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July 15, 2009

Eileen Maher  
Unified Port of San Diego  
3165 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92101

RECEIVED  
JUL 29 2009  
Environmental  
Services

Dear Ms. Maher:

On behalf of everyone connected with Aquatic Adventures Science Education Foundation, I thank you for your continued support through the Unified Port of San Diego. With your \$30,000 grant, science education for low-income youth in City Heights through the *SEA Series Initiative* was greatly enhanced. I have enclosed our final report for your review.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me at (858)488-3849. We are very appreciative of the Unified Port of San Diego's support of the *SEA Series Initiative* and commitment to expanding literacy and stewardship of San Diego Bay!

Sincerely,

Shara Fisler  
Executive Director

/s  
Enclosure

## SEA Series Initiative

### Initiative Outcomes

Aquatic Adventures verifies program success based on the outcomes of quantitative and qualitative evaluation led by Roxanne Ruzic, Ed.D., a contracted specialist in educational research. Dr. Ruzic received her doctorate in education from Harvard University. She is an education and research consultant and teaches graduate level courses in research methods for Chapman University.

Content assessments, attitudinal surveys, and interviews units were administered and are being entered and analyzed. In addition, student and teacher participation information is tracked. **The final evaluation results will be available in our annual evaluation report in January 2010.**

Each project goal as described in the grant application is listed with outcomes for each recorded below.

#### Goal: Increase interest & participation in the environmental sciences among students and teachers

Outcomes:

- 2 additional elementary schools and 2 additional middle schools, in the San Diego Bay watershed were provided with the program.
- 1,903 students participated in the program
- 16,180 total educational hours were provided.
- 54 teachers participated in professional development.
- 54 classrooms received books and science materials.

#### Goal: Increase performance and persistence in environmental science by students

Outcomes:

- Pre- and post-content assessments were administered to program participants to measure environmental science performance.

#### Goal: Increase interest and engagement with natural habitats in the San Diego Bay watershed among students from urban communities

Outcomes:

- 1,903 students participated in a field-based experience to a natural setting.
- Pre – and post-interviews and surveys were administered to program participants to measure interest in natural habitats.

**Goal: Increase diversity among those who support and act for the benefit of the environment**

Outcomes:


- 1,903 students participated in an environmental action related to their unit of study.
- Student-created conservation campaign buttons were created and distributed to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade participants at middle schools to raise awareness around their conservation efforts.
- 30 bags of trash were removed from students' neighborhood canyons and streets.
- 20 storm drains located adjacent to students' schools were painted with "No Dumping...I Live Downstream" signage.
- 60 native species were planted in canyon habitats.



**Initiative Narrative**


Aquatic Adventures provided classroom-based, experiential science education to 1,903 low-income students and 54 teachers including professional development for classroom teachers, hands-on activities, thematic curriculum, books and materials, a field experience to study conservation concepts and an environmental service project that students implement at the completion of the program.

The initiative was expanded to reach four new schools this year. In total, the program was provided to all 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes at four elementary schools and four middle schools in low socio-economic status communities. Six of the schools are located within the Chollas Creek Watershed, which leads to San Diego Bay. Curriculum is grade level specific, with different curriculum units and activities for each grade.

Each Unit Incorporates:

