Synergy:

(sin’ar.je) n. 1. a combined and correlated force; 2. united for action.

You’re Invited to
Glen Avon Heritage Park
Grand Opening
Saturday, July 18th
Ribbon Cutting and Park Opening
12 (noon) to 4pm

Come join your neighbors and friends for this fun celebration of our community’s own premiere park.
Music, food, activity booths, car show and more.

Finally! After 9 long years WE HAVE A PARK!! The Glen Avon Heritage Park will hold its GRAND OPENING on July 18th. When we started out in 2000 and purchased the 13-acre property, it seemed so easy-- we were just going to build a park. It’s something good for the community --what could go wrong? How little we knew!

I can’t tell you the thousands of hours spent planning, discussing, arguing, begging, negotiating, pleading and threatening in order to get through the bureaucratic red tape. It seemed that each day brought a new “surprise” from the extra $20,000 to review a plan that didn’t need to be reviewed; or the surprise bill from a contractor for $93,000 for “extra work” at the site; to the thousands of dollars to make sure the little orange fence stayed in place so we weren’t in violation of one thing or another. Every little task ended up costing us money and delaying the work. Thank goodness for the terrific people that volunteered their time--from the Operating Engineers who did all the grading for us for free; to the Cement Masons who did the cement work; and Jim Huber who saved my sanity by helping to coordinate the workers and keep things moving. I would have killed myself years ago if it hadn’t been for all the great people who took pity on us and stepped in to help.

THANK YOU - THANK YOU - THANK YOU!

But the frustrations and hair pulling are behind us! We can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Another summer will not go by without the children of our community getting to play in their park.

Please join us on the 18th to celebrate and get familiar with YOUR park. Take pride in the fact that this happened without government stepping in, or without it being given to you --we, as a community, made it happen. It’s a perfect reminder that when people come together with a common goal, they can accomplish anything.

Penny Newman
In 2008, CCAEJ completed its Strategic Planning Process mapping the direction for the organization for the next 5-10 years. We committed to focusing our work of most critical need—air pollution from the movement of imported goods and products from the port complex in Los Angeles through the Inland Valley on its way for distribution across the nation.

Recent research has presented startling and alarming information—the Mira Loma/Fontana areas continue to have the highest readings of particulate pollution; a Health Risk Assessment identified the San Bernardino BNSF intermodal railyard as having the highest cancer risk of all railyards in the state at a whopping 3300-in-a-million (compared to the Clean Air Acts limit of 10-in-a-million). We simply can not ignore this situation and therefore committed to making goods movement impacts our priority issue. That meant making a very hard and gut wrenching decision—closing our desert office and laying-off our talented terrific staff.

2008 was also the beginning of the economic upheaval that has affected us all. Some in the funding world reported a 30-40 percent loss of investment, severely curtailing or limiting their ability to fund non-profits. To prepare for the possibility of reduced funding, CCAEJ took proactive steps to utilize our resources as effectively and efficiently as possible. We consolidated our San Bernardino office with our Glen Avon office and reduced spending where we could, including eliminating some staff positions. CCAEJ now finds ourselves financially stable, focused and excited about the new direction we’re going and the launching of our EJ Intervention Program and our Inland Clean Air Network (ICAN).

Maggie Hawkins
President, The Board of Directors

Building power from the ground up is the goal to which CCAEJ is committed. Starting as a neighborhood group in 1978 to address the pollution and health impacts from the Stringfellow Acid Pits, CCAEJ has grown to be one of the oldest and most effective environmental justice organizations in the nation. With 11 staff members, a budget of $1.2 million; and property that includes a 13-acre community park and with our own 5,000 square foot office building; it has the sophistication of a well-run business but remains a truly grassroots, community-based organization that is deeply rooted in the communities in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. To ensure that accountability and governance from the communities we serve, the Board amended the By-Laws to ensure that at least 50% of Board members are from the affected communities we serve.

CCAEJ continues to develop indigenous leadership and implement groundbreaking programs that enhance our community members’ skills, build confidence, and find opportunities for people to have a voice in decisions affecting their lives. In 2008, we provided direct training and assistance to more than 8,891 people in the Inland Valleys.

