



La Plaza

◆ Serving ◆ Educating ◆ Celebrating ◆ Connecting

Strategic Plan

2013-2016

May 2013

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I. Introduction and Background

a. La Plaza's Evolution as a Valuable Asset to the Central Indiana Community

La Plaza, Inc. was initially established in 2002 as the umbrella organization to oversee fund development and capacity building for three long standing organizations: The Hispanic Education Center, El Centro Hispano, and FIESTA Indianapolis. However, in response to the tremendous growth of the Hispanic community in Central Indiana and the desire to be more effective and cost efficient, the four organizations decided to merge into a single entity under La Plaza, Inc. in 2004.

The success of the consolidation was realized due to the dedication of the four agencies to the future needs of the Latino community within Central Indiana and their recognition of the community's desire for a central organization that would contribute strongly to the effective and efficient delivery of programs and services.

La Plaza kept its promise to the community. Over the past eight years, La Plaza has served more clients with fewer staff; added two new education programs; diversified its funding streams; and remains a trusted voice for the Latino community in Central Indiana.

As a result of implementing its 2006-2009 Strategic Plan, La Plaza achieved the following notable accomplishments:

- expanded existing programs and established two new programs: Father/Son, patterned after the Mother/Daughter program, and the Leadership Institute for Latino Youth, a six week leadership program for middle school students;
- increased financial sustainability by narrowing the organization's primary focus to education;
- expanded collaborations to deliver health and human services;
- expanded development results from Night of the Americas and FIESTA Indianapolis; and individual donors; and
- strengthened its board, policies and procedures, and financial health, earning an "Excellent" agency evaluation rating by the United Way of Central Indiana.

Building on these successes, La Plaza then developed and implemented its 2010-2012 Strategic Plan, and achieved the following notable accomplishments:

- internally evaluated all educational programs and engaged an outside evaluation of Tu Futuro, the Leadership Institute for Latino Youth (LILY), and Mother-Daughter/Father-Son (MD/FS);
- increased capacity of LILY by 66.7%, to 50 students served annually;
- improved the impact of Tu Futuro by designing a curriculum for 9th and 10th grades;
- enhanced the Access to Health and Social Services program by engaging new partners and creating a Health Outreach Coordinator position;
- formed a Facilities Committee and conducted an internal needs assessment;

- increased support from individuals by 40% and events by 10%, and achieved 100% giving by board members; and
- provided leadership to a host of local education and health studies, community conversations, and the formations of common agendas (*What's Possible?* Community Conversations, Neighborhoods of Educational Opportunity Plan Steering Committee, Talent Alliance Executive Committee).

b. Strengths Opportunities, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

As the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan came to a close, La Plaza's board and leadership staff began planning for the organization's third Strategic Plan, to guide the work throughout 2013-2016. Utilizing a strategic planning consultant, La Plaza engaged in a series of meetings that resulted in an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), as well as the organization's mission, vision, guiding principles, goals, and measurable objectives. This process led to the development of three strategic goals that became the framework for La Plaza's 2013-2016 Strategic Plan, which are outlined in this document.

The following is a summary of the board's conclusion in each area of SWOT analysis:

Strengths

- La Plaza is a recognized leader in the community and is often the first organization approached to reach out to the Latino community.
- La Plaza has strong staff leadership.
- La Plaza designs and implements high quality programs and services.
- Through strong collaborations and partnerships, La Plaza is able to serve more families with less staff and lower costs.

Weaknesses

- La Plaza's annual budget is over-reliant on grants from foundations.
- La Plaza is located on the far eastside of Indianapolis, making access difficult for the large Latino community residing on the westside of town.
- La Plaza's board would benefit from greater expertise across a wide range of areas including philanthropy, public relations, marketing, and governance.