<p><b>In-Class Activities</b></p> 	<p>All students participated in four to five hands-on, interactive, standards-based science lessons in their classrooms led by Aquatic Adventures staff. Interactive program content introduced students to science in genuine ways, helping them make connections between science and their own lives and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:</b> Students became "Invert Investigators" learning about invertebrate adaptations to the rocky seashore habitat and how coastal habitats are linked to inland neighborhoods.</li><li>• <b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students became "Wetland Avengers" learning about the importance of the wetland ecosystem and its functions.</li><li>• <b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students became "Research Scientists"</li></ul>
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	<p>performing experiments and exploring the scientific process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students became <i>"Time Travelers"</i> using geologic evidence to discover what the Earth was like in the past and the forces that are shaping its future.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Field Exploration</b></p> 	<p>All students participated in one science focused field trip led by Aquatic Adventures staff, offering a venue for experiential learning of science content and an opportunity to explore local tidelands. Field-based learning allowed students to apply their knowledge gained in the classroom and to understand the relevance of science.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:</b> Students tide pooled to discover invertebrate behaviors and adaptations in the rocky seashore habitat and conducted quadrat analysis to assess biodiversity.</li> <li>● <b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students explored wetland habitat at the Chula Vista Nature Center.</li> <li>● <b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students looked in-depth at the bay through running experiments testing animal adaptations, performing DNA analysis to identify plankton, and analyzing water quality.</li> <li>● <b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students visited the Birch Aquarium where they used visualization technology to "fly" over the Earth's ocean and understand plate tectonics. They also simulated coring techniques to study microfossils.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Environmental Service</b></p> 	<p>All students participated in a locally-based environmental service project related to the science curriculum and led by Aquatic Adventures staff. By participating in locally-based environmental projects, students gained the belief that they can make a difference, encouraged others to participate in stewardship and increased everyone's ability to increase quality of life within highly urbanized communities and downstream in San Diego Bay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:</b> Students conducted a street cleanup in their neighborhood and painted storm drains with "No Dumping" signs emphasizing how local actions in urban communities affect their neighborhood environment and tidelands.</li> <li>● <b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> In partnership with the San Diego Canyonlands, Inc. students worked with community volunteers to conduct habitat restoration in an urban canyon neighboring their school. Restoration activities varied depending on each canyon's needs and included planting 60 native species, collecting and dispersing native plant seed, and</li> </ul>

	<p>removal of 10 bags of trash.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students mentored younger students while playing the “Save Our Island!” board game which requires them to make good environmental decisions.</li> <li>● <b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> Students designed and created posters to encourage others to conserve resources and to reduce, reuse, and recycle.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Classroom Teacher Support</b></p> 	<p>In order to increase the number of teachers who provide quality hands-on, interdisciplinary science education to their students in the early grades, Aquatic Adventures provided activities to increase teachers’ comfort and facility in science. All teachers received supports and classroom materials to enrich and extend their students’ environmental science and literacy learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All teachers participated in a curriculum-based professional development workshop led by Aquatic Adventures.</li> <li>● All sixth grade teachers participated in a science-based professional development workshop led by a Scripps Institution of Oceanography scientist.</li> <li>● All classroom teachers received standards-based lessons linked to the hands-on science activities for use in their classrooms.</li> <li>● All classroom teachers received theme-related books for use with the curriculum units, enabling them to meet language arts requirements. In addition, all sixth grade teachers received a science kit for use with the curriculum units enabling them to provide hands-on scientific learning experiences.</li> </ul>

## Enhancements

This year Aquatic Adventures utilized the results of previous years’ program evaluation to create a comprehensive plan for curriculum enhancement. The plan was designed to ensure that we are exceeding all program goals and best meeting teacher and student needs. This guide is being used to assess all curriculum units and direct enhancement efforts. To date, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade unit has undergone assessment and changes and will be ready for use in the next academic year. Enhancements include:

- Incorporating nature in students’ neighborhoods into lessons across all grade levels
- Adding urban ecology lessons to teacher’s thematic curriculum to tie science in student’s community to the tidelands
- Broadening the range of sciences students are exposed to
- Linking curriculum to Environmental Education Initiative and National Science Standards



# AQUATIC ADVENTURES

## ANNUAL REPORT: 2008



### ***OUR MISSION:***

Aquatic Adventures educates urban youth about science, the ocean and nature through tuition-free programs, creating the next generation of scientific and environmental leaders.

**Aquatic Adventures**

2211 Pacific Beach Drive • San Diego, CA 92109

858.488.3849 (tel) • 858.488.4265 (fax) • [www.aquaticadventures.org](http://www.aquaticadventures.org)

Dear Friends and Supporters:

Due to your extraordinary contribution and efforts, 2008 has been a year of accomplishment and new growth for Aquatic Adventures and our students. This year we served over 4,000 young people, organized one of the largest community-driven wetland restoration projects in the country, and were honored with regional and national-level awards for our work. We have brought our programs to a new set of elementary schools in San Diego, expanded our conservation research in Baja California and now more than 90 percent of our 2008 high school program graduates are attending four-year universities.

Aquatic Adventures remains at the forefront of addressing several significant areas of need and possibility for both our region and our nation: the need to support young people from underserved communities as they strive to attain their goals, the need to strengthen science education in our schools, and the need to educate young people – and all of our citizens – about ways in which they can contribute to environmental sustainability.

