A BRIEF REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON THE PROGRESS OF PRINCIPAL PROGRAMS OF BUILD HOPE INCORPORATED FOR FY2021

Purpose: Build Hope, Inc. (“BHI”) is funded entirely by grants and the in-kind support of staff at the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (“HACLA”) and centers its work and resources on supporting residents and clients of HACLA. As a companion to our look forward at the FY2022 program and budget, this report provides the Governing Board with a review of the activities and program successes for FY2021.

Issues: Our programmatic focus has been aligned with the following three themes that led us through FY2021: Pathways to Higher Education, Bridging the Digital Divide, and Financial and Resource Security. Additionally, this year Build Hope Inc. has been working on the integration of its revised mission into branded messaging, communication tools, and overall organizational capacity building. The following represents our accomplishments in these areas to date and our plans for the next six months of focused work.

Pathways to Higher Education
Build Hope, Inc. (“BHI”) is aligned with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Book Rich Environment, HUD, the LA Public Library and LAUSD to promote literacy initiatives to improve third grade reading scores. The premise of the initiative is to provide access to books for youth in K-3rd Grade to increase reading proficiency. Through the Book Rich Environment, BHI received 7,914 books to distribute throughout HACLA communities in FY2021. All books have been distributed at various community engagement events within the public housing, Section 8 and redevelopment sites within HACLA’s portfolio. Recreational partners incorporated tutoring and reading literacy during the pandemic through virtual platforms that offered academic enrichment and other literacy supports to young children and families.

The BHI Scholarship Program is designed to support the youth living in HACLA’s communities who are heading to college for their first year or are returning scholars working to finish their college careers. We recognize that college is an important tool for financial and social mobility, not only for the youth themselves but for their families. This past July, we celebrated the Ninth (9th) Annual Build Hope Scholarship program. Since its inception, the program has awarded a total of $280,000 in scholarship funds.

This year, BHI received an astounding 100+ applications! We awarded 72 scholarships strictly with BHI funding and an additional 30 scholarships in collaboration with CSP, totaling $134,250 in awards. We attribute this increase to
our partnerships and staff who did direct outreach and promotion, held orientation workshops and assistance with applications to get youth engaged in the scholarship application process. This year also marked the success of our programmatic approach to add Continuing Scholarships targeted to support returning scholars. Thirty of the sixty-eight scholarships awarded this year were given to past scholars who are continuing into their second and third years of college. The Continuing Scholarship Program is doing exactly what it was intended to do: ensuring our students do not just enter college but complete it.

Scholarships awarded ranged between $250 and $2,500 for scholars attending a range of institutions including UC Berkeley, UCLA, Yale, Spelman College, Morehouse College, San Francisco State, and various California State Universities and local community colleges.

**Bridging the Digital Divide**

BHI has continued to focus on increasing internet connectivity, providing access to computers and devices, and ensuring young learners at our sites have the opportunity to keep up with schoolwork and digital hybrid instruction and seniors are able to access health and services.

In FY2021, BHI worked with HACLA’s new internet partner, Starry, to bring internet to eight HACLA public housing sites. The Digital Initiatives also included active distribution of 1,620 T-Mobile hotspots at five public housing sites, resident leaders, youth employment workers at the WorkSource Center and Section 8 residents.

Build Hope Inc. focused on supporting resident adoption of the internet options available to them and ensuring that families are digitally literate. BHI helped internet partners host sign-up events at our public housing sites and brought in EveryoneOn to conduct trainings and technical assistance for residents. Most critically, BHI has supported digital connectivity and literacy with the kick-off of our **Digital Ambassador Program**. Initiated as a pilot under the Community Health Worker demonstration grant at Nickerson Gardens, the Digital Ambassadors promote digital connectivity in a peer-to-peer model.

