

1200 FOUNDATION

WORKING FOR THE WORKING POOR

NEWSLETTER

March 2007

1200 Foundation Hosts Reception For 2006 Grantees and Donors

On February 15 we hosted our second annual reception for grantees, donors, and friends in Piedmont. Ann Frizell, president of the 1200 Foundation, introduced the directors of five non-profit organizations that received \$5,000 grants in 2006. The two newest recipients were C.E.O. Women and Street Tech.

C.E.O Women, based in Oakland, is a non-profit organization that is creating economic opportunities for low-income immigrant and refugee women. C.E.O. Women empowers them by teaching entrepreneurship, English and communication skills so they can establish successful livelihoods and small businesses.

Street Tech is a San Pablo-based non-profit organization offering low cost computer training, certification, and job placement for deserving adults from disadvantaged communities in the Bay Area. It provides a comprehensive career development program that includes job skills training, credentials, career coaching, work experience and job placement assistance.

Earlier in the year, similar grants were awarded to these other non-profit organizations:



Farhana Huq (left), Founder and Director of C.E.O. Women, and Lester Ellis (right), Founder of the 1200 Foundation.

- **Saint Vincent's Day Home** Family Learning Program in Oakland that offers workshops and classes that encourage families to become self-sufficient and pursue their educational and employment goals.
- **Sophia Project** in West Oakland that provides a safe, home-like environment for children and working families who are at risk of homelessness and its effects.
- **Opportunity Junction** in Antioch that offers computer-based business training paid internships and alumni services to low-income adults.



Lilia Salazar, a graduate of C.E.O. Women's program, and her husband, now own their own janitorial supplies company in Oakland.

C.E.O. Women Helps Immigrant Women Become Economically Self-Sufficient

Without employable skills and an ability to speak English, immigrant and refugee women remain some of the poorest and most isolated members of our society. This condition only deepens over time.

The mission of C.E.O. Women is to get women participating in the economy as entrepreneurs so that they may become economically self-sufficient and integrated members of our society.

Sophia Project Serves Families At Risk for Homelessness

Located in a neighborhood of low income families in West Oakland, Sophia Project, one of the 1200 Foundation's grantees, offers early childhood education, infant toddler care, and family support services.

Carol Cole, director of the project, says there are many tangible results of the program:

- The children who have been in the early childhood program are all participating well in school. Teachers regularly remark upon the children's social skills and the harmony they bring to their classrooms.
- Five of their children were awarded scholarships to a local private school based on academic achievement and social cooperation.
- All the families who have been through the program remain housed.
- The project received an award from Bank of America for excellence in neighborhood renewal.
- The project is frequently recommended as a resource for other agencies to learn about 'best practices' for the population of children served by Sophia Project.



Left. Carol Cole, Director of Sophia Project.

Below. The Myrtle House, one of two Sophia Project homes in West Oakland.



Alissa Friedman, Executive Director of Opportunity Junction, speaks at 1200 Foundation annual reception.

Opportunity Junction Director Discusses Highlights and Successes of Past Year

Alissa Friedman, Executive Director of Opportunity Junction (formerly known as OPTIC), discussed the 2006 highlights of her organization:

- 24 placements directly from job training internships into positions earning an average of \$14.25 an hour (biased a little by some excellent placements - median starting wage of \$12.00 an hour).
- 399 learners accessing computers, improving their English and learning Computer Basics at our evening Technology Center during our last fiscal year.
- 418 low-income working families receiving tax assistance to help them start building a financial future.

She asked reception attendees how many of them had heard of her organization before donating to the 1200 Foundation. None of them had.

"This shows," she said, "just how important the work of the Foundation is in helping not just Opportunity Junction, but other non-profit organizations in the East Bay that so badly need your support."



Above. Joe McKinley, Director of Training, and Barrie Hathaway, Executive Director of Street Tech, in front of Street Tech's ReliaTech computer repair shop.

Below. Vernon Williams, a Street Tech graduate, in their computer training room.



Street Tech Offers Life Skills and Technology Training to Attendees

Street Tech believes that all men and women, regardless of barriers to success, can achieve economic self-sufficiency through prosperous, vibrant, meaningful careers. In a highly professional and nurturing environment, they train participants in state-of-the-art computer skills, then guide graduates into desirable technology careers.

