

## **2003 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **Desert Communities Empowerment Zone**

For the year 2003 our focus for DACE was developing projects cooperatively with community advisory committees into the preliminary design stages of construction development and continuing to design a staffing foundation to accomplish the multitude of projects. Working to empower residents often places DACE in awkward circumstances as we are sought out to be the leader and complete the work rather than facilitator. In many cases we are placed in the middle between community needs or concerns and political realities and blamed by both for any result. However, the basis of our community based asset model is anchored in empowerment and our efforts are driven from the communities; involvement and interaction on all projects. Both through increasing their capacity with education and awareness of their responsibilities as residents while encouraging their participation collaboratively and cohesively in all local activities. In this way, their existing talents and experience are optimized towards shaping the future development of their community.

The following are highlights for this past year:

1. RANCHO Housing Alliance, Inc. designated as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) and broke ground on its first housing subdivision Rancho de la Fe.
2. DACE secured a grant to purchase warehouse and assume a USDA CF loan to anchor a regional food bank for the DCEZ and neighboring communities.
3. DACE Regional Community Resource Center continues fully rented as non-profit mall and community center.
4. Continued work on internal systems aiding in the coordinated development of project ideas, funding, project management and community outreach towards moving projects to implementation.
5. Continued involvement in monthly community meetings and identification of concerns and issues affecting the community.
6. Creation and support to community advisory committees and providing leadership training to ensure proactive & effective involvement in the development of all projects in their communities.
7. RANCHO has established a successful and growing homebuyer education program that serves a variety of upcoming homeowners across the valley.
8. Established the On-Site septic management training program for private mobile home park owners that will aid them in sustaining their new or repaired systems.
9. RANCHO is acting as the development partner for SafeHouse of the Desert, a teen runaway shelter for the Coachella Valley. DACE also supported a match grant to seed the predevelopment costs.