

## **2001 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **Desert Communities Empowerment Zone**

This past year our focus for DACE was establishing our selves within each community and overcoming the entrenchment of many residents and organization that DACE and its mission was a reality. After two years of minimal activity and uncertainty of funding, DACE has made huge strides to establish itself as a leader and partner within all the communities. As DACE reputation grew so did the demand for our attention and participation in community activities. But the vision also expanded for DACE to be a strong proactive leader in the communities, the funding soon became secondary to the technical assistance and capacity development targeted and accepted by the residents. DACE and its Board also established a vision for an entrepreneurial organization that could meet the communities needs to establish facilities and infrastructure for services that adds value to the community and provides revenue to DACE.

Anchored in principles of empowerment, we constantly focus our efforts on the communities involvement and interaction on all projects. Both educating on their responsibility as residents but working to unite their voices to participate in all local activities and utilize their existing talents and experience to shape the future development of their community.

DACE painted a broad stroke this year in its activities, that include the following highlights:

Implementation of RANCHO Housing Alliance, Inc. Awarded \$50,000 grant from Riverside County to establish new affordable housing non-profit corporation. Focusing on educating and qualifying residents for affordable housing and the development of new housing stock in each community.

Implementation of DACE Immigration and Tax Services-based on need from the community to provide reliable and affordable services complimented by citizenship classes.

Obtained certification from State of California to provide health insurance program coverage for low-income children & families.

DACE Regional Community Resource Center continues fully rented as non-profit mall. Over 100 community events held in the building in the past year above those sponsored by DACE.

Development of DACE capacity and acceptance by the communities. DACE is now considered by the communities as a leader and partner in their efforts to develop programs.

Diligent work with the residents of North Shore, brought several local projects to fruition over a four month period. The most significant achievement is the development of leadership within the community and the eventual formation of the North Shore Community Council.

Desert Communities Christmas Project- inspired by a resident and brought to DACE to meet the needs of the farmworker children, a partnership was formed with the local LOWES Home Improvement store and DACE. DACE raised over \$7,500 in two weeks and the LOWES staff purchased and prepared over 4000 toys in 750 bags. The distribution of the bags was coordinate by DACE staff with community leaders and the local schools.

Continued involvement in monthly community meetings and identification of concerns and issues affecting the community. Example is our co sponsorship of the Blythe Housing Summit, a bi monthly

forum to discuss housing needs and opportunities in the Palo Verde Valley.

Creation and support to community advisory committees and providing leadership training to ensure proactive & effective involvement.

DACE development of community based facilities to provide infrastructure and environment for other supporting services to operate.

DACE Community Resource Center-offering an environment for the residents and organizations to meet and work with the community.

Outreach to the private more affluent communities neighboring the EZ to raise awareness and identify private philanthropic resources to partner in the continuing development of our programs.