Through leadership development, community organizing, and direct action we help communities in the Riverside and San Bernardino Counties confront power and demand basic human rights to a safe places to live, clean water to drink, healthy air to breathe, and jobs with dignity, living wages and safe conditions. With the development of the Glen Avon Heritage Park we have demonstrated that members of a community don’t have to sit back and wait for government or others to do things for them, but that working together we can take the lead and make it happen.

Penny J. Newman
Executive Director
Monitoring Lead in Candy and Soda

Raquel Contreras, Community Organizer

In the past few years, awareness has focused on candies and soda bottles (primarily from Mexico) that have high levels of lead. To address this problem, a bill was passed in 2007 outlawing the sale of such items; and a judicial settlement was reached with PepsiCo Inc.; Dr. Pepper/Seven Up; and Alpro Alimento Protenico, S.A. de C.V. regarding lead content in Mexican soda bottles. As part of that settlement funds were set aside to monitor the sale of these products through the Attorney General’s office. CCAEJ received one of those grants and have developed a monitoring program with the help of our SALTA promotoras.

The lead monitoring project consisted of going out to various stores that are likely to sell products contaminated with lead. Examples of products that might contain lead are Chaca Chaca, Tama Roca Banderilla, Barrilito, Lucas limón con chile, Qi Cái Bang, among many others. These products were identified from a list provided by the California Attorney General’s office. The monitoring project began in September 2008 and ended in April 2009 with a total of 1,275 stores/facilities, in both Riverside and San Bernardino counties being monitored.

Lead-poisoning can cause developmental delays in children: kidney and liver damage; reproductive problems; seizures and in very extreme (and rare) cases, death. The symptoms of lead-poisoning are similar to those of the flu, and as a result, many parents don’t realize that their children have been affected. The only way to tell conclusively is through a blood test. Children are the most affected when it comes to eating lead-contaminated candies, and they can suffer gravely. Lead poisoning occurs slowly, resulting from a gradual accumulation after consuming it several times. Once consumed, the body absorbs lead through the small intestine. Most of the lead is absorbed in the bones, where it is stored for years and released slowly into the soft tissue. Consuming lead can cause blood poisoning. In fact, it can even cause death. Symptoms to look for include: loss of appetite, stomach ache, constipation, vomiting, exhaustion, and learning problems. That is why we are worried that these products are being sold in our community. We, as parents, must make sure to keep an eye on what our children eat so that we can be at ease that our children will grow healthy and strong.

The monitoring was done by a group of residents from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Both groups visited hundreds of stores, checking to see if they sold these lead contaminated products. In fact, they discovered a large number of markets with these products stocked on their shelves. Amelia Castillo worked on the project in county of San Bernardino. She reported that she had to go to the same store 3 times because she found so many candies from the list of lead contaminated candies that she could not identify all of them in one visit. It happens also with sodas. Regularly, lead contaminated sodas are found in Mexican restaurants.

Minerva Ortiz worked in the Riverside county area. She reported that she interviewed an ice cream man who frequents her neighborhood. She was surprised to discover that the ice cream man carried a lot of the prohibited candies with lead. It shows how accessible lead-contaminated candies are for our kids. It is important that, we, as parents, make sure to keep an eye on what our children eat. We can’t take for granted that if its on the shelves of our stores, it’s safe. For more information call CCAEJ at 951-360-8451.
Mira Loma Village is a residential development constructed in the 1930's as housing for the industrial/military operations at the Space Center located across the street from the residential community of 101 homes. The surrounding area land uses have continued as industrial and manufacturing uses.

On October 2004 a proposal for six mega warehouses was presented to the public for review, at a public hearing before the Planning commissioners in Riverside. The community, together with support from CCAEJ and the local air districts, were able to hold off the project through a variety of community actions. The concerns voiced by residents, CCAEJ, as well as local air districts, at that planning meeting and the insistence of a revised EIR due to critical and significant health impacts to the community caused this project to be tabled for the last five years.

The project was recently brought back to the Planning Commission with a new EIR (Environmental Impact Report) and some minor changes to the three warehouses directly behind the housing tract. However, even with the proposed changes, the concerns remain. As proposed the project will increase diesel emissions and truck and traffic congestion to a neighborhood that is critically impacted and designated a diesel “Hot Spot” by South Coast Air Quality Management District.

