

MEMORANDUM:

To: Mayor David Martin
From: Michael Duggan, Domus
Date: January 22, 2014
Re: 2015/ 2016 Operating Budget Request

EAST SIDE COMMUNITY CENTER (operated by Domus)

Through this submission, we hereby request ongoing operating expense support from the City of Stamford for \$50,000 to apply toward utility expenses associated with the facility at 83 Lockwood Avenue. The costs to operate the building have risen, and the demand from those who use the facility has increased dramatically because of the closing of Yerwood and CTE. This location serves the broader Stamford area through employment programs, recreational programs, parent-focused programming, holiday celebrations, and other programs which operate in this facility for all local residents. The IRS' VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program, which offers free tax help to low- to moderate-income people who need help preparing their tax returns, and nonprofits and groups which need meeting space, call the center home. The East Side Partnership, Child Guidance, and FSW have permanent offices in the center, which also serves as a polling place for elections. The Domus program Trafigura Work & Learn Business Center opened in October 2010 and helps hundreds of local youth gain the hard and soft employment skills they need to obtain and retain employment. These young people need to learn these skills to get a job and have no other program that will take them in and teach them. Literacy Volunteers offers English classes here five days per week. An open gym session is offered to teenagers in the community on a weekly basis, providing a safe and productive activity for these kids who are not otherwise engaged in supervised activities. Our sports field and gymnasium are used for adult and youth soccer programs, football practices, cheerleading, and baseball. Adults from the community use our outside space for volleyball practice and games. During the year, there are at least six large activities hosted in this building for the community, such as East Side Day, an international food festival, East Side tree lighting, Three Kings Day, Martin Luther King celebrations, and the Community Easter Egg Hunt. We have regular celebrations here to mark birthdays, christenings, weddings, and communions. We welcome local residents and staff of the Childcare Learning Centers (CLC) to join our

physical education teacher in regular fitness workouts. Our garden and greenhouse grow produce used in our programs and donated to the community, acting as important educational vehicles to teach local residents healthy living. This location also serves up to 188 Stamford students through Trailblazers Academy middle school and its out-of-school-time program called Lion's Den.

The hundreds of people who use the facility as a center for social, recreational, educational, and public service activities are residents of Stamford, and the vast majority come from the East Side. Many are minority, with 44% Black, 41% Latino, 6% bi-racial, and 9% other. Most families in the neighborhood are low-income and do not have the resources to pay for the programming offered here or elsewhere. Hours of operation stretch well beyond the school day into the evenings and weekends.

Programming for the center is operated through our community programs effort and is overseen by the chief community officer. The move to this City building carried with it a hefty operating budget: Operating expenses for this building last year were approximately \$344,000, with a significant portion incurred to keep the facility open and available for the myriad of programs that we organize and host for community residents. We feel fortunate to have the space to offer to run or host community gatherings and act as a hub for this previously unserved section of Stamford. We hope the City will defray part of the costs associated with providing this valuable service.

Impact on the center if funding is reduced or eliminated:

The center currently makes available its library, media center, computer lab, classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium, outside field, parking area, and auditorium to a variety of community groups serving East Side residents and for a variety of educational and community events for the East Side. Almost all of these occur at no cost since these residents have the fewest resources and cannot afford fees. Most services provided to the community take place during evening and weekend hours. The building also houses Childcare Learning Centers offices and storage for the Stamford Youth Foundation sports equipment. Last year, the police department opened a substation in this facility. If the City reduces or eliminates funding for general operating support, the center will have to reduce community programming by eliminating some of the evening and weekend activities. There are no other large spaces where groups can meet in this part of Stamford. The center might have to charge community groups for using center space which will be a great hardship for the small community groups that use this building and its facilities. This may make it impossible for the groups to meet for the intended purpose, which will negatively impact the work we have undertaken with our partners to make the East Side a cleaner, safer, more attractive, more cohesive, and more pleasant place to live.

Budget Instructions

- 1. Mission & Goal Statement: The City of Stamford requires the inclusion of a Mission & Goal Statement in the submitted budget package. This should include the mission statement of your organization, accompanied by goals and objectives for Fiscal Year 2015/2016. With regard to activity goals, every effort should be made to be specific and quantitative. The goals and objectives should be numerical outcomes that are measurable and can be easily tracked.**

Domus began as a single residential group home for ten boys in 1972. In 1991, we began expanding our programs to meet the growing needs of the youth we serve. Today, Domus is a multiservice organization serving nearly a thousand of the region's most struggling youth in Stamford, plus a small school in New Haven, CT.

Our goal for the young people we serve is to create the conditions necessary for them to get on a path toward health and opportunity so they can engage and succeed in school and ultimately have satisfying and productive lives.

In order to help these youth stay in school and catch up academically so they can achieve the important milestone of high school graduation, Domus focuses on three interventions:

1. High-quality remedial academic instruction;
2. Effective out-of-school-time programming and;
3. Support in overcoming non-academic barriers to academic success

At Domus we find and love young people who are shut out, unwanted, unloved, and afraid; the young people society has failed and discarded; the young people who, without our intervention, would drop out of their schools and their communities and be incarcerated, homeless, or dead. Our kids are often referred to as the “bad kids”—those young people that society has labeled as undeserving of additional resources and sympathy and whose lives have little or no value to the larger community. Kids who are—at best—seen as incapable of change and at worst as dangerous criminals or criminals-in-training. Because our young people have been chronically exposed to adverse childhood experiences and because they have reacted to this trauma by harming or threatening to harm themselves or others, they are feared and shunned. Because they are difficult, disconnected, and disengaged, they do not receive the interventions they need to not only achieve their goals but to even understand that they can strive for goals and that their life can be better.

