



Somos Mayfair Strategic Plan 2008-2011



Somos Mayfair cultivates the dreams and power of the people of Mayfair through cultural activism, social services and community organizing. We are generations of immigrants, rooted in a vibrant community, who nurture healthy families and speak out for justice in Silicon Valley.

We are working toward the day when all people of Mayfair believe our barrio to be a place where beauty, power, and dignity flourish and Mayfair is extensively connected to the region, valued for our contributions to society and engaged with the broader movement for justice.



Letter from the Board Chair/Executive Director

December 2008

In 1996, the Mayfair Improvement Initiative was created in east San José, California, at the height of the dot.com revolution in the Silicon Valley. Though the Valley had the attention of the world as the center of global prosperity, those living in the Mayfair neighborhood were left out. Even in capitalism's newest incarnation, not everyone was benefiting. The Mayfair Initiative sought to address these inequities. Central to this effort was the belief that those of us that live in Mayfair have the right, capacity and opportunity to be the leaders of community change in Mayfair. This belief has its roots in the legacy of community organizing and leadership development that has been a constant dynamic in Mayfair since the early 1900's, with César Chávez who organized here during the 1960's, being Mayfair's most famous son. Today, Somos Mayfair, born out of the Mayfair Initiative, carries this belief forward in new and innovative ways that remain a testament to the hope and activist spirit, as well as the tested experience of previous generations of Mayfair residents.

The past four years have been a time of intentional transition with the sunset of the Mayfair Initiative as it was originally known. Today, Somos Mayfair stands as an independent and impactful organization. We have preserved the strengths of our origins while thoughtfully building new approaches and expertise that best address the deepest needs of Mayfair. In doing so, we have built a new organization that is based in a unique relationship with our community, that we are both supporter and partner, and that residents are not only our clients but also allies in the work.

In November 2007, the full Board and Staff of Somos Mayfair together with community allies began a new strategic planning process. We did so with the intent of affirming the organization we had become after four years of transition. During those four years we had changed our name, built a new Board of Directors, recruited a largely new staff, remade our program model, strengthened our organization infrastructure, recruited new supporters and allies and diversified our funding base. It felt like the right time to affirm this new organization we had become, and to clarify the beliefs and activities that are at the core of Somos Mayfair.

The enclosed strategic plan is the outcome of our Board and Staff's collective research, dialogue and decision-making. It summarizes our commitments to making a difference in the lives of Mayfair residents and building an organization that is healthy, resilient and grounded in love, creativity and an unshakable belief in the people of Mayfair.

Sincerely,

Darcie Green
Board Chair

Jaime Alvarado
Executive Director

“Having an advocate for working poor people of color who have no clear power base is very important. It's important that Somos is out there, being that advocate, building that power base.”

— Anonymous reply to the question: **What is the difference that Somos makes in the community?**

Background

Somos Mayfair began in 1996 as a partnership between the immigrant, working-class residents of the Mayfair neighborhood of east San José and allies from throughout Silicon Valley. Calling ourselves the Mayfair Improvement Initiative, we worked to make streets safer, build a community garden, paint murals and advocate for social services, education, affordable housing and economic development.

Throughout our history, our priority has been to empower residents and build local leadership to advocate for Mayfair. We are one of a growing number of non-profits combining social services with community organizing. We are unique in using cultural arts to promote leadership development for social justice.

In 2006 we changed our name to Somos Mayfair (We are Mayfair) signifying pride in ourselves and in our community.

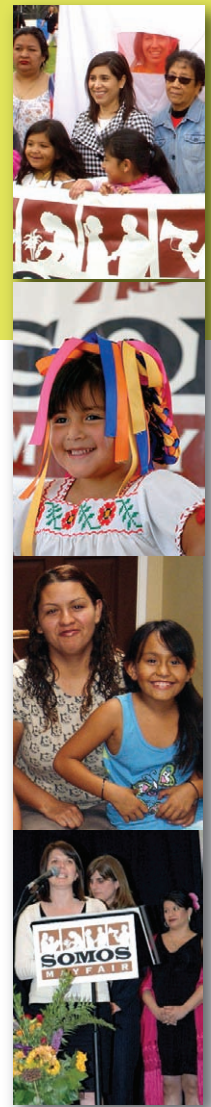
Needs and Opportunities

Somos Mayfair's work is focused on the greater Mayfair area of east San José and the immigrant, working-poor families that live here. This community is our home and is the central focus for our work. Yet we know that the issues we face in Mayfair are directly tied to the same issues that exist in other communities just like Mayfair all across the region and beyond. The problems we face in Mayfair are caused by the inequities in opportunities and power between communities sorted by class and race.

But change is possible and it begins when we first acknowledge what we believe in most deeply; what makes our resolve strong. We believe that the immigrant families that arrive in Mayfair come with the dream of a better future for their children; that hope is what gives them strength and endurance. We believe that change must begin with individuals and families but must not end there. We believe that we can use cultural tools to tell our stories and through them get at the deep psychological and social barriers that keep the people of Mayfair from believing in their own strengths and knowledge. We believe that healthy leadership can best be developed and sustained with groups of people, rather than in individuals. And, we believe that no community operates in isolation, and that we in Mayfair are part of a vibrant movement of grassroots organizations and working poor communities that are struggling to change the world.