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**Digital Literacy Program Highlight.**

*While COVID-19 presented many challenges, the response to COVID-19 presented unique opportunities for BHI to leverage resources to address the needs of the ever so daunting digital divide. Due to these efforts and the program model established via the Digital Ambassador program, the BHI Vice President presented at the national ConnectHome conference and highlighted the Starry Internet expansion across HACLA’s portfolio and the need for direct peer-to-peer outreach and engagement to reach internet adoption. To date, with the assistance of the Digital Ambassadors, we have exceeded Starry’s adoption rate of 30% across HACLA’s portfolio and are averaging 34%. Nickerson Gardens, the original Digital Ambassador pilot site, obtained 64% Starry internet adoption rates! This along with the scalability of the Digital Ambassador program model won BHI two ConnectHome Recognition Badges.*
The first cohort of thirty Digital Ambassadors, represent residents at all public housing developments. Approximately 2-10 Digital Ambassadors are assigned to each public housing development to conduct outreach and promote digital connectivity initiatives after they are fully trained in digital technology tools so that they can teach their neighbors. This year Digital Ambassadors promoted Starry Internet, hotspot usage, the Emergency Broadband Benefit program, and broader use of the internet for goods and services.

BHI applied for and received an allocation of funds from the Mayor’s Office to begin the upgrade of HACLA’s Computer Labs. To date, $220,000 was announced and further discussions are happening to expand that investment both with the City of Los Angeles and with large tech companies.

**Financial and Resource Security**

Our non-profit was created to ensure that all residents and clients within HACLA communities and programs have access to the resources and support they need to improve their quality of life, health and well-being. One of the cornerstones of BHI’s programmatic work has been resource distribution and financial advancement.

This year, BHI partnered with the Watts Gang Taskforce to implement *One Watts*, a program focused on placing reentry, gang-involved or gang-affiliated individuals into career pathways. The program began with the successful award of a three-year grant through California Violence Prevention (CAL VIP) and has completed its first program year with the milestone of meeting its recruitment and placement goals. This year BHI was able to secure a $450,000 grant from the Ballmer Foundation which will provide $150,000 per year to help enhance employment supports and cover staffing and overhead costs.

In partnership with *Baby 2 Baby*, BHI continued to provide essential baby items for children and families so that parents have the resources they need to ensure the health and wellness of the children are achieved in the formative years. Thousands of items were distributed to households across HACLA’s portfolio and included: Baby formula, diapers, wipes, cleaning supplies, and other items such as car seats and play pins. This is also aligned with Build Hope, Inc’s goal of ensuring babies have what they need to thrive and grow and addresses food insecurity for our neediest little ones.

**Organizational Growth**

In defining the domain of BHI as a nonprofit affiliate of HACLA this year, BHI added a new *Healthy Lives* focus to its work. BHI sees this as a natural progression of the nonprofit’s work to give all residents a Path To Growth and a reflection of the fact that our families lives are influenced by the environment in which they live. Under our Healthy Lives initiative, BHI received a small $10,000 grant from the Liberty Hill Foundation and used the grant to fund a community driven, small start project in Watts to green and clean an alley used frequently by students getting to and from Flournoy Elementary School; a feeder elementary for Imperial Courts and Nickerson Gardens students. The funding was used to create a mural, improve lighting and create green planters. BHI will continue to provide opportunities for programs, resources as well as small capital investments that create empowering environments.
This year, BHI hired a communication consultant to assist the organization with developing a logo, communication strategy and new website. To date, the logo and style guide are complete and BHI has soft launched its new website this Fall. The branding strategy was based on an extensive research campaign focused on talking to partners, staff and residents who have benefitted from or worked with BHI as well as an assessment of BHI’s new mission and focus on empowerment and equity.

BHI is focusing on targeting audiences who might take an interest in our work and developing donor relationships through the creation of three donation campaigns and a pitch book. The work to develop and roll out these campaigns will flow into FY2022 as well as our work to layer in additional content to our website, which includes video and animation content as well as a new Scholarship Portal. As a fundraising arm, BHI is working hard to develop relationships with individuals in the greater Los Angeles community to diversify access to resources and financial support of our programs. These relationships will be captured and communicated with using Monday.com, our selection for a Customer Relationship Management tool. In FY2021, the BHI team selected and licensed Monday.com and will spend the first two quarters of FY2022 building out the system.

The organization is also working on a set of policies and procedures to formalize its ability to hire and manage staff as well as create a formal Memorandum of Understanding between HACLA and BHI for services and support. These goals are expected to be reached in the second part of FY2022.

Lastly, BHI is working on Governing Board and fundraising stewardship, which includes filling vacant positions as well as considering the addition of new seats on an as-needed basis.