In summer 2009 the City offered Domus a lease for part of the 83 Lockwood Avenue building to house the Trailblazers Academy charter middle school, its out-of-school-time programs, and to offer programs that are operated for the benefit of the local neighborhood: The building currently houses a police substation, a youth workforce development program, The East Side Partnership, Childcare Learning Centers, the Stamford Youth Foundation, the Stamford Public Schools Alternative Routes to Success program, Child Guidance, and FSW. This space is a resource for many local groups looking to organize regular meetings for recreational, social, local service, and educational needs. As an example of the kinds of activities we facilitate: We host basketball, soccer, and volleyball leagues and groups to keep youth who might otherwise engage in negative behaviors busy and safe in the presence of adults. The adults who use the

facilities for sporting activities develop strong bonds with their neighbors and with members of other teams which can diffuse tense relationships when they meet under different circumstances. The center acts as a VITA site for local low-income neighbors who need help with tax return preparation. We regularly act as a polling place for primary and mid-term elections, and we host city-wide events like Martin Luther King celebrations, weddings, christenings, other family events, an international food fair showcasing local businesses and spurring economic development, Three Kings Day, Ecuadorean Independence Day Festival, the Crisol/Acuarela event in support of the Leslie Ann Padilla Foundation, and East Side Day. Over the course of a year, thousands of people visit the center.

As the activities we hold in the building are not specific programs run by Domus, we do not set official targets for those. We track numbers of people who attend various programs available to the community. From January, 2014 to December, 2014:

- We opened our free summer camp to one hundred K-5 youth who live in the East Side Community and are not students at Trailblazers Academy middle school or participants in any other Domus programs.
- Local organizations like Literacy Volunteers offered 12 ESL classes Monday through Fridays each week to at least 120 individuals (approximately 600 classes per year).
- Domus hosted and coordinated one-day activities such as East Side Day (300), Easter Egg Hunt (250), Tree Lighting (150), Martin Luther King Day (200), Hispanic Advisory Council Health Day (1,500), Three Kings Day (500), and a Sathya Sai event (300).
- Local clubs and sports leagues use our field and auditorium: Eddy's Fun Soccer for 4 to 8 year olds (200 kids, twice a week); Ecuadorian Soccer League (250 adults with over 600 people attending weekly games); Police Athletic League (150 elementary, middle, and high school basketball players three times week from February to May).
- Approximately 200 tax returns were prepared at this location through the free VITA program run by the IRS.
- The East Side Partnership held monthly meetings for community discussions of such topics as the Master Plan, Urban Transitway, and Northeast Utility Substation plans.

Every year we host more events which attract more and more people. We expect to continue to serve as a gathering place for this area of Stamford, providing educational, recreational, social, and athletic events to engage the residents of this neighborhood in safe, pro-social, community-building activities.

- 2. Organization Chart: Each agency must submit an updated table of organization showing every existing budgeted full-time position. Your organization chart should clearly define which position is responsible for each operating unit and identify lines of authority or control. Do not include part-time or permanent part-time positions on your chart.**

Please see attached.

- 3. Fiscal Year 2013/2014 Operating Results: Please include your most recent statement of your actual operating results. The statement should include your operating**

results for expenditures and revenues, compared to budget, for every line item in your budget.

Please see attached audited financial statement for 2013-14.

- 4. Fiscal Year 2014/2015 Operating Budget: Please include a copy of your current operating budget, year-to-date expenditures and revenues as of October 31, 2014, and projected operating results for the current fiscal year.**

Please see attached.

- 5. Proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2015/2016: Please include a copy of your proposed operating budget, including revenues and expenditures by line item, which has been approved by your respective board. Please include any capital improvement plans that may not be reflected in the forwarded budget. In addition, two copies of your salary budget, by position, should be included in your submission.**

We do not yet have a 2015-15 budget.

- 6. Audited Financial Statement:**

- * **Entities receiving more than \$50,000 from the City of Stamford on any one fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial statement prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles audited by and with the report of an independent certified public accountant.**

- * **Entities receiving at least \$25,000 but less than \$50,000 from the City of Stamford in any fiscal year may be required to submit an organization-wide audit to the City at the City's request.**

- * **Entities receiving less than \$25,000 from the City of Stamford in any fiscal year shall submit a financial statement indicating the overall financial condition of the organization and identifying the impact of City funding. The City may require that such a report include (1) a balance sheet showing appropriate categories of assets, liabilities and fund balances, (2) a statement of operations showing appropriate categories of revenues and expenses and (3) appropriate explanatory footnote disclosures. Two officers of the organization shall attest to the accuracy of all financial disclosures in writing.**

Please see attached.

- 7. Budget Narrative: As part of the budget submission process, all outside agencies are requested to submit a narrative overview of their expenditure budget request. This overview should identify any significant areas of change or concerns related to funding levels, levels of service and key issues that departments feel should be identified. In addition, any departments requesting additional staffing or program expansions to be funded by the City of Stamford should outline those requests in this overview. Please address this memorandum to Mayor Martin but forward it to the Director of OPM by the due date identified in the attached budget schedule. If you require additional assistance or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 977-5908. Thank you.**

Please see attached.