The project will not only impact this neighborhood but also two other neighborhoods directly across from the other three larger warehouses-- Country Village, a retirement community, and Homestead.

The scientific information provided to our elected officials continues to be ignored. Studies clearly show that our children in the area have the weakest lung capacity and slowest lung growth of all children studied in Southern California due to particulate pollution. The EIR states this project will add to the cumulative impacts of diesel emissions which are already at 100 in million. The EIR concludes that even with the mitigation measures implemented this project will still have significant impacts to the air quality, climate change, noise, transportation and traffic.

The siting of these warehouses so close to homes raises community concerns due to an increase in health risks and the loss of quality of life to families. In one research project, local residents counted as many as 800 trucks in one hour passing less than 20 feet from the backyards on Etiwanda Ave. These warehouses will surround the homes, creating a circle of poison for the families.

We know that the closer one is to the diesel source the greater the health risk. To add insult to injury, in addition to these six warehouses, county planners are also looking at a proposal for eleven more warehouses across the street at the Space Center!! We agree with the signs posted at the entry to Mira Loma Village - No more warehouses-- no more trucks -- no more asthma!
In recent years, the severe air quality problems of the Inland Valley have been documented and have led to the recognition of the severity of health impacts from goods movement industries. While our numbers get quoted and repeated—highest levels of particulate pollution in the nation - highest levels of ozone - highest cancer risk of all rail yards in the state—they get folded into “the greater LA Basin”. The result is all the funding and solutions end up going to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. One report out of Fullerton that outlined the costs of air pollution cited the huge costs in the Riverside/San Bernardino area but again lumped them under Los Angeles.

With the horrendous cancer risk at the BNSF rail yard (3300-in-a-million) we expected action to be taken at that facility. Instead the clean trucks, new equipment, etc are going to the ports. Even though we have 4 Board members from the Inland Valleys on the AQMD board the DERA (Diesel Emission Reduction Act) funds from the stimulus money is proposed for the ports. Rubbing salt in the wound we were callously asked to sign onto a letter in support of this move. The latest insult came in reading an article that referred to our area as “eastern suburban Los Angeles”!! It is clear, the Inland Valleys have an identity crisis. If we don’t step out from under LA’s shadow we will never get the resources, attention and solutions we need to solve our air quality problems.

That is why CCAEJ is facilitating the formation of the Inland Clean Air Network (ICAN) to bring groups and individuals that are concerned about our air together to explore solutions. We will kick off our new network with a tour for staff from Dept. of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) in August. The two day event will highlight some of the worst areas on the western end of the two counties. In early fall we will hold our first summit to bring all our communities together, map out where the problems are and begin to outline solution. From there we can combine our efforts to get the resources we need to address them. Please join us in giving a face to the valleys of Riverside and San Bernardino. If you are interested please call CCAEJ at 951-360-8451.

Inland Clean Air Network (ICAN)

Many residents believe that their community has been sacrificed for the benefit of the county and that its time to bring decision-making closer to home. They have joined with others in promoting Cityhood for the communities of Jurupa. The only way we will ever have control over our own destiny is to step forward and take the responsibility of governing ourselves. Its time for Jurupa to become its own City. Our organization is made up of community members who work together to make sure our voices are heard regarding the decisions affecting our lives. For the Glen Avon, Rubidoux, Sunnyslope, Mira Loma and Pedley area, CCAEJ has taken a position in favor of incorporating into a City. Why? We are simply tired of decisions affecting our families being made by people outside of our community. Its time for residents to take responsibility for what happens where we live.