Aquatic Adventures is looking forward to an exciting and dynamic 2009. This year will mark the tenth anniversary of our organization's founding and we expect it to be a year of great change as well as continued growth and opportunity. This year we are embarking on an initiative to better communicate our mission and the power of our work. This effort will include selecting a new name for our organization, as well as new materials that communicate the unique qualities of our science programming for underserved youth. We look forward to sharing our new name and new identity with you by the spring of this year.

We invite you to review our 2008 annual report and to continue to stay closely involved with the work of Aquatic Adventures. We deeply appreciate your ongoing support for our programs and services.

With best wishes for an exciting New Year.



Ileana Ovalle  
Board Chair 2007-2008



Shara Fisler  
Executive Director



*Students explore science, nature and the ocean through hands-on, experiential learning.*

- Served over **4,470** with **48,800** hours of education.
- Provided professional development for over **43** San Diego Unified School District teachers.
- Provided **98%** tuition-free programs.
- Mobilized over **1,000** volunteers to translate environmental awareness into action through an event which restored two acres of degraded habitat.
- Planted more than **2,500** native plants and created a school garden on Hamilton Elementary School's campus.
- Engaged **60,000** students nation wide in an electronic field trip on grey whales and conservation efforts.
- Program participants in our classroom and field-based school programs increased their science content knowledge by **23%** or greater.
- **100%** of 2008 intensive after-school and summer program graduates are attending college and greater than **90%** are attending four-year universities, as compared to less than **17%** of their peers from the same school. One of our graduates is now attending **Brown University**, making her the first graduate from her high school to attend an Ivy League institution in over 15 years.
- **75%** of intensive after-school and summer program college students who have declared a major have done so in the sciences.
- In January, 2008 Aquatic Adventures was selected as the National Environmental Excellence Award winner by SeaWorld/Busch Gardens/Fujifilm.
- In November, 2008 Aquatic Adventures was the recipient of the Bank of America Neighborhood Excellence Award.



*Aquatic Adventures staff and students receive the 2008 Environmental Excellence Award, from SeaWorld, Busch Gardens and Fujifilm.*



*2008 alumna, Betty Hua, becomes the first graduate from her high school to attend an Ivy League institution in over 15 years.*

## SEA SERIES INITIATIVE

Classroom and field-based school programs

The SEA Series Initiative provides classroom and field-based science education for elementary and middle school students, as well as professional development and resources for their classroom teachers. Students participate in the program through four consecutive years.

The Initiative is currently provided at Carson Elementary, Hamilton Elementary, Florence Joyner Elementary, Gompers Middle, Monroe Clark Middle, and Montgomery Middle School. The following report summarizes results from the 2007-2008 academic year.



*Fourth grade students conduct a scientific experiment.*

**"It [the program] will definitely generate a lot of interest in these kids to where they're going to want to be biologists...It perks up that interest, and next year, when they have laboratory science with microscopes, they will already have a base of knowledge from this and they can see how scientists are actually working with this stuff."**

**—Wilson Middle School Teacher**

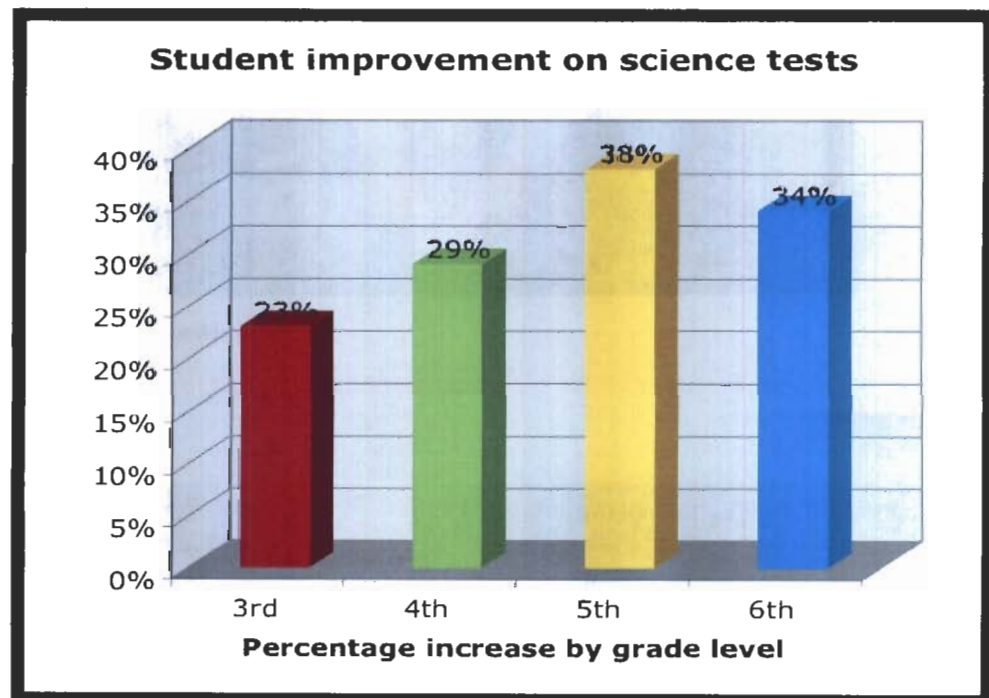
**"I think [science] is important, because if scientists didn't do experiments, they wouldn't solve problems."**