Opportunities

- Immigration reform at the national level would result in increased demand for La Plaza's programs and services, particularly in the area of education. The passage of immigration reform or the Dream Act would qualify more Latino students to attend college and therefore present greater opportunity for La Plaza to make an impact.
- The Latino community continues to grow. Indiana has the 21st largest Latino population in the United States, and 22% of the state's Latino population resides in Marion County.

- There is an increased community awareness of the importance of increasing the high school and college graduation rates.
- Despite health care reform, many Latinos will still be denied access to affordable health insurance.

Threats

- There is increasing competition from other new Latino organizations, such as Indiana Latino Expo and Indiana Latino Scholarship Fund;
- A lack of immigration reform results in increasing demands for La Plaza's Access to Health and Human Services; and
- Decreases in private and public funds continue to strain the organization's operating budget.

c. Vision

The newly adopted vision of the board of directors and leadership staff is that La Plaza is the recognized Central Indiana leader in helping Latinos reach their full educational potential by building on their strengths and fostering self-sufficiency through completion of higher education for youth and access to health and social services for families.

d. Mission

Since its inception, La Plaza's mission has been *"to serve, empower and integrate the Latino community of Central Indiana."* As a result of the 2013-2016 strategic planning process, the board of directors and leadership staff put forth a revised mission statement that more accurately describes the current, primary role of the organization to increase the number of students graduating from high school and completing post their college education: *"La Plaza strengthens Central Indiana by advocating and preparing Latino students for educational success and by connecting Latino families to health and social services."*

e. Guiding Principles

La Plaza's refined values statement reflects the core principles that ground it as an organization:

- We promote student success, high school and college completion.
- We deliver high quality, relevant programs with positive, measurable outcomes in the services we provide: education, health, and social services.
- We are responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to La Plaza.
- We perform our work with integrity and the highest ethical standards.
- We collaborate with other organizations and leverage the talents and expertise brought to La Plaza by our partners for the delivery of programs and services.
- We celebrate, preserve, and promote Latino culture and its value to the community.
- We are a forum that engenders trust and serves as a liaison between Latinos and the larger community.

- We foster leadership among Latinos and encourage their full participation in the community.
- We are a unifying voice for Latinos.

II. Challenges Facing the Central Indiana Latino Community

According to the 2010 US Census, the Latino population in Marion County has grown by 48.7% since 2007. A noteworthy 40% of the Latino population in Marion County are individuals 18 years old or under, indicating that the Latino population is young and La Plaza's opportunity for enormous impact is real. La Plaza helps these Latino students complete high school and attain a postsecondary degree – both of which will make them more competitive and more successful in today's and tomorrow's workforce.

a. Education Disparities

Statistics show that members representing Marion County's Latino community are at risk for low-education and employment attainment, as 50% of Hispanic adults have neither a high school diploma nor an equivalency, and only 10% have attended college (Catholic Charities Indianapolis, 2011).

Hispanic children often face multiple barriers and risks from birth to adulthood that ultimately affect their ability to become self-sufficient. For example, Hispanic children are three times as likely (35%) to be poor as compared to white children (12%) and nearly three times as likely to live in extreme poverty (US Census Bureau, 2011). In addition, Hispanic children are almost twice as likely as white children to have a parent in prison (the Pew Charitable Trust, 2010).

According to the Children's Defense Fund (2011), each day in the United States, 945 Hispanic students drop out of high school. Moreover, only 66% of Hispanic students graduate from high school within four years of starting ninth grade, as compared to 82% of White students (US Department of Education, 2011).