From this analysis, within the greater Mayfair community we have four key goals:

- 1. Nurture** healthy and resilient children and families and community in Mayfair;
- 2. Cultivate** a vibrant community characterized by strong relationships, dialogue and interdependence between community members;
- 3. Build** community power through effective teams of community leaders, organizers and advocates;
- 4. Connect** our work in Mayfair to similar work being done in our region, our country and the world; work that collectively represents and contributes to the growing popular movement for justice and equity in our region and the world.



“I have seen Somos Mayfair take a strong role with women and empower them to not only be mothers who are caretakers – but also teachers to their children and mothers who know where to find support for their kids.”

— Anonymous reply to the question:
What does Somos do better or differently than anyone else?



“The Mayfair neighborhood has issues. Somos isn't in denial about those issues. They do their programs to address the real needs; they don't just follow the funding.”

— Anonymous reply to the question:
What does Somos do better or differently than anyone else?

Somos Mayfair Programs

We work towards our goals through three, interrelated programs:

- 1. Family Support:** Our Promotores support 200 families each year to take action on their most urgent issues and to nurture their children and families for future success.
- 2. Community Engagement:** We work with 15 community cultural activists each year using popular theater to tell our stories, engage our community in dialogue to build awareness and encourage action. We also host three community celebrations each year. Through it all we reach over 5,000 people each year.
- 3. Civic Action:** We cultivate teams of resident leaders to organize the Mayfair community to act on issues affecting the entire community. Annually, we work with 40 resident leaders to deepen their skills as researchers, organizers and advocates on behalf of the entire community.

Strategic Planning Process

In November 2007, the Board and Staff of Somos Mayfair initiated our strategic planning process. Over the subsequent 11 months, we conducted a series of dialogues and interviews to shape and inform the major decisions that were to be made jointly by Board and Staff.

• Board and Staff Dialogues

Through a series of four day-long retreats, the full Board and Staff of Somos Mayfair utilized storytelling and popular education methodologies as well as more typical non-profit strategic planning methodologies to explore the history of Mayfair and Somos Mayfair's role in it. We analyzed the regional and global forces that shape Mayfair, named our values and beliefs, and developed new Mission and Vision statements;

• Community Stakeholder Interviews

Understanding that in order to accurately assess Somos Mayfair, we needed to solicit input from key community stakeholders. We conducted a series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews with Mayfair residents, Somos Mayfair clients, Advisory Board members and regional allies;

• Decision Process

Once all our external and internal research was completed, we held a final retreat with full Board and Staff participation. In this retreat, the Board and Staff jointly made final decisions regarding our new Mission, Vision, organizational priorities and core strategies.

Priorities & Core Strategies

Over the next three years, FY 2008-2010, Somos Mayfair will invest dedicated resources to four priority initiatives that will deepen the impacts of our programs, strengthen our organization and strategically communicate our vision, methods and results to a broad audience. The priorities and core strategies that we selected reflect our decision to affirm what we have built through four years of transition and what work needs to be done to strengthen the foundations of the renewed organization we have become.

Demonstrate the measurable impact of Somos Mayfair's programs on the health and resiliency of families and community.

Somos Program Model

In order to ensure standards of quality for program delivery, Somos Mayfair will refine and document the program delivery model that we have built;

Impact Evaluation

With our program delivery model documented, we will establish three-year impact goals for Somos Mayfair programs and implement evaluation strategies to measure our impacts;

Somos' Program Model Dissemination

We will share and train allied nonprofits, funders and local government agencies in Somos Mayfair's program and impact evaluation models.

Increase and strengthen Mayfair community power.

Community Leadership Development

We will develop a community power building model for Somos Mayfair and implement a plan for training community leaders to be effective community power-builders;

Internal Leadership Development

We will develop a community power building model for Somos Mayfair and implement a plan for training our Board, Staff and Volunteers to be effective community power-builders;

Community Advocacy

We will organize a series of community-led advocacy campaigns that will result in advocacy successes and the establishment of community-led base groups.

Build the Board and Staff we need to most effectively achieve our mission.

Strategic Board Development

We will implement a Board development plan that supports successful organizational and program development and increases the visibility of Somos Mayfair in the region;

Employer of Choice

We will establish progressive employment policies, a work environment of continual learning and a challenging yet supportive organizational culture that make Somos Mayfair an employer of choice in the region;

Staff Infrastructure Development

We will build the next level of staff infrastructure necessary to sustain a consistently high performing organization.

Effectively communicate our key messages, program model and impact to our priority audiences.

Communications Plan

We will develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to disseminate Somos Mayfair's key messages;

Communications Infrastructure

We will build Somos' human and technical infrastructure to ensure strategic and regular communications with the Mayfair community and Somos' other key audiences – funders, donors, allies and the nonprofit sector.





“I would like to see the organization connect more broadly in larger circles because it has so much to offer and teach other groups...The organization has a unique perspective and I want to see Somos work on a regional and state level.”

