



Improving the lives of residents and business-owners in the Vernon Central Neighborhood.

The power of CRCD's work can be seen in the lives of young people who gain high school diplomas, go to college, earn paychecks, move into stable and high quality housing, and revitalize their own community. The transformation of neglected, under-utilized buildings into neighborhood treasures, as happened with the Dunbar Hotel, shows the effectiveness of CRCD's place-based approach. As people come together to live, work, and play in the neighborhood spaces created through CRCD initiatives, projects, and programs, and return South Los Angeles to its vibrant origins as a place where working families can thrive, CRCD and our partners are ready to redouble our efforts. We are excited to share with you just some of CRCD's recent successes that will illustrate the great things to come as we roll out our 2014-2019 strategic plan. Please enjoy, and share, our stories:

James McCowan, 25 years old

CRCD's housing, job training, and social enterprise turn a life around

When James was 18 years old, he aged out of the foster care system and became homeless—sleeping in cars, on friends' sofas, wherever he could find shelter. Soon he became, in his own words, "a knucklehead." He "got sloppy" and was arrested for drug dealing. Thankfully, the experience shook him to the core, and he learned that "fast money is not the only option. If you get it fast, you'll lose it fast."

By age 19, James had changed. He started out with a summer job at CRCD, and then helped remove graffiti and beautify Vernon-Central through job training with CRCD's Vernon-Central Workforce Development Network (VCN). James earned a leadership award at the VCN graduation ceremony. He got an apartment of his own through CRCD's housing program for homeless youth, along with household goods and support services from CRCD staff to ensure his success over the long haul.

Next, James got a job with CRCD's social enterprise, CRCD Enterprises, which employs local youth and young adults for projects including painting and maintenance. One of his regular assignments was to maintain the VCN YouthSource Center—a hub for youth services located on the ground floor of 28th Street Apartments. 28th Street Apartments is an affordable housing complex co-owned by CRCD and Clifford Beers Housing, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Seeing James' great work, the on-site property management firm—the John Stewart Company—offered James a full-time job to maintain the entire historic building. "Now I'm on the ladder to success—really an elevator, because I'm moving up so fast," he says.

Today, James reminds young people in South LA that CRCD has a lot to offer. In addition to job training, he learned how to fill out a resume, how to dress professionally, and how to manage money and pay his bills on time. "It wasn't easy, but CRCD offers a lot of good if you follow the path," he says. "No dream is ever too big to achieve."

Now a single father of a three-year old boy, James says his son won't follow the same path he did. "I want to continue to be a positive impact on young men and show there is a different path they can take," he adds. Calling his son the biggest blessing in his life, James says it feels good to be a role model. "For the first time, I have my own car with valid registration," he says. "If I get pulled over, I don't have to worry. I know I'm legit."



Voices

A 5-Year Strategic Plan

Letter from the Executive Director

Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD) has emerged as one of LA's go-to nonprofits for innovative strategies to improve the lives of youth and young adults and the neighborhoods where they live. CRCD has made a tremendous impact in the Vernon-Central community in South Los Angeles, with a special focus on the talented and energetic young people who reside here. Thanks to great partners and supporters, CRCD has earned respect from public and private sectors for our comprehensive approach to creating a vital, sustainable community.

Committed to improving the way our justice and foster care systems address the needs of young people, CRCD is excited to share its partnerships in several national initiatives. These include the federally funded Vera Institute of Justice's Youth Futures project, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Initiative, and the Aspen Institute's Opportunity Youth Network. These projects expand CRCD's education and career pathways programs for youth exiting the justice and foster care systems. CRCD is also addressing the needs of youth in the justice system thanks to the support of two local funders – The California Endowment and California Community Foundation. Through these efforts, CRCD is becoming a recognized leader in programs designed to assist youth with life-changing education and career opportunities

In this report to the community, I'm excited to announce our 2014-2019 strategic plan. Developed with youth, community leaders, our board, staff, and other stakeholders, this plan will guide our work through 2019. Our key goals include:

- Serve 2,500 youth from Vernon-Central
- Intensify our research and evaluation efforts
- Contribute to local and national conversations regarding "Opportunity Youth"
- Develop at least 250 more units of affordable housing in Vernon Central

As we embark on this new plan, we invite you to learn more about our work and to share in our accomplishments. CRCD creates real pathways to success for young people and other community members in Vernon-Central. We hope you will join our ongoing efforts to change lives and build neighborhoods responsibly. Thank you for your time and your support,

Mark A. Wilson
Executive Director



Annual Jazz Festival Brings Golden Age Back to South LA

CRCD Gears Up for 2014 Jazz Fest

The rich musical history of South Los Angeles comes to life every summer at the Central Avenue Jazz Festival, which takes place at 42nd Street and Central Avenue, in front of the newly renovated Dunbar Hotel—itsself a reminder of LA's jazz heyday.

