



**San Antonio Youth Centers, Inc.
Alamo City YouthBuild
Youthbuild Program Report**

Semi-Annual Progress Report

Reporting Period – July 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004

A. Progress made during the reporting period in meeting Youthbuild program goals and objectives.

Educational Goals: Our program goal was to enroll 28 eligible applicants from our service area and target population. We exceeded our enrollment goal of 28 by admitting a total of 33 participants. For the month of July 2004, we had an enrollment of 28 participants which means we achieved 100 percent of our program goal; and 84 percent of total enrollment.

During August 2004, we had an enrollment of 24 participants which accounts for 85 percentage of our goal. This means we had a 15 percent dropout rate. During September 2004 and October 2004, we maintained enrollment of 23 trainees, which is 82 percentage of our goal. In November we dropped to 20 participants which is 71 percentage of our enrollment goal and December 2004 we increased participation up to 22 participants which is 78 percent of the program goal of 28. Four individuals completed and attained their GED Certification. Three of four who attained their GEDs are seeking enrollment at areas colleges to attain higher education in the fall of 2005.

Staff is helping these individuals with applications and financial aid packages; and ACCUPLACER (college entrance exam). There are an additional four participants who have made significant progress toward the attainment of their GED. That is, they have completed and taken portions of the test and are awaiting final scores. Should all four participants who are awaiting scores pass, we will have a combined total of eight participants attaining their GED certification during the period under review.

Job Training/Placement Goals: Two participants were sent to complete tax preparation training. The two individual completed training and are now gainfully employed while still actively participating in the Alamo City YouthBuild Program.

Construction/Site Training Goals: We initially proposed to rehabilitate two houses that were donated by the San Antonio Housing Authority. While the houses have not been completed, we have made significant progress toward beginning the work. The environmental review has

been completed on both properties. The review revealed traces of lead. Therefore, with the participation of the City of San Antonio's Neighborhood Action Department, we are working on lead abatement.

Meanwhile, we have been working on other construction projects with our partners:

1. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Merced Housing Corporation, a community housing development corporation, serving low to moderate income residents in San Antonio and surrounding communities. We completed two ramp projects for a disabled elderly woman residing on the Eastside of San Antonio. We are doing rehabilitation work on this home. We are widening four doorways for disabled accessibility. We are also working on exterior siding, insulation, installing sheetrock, finish carpentry, glazing and painting. We completed the chain link fence around the house.
2. UU Housing Corporation entered into a partnership with our program in early December. Our trainees are working on a house to sheetrock a 1,500 square foot house. We will tape and float texture and then paint the entire house.
3. RAMP, a subsidiary of San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation, worked with us to build two ramps. Our relationship is on-going. We are now been asked to do more work on ramps for elderly homes and to pre-assemble ramps in their warehouse.
4. Habitat-for-Humanity has provided many learning opportunities for our trainees. We have done framing, roofing, painting, landscaping, sheetrocking, installing electrical fixtures, installing furnaces, trim work, and flooring on their track homes.

The trainees have assisted with the management of the commercial maintenance on our agency campus. They stained the fence around the complex, completed the painting of the exterior that was begun by volunteers, HVAC maintenance on rooftop A/C units, plumbing maintenance, and repaired sheetrock.

Competition Build Day, a program initiated by Texas A&M University's College of Architecture. The trainees built dog houses for the competition. The project generated \$450 fundraising income for the Alamo City YouthBuild program at the SAYC's annual fund-raising event. Trainees also built picnic benches for Laurel Heights United Methodist Church. They also built a large tool shed to house our equipment and materials.

Additional Funding Goals: We were awarded \$12,000 from the San Antonio Housing Trust toward rehabilitation of our two houses. We received \$5,000 from the JP Morgan Chase Foundation for trainee stipends and a \$2,500 individual contribution from James Lifshutz for

operation of the program. A grant proposal is pending for \$5,000 with the San Antonio Area Foundation.

B. Activities accomplished during the reporting period, including important events and milestones.

We enrolled 31 eligible participants. We maintained enrollment of 75% of our targeted goal of 28 participants.

The Leadership Council visited St. Edward's University in Austin and established a relationship with the University Community and Outreach Department. Through the contact, the council was able to secure a room for future leadership development activities. The University provided our Leadership Development Council Members with computers to enhance their computer skills as well as academic books to enhance their learning abilities.

Participants traveled to the University of Texas at Austin to tour the campus. They also visited the University of Texas at San Antonio to participate in a competition scavenger hunt. We also toured the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. The purpose of the visits to these institutions of higher learning was to familiarize the trainees with the campus and college environment and to entice the trainees to think of higher education and the possibilities that higher education holds in a person's life.

Trainees participated in the Salvation Army Christmas Cheer Program. The program accepts donated gifts for distribution to low-income families. Our trainees packaged and labeled the donated gifts for distribution to area families.

Participants participated in a disaster relief program with the greater San Antonio Disaster Agency after flooding destroyed some homes in the city.

Four (4) participants completed the GED and three of the four have initiated the college enrollment process for fall 2005.