While college enrollment rates for Latino students ages 18-24 increased by 24% from 2009 to 2010, and 73% of Latino students attained a high school diploma or equivalency, only 44% of these students enrolled in college, and of those, only 17% were enrolled in a four-year college (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). According to data from the US Department of Commerce/US Census Bureau (2012), in the downturned economy, people without bachelor's degree have higher rates of unemployment than those with a bachelor's degree. This and other research continues to show, there is a strong correlation between education and job security.

b. Health Disparities

A lack of adequate health care, knowledge of disease prevention, and healthy lifestyle education also face the Latino community in Indiana. As described in the IU School of Medicine and Department of Public Health's 2011 *Hispanic Health Briefing*, compared

to white adults, Hoosier Latinos report a 61% higher rate of being unable to seek regular medical attention due to cost, and 32% indicate having no medical insurance. This report also highlighted the following three challenges facing Hoosier Latinos:

- Problematic Health Behaviors: including low levels of exercise, inadequate or non-healthy diet, lower health care use, including seeking screenings for diseases
- Poor Mental Health: Hispanics scored worse on the PHQ (a depression and anxiety survey) than whites
- Education: evidence suggests that lower education attainment rates in the Hispanic community lead to not only lower income but also a lack of health insurance

III. La Plaza Education Programs

La Plaza's education programs target first generation low-income Latino students and their families. La Plaza's education programs help students and families navigate the educational system and help schools build their capacity to serve Latino students

a. Summer Discovery

The Summer Discovery program is an academic focused program for children in 1st – 6th grade. This multi-faceted program provides academic enrichment in reading, math and technology, physical and health education, visual and performing arts, community service projects, educational field trips, college and career exploration, and character education.

Over 95% of the students in La Plaza's Summer Discovery program are immigrants or children of immigrants and speak native languages other than English and 92% are from families who have incomes lower than the federal poverty level. The Summer Discovery program has an educational emphasis that provides an academic bridge from one school year to the next. The program provides focused instruction and additional tutoring to help students strengthen their academic skills and their use of the English language as well as enriching activities that promote leadership as well as physical activity to encourage positive personal development and healthy living.

In response to a demand from the community, the Summer Discovery program has continued to increase its capacity for enrollment. Over the past three years, enrollment has increased 16%, with 124 students participating in 2012. In addition, there were 23 students placed on a waiting list once enrollment reached its capacity. Of the 124 participants in 2012:

- 99% of students improved language arts skills based on pre and post-testing;
- 90% of students improved math skills based on pre and post-testing;
- 85% of students read 20 or more books during the program;

- 100% of students participated in interdisciplinary arts and physical/health education lessons; and
- 87% of students participated in community service projects; and 85% of students were exposed to college life during a visit to Marian University.

b. The Leadership Institute for Latino Youth

The Leadership Institute for Latino Youth (LILY) is a six-week summer leadership program for 7th – 11th graders designed to help Latino students gain the skills necessary to be better prepared for college, work, and life.

The LILY program continues to grow and improve each year. In fact, in 2011 LILY was selected as a national semi-finalist for the National Summer Learning Association's 'Excellence in Summer Learning Award.' It was also highlighted in the national guide *Best Practices in Summer Learning Programs for Middle and High School Youth*.

The LILY program enrollment has nearly doubled since it started in 2009. In the summer of 2012, 59 students participated in LILY. In addition to student enrollment, the program has expanded the duration of the program (from four to six weeks), the length of the program day (from seven to eight and a half hours), and the grade levels of participants (to now include 10th and 11th grade). Due to multiple requests from our former LILY students and their families, in 2012 La Plaza created an additional component for 11th graders. The LILY Ambassador program offers experiences for these youth such as academic workshops, guest speakers from various career fields, community service projects, educational field trips, job shadows, and opportunities to build leadership skills while assisting with the elementary school program.

The outcomes of the LILY program continue to be impressive. In 2012:

- 95% of students improved skills in math and 81% of students improved skills in English based on pre and post assessments;
- 100% of students who completed the program identified a career path and academic plan,
- 70% of students demonstrated an increase in knowledge about college readiness and career preparation;
- 80% of students feel they increased their knowledge of Microsoft Word and Power Point;
- 86% of students have learned additional academic skills and tools for using the internet for research; and
- 93% of students responded that they learned how to become a leader in their community.

c. Mother-Daughter/Father-Son programs

The Mother-Daughter/Father-Son (MD/FS) programs encourage and prepare students to complete high school and pursue and complete postsecondary education, while

empowering parents and guardians to support their children's educational careers and focus on their own personal development. The MD/FS programs are currently offered to middle school students and their families at five Central Indiana schools.