In researching the issues we discovered that Incorporation does not mean new or more taxes. According to the Jurupa Valley Incorporation Research Committee, “To the contrary, the entire incorporation process is designed to determine if the new city is self supporting by the transfer of current taxes and responsibilities from the County to the newly-formed City. Additionally, there are some additional tax dollars that are available to a City (already collected at the state level) that are not available to the county that helps make all of this possible. It could even be possible to have more funds available to provide services at the city level, without one more penny out of your pocket. These tax dollars today are being given to other cities. Incorporate and bring your taxes back to your community.” This clearly is our last chance to rule ourselves since Riverside is encroaching on our area and Eastvale’s incorporation boundaries have targeted major portions of Jurupa. For more information visit http://www.jvirc.org/
Statement of Activities

Operating Support and Revenue
Foundation and Grant Revenue $1,100,362
Government grants $653,583
Total Support & revenue $1,753,945

Expenses
Program Expenses $1,870,820
Management & General $228,834
Fundraising $36,615
Total expense $2,136,269

Net Assets at Beginning of Year $956,624
Net Assets at End of Year $590,994
Total Assets $433,822

Due to delinquent payments of money owed to CCAEJ, CCAEJ used some temporarily restricted cash funds for general operation purposes. Funds were replenished in January 2009.
Supporters

CCAEJ’s strength and focus comes from its members and supporters—individuals who contribute their energy and time to help us achieve environmental justice in the Riverside and San Bernardino area. We are deeply indebted to you who have helped to make 2008 such a successful year, especially our SALTA graduates, Community Action team members and our A-Team.

We also are grateful for the continued support by the following funders who have demonstrated their confidence in our work through their generous financial support.

Private Foundations
The California Endowment
The California Wellness Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
The Wm & Flora Hewlett Foundation
The New World Foundation
University of Southern California
The Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock
The Annenberg Foundation
The Community Foundation of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties
Environment Now
Roth Family Foundation

Government:
Public Health Institute
National Institute of Health (NIH)
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
San Bernardino Dept. of Public Health
Murray Hayden Urban Parks Grant

Partnerships
California Alliance
THE Impact Project
Environmental Justice Working Group
San Bernardino Green Alliance

Memorial / Special Funds
Galleano Family Scholarship

CCAEJ is grateful to Board and Staff members who left in 2008, but whose commitment and hard work helped us accomplish our goals.

2008 Board of Directors
Surekha Acharya, President
Maggie Hawkins, President Elect
Karen Bradford, Secretary
Nancy White, Financial Officer
Deenaz Coachbuilder
Renae Bryant
Cindy Lopez-Elwell
Kim Carter

2008 Staff
Penny Newman, Executive Director
Betty Stinson, Executive Assistant
Nancy White, Financial Officer
Deenaz Coachbuilder

Cindy Newman, Admin. Director
Andrea Marmo, Development Director
Josie Gaytan -- SALTA Coordinator
Roth Family Foundation

Fay Faroq, Office Assistant
Tom Orth, Computer Support Technician
San Bernardino

Esther Portillo -- Organizing Director
Rachel Lopez- Director
Sylvia Betancourt -- Policy Advocate
Josie Gaytan -- SALTA Coordinator
Raiquel Contreras --Community Organizer
Edgar Rojas --Community Organizer
Rosa Vielmas --Community Organizer
Colleen Smethers - Stringfellow Archives

Penny Newman, Executive Director
Betty Stinson, Executive Assistant
Cindy Newman, Admin. Director
Andrea Marmo, Development Director
Fay Faroq, Office Assistant
Tom Orth, Computer Support Technician

San Bernardino

Jan Misquez, Director
Susana Negrete - SALTA Coordinator
Carmen Segala - Community Organizer
Simon Washburn, Community Organizer

Desert

Donna Charpied, Director
Norma Roman, Community Organizer
Guadalupe Veyra, Community Organizer

Our Mission

The Mission of CCAEJ is to bring people together to improve our social, economic, and natural environment. We do this by bringing diverse communities together in ways that empower in order to create safer, healthier, toxic free places in which to live, work, learn and play.
CCAEJ’s A-Teams - at work in our communities

Rosa Vielmas, Community Organizer

CCAEH’s A-Teams (Neighborhood Assessment Teams) are groups of community members that have graduated from our SALTA classes and have been selected for additional training. CCAEJ is now in our third generation from the Riverside area. The current A-Team is Monica Gaytan, Alejandra Jimenez, Elva Jimenez and Rebecca Jimenez. Our newest A-Team is in San Bernardino with team members Maria Birrueta, Victoria Misquez and Jose Velasco. Our original A-Team underwent training to measure ultra fine particles using an instrument called a P-Trak from researchers at USC’s Keck School of Medicine. They also developed a protocol for identifying and counting trucks and conducting community assessments using GIS instruments to identify the location of warehouses and truck facilities. Since then, each A Team has been trained by the previous generation and has extended the training to other community organizations such as the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma (LABACA) A-team.