Ten participants have significantly increased their construction skills since enrollment into the program. Of these ten, six participants have acquired exceptional skills and are prepared now to find meaningful and gainful employment in the construction industry.

Participants attained OSHA ten hours certification through St. Philip's College. And they also received training and certification in CPR and standard First Aid.

SAYC's superintendent, Mike Lopez, attained his certification in Lead-Based Paint Awareness. We are working with the City of San Antonio's Neighborhood Action Department to train and certify our trainees in lead-based paint awareness.

Participants were involved in a workshop to identify historical homes and properties in our service areas. After the training, the participants, along with staff and the Historical Preservation Office through the Department of Planning, City of San Antonio, conducted actual field work to identify and document historical properties in written and photographic forms.

C. Your biggest challenge during the reporting period and your response to the challenge.

Considering that our participants, many or all of whom come out of disadvantaged backgrounds, and have been exposed to behaviors and activities that many would consider anti-social, we were and continue to be challenged with the task of modifying behaviors and keeping participants focused and motivated. It has and continues to be a challenge to assemble this group of participants who have come from diverse backgrounds to keep them working together for a common purpose.

We have managed to keep conflicts to a minimum and have been able to encourage participation and good citizenship by instituting positive reinforcement by rewarding and recognizing achievements. We celebrate birthdays. We celebrate completion of GED certification. We delivered Christmas gifts to homes of trainees who have families. Trainees and their families celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas with our agency staff. We instituted an open door policy for trainees to approach the program director. Staff take interest in the total well-being of trainees by calling and check on those who may be absent from training on any given day. We have peer counseling and team work to encourage open communication and trust among trainees.

We also have program policies to ensure safety, respect, well-being and health of the program and its participants. Individuals who repeatedly violate policies are reprimanded according to these policies and guidelines.

Enabling our trainees to participate in other community activities; and making it possible for them to work with other area agencies have helped us to introduce positive energy and zeal into the program. This has helped to increase and build morale, resolve attendance issues and reduce absenteeism.

D. Proposed changes, if any, in program design.

Our timeline on the proposed rehabilitation of the two houses donated by San Antonio Housing Authority has being altered due to the presence of traces of lead at both properties. Notwithstanding, we are continuing to provide learning experiences for our trainees by engaging in collaborative work with our local partners. There are still lots of available sites and work to be completed by our trainees. We are hopeful the lead issue will be resolved within the month.

E. Impediments encountered during the reporting period and solutions adopted to overcome them, as well as any delays in progress of grant activities because of those impediments.

Our greatest challenge and impediment has been the discovery of lead traces at both of the proposed houses. While our timeline may be off, we are still providing learning opportunities for our trainees through work with our collaborative partners. The lead issue has now become an opportunity to expose our trainees to the field of lead abatement. We are working with the City of San Antonio's Neighborhood Action Department to certify select trainees in lead abatement, thus enhancing their marketability after the program ends.

F. Unusual activities, accomplishments, and features of the grant or experiences that would be helpful for other Youthbuild grantees.

Our involvement with the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation Society was a very unique activity. Participation in disaster relief was not part of our original intent, but it proved to be a valuable experience for our participants. We are proud and appreciative of the warm reception we have enjoyed from our partners in the community and the local community as a whole.

Our partnerships have proven to be invaluable. Our agency has always sought partnerships with other service organizations to ensure our clients receive maximum aide. We have extended this belief to our ACYB program and have seen only good things come of it. Our trainees are able to receive GED classes, college courses, counseling, day care, housing assistance and much more without undue stress on the youth or the program.

The slogan or theme of our program—"Raising the Expectation Bar" has helped us to motivate and encourage our staff and participants to strive for success. We check the progress of staff and participants against our expectation bar. This has been a good motivator and a yardstick by which to check progress.

G. Your dropout rate: what contributes to it and what is your program doing to address this problem?

From July 1, 2004 - December 31, 2004, we had an overall dropout rate of 22 percent. Our goal was 28 participants but we ended the reporting period with an enrollment of 22 which is 78 percent of our goal.

From our exit interviews and holding conversations with those who dropped out of the program, it was revealed that participants were leaving to seek employment in hotels to earn more than the stipend. Other participants, in spite of the thorough interviews we conducted to identify suitability, could not adjust to the structure and the stringent policies and procedures of the program. Family considerations accounted for two participants dropping out of the program. We had some who dropped out due to legal problems prior to enrollment in the program.

Our program is instituting peer counseling to curb some of the drop out rate. Staff is making greater contact via phone calls to check up on participants to ensure they are doing well in and out of regular program period. We have instituted a family night so that we interact with family members to increase the trainees' support system. We continue to reinforce our high expectation by reciting our slogan—"raising the expectation bar". We provide more help with GED preparation so that participants are not overwhelmed with academic work. We increased stipend rates based on merit and accomplishments such as GED completion and site training performance. We continue to acquire donated items such as movie passes and local event passes to motivate and expose trainees to the real world. We increase youth opportunities with job shadowing and employable skills such as computer classes.