Through MD/FS, La Plaza serves Latino youth by providing them with: a culturally competent and comprehensive postsecondary readiness curriculum; Latino mentors; bilingual staff; regular home visits; and enhanced partnerships with their schools and teachers. Program objectives include:

- improving the academic performance of students;
- exposing students to the college experience and career exploration opportunities;
- helping students set short and long-term educational and career goals;
- increasing parent knowledge about community resources and involvement in their child's education;
- fostering students' leadership and personal development;
- encouraging students to become leaders in their community; and
- how to best help serve and empower others through community service.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, 185 students participated in MD/FS programs. Based on student surveys and staff records, outcomes and results from the 2011-2012 academic year include:

- 89% of students indicated that, "being a good student is an important part of who I am";
- 86% of enrolled students increased their knowledge about colleges and potential careers;
- 77% of students plan to attain a postsecondary education; and
- 76% of enrolled students set short and long term academic and career goals.

In 2011, the MD/FS program model was adapted in order to address challenges in student retention and attendance. At several of the schools, the programs are now being offered to students during the school day because of lack of after school transportation. La Plaza is able to do this because the program aligns with many of the Indiana State Academic Standards. Schools are willing to provide the programs during instructional time because they agree that it can lead to improvement in student's grades, behavior, and attitude toward school. This model has shown successful results and will be evaluated for future program implementation.

d. Tu Futuro (Your Future)

Tu Futuro supports and encourages Latino high school and non-traditional students to complete high school and pursue postsecondary education opportunities. Tu Futuro increases students' future employability and attainment of high-quality degrees and credentials, and helps address language, citizenship and low-income barriers the students and their families face with regard to access to higher education.

In 18 public and private school settings in Central Indiana, the Tu Futuro program currently provides some or all of the following services: introductory college preparation workshops; an eight-week bi-lingual workshop series for 9th and 10th grade students, parent workshops; education fairs; college visits; community service and student leadership development activities; mentoring opportunities; and individualized student consultations in person, by phone, and email. In and out of the school setting, Tu Futuro program staff assists students and their families with completing online career inventories, researching postsecondary institutions of interest, and completing college entrance exam registrations, college and scholarship applications. Among other strategies, students are encouraged to enroll in rigorous college preparation courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB), and complete postsecondary entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, the Tu Futuro program served 1,618 9th-12th grade Latino students and worked intensively with 224 high school seniors. Additionally, in 2011, the Tu Futuro program introduced an eight-week bi-lingual workshop series for 9th and 10th grade students, providing a comprehensive career exploration, college information, test preparation and study skills, and other educational support. Outcomes for Tu Futuro for the 2011-2012 academic year include:

- 89% of seniors applied to college;
- 52% of seniors applied for scholarships;
- 53% of seniors were enrolled in a postsecondary institution, a result that exceeds the national average of Latino college enrollment by 21%;
- 85% of 9th and 10th grade students reported an increased desire to attend college;
- 80% of 9th and 10th grade students could name the requirements for college enrollment; and
- 85% of 9th and 10th grade students could name various sources of where to obtain financial aid.

e. The La Plaza Scholarship Fund

Each year La Plaza awards up to six, \$2,000 four-year scholarships to deserving Latino students from across Indiana. Students are selected based on their academic record, community involvement, and financial need. For many, these awards determine if the student will be able to attend college.