Recalling the golden era of the 1930s and 1940s, when the Dunbar played host to top musicians and jazz clubs lined Central Avenue, the annual event is now a showcase for the entire community, attracting thousands of Angelenos, including city leaders and some of the world's best jazz performers. With its focus on our community's deep musical roots, the event has become one of the most respected jazz festivals in the country, showcasing great musical acts like Ernie Andrews, Cuba LA, and the Gerald Wilson Orchestra.

Hosted by 9th District Los Angeles City Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr. and CRCD, the Jazz Festival has also become an important economic engine for South LA. Since 2007, attendance has risen by 20% each year, according to CRCD. In 2013, more than 13,000 people attended the free festival, spending money on food and merchandise, and supporting local businesses.

"Not only does the Jazz Festival highlight the cultural heritage and artistic significance of the South LA community, it also attracts numerous vendors and visitors to the event, which in turn drives dollars into the local community," says Mark Wilson, CRCD's Executive Director. Already hard at work on the 2014 Jazz Festival to be held July 26-27, CRCD anticipates attendance numbers to be even higher, thanks to the hard work of the volunteers and community leaders who partner to make the Central Avenue Jazz Festival happen. Visit centralavejazz.org for more details.

Larry Frank, Los Angeles Trade Technical College President

New College President highlights innovative educational partnership with CRCD

When it comes to changing the lives of homeless or at-risk youth in the Vernon-Central neighborhood of South Los Angeles, Los Angeles Trade Technical College (Trade-Tech) and CRCD's educational partnership is key.

Trade-Tech's campus serves as the home for CRCD Academy, an alternative high school site operated in partnership by CRCD, Trade-Tech, and YouthBuild Charter School of California. CRCD Academy offers young people aged 17-24 an expedited path to earn a high school diploma along with co-enrollment in community college.

"The beauty of this partnership is that an out-of-school and out-of-work youth can earn his or her high school diploma while earning college credits simultaneously," explains Larry Frank, the new LATTTC president as of 2013. "It accelerates the timeline to success."

Trade-Tech has partnered with CRCD since 2009 to provide job training and education through CRCD's South LA YouthBuild program. YouthBuild members help to build CRCD's affordable housing and do other community projects. They also earn educational scholarships as AmeriCorps Volunteers. CRCD provides intensive case management, support services, leadership development, career placement services, and one year of follow-up support to South LA YouthBuild members.



Frank explains that CRCD is a critical bridge to career-path programs and resources for at-risk students, including youth in the county probation system. "This is not a population that most institutions want more of, but CRCD actively recruits them and their case managers support them to help them be a successful group of students."

Jan Perry, GM, Economic & Workforce Development Dept., City of LA

General Manager reflects on CRCD's success, looks to future

Jan Perry has been a champion for CRCD since the beginning. As the 9th District member of the Los Angeles City Council until 2013, she has worked with CRCD since its start, when the City Board of Public Works awarded CRCD a contract for graffiti removal and neighborhood beautification.

During her years in elected office representing Vernon-Central and downtown LA, Perry quickly realized CRCD's capabilities, and our reliability, as well. "We could point to a specific need and CRCD could address it," she says. "We knew CRCD would take care of it and grow the solutions to cover other issues as well."

In 2013, Mayor Eric Garcetti appointed Perry as the General Manager of the Economic and Workforce Development Department for the City of Los Angeles. A long-standing proponent of strategic approaches to job creation for Angelenos, Perry continues to recognize CRCD's successful approaches to the jobs issue.

"CRCD is more than just an organization, it's a movement," she says fondly. With its multi-pronged approach—from job training to education and housing to neighborhood beautification and economic development—CRCD always looks to create sustainable jobs in the Vernon-Central neighborhood, Perry explains.

Perry says the lengths to which CRCD goes in order to facilitate employment for people in the Vernon-Central neighborhood is commendable. She praises CRCD for ensuring that "every project it takes on has a component of employment attached to it, as well as the potential to build future equity for the organization."