**—Aquatic Adventures Elementary School Student**

OUTCOMES & EVALUATION RESULTS:

- **100%** of teachers said the program helped students learn science.
- **100%** of teachers said the program made the students more interested in science.
- **100%** of teachers said the program made the students more confident in science.
- **100%** of teachers said the program made it easier for students to achieve the goals associated with state science standards.
- **92%** of students reported that they help the environment.

- **1,450** students participated in **13,131** total educational hours.
- **43** teachers participated in professional development, receiving books and science materials.



*On average, students did better on an evaluative test of science knowledge and understanding at every grade level after participating in the program.*

## SEA POWER INITIATIVE

Intensive after-school and summer programs & support services

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The *SEA Power Initiative* is designed to provide middle and high school students with a series of programs that act as building blocks in ocean science education and research focused experiences. Beyond programmatic components, the initiative provides sixth grade through college students with a support structure to ensure their ability to pursue higher education and a career in the sciences.



*High school students prepare to attend college.*

"[The program] really changed my life...It helped me to...see myself as a leader in our community... I feel capable of making a change."

*– Aquatic Adventures High School Student*

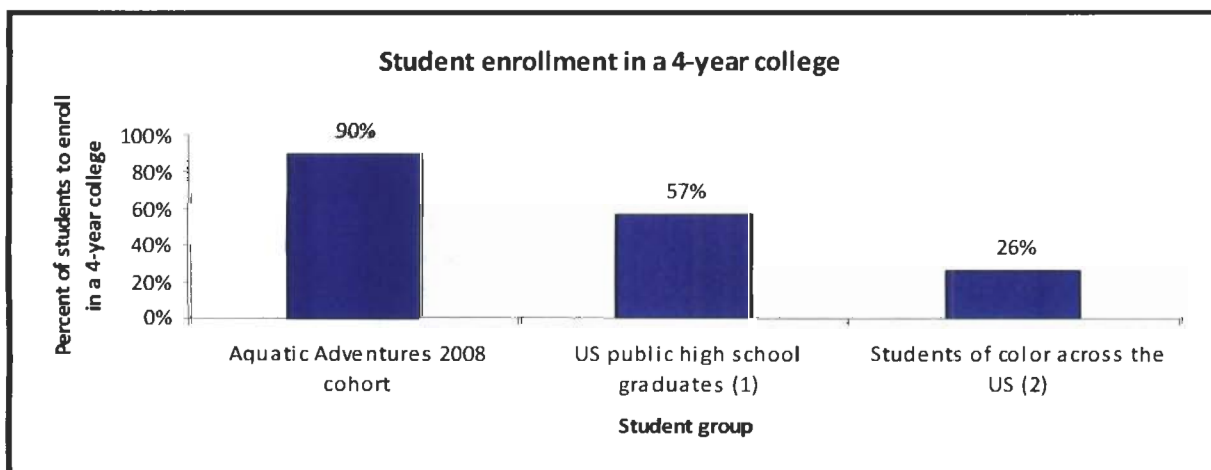
"Science...[the program] teaches you what's out there and that you can do it and it's possible, don't give up because it seems like it's hard because it's not. If you are passionate you can do it."

*–Aquatic Adventures High School Student*

OUTCOMES & EVALUATION RESULTS:

- Student scores on an objective test of science knowledge and understanding increased by an average of **49%** between the beginning and end of the high school program.
- **80%** of high school students ended the 2007-2008 school year with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above.
- In a high school where less than 17% of students go on to college each year, **100%** of Aquatic Adventures' 2008 graduates are attending college, including Brown University, University of California, Berkeley, and University of California, San Diego.
- **75%** of students who have declared a major have done so in the sciences as compared to 25% of students of color nationally.
- **100%** of students ended the high school program with an awareness of environmental issues and a belief that they can help the environment. **67%** reported making real changes and sacrifices to help the environment.