**Funding:** The stated programs receive grant support and in-kind resources from external organizations, a transfer of funds from LA LOMOD as well as individual donations

**Attachments:**

1. 2021 By The Numbers
2. Scholarship Brochure
3. Program recipient highlights
Transforming the Lives of Residents Living in HACLA Communities

2021 BY THE NUMBERS

Awarded 102 College Scholarships Totaling $134,250

Provided......
7,914 Books

2,500+ household items

40,000+ Diapers

2,000+ Backpacks

1,620 hotspots
9TH ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION
WELCOME
Build Hope, Inc. (BHI) welcomes our scholarship award recipients, their families, our sponsors, our partners, and colleagues to this wonderful event.

This year the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), Build Hope Inc., and the Los Angeles Police Department’s Community Safety Partnership (CSP) host the 9th Annual Build Hope Inc. Scholarship Award Ceremony. The scholarship event is supported in part by the Los Angeles Rams and the Ballmer Foundation. Over 90 students entering or continuing their post-secondary education and reside in HACLA and CSP communities in the City of Los Angeles will be awarded $129,000 in scholarships to support their academic success.

ABOUT BUILD HOPE, INC.
To improve the quality of life and well-being of children, youth, low income individuals and families living in public housing, Section 8 and other residential housing units owned or operated by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, California by providing pathways to positive health and economic outcomes through targeted trauma informed and culturally-appropriate programs and connections; supporting community cohesion through resident leadership, community building, and public safety; and providing supportive services and resources that promote educational attainment and digital literacy.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP
The mission of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Bureau is to use community relationship strategies to strengthen trust between law enforcement and the community. The development of long-term relationships, enhanced community capacity, and community partnering lead to decreased crime and improved community perception of safety.

AGENDA

Welcome & Introduction
Cielo Castro, Chairperson, HACLA BOC
Opening Remarks
Doug Guthrie/Jenny Scanlin
Keynote Address
Danielle Brazell, General Manager, Los Angeles DCA
Spoken Word/Group Activity
Marquesha Babers/Brian
Presentation of HACLA & CSP Scholarship Recipients
Jenny Scanlin, President, BHI
Student Speaker
Zenaida Aguirre, Returning Student
Presentation of HACLA Returning Scholars
Jennifer Thomas, Assistant Director, HACLA
Presentation of CSP Heart of Lion Award
Joel Lopez, Program Manager, CSP
Congratulatory Video
Cielo Castro, Chairperson, HACLA BOC
City of LA Education Advisor
Steve Zimmer, Board Member, LAUSD
Closing Remarks
Cielo Castro, Chairperson, HACLA BOC
Cielo is Chief of Staff at Fairplex, a nonprofit, 501 (c)3 organization that leads a 487-acre campus proudly located in the City of Pomona. Fairplex is a public-private partnership with the County of Los Angeles and is home of the LA County Fair and more than 500 year-round events. She came to Fairplex after serving as Transparency Officer for the City of Los Angeles Office of City Administrative Officer, acting as executive liaison with external stakeholders and providing oversight support for the City’s $8 billion budget. Cielo was previously Deputy to Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, where she was responsible for discretionary grant making; staff hiring, recruitment and development; and policy issues including immigration, housing and community development. Cielo served the Obama Administration as Special Assistant at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D.C., where she advised the Assistant Secretary of Community Planning and Development on policy and political matters regarding a $50 billion grant portfolio and over 1,200 grantees. Previously, she had seven years of experience working with elected officials as Director of Constituency Services with the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, and in outreach roles with the National League of Cities.

Cielo previously served as a Commissioner to the Los Angeles Fire and Police Pension board, appointed by Mayor Eric Garcetti in September 2014. She enjoys her book club, and her role as the Los Angeles co-coordinator of Las Comadres para las Americas, and Professional Development Advisor for Latinas Promoviendo Comunidad/Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc. Cielo was a 2007 National Hispana Leadership Institute Executive Program Fellow.

Cielo is a Southern California native, born in East Los Angeles, and raised in the City of Norwalk by immigrant parents. She received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Boston University, and a Master of Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School. Cielo and her spouse Jesse Saucedo live in the City of Los Angeles, where Jesse serves on the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council. They are parents to twins, Adelina Azalea and Tomas Antonio.

Commissioner Castro was appointed to HACLA’s Board on December 15, 2017 and became Chairperson on April 22, 2021.