One of Street Tech's success stories is Vernon Williams. After some difficult years as a teen, Vernon was given a pamphlet about the Street Tech program. He was told that the program was very hard work and long hours, but that it could change his life.

In June 2006, Vernon completed the courses gaining all three technical certificates. While attending classes, he also worked full time in the information technology departments of three major corporations in the Bay Area.

He now has a full-time IT job and has recently started his own consulting firm with a contract to introduce computers and technology at the junior high and high school levels.

"Street Tech was a life-saver for me," he said, "a phenomenal opportunity that I want to share with others."

Saint Vincent's Family Learning Program Encourages Literacy Development

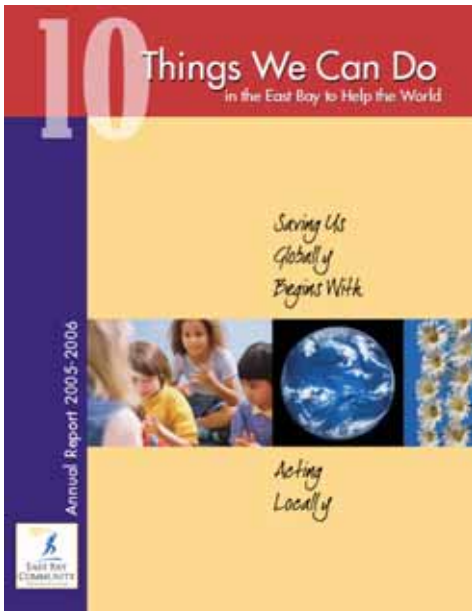
Saint Vincent Day Home's Family Learning Program brings parents together with their children to discover the ways they can pursue their own learning goals while developing the language and learning skills of their children.

The program, started in mid-2005, has already fully implemented:

- A Family Library collection of fiction and non-fiction for children and parents in many bi-lingual titles.
- A Read to Me Program of parent/child workshops with books to keep.
- JumpStart Collaborative program with Saint Mary's College for early literacy development for three-year olds.
- A weekly Spanish learning group for parents and workshops to share and record stories.
- Family music workshops for families where a story is read together, songs are learned, and everyone sings together.



Sylvia and daughter Stephanie reading together at Saint Vincent's.



Cover of EBCF Annual Report. The full report can be found at www.eastbaycf.org.

East Bay Community Foundation Features 1200 Foundation in 2005-06 Annual Report

In its recent annual report, “10 Things We Can Do in the East Bay to Help the World,” the East Bay Community Foundation devoted one page to “Leveraging Resources for Change.” The example EBCF used was the 1200 Foundation and its focus on the working poor.

“When we encountered Lester Ellis and his idea to advance the lives of the working poor,” the report said, “we knew immediately we could increase the capacity of his 1200 Foundation to accomplish its mission.”

The report continued, “With an estimated 20-25 percent of workers in the East Bay earning incomes below the poverty line – often with non-existing or inadequate benefits to boot – Piedmont insurance broker Ellis wanted to create a foundation to support programs assisting employed but impoverished people in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.”

EBCF provided legal, financial and research assistance enabling the 1200 Foundation to become “a player for change.” They enabled the 1200 Foundation “to pursue its vision with volunteer help and minimum administrative expenses.”

We appreciate the support and assistance that EBCF has provided to us – and our inclusion in their annual report.

You Can Become a Member of the 1200 Foundation

The 1200 Foundation is an East Bay non-profit organization dedicated to helping the working poor in Alameda and Contra Costa counties move up and out of poverty.

Established in 2005, the Foundation awards grants to innovative, successful programs that directly benefit the working poor in the East Bay. The programs described in this newsletter epitomize the type of local non-profit organizations that we are excited about supporting.

The work of the 1200 Foundation is performed entirely by volunteers who believe in the organization’s vision. We are hoping that many others will join us in sharing this vision.

Through the 1200 Foundation you can help in a very direct way because we:

- Focus specifically on the working poor rather than general charity.



Visit the 1200 Foundation website at 1200foundation.org.

- Support members of your own East Bay community.
- Cross a wide spectrum of programs – housing, education, medical care, child care, and employment – to improve the quality of life.
- Let you become an involved participant not just an anonymous donor.
- Ensure funding goes to programs not to administrative overhead.

Contact us today to see how you can become a member of the 1200 Foundation.