

## Santa Ana Resource Network – 2005-06 Social Capital Initiatives

1) OC Shares - Develop an Orange County-based program modeled after the successful, L.A. SHARES ([www.lashares.org](http://www.lashares.org)), a non-profit materials reuse program, which takes donations from the local business community of reusable goods and materials (both new and used) and redistributes these items FREE-OF-CHARGE to non-profits and schools throughout Los Angeles County. Since 1991, LA Shares has worked with over 1,000 local companies to give away more than \$40 million worth of goods and materials to over 2,500 organizations in Los Angeles County. In addition to the obvious benefits to the community-based organizations that receive the materials, the program is also supported by local government / the business community which are required by Assembly Bill 939 to reduce their landfill-bound waste.

Over 90% of the transactions provided by this free service are conducted over the Internet through their software system modeled after auction facilitator "e Bay". The goods typically move from donor to recipient without ever being physically maintained by LA Shares. LA shares has expressed an interest in bringing the benefits of this model to Orange County by providing the technical support and expertise needed for a local organization to launch a program. Similar partnership efforts are already underway in San Francisco, Atlanta and the District of Columbia. Proposed partners include Santa Ana's Public Works Agency, the California Integrated Waste Management Board, Waste Management, local trash haulers, Orange County local government agencies, the Community Action Partnership of Orange County and area charitable foundations.

2) Time Dollars - The Resource Network proposes to implement a pilot project in Santa Ana to improve opportunities for civic engagement by private for-profit corporations. The initiative is also intended to encourage / generate economic benefits within a closed system, without the exchange of financial resources. Time dollars have been proven to be a vehicle that encourages / provides compensation for community service work while offering financial rewards to participants. An example of a possible Time Dollar project in Santa Ana might include the following participants / partners : junior high school students, Santa Ana literacy centers or park sites, Goodwill Industries' Computer Store and a Santa Ana-based firm providing professional services. These participants / partners might work together by having the youth agree to assist at literacy centers or clean-up local parks and earn ten time dollars per hour. These time dollars would then be accepted at Goodwill Industries' Computer Store for the purchase of their Internet / Windows ready computers. Goodwill would then use the time dollars as payment to receive pre-arranged professional services i.e. advertising / marketing to further support their computer operations and need for continued donations. In this scenario, the high school students benefit, as do our residents and the parks, Goodwill benefits from the consulting services and a local professional firm receives a tax deductible write-off and positive public

relations associated with their commitment to the Santa Ana community. Please note that this example is very conceptual and no commitments have been made to date by Goodwill or the Parks Agency.

3) Financial Literacy - The Resource Network is concerned that numerous studies have identified financial literacy and gaining access to financial services as a major obstacle in the path of Santa Ana's Latino households seeking to accumulate wealth. Check cashing outlets and pay day loan stores are found conveniently through-out Santa Ana, but large geographic areas have no banks or savings and loans which enable consumers to open checking / savings accounts and establish credit. The Earned Income Tax Credit is widely promoted as an anti-poverty program by the federal government, but nearly \$90 million of credit are unclaimed by Santa Ana's low-income families each year. Consumer fraud is also rampant in our community. In response to these conditions, numerous organizations have launched initiatives to address the "financial literacy" of our community, but there is little if any coordination between these efforts. Members of the Resource Network are now proposing a more proactive effort to identify the functional relationship between these initiatives to identify common ground and improved opportunities for collaboration.

4) State of the Non-Profit Industry - A report published recently by the UCLA Center for a Civil Society provided new and valuable insight into the non for profit industry in Los Angeles County and the direct benefits associated with this growing sector of the economy. In response, members of the Resource Network recognized that there was a benefit in quantifying the non-profit sector in Orange County as well. Our secondary research in this area has resulted in new contacts being made with the Center for Non-Profit Management at CSUF and Professor of Non-Profit Marketing Mary Joyce. Through these contacts, Santa Ana's experience with the Resource Network as an asset-based community building tool is expected to be included in upcoming assessments, including CSUF's "Democracy Project" addressing civic engagement and transparency in the consideration of local public policy. This work is expected to be ongoing.

5) Transparency / Information Sharing Initiative - Viewed as a logical extension of the State of Non-Profit Industry, this effort seeks to introduce common-sense and practical improvements to the way that information is shared regarding the consideration of local public policy. Examples include: 1) initial efforts to promote more thorough coverage of Santa Ana's community news by the OC Register; 2) greater access, via internet, to meeting agendas for City Boards and Commissions; 3) quarterly updates provided to the Resource Network Steering Committee by Commissioner Leon, on matters considered by the Redevelopment and Housing Commission ; 4) greater participation by CBOs in the preparation of the Five Year Consolidated Plan; and 5) periodic updates on matters associated with civic engagement being published through the Resource Network Newsletter.

6) Job Match Initiative - Recruiting and retaining employees is a major challenge for Santa Ana's community-based organizations, especially given the extraordinary turn-over rates found in this sector of the economy. While service oriented organizations have a clear preference for hiring local residents that are well qualified, they also currently have few inexpensive options to promote their job opportunities to their preferred applicant pool. Likewise, Santa Ana has numerous well qualified residents that are interested in earning an income while "giving back", but too often are unaware of employment opportunities that become open periodically in this sector. As currently envisioned, the Job Match initiative will create a new partnership with the WORK Center and enhance the ability of employers and job seekers to meet up via improvements to their Internet-based software and marketing campaigns. This strategy is viewed as having long term benefits as the Santa Ana community become more familiar with new ways to matching employment needs and interests.

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