Danielle Brazell is a visionary national arts and cultural leader, passionate about the roles that arts, culture, and creativity play in advancing civic belonging, equity, economic prosperity, and social connectedness. Her career spans thirty years, first as an artist, teaching artist, cultural producer, and administrator, and now as the General Manager of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). A passionate advocate, she advances the agency’s mission to enhance the quality of life in the city.

Ms. Brazell provides executive leadership to a staff of 84 full-time employees and over 200 part-time employees, including a robust roster of teaching artists. Ms. Brazell works with the progressive agency’s Community Arts, Grants Administration, Public Art, and Marketing, Development, Design, and Digital Research division directors, and the Performing Arts Program and General and Administrative Support Program directors, to implement an annual budget of $22 million and a robust $150 million portfolio of capital projects, facilities, programming, and initiatives of free and low-cost publicly accessible arts and cultural services citywide.

Prior to 2014, Ms. Brazell was the Executive Director of Arts for LA, a highly visible arts advocacy organization serving the greater Los Angeles region. Under her stewardship, Arts for LA became a formidable coalition advancing the arts in the largest county in the country. Ms. Brazell was previously the Artistic Director of Highways Performance Art Space and the Director of Special Projects for the Screen Actors Guild Foundation. She serves as a board member of Americans for the Arts and DataArts.
BHI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

GRADUATING SENIORS

$2,500

Jocelyn Perez
Rancho San Pedro, UCLA

$1,000

Angelica Hernandez
Nickerson Gardens, Cerritos College

Brenijia Barnes*
Imperial Courts, Clark Atlanta University

Carlos Gonzalez
Section 8, CSFU

Cristian Pineda
Pico Gardens, CSULA

Jade Garcia
Avalon Gardens, CSUDH

Joselyn Ruiz*
San Fernando Gardens, Sacramento State

Julie Cruz
Section 8, CSUDH

Kimberly Vargas
Estrella Courts, CSULB

$500

Alma Lopez
Avalon Gardens, CSULA

Ashley Rivera
Nickerson Gardens, CSUN

Brianna Garcia
Rancho San Pedro, El Camino College

Cielo Pina
Nickerson Gardens, CSUN

Jedrick Cota*
Ramona Gardens, Sacramento State

Kayla Enciso*
Pueblo del Rio, LA Trade Tech College

Kofi Saliah
Imperial Courts, CSUDH

Kyla Leslie
Jordan Downs, Spelman College

Leyohnah Jones
Nickerson Gardens, CSULA

Marina Gomez
Imperial Courts, CSULA

Marveon Mabon*
Imperial Courts, Morehouse College

Melissa Dumas Zavala
Mar Vista Garden, CSULA

Perla Ocampo
Nickerson Gardens, El Camino College

Pilar Diaz Bombino
Imperial Courts, UCLA

Renajah Lee
Nickerson Gardens, CSUN

Ryan Rivas
Ramona Gardens, UC Berkeley

Saylinit Perez
Pueblo del Rio, CSUN

Stephanie Ponce
Pico Gardens, CSULA

Vanessa Alfaro*
Ramona Gardens, UC Merced

Yanira Cardoso
Jordan Downs, UCSD

BHI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

GRADUATING SENIORS

$500

Leilani Stopani
Mar Vista Garden, Santa Monica College

Lilian Gonzalez
Mar Vista Garden, Channel Islands

Marcella Guerrero

$250

Evelyn Pulido
Section 8, LATTC

Isaac Bhoorquez
Section 8, El Camino College

RETURNING STUDENTS

$2,500

Janalee Gomez
Nickerson Gardens, Cal Poly SLO

Maria Reyes
Nickerson Gardens, CSULA

$2,000

Araceli Gonzalez Herrera
Gonzaque Village, Texas Christian University

Mahtab Ahmed
Mar Vista Garden, Cal Poly Pomona

Sofia Rico
San Fernando Gardens, UCI

Jocelyn Benavides
Ramona Gardens, CSUN

Nina Stewart
Avalon Gardens, Fresno State

Paola Ortega
William Mead, Pasadena City College

*Double scholarship recipient for BHI and CSP
### BHI Scholarships

**Recipient**
- Andrea Hernandez
  - San Fernando Gardens, SF State
- Brisa Bernal
  - Gonzalez Village, UC Irvine
- Elizabeth Juarez
  - Mar Vista Garden, Cal Poly SIO

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$1,500**
  - Jennifer Martinez
    - William Mead, ELAC
  - Sandy Garcia
    - Pueblo del Rio, UCSB