- **90** students from middle school, high school, and post-high school participated in SEA Power programs and/or supports.
- **48** middle and high school students participated in a total of **7,629** hours of science instruction, **5,865** hours of field experiences in natural settings, and **1,520** hours of environmental service.
- **20** high school students conducted conservation-based research in Baja California, Mexico, working alongside scientists and contributing to science and conservation fields.



**90%** of Aquatic Adventures high school graduates are attending 4-year colleges as compared to 57% of public high school graduates in the U.S. and 26% of students of color nationally.

(1) US Department of Education 2008  
 (2) US Department of Education 2005

## WETLAND AVENGERS/CAMPEONES DE LOS CAÑONES

Habitat stewardship projects

*Wetland Avengers/Campeones de los Cañones*, is a community-based watershed education and habitat restoration project that utilizes an innovative approach to engender environmental awareness and action, as well as increased experiences and enjoyment of the natural world within highly urbanized areas. The project culminates in an event that mobilizes hundreds of volunteers from a non-traditional environmental constituency to embark on a "Mission Possible" to protect their watershed, benefiting wildlife, water, habitats and humans for today and tomorrow.



*Community youth work to restore their neighborhood canyon.*

*"Canyons are so important because they're an escape from everyday life. Right now the canyons are diamonds in the rough, but once they are restored, they'll be healthy and safe places for our community."*

*- Aquatic Adventures High School Student*

*"Science is our final frontier. Through science, students have the desire to learn to read, do math and explore, and build toward the future. The canyons are a great resource in making science come alive."*

*- Sheila Jackson,  
Vice President of the San Diego Unified School*

## WETLAND AVENGERS/CAMPEONES DE LOS CAÑONES

Habitat stewardship projects

### OUTCOMES & EVALUATION RESULTS:

- The creation and facilitation of the **City Heights Canyons and Communities Alliance**, a 12 member group, that meets monthly to integrate urban communities with their local natural canyon environments, for the purpose of achieving environmental sustainability and increased quality of life.
- **2 acres** of coastal sage scrub and southern maritime chaparral habitat and **200 linear feet** of stream corridor were restored through removal of trash and invasive species and planting a variety of native species.
- An **outdoor classroom** was created in the canyon adjacent to the elementary school to provide learning and personal development opportunities for thousands of youth.
- A **native plant garden** was created on campus at Hamilton Elementary School to link the canyon to the campus.
- **95%** of survey respondents reported that they “definitely” (75%) or “probably” (20%) would visit the canyon again.
- **100%** of survey respondents reported that they “definitely” (88%) or “probably” (12%) would like to attend an event like this again.
- **99%** of survey respondents reported that they “definitely” (76%) or “probably” (23%) would be willing to help with a smaller project in the canyon.

- **1,052** volunteers participated in Wetland Avengers/ Campeones de los Cañones.
- **53%** of participants surveyed identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino/a, **25%** as White, **15%** as Asian, and **5%** as African-American.
- More than **two-thirds** of those surveyed reside in neighborhoods with lower-than-average median household incomes.
- **58%** of participants were under **18** years old.
- **2,500** native plants were planted.
- **160** cubic yards of invasive plant material and **40** cubic yards of trash were removed from canyon and wetland habitat.
- **202** volunteers participated in at least **1** of **6** Friends of Swan Canyon restoration projects.

# THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Donors & Supporters

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## \$50,000 +

Bank of America Foundation (\$200,000); Yvette & Floyd Pickrell (\$100,000); and J.W. Sefton Foundation (\$50,000).

## \$25,000 - \$49,999

American Honda Foundation; AmeriCorps VISTA, Harriet E. Pflieger Foundation; Joint Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); Orca Fund at The San Diego Foundation; Sempra Energy; and Sierra Club Foundation.

## \$10,000 - \$24,999

Anonymous; Biogen Idec Foundation; Jane & Dick Brown; City of San Diego; County of San Diego: Supervisor Greg Cox; Del Corazon; Ivan Dunmire; Joan Eichen; Endangered Habitats Conservancy; Tracy & Gabe Giordano; HD Supply; Invitrogen Corporation; Jiji Foundation; QUALCOMM, Inc.; REI; Reuben H. Fleet Fund at The San Diego Foundation; SeaWorld/Busch Gardens Environmental Excellence Awards; Unified Port of San Diego; and Wachovia Bank.