She recounts the story of a young man she watched grow up. At the 2010 grand opening of the JW Marriott downtown, "a young man at the door with a proper uniform on said, 'Good evening, Ms. Perry,' and it brought me to tears to see this young man who came up through CRCD," she said. "I know how long his climb was to get there and it gives me an enormous amount of hope that CRCD was the bridge."

Best of all, Perry says, since the earliest days of CRCD, the leadership keeps improving: "They've gotten stronger, more sophisticated, and more strategic."



Joanna Farias, 20 years old

After receiving housing and a job from CRCD, she now manages a community garden, with an eye toward transferring to a top university

Joanna was on the brink of homelessness until a faculty member at her high school referred her to CRCD partner agency, All Peoples Community Center, where she took part in the Vernon Central Workforce Development Network (VCN) program. Joanna was able to take advantage of VCN work readiness and job training components, and receive support services through All Peoples Community Center. She also applied for housing, and now has an apartment of her own at the Broadway Apartments, an affordable housing complex in Vernon-Central co-owned by CRCD and partner Little Tokyo Service Center. All Peoples Community Center was instrumental in helping Joanna earn her high school diploma and enter Los Angeles City College (LACC) as a full-time student. Within two weeks of enrolling at LACC, she obtained a job at CRCD's community garden, located at Normandie Avenue and 65th Place.



"I was recruited by CRCD to help grow the garden," she explains. "Now I teach skills on gardening. Our community gardens are a safe space where all generations can gather together to grow food and improve lives." At the garden, neighbors can rent a plot for \$5 a month to grow whatever they want. Joanna helps the gardeners with advice on seeds and what to plant. At harvest time, she helps organize a party where growers share a communal meal made with garden-fresh food.

Joanna now has her sights set high. Her goals include transferring to the University of California at Berkeley, where she plans to major in business. She's currently taking a full course load at LACC, studying psychology, child development, geology, and art history. "Education is my top priority," she says. "I never knew what I wanted to major in until business drew me in and UC Berkeley is calling me. My goal is to transfer in the next two years."

CRCD's effective collaboration with partners like All Peoples Community Center provide options and opportunities that can give people what they need, when they need it. The two agencies worked together to provide Joanna with job training, life skills, housing, and a job she enjoys. Joanna says CRCD "takes you to a better place. If it's getting your high school diploma or a scholarship for college or job, CRCD will help you. They provide encouragement and support. They are always on the lookout for us, and pushing us to strive for more."

As she works toward her goals, Joanna says young people who find themselves in difficult circumstances should seek out CRCD and its resources. "Don't give up, no matter what—especially on school. Keep taking classes and at the end you'll progress," she says, adding, "Education can turn your life around. Time doesn't wait for you. You need to go for it because I want my story to make a difference."



Historic LA Properties Rehabilitated

Residents Have Quality Housing Thanks to Revival of Historic Dunbar Hotel & 28th Street Apartments

Two historical properties that harken back to the golden years of the Central Avenue corridor are now stellar examples of CRCD redevelopment efforts. Built in the same era, the landmark 28th Street Apartments (formerly known as the 28th Street YMCA) and the Dunbar Hotel once served as important beacons for African Americans. Opened in 1926, the 28th Street YMCA was the first Y west of the Mississippi to serve Black people. Both buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Dunbar Hotel

The historic Dunbar Hotel, built in 1928, was the heart of Black culture in Los Angeles from the 1920s to the 1940s, playing host to celebrities, writers, and jazz greats like Ella Fitzgerald, W.E.B. Dubois, Langston Hughes, and Ray Charles. But its luster faded in the 1970s and the hotel fell into disrepair, closing in 1974. When it reopened in 1987, celebrities no longer roamed the once-upscale halls. Over time, illegal activities and vandalism became commonplace, creating hazards for the residents, and sadly the Dunbar became an eyesore for the entire neighborhood.

Today, thanks to the hard work of CRCD, its real estate partner Thomas Safran and Associates, and other neighborhood leaders, the former hotel is now Dunbar Village, a lively, well-maintained 83-unit affordable apartment complex for seniors and low-income families. Before the renovation began in 2009, the Los Angeles Police Department identified the building as one of the most dangerous in the area. Today it is one of the safest. The new Dunbar, which re-opened in 2013, retains the architectural character of the original hotel, and includes laundry facilities, community rooms, a fitness center, a computer room, barbecues, and playgrounds.