IV. Access to Health and Social Services Program

La Plaza believes that in order for families to be productive citizens and focus on their own advancement, they must have their basic social and health needs met. During the economic crisis, the community has relied on La Plaza's services to see them through these times. In collaboration with community partners, La Plaza builds trust, bundles services, and facilitates access to essential health and social services for 4,400 Latinos in Central Indiana Program objectives include:

- reducing health disparity in Central Indiana by providing access to essential high quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate health care to the Latino population;
- providing access to essential social services to the Central Indiana Latino population to ensure that their basic needs are met so that their overall health does not quickly decline;
- partnering with universities and researchers to implement health studies in order to better understand the health needs of the Latino community; and
- partnering with local health organizations to help them build capacity to better serve Latinos in a culturally effective manner.

Many culturally and linguistically appropriate on-site services focused on health care needs are provided at La Plaza including:

- *Women, Infant and Children (WIC)* to provide families with supplemental foods, nutrition education, and health care referrals;
- *Covering Kids and Families* program to ensure children have access to health insurance programs such as Medicaid, Hoosier Healthwise and Wishard Advantage;
- a pediatric health clinic through a partnership with Wishard Hospital to ensure children's health care access;
- *Smile Mobile Dental Clinic* to promote children's oral health through low or no-cost dental exams;
- *Charlas* (presentations) are offered on different health topics such as cancer prevention, diabetes, nutrition, prenatal care, and HIV;
- the *Dyson Community Pediatric Training Initiative* brings pediatric medical residents to La Plaza to gain Latino cultural understanding so that they can better serve their Latino patients; and
- health studies focused on Latinos are implemented in partnership with universities and researchers.

La Plaza also provides access to social services including:

- emergency financial assistance for rent and utilities to support families' basic needs for housing;
- a food pantry to support families' hunger and nutrition needs;
- *Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic* that provides pro bono consultations to support families' legal needs;
- assistance with applying for food stamps and TANF to maximize families' ability to meet basic needs;
- holiday assistance such as food, gifts, and financial assistance at a time when basic needs can be more pronounced;
- job fairs and job opening distributions to provide families with greater self-sufficiency through increased employment;
- English translation services for families who are not English-proficient ; and

- referrals to various social service organizations which provide additional services to families in need.

V. Strategic Goals 2013-2016

In the eight years since La Plaza merged with three other local Hispanic- serving organizations, thousands of individuals have accessed services focused on educational attainment, health, and social services, helping stabilize individuals and families alike, and build their self-sufficiency. During that same time period, countless others in the broader community have been engaged in the vibrancy of Hispanic culture through two annual La Plaza events: *Night of the Americas* annual dinner and the *FIESTA Indianapolis* festival. Also in the last eight years, the local Hispanic community has also continued to grow significantly, creating an even greater demand for La Plaza's services. The organization's success in meeting community needs has attracted attention from other communities, both in Indiana and around the country.

Building on its success, La Plaza's board and leadership staff spent the second half of 2012 reflecting on stakeholder perceptions of the organization's work, researching community needs, and exploring program directions for the next four years. The result is this draft plan, which includes a re-articulated mission statement, a new vision, refined values, and the process by which La Plaza will advance its mission within the framework of its two primary purposes:

- providing strong education programs to help Central Indiana's Latino students complete high school and pursue higher education; and
- connecting Central Indiana's Latino families – especially newcomers – with essential, wrap-around health and social services to ensure that each family member can thrive in the community.

La Plaza has set the goals strategic goals:

- Increase the number of Central Indiana's Latino students completing high school and pursuing postsecondary education;
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of our health and social services; and
- Increase organizational capacity through improved fundraising, marketing and community awareness, and board effectiveness.

These goals and an overview of responsible parties and deadlines are outlined in the following *Timeline and Accountability Profile*. The details of implementation and evaluation will be created, managed, and completed as listed on the chart by the appropriate parties.

Goal #1: Increase the number of Central Indiana’s Latino students completing high school and pursuing postsecondary education.