**Recipient**
- Daisy Ponce Contreras
  - Pico Gardens, CSULA
- Diana Gonzalez
  - Avalon Gardens, UC Riverside
- Edgar Garcia
  - Rancho San Pedro, CSU San Marcos
- Edgar Olguín
  - Pico Gardens, CSU Fullerton

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$1,000**
  - Gabriela Olmedo
    - Imperial Courts, El Camino College
  - Melissa Luna
    - Nickerson Gardens, CSUDH

**Recipient**
- Karen Ramos
  - Ramona Gardens, CSULA
- Karina Rodriguez
  - Ramona Gardens, CSULA
- Lesli Lopez
  - Mar Vista Garden, CSUDH
- Marie Cruz
  - Rose Hills Courts, UC Merced

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$500**
  - Lisa Aguilar
    - Mar Vista Garden, CSU Dominguez Hills
  - Vanessa Martinez Leiva
    - Avalon Gardens, CSUDH

**Recipient**
- Alejandra Gonzalez
  - Nickerson Gardens, El Camino College

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$250**

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### CSP Scholarships

**Recipient**
- Brenjiia Barnes*
  - Imperial Courts, Clark Atlanta University
- Cecilia Burgara Ortiz
  - South Park, UC Santa Cruz
- Celine Reyes
  - South Park, CSULA
- Erwin Rodriguez
  - Harvard Park, CSUDH
- Gabriel Burgara Ortiz
  - South Park, UC Davis

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$2,500**
  - Joselyn Ruiz*
    - San Fernando Gardens, Sacramento State
  - Luis Holguin
    - South Park, UC Merced
  - Melissa Covarrubias
    - South Park, UC Merced
  - Nathalie Esquivias
    - South Park, CSULA

**Recipient**
- Alex Gonzalez
  - South Park, CSULA
- Angel Cervantes
  - San Fernando Gardens, Glendale Commm College
- Damariyeea Molale
  - South Park, Adam State University

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$1,500**
  - Devin Foney
    - South Park, CSULA
  - Joseph Coleman
    - South Park, Universal Tech School
  - Kayla Enciso*
    - Pueblo del Rio, LA Trade Tech College

**Recipient**
- Brian Mendoza
  - South Park, San Jose State Uni
- Daniel Ojeda
  - South Park, CSUDH
- Fabiola Chavez
  - San Fernando Gardens, Santa Monica College

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$1,000**
  - Gisselle Bautista-Cristales
    - Harvard Park, CSUDH
  - Jedrick Cota*
    - Ramona Gardens, Sacramento State
  - Jonny Lopez
    - South Park, UC Santa Cruz

**Recipient**
- Vanessa Alfaro *
  - Ramona Gardens, UC Merced
- Vanessa Amador
  - South Park, UC Davis
- Wendy Chuc Velasquez
  - South Park, UC Irvine
- Yesenia Morales
  - Pueblo Del Rio, San Jose State University

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$500**
  - Karen Ramos
    - Ramona Gardens, CSULA
  - Karina Rodriguez
    - Ramona Gardens, CSULA
  - Lesli Lopez
    - Mar Vista Garden, CSUDH
  - Lisa Aguilar
    - Mar Vista Garden, CSU Dominguez Hills

**Recipient**
- Alejandra Gonzalez
  - Nickerson Gardens, El Camino College

**Scholarship Amount**
- **$250**

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*Double scholarship recipient for BHI and CSP.
CONGRATULATIONS!

“We applaud how much you’ve accomplished and are very excited for your future. The many challenges in the world today are no match for your ingenuity, creativity and ability to make a difference. We wish each of you fulfillment and success in your chosen field of endeavor.”

—Goldfarb & Lipman LLP

“Yardi is proud and grateful to support HACLA’s efforts to improve the lives of Los Angeles residents with critical housing resources and supportive services. Congratulations to this year’s recipients of HACLA’s Section 3 scholarships. Thank you, HACLA, for the opportunity to help recognize the success of your student residents and for the chance to support your organization with our technology and services.”

—Yardi

“Xerox recognizes the importance of HACLA’s mission and its contribution to our community. For over 50 years, Xerox has partnered with government agencies across the US to improve the productivity of the modern workplace. We are a proud contributor to HACLA’s Scholarship Fund and want to extend our congratulations to the hard working, inspirational students, and this year’s well deserving scholarship recipients!”