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

Amylin Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Anonymous; County of San Diego: Supervisor Pam Slater Price; Cox Communications; Cox Conserves at Cox Communications; CW Cares for Kids Fund, a fund of the McCormick Foundation; Linnea & Paul Dayton; Linda & Joel Fidler; French Fund & Masserini Trust; Scott Grimes; Hervey Family Fund at The San Diego Foundation; International Community Foundation; Dina & John Johns; Johnson Family Foundation; Linnie Cooper Foundation; LOWE's; PADI Foundation; Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch; ResMed Foundation; San Diego Audubon Society; San Diego National Bank; Solon E. Summerfield Foundation Inc.; The Legler Benbrough Foundation; and Union Bank of California.

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# THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Donors & Supporters

## \$500 - \$999

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## under \$499

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*Floyd & Yvette Pickrell with friends  
at Aquatic Adventures Annual Gala.*



*Students and staff receive Bank of America's  
contribution to help Aquatic Adventures grow  
in the community of City Heights.*

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### **SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD**

Dr. Paul Dayton, Dr. Drew Talley, Dr. Theresa Talley, Dr. Yonat Swimmer, and Dr. John Wang.

### **EDUCATION & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

Dr. Carlos Nelson, Margaret Ortega, and Dr. Roxanne Ruzic.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD**

Bruce Hansen and Craig Hooker.

### **FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Lorena Alvarez, Paulo Alvarez, Elviro Barraza, Irma Barraza, Serena Campos, Felicia El-Aton, Hermalinda Figueroa, Linda Lon, Letti Mehari, Alma Rodriguez, David Rodriguez, Jackie Rodriguez, Rueben Vargas, and Hilaria Vargas.

### **YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Alex Alvarez, Richie Alvarez, Ulisses Barraza, Yvonne Campos, Cielo Corado, Abigail Figueroa, Antonio Figueroa, Angel Ortiz, David Paez, Tania Ruiz, Jasmin Stewart, Joel Urbina, Sonya Vargas.

# 2008 FINANCIALS

Year Ending December 31, 2008

## REVENUE

Capital Campaign	\$75,000.00
Corporate Contributions	\$208,416.16
Foundation Contributions	\$429,925.00
Fundraiser Contributions	\$152,349.43
Government Grants	\$140,266.20
Individual Contributions	\$62,943.11
Interest Income	\$209.92
Program Fees	\$19,840.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,088,949.82</b>

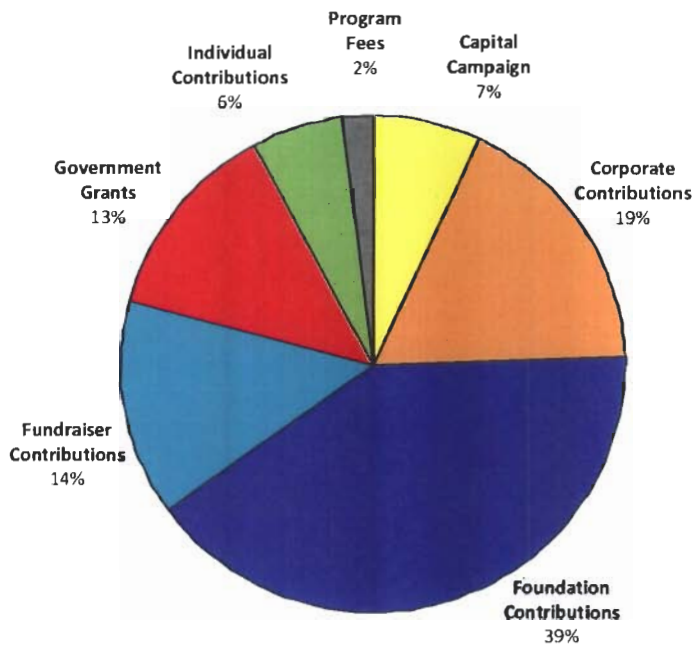
## EXPENSES

Program Services	\$975,580.94
General & Administrative	\$29,315.52
Fundraising	\$62,721.24
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,067,617.70</b>

## NET INCOME

**\$21,332.12**

### TOTAL REVENUE 2008



### PROGRAM EXPENSES 2008