The Dunbar Village is a perfect example of how CRCD's comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization works. The project generated immediate benefits for the community in terms of neighborhood beautification, affordable housing, and improved safety and economic development. CRCD, Thomas Safran & Associates, the LA Police Department, and All Peoples Community Center were jointly honored in 2013 with a MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award in recognition of the public safety improvements achieved at Dunbar Village. The MetLife Foundation and the LISC Community Safety Initiative issue these awards to promote neighborhood safety and revitalization nationwide. CRCD has been a longtime site for the LISC Community Safety Initiative.

28th Street Apartments

A similar story can be told about the aging 28th Street Apartments (formerly known as the 28th Street YMCA), which was purchased by CRCD and partner Clifford Beers Housing for major rehabilitation in 2010. Three years later, the team completed a remarkable transformation of this previously neglected community asset. Original architectural detail was preserved and restored to the old YMCA and apartments, and a beautiful modern addition was built. The new 28th Street Apartments opened in 2013, featuring 49 housing units, and serving youth transitioning from foster care as well as adults with mental health diagnoses. The 28th Street Apartments also houses the City of Los Angeles VCN YouthSource Center on its ground floor. The YouthSource Center is a hub for youth services, with a focus on connecting young people aged 17-21 to education and employment.

More than 40 youth from CRCD's South LA YouthBuild program assisted with construction and redevelopment of the 28th Street Apartments, and some of those young people now live in the permanent supportive housing that they helped renovate. The 28th Street Apartments earned the 2013 Housing Award from the World Architecture Festival in Singapore; the Preservation Design Award from the California Preservation Foundation; the 6th Annual Housing Institute Partnership Award from the L.A. County Department of Mental Health; the 2013 Design Award from the Westside Urban Forum; and the 43rd Annual L.A. Architectural Award from the Los Angeles Business Council.





South LA YouthBuild Program

CRCD's South LA YouthBuild Grows Exponentially, Based on 5 Years of Success

Pablo Esparza is a graduate of CRCD's South LA YouthBuild program. Once homeless and drifting in and out of school, Pablo joined South LA YouthBuild, and as a participant in the program, helped renovate the historic 28th Street Apartments, where he now lives in an apartment of his own. Pablo is a true success story, showing how CRCD's housing and job training work together to improve the lives of young people.

In the five years that CRCD has run its South LA YouthBuild program—which is based on a nationally recognized model developed by Dorothy Stoneman of YouthBuild USA—the number of young people participating in the publicly and privately funded program has tripled, and the number of women participating in the program has increased to 50%. As part of the national YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network, South LA YouthBuild provides 17-24-year-olds with an opportunity to earn a high school diploma, co-enroll in college, learn valuable job skills while building affordable housing in their own neighborhoods, develop leadership skills, and move on to college and careers with support from CRCD. CRCD leads South LA YouthBuild, and delivers the program in partnership with Trade Tech, YouthBuild Charter School of California, the Home Builders Institute, and others.

South LA YouthBuild brings youth educational and job opportunities in tandem, and the hands-on work completed by South LA YouthBuild participants expands affordable housing and economic development in our neighborhoods. CRCD is proud to be part of the continued growth and success of program; but the greatest success stories come from the young people who take part in South LA YouthBuild—young people like Pablo, who go on to achieve their goals of overcoming homelessness, finishing school, and giving back to their communities.

The Area We Serve

CRCD Main Office

3101 S. Grand Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90007

36th Street Apartments
157 E. 36th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Broadway Apartments / Ruth's Place -
Homeless Youth Drop In Center
4775 S. Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90037

Epworth Apartments
6525 S. Normandie Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90044

28th Street Apartments/City of LA VCN
YouthSource Center
1006 E. 28th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Dunbar Village / CRCD Administrative Offices
4201 S. Central Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90011

Historic Ralph J. Bunche House
1221 E. 40th Place
Los Angeles, CA 90011

CRCD's 2014-2019 strategic plan was funded in part by a grant from the California Wellness Foundation (TCWF). Created in 1992 as a private independent foundation, TCWF's mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education, and disease prevention.

The strategic plan was also funded by a grant from the Marclad Foundation. The Marclad Foundation is a private family foundation based in San Francisco, CA. Marclad funds nonprofit organizations primarily in arts and culture, education, health and sciences, youth and families, and civic engagement.

To support CRCD's work, please visit our website at <http://www.coalitionrcd.org> or donate via mail to CRCD, 3101 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007.

Coalition for Responsible Community Development

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