—Xerox

“Thank you for this enormous opportunity, which will affect so many students in a positive way. The CSP officers who have worked tirelessly with the youth, will be able to continue to watch them follow their dreams and eventually become leaders in the community. The families of these students will also have a little less to worry about now, as they support and encourage them to DREAM BIG.”

—Emada E. Tingirides, Deputy Chief

DONORS

SECTION 3 PROGRAM

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CSP)

HOUSING BASED DAY SUPERVISION (HBDS)
Since 2012, Kids Progress, Inc. (KPI) has been providing college scholarships to high school seniors in HACLA’s housing communities. Students have pursued a variety of majors, including engineering, biology, computer science, and communications degrees at community colleges, state colleges, as well as Ivy League universities. This cannot happen without the support of our sponsors, partners, and friends who generously give to provide this scholarship opportunity to students who need it most. Thank you!

Jenny Scanlin, President of Build HOPE, Inc.

BHI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

If you are interested in donating to the Build HOPE, Inc., please contact Jacob Toups at Jacob.Toups@hacla.org or 213-392-1307.

You can visit our website at www.haclabuildhope.com. BHI is a registered 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation.
Eric Lopez (c) is pictured holding his Section 3 Scholarship Award

Eric Lopez, a Jordan Downs resident who participated in the HACLA Youth Employment Program, earned a Section 3 scholarship and enrolled in Cal State Northridge to pursue his degree. After graduating from college, Eric enrolled in the HACLA Watts Los Angeles WorkSource Center’s WIOA program and began a construction training program. He completed the program and was placed at the Jordan Downs Redevelopment Project with H2O Fire Protection as a P1 Fire Sprinkler Fitter earning $70.62 per hour. He plans on continuing to work hard and move up in the industry to someday become a Project Manager.

Lakenya Spikes is pictured here in front of the HACLA Watts Los Angeles WorkSource Center

Lakenya Spikes is an Imperial Courts resident who wanted to pivot from healthcare to a career that allowed her to work more closely with members of her community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The HACLA Watts Los Angeles WorkSource Center enrolled her into the WIOA program as well as the One Watts program, which provides additional vocational training and employment services to Watts residents. Lakenya completed 300 hours of work through the COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker grant at the Watts Empowerment Center/Red Eye. After she completed her hours, she was offered two different employment opportunities at the Jordan Downs Redevelopment Project, and accepted a position at Walton Construction as an Administrative Assistant.
Jobs Plus Initiative/Community Health Worker (CHW) Program

The Jobs Plus Initiative (JPI) connects public housing residents with employment, education and financial empowerment services, offered exclusively at Nickerson Gardens Public Housing Development. The Community Health Worker Program is a two-year pilot program funded by a supplemental grant to JPI. In 2021, the program was renewed for a third year due excellent performance. The program hires Nickerson Gardens residents and trains them to become public health advocates and exposes them to careers in the healthcare field. Evelin Ruiz was unemployed prior to becoming a JPI participant where she was hired as a Community Health Worker. She was soon offered a permanent position at the Watts Healthcare Corporation. As a result, Evelin and her family were able to purchase a home in a neighboring community.

Project SOAR

Renajah Lee is a resident at Nickerson Gardens and is a Project SOAR Ambassador. Project SOAR, a college access program through a partnership amongst the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and SoCal CAN. Renajah was admitted to Cal State University Northridge and is the first in her family to attend college. Renajah says that “Project SOAR helped me create an academic plan for the remainder of high school and It has also assisted me throughout the entire college application process.” Renajah Lee was awarded a scholarship from Build Hope Inc., the non-profit affiliate of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.
Digital Ambassadors Program

Digital Ambassador Ana Sajche-xec (r) is joined by Dawn M. Comer of the Los Angeles Mayor’s Office of Budget & Innovation (l)

Digital Ambassadors are HACLA residents who address the digital divide in their community via telehealth and digital skills trainings. A total of 39 Digital Ambassadors enrolled in the program in 2021. “Being a digital ambassador has taught me skills such as helping parents with parent portal and how to make flyers that will get your message across. In other words, it's these small things that we can learn to teach others, in order to bridge and aid the consequences of the digital divide.” –Sandy Garcia, Digital Ambassador at Pueblo del Rio