; Wed, Dec 2  
9 am to 4 pm

**Curriculum:** Learn content and facilitation practices to effectively lead an RLA. The RLA curriculum covers a wide range of topics—community building principles, healthy food systems, safe and walkable communities, land use planning, and leadership & advocacy. Finally, implementation of a community improvement project—including needs assessment, planning, implementation & evaluation—is integral to the RLA curriculum. Features of this Facilitator Seminar include:

- Practice facilitating key elements of the curriculum and exercises
- Learn best practices from participants of pilot RLAs invited as guest presenters
- Conduct elements of a community assessment to practice what you will have the residents learn to do



# Building Toward a Vision of Community Engagement and Collaboration

*“... is the process by which people, organizations and institutions are empowered to build ongoing, permanent relationships, and shared responsibility in implementing and managing change for the purpose of applying a collective vision for the benefit of a community.”*





COMMUNITY HEALTH  
IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS

*making a difference together*

Dana Richardson,  
[drichardson@sdchip.org](mailto:drichardson@sdchip.org)  
858-609-7968