— Anonymous reply to the question:
Where do you think Somos can improve?

Conclusion

This plan provides direction to Somos Mayfair’s efforts over the next three years. It gives instruction for the infrastructure that needs to be reinforced or built for the first time. It also prioritizes our commitment to genuine, meaningful impact with our work in the Mayfair community, and our commitment to successfully measure and demonstrate that impact. We will implement these strategic priorities while simultaneously delivering our programs in our community. At the end of the three-years of this plan, we will emerge a more deeply impactful, better resourced and more sustainable organization. Ultimately this will all be done with the overarching goal of making an even bigger difference in the life of our community.

The process of developing this plan has been one that is true to the culture of Somos Mayfair. We have affirmed our commitment to and use of popular education methods for nurturing dialogue, reflection, analysis and action while also embracing the more common approaches to strategic planning. Through it all we have been deeply touched, affirmed, inspired and energized. In the ¡Si Se Puede! spirit of Mayfair, we move forward with hope and resolve.

Gracias

Somos Mayfair is indebted to allies who participated in the strategic planning process. Their generous gift of their time, reflection and dialogue deeply informed our decisions and inspired and energized us.

Focus Group and Interview Participants

Elisa Marina Alvarado	Yolanda Guzman
Cathy Andrade	Ashu Kalra
Diane Aranda	Helen Kim
Cindy Avitia	Pat Krakov
María Teresa Bárcenas	Annabel Leyva
Marlene Bjornsrud	Lorena Madrid
Angie Briones	Martha Martinez
Norma Chávez	Sandra Mendoza
Patricia Chiapellone	Olga Montes
Margi Clarke	Pia Moriarty
Eleanor Clement Glass	Ana Nava
Irene Colima	Gerardo Olvera
Rafael Cruz	Rosa Pérez
Juliet Ellis	Nancy Ragey
Phaedra Ellis Lamkins	Elizabeth Sills
Emily Goldfarb	

We owe a special thank you to the advisors that assisted us in our process. Their support, guidance, respectful challenges and good will made the process that much more enlightening, thoughtful and productive. Gracias siempre to Helen Kim for suggesting we begin by looking at the history of our community and the forces that impact us, to Suzanne Pharr for encouraging us to examine power dynamics, and to Alfredo Vergara-Lobo and Belma Gonzalez for guiding and advising the final stages and for corralling all of our visioning into one single document.

This process was made possible with the financial support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and The Women's Foundation of California. Their commitment to the Mayfair community and Somos Mayfair are unquestioned. For their support we are grateful.

Finally, a special thank you to Aryeh Shell and Rebecca Bauen for demonstrating how to use popular education to deepen our understanding of our past, present and future and helping to build stronger and deeper relationships among board and staff, and to all of the Somos Mayfair Board and Staff that energetically, thoughtfully, respectfully and lovingly gave so much to the planning process.

Steering Committee

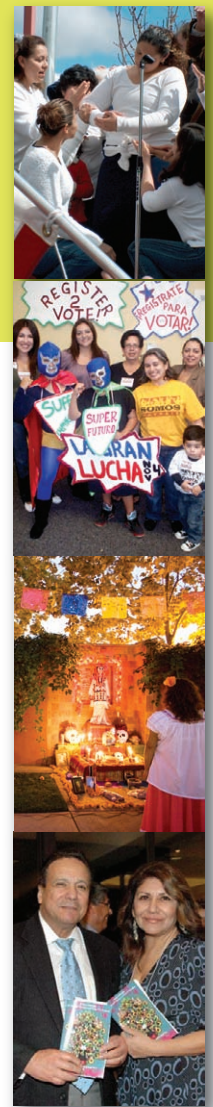
Darcie Green – *Board Chair*
 Patrick Soricone – *Board Treasurer*
 Jennifer Chávez – *Board Member*
 Adel Olvera – *Board Member*
 Dolores Santa Cruz – *Board Member*
 Jaime Alvarado – *Executive Director*
 Rebecca Bauen – *Associate Director*
 Diana Jauregui – *Lead Promotora*
 Aryeh Shell – *Program Director, Community Engagement*

Board Members

Ivonne Gutiérrez – *Board Vice Chair*
 Brenna Silberstein – *Board Secretary*
 Alejandra Herrera Chávez
 Leticia Martínez
 Rudy Rodríguez
 David Wain Coon

Staff

Josefina Carrillo
 Luisa Chavarín
 Kathy Córdova
 Nayhieli Cruz-McLeskey
 Laura Espino
 Arturo Gómez
 Pam Gudiño
 Angelica Lujano
 Jesus Dora Moya
 Evangelina Nevárez
 Karla Reyes



“Somos gives the neighborhood an identity in the region. If it was gone, the neighborhood might get little or no attention or respect.”

— Anonymous reply to the question: **What would the community miss the most if Somos were to close its doors?**



Somos Mayfair, Inc.
370-B S. King Road
San José, CA 95116

T: 408-251-6900
F: 408-251-6987

info@somosmayfair.org
www.somosmayfair.org