Strategy	Accountability	Targeted Completion Date(s)	Status
1. Conduct an outside evaluation of all education programs, analyze results, and implement recommendations so that 95% of enrolled seniors graduate from high school and 55% enroll in postsecondary institutions in the year following high school graduation	Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	June 2014 for completion of evaluation December 2016 for implementation of recommendations	
2. Create and implement a continuum of integrated, sequential curricula and short-term outcome indicators for students in grades 1-12 by aligning Summer Discovery, LILY, and MD/FS with the Tu Futuro program	Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	June 2014	
3. Equip more Latino parents to become effective advocates for their children’s education by developing and implementing parent advocacy strategies into educational programs and broader community collaborations	Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	June 2014	
4. Improve program effectiveness by developing and implementing professional development plans for	Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	December 2013	

Strategy	Accountability	Targeted Completion Date(s)	Status
all staff			
5. Educate the broader community about the need for La Plaza's programs by researching, producing, disseminating, and leveraging a community report on the state of Latino youth in Marion County	Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	June 2015	

Goal #2: Improve the quality and effectiveness of our health and social services.

Strategy	Accountability	Targeted Completion Date	Status
1. Conduct an evaluation on the effectiveness of the current co-located service program delivery model, analyze results, and implement recommendations.	Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	December 2013 for completion of evaluation	
2. Complete a community and facility needs assessment to determine if there are better and more effective ways and locations for delivering programs	Facility Committee, President & CEO	June 2015	
3. Develop systems to track data about need for and effectiveness of existing programs and needs that are not being met	Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	December 2014	

Strategy	Accountability	Targeted Completion Date	Status
4. Develop a revised health and social service model based on results of the community and facility needs assessment and the analysis of data collected on existing and needed programs	Facility Committee, Program Committee, President & CEO, Director of Programs	December 2015	

Goal #3: Increase La Plaza’s organizational capacity through improved fundraising, marketing, and board effectiveness and enhanced community awareness.

Strategy	Accountability	Targeted Completion Date	Status
1. Design and implement a comprehensive annual development plan to increase and broaden financial support for the organization	Development Committee, Director of Development	December 2013 December 2014 December 2015 December 2016	
2. Develop and implement an individual gifts solicitation program focused on Latinos and the broader community, thereby increasing funds contributed to the organization from individuals by 10% in 2013 (metrics for future years will be developed annually)	Development Committee, Director of Development	December 2013	
3. Strengthen donor and funder stewardship programs to ensure	Development Committee, Director	December 2014	

Strategy	Accountability	Targeted Completion Date	Status
donors acknowledged, engaged, and aware of the impact of their gifts to increase the organization's donor retention rate to 60% or higher by 2014 (metrics for future years will be developed annually)	of Development		
4. Leverage board relationships to expand corporate sponsorships by 5% in 2013 (metrics for future years will be developed annually)	Development Committee, Director of Development	December 2013	
5. Continue to grow the fundraising results from current events (FIESTA Indianapolis and Night of the Americas) by 10% in 2013 (metrics for futures years will be developed annually), while strengthening the cultural emphasis of the programs to reach the broader community	Marketing & Public Relations Committee, Director of Development	December 2014	
6. Develop an annual marketing plan to communicate La Plaza's mission to key audiences, using the most appropriate social, print, earned, and purchased media and ensure that La Plaza is cited in the media among community thought leaders (metrics to be developed annually)	Marketing & Public Relations Committee, Director of Development	December 2013 December 2014 December 2015 December 2016	

Strategy	Accountability	Targeted Completion Date	Status
<p>7. Develop an annual plan to involve program partners and board members in regular advocacy efforts (e.g. op ed pieces and speaking engagements) to heighten awareness in the broader community of the challenges facing Latinos and La Plaza's Role (metrics to be developed annually)</p>	<p>Marketing & Public Relations Committee, Director of Development</p>	<p>December 2013 December 2014 December 2015 December 2016</p>	
<p>8. Increase the engagement, commitment and effectiveness of the board by developing and implementing formal processes for recruiting, orienting, and evaluating board members</p>	<p>Governance Committee, President & CEO</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	