This approach of passing the knowledge from community member to community member has built the capacity of the neighborhoods and transferred skills from neighbor to neighbor.

Recently the A-Teams from Riverside and San Bernardino have been working together on a project with Redlands University. Amber Hurley, a senior at the university, selected our A Teams to work with on her Senior Project. The study focused on San Bernardino’s Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Intermodal Rail facility. Amber was drawn to the facility from reports of a Health Risk Assessment conducted by the California Air Resources Board that found the facility to have the highest cancer risk of all rail yards in the state—a whopping 3300-in-a-million. In comparison the Clean Air Act permits a mere 10-in-a-million. San Bernardino BNSF was more than three times higher than the next railyard cancer risk.

The Teams used the P-Trak instruments, to measure ultrafine particles in the air that are generated by diesel emissions from the trucks and locomotives at the rail yard. 86 different points were studied in the neighborhood near the entrance gate. The A Team developed charts that illustrate the numbers of ultrafine particles in the air over a period of time. The study confirmed that the further the distance from a diesel source, the volume of ultrafine particles in the air will drop. Since ultra fines are highly toxic particles, creating a buffer area between a source of diesel emissions and community members would be an ideal solution.

The study confirmed that moving the entry gate to the west away from the Child care center, park and homes and closer to the ravine would reduce the human exposure to the rail yard pollution.

To get involved in your community, you’ve got to know what’s in your community. The A Team is building skills and demonstrating their leadership. They’re developing a community map of the hot spots that are affecting the health of their families, friends and neighbors. They’re using 3 P-Traks to do a study in Mira Loma Village and Westside San Bernardino, where measurements are taking inside a home, out in the yard, and at the curbside near heavy traffic to see if the numbers are very different in volume of ultrafine particles in the air.

The A-TEAM is working here in Riverside, doing community mapping at specific points. They are document-
Ing, monitoring, and analyzing community changes. They use community mapping to understand and communicate detailed information about neighborhood conditions.

Mira Loma Village is one of the specific places where they monitor the air. The surrounding warehouses in the neighborhood have a severe impact on the health of the community. Mapping is the visual representation of data by geographic location. Community mapping does this in order to support social and economic change on a community level, and is a powerful tool. By designing and leading the mapping process, the A-TEAM and community residents are better positioned to ensure that the maps reflect community needs and provide some benefits. The Mapping process better equips community groups to use the map results for advocacy and organizing. The A-Teams creates a big map of the neighborhood surrounding any proposed new project in order to visualize the potential health and safety problems that might be created by these projects. “Such activities allow local residents to see their community in a whole new way and participate in making it better”, says A-Team coordinator, Rosa Vielmas.

A-TEAM members Rosa V., Monica G., Alexandra J., Rebecca J., and Elba J. They are all SALTA Program-trained promotoras that live in Mira Loma, and have gone on to become highly engaged community leader. Leadership promotes community values. The A-Team goal is to guide more Inland Valley residents toward a proactive, leadership role in influencing the decisions that directly affect their neighbors and community health.
For far too long, people have studied, gathered statistics and talked about the disproportionate impacts from pollution that certain communities bear. These fall under the label of EJ or environmental justice communities and are typically low income, communities of color that get more than their share of risks and far less of the benefits. Through CCAEJ Strategic Planning process we have developed an EJ Intervention Program to stop the endless studies and mounting statistical facts, and start actions to reduce the risks and create benefits. After the Air Resources Board’s HRA that found the extremely high cancer risk at the BNSF rail yard in San Bernardino, one resident lamented, “If they know they are polluting and they’re hurting people, they should do something.” In response to that plea, CCAEJ created the EJ Intervention and Revitalization Program.

The goal of the program in San Bernardino is to establish a demonstration program with the residents of the Westside community in the City of San Bernardino to assist in reducing exposures from the rail yard’s pollution by instituting a comprehensive approach that brings the various agencies and stakeholders to the table with the affected residents to develop a proactive, intervention and reduction program. CCAEJ’s program recognizes that to reduce the exposures and create a healthy community will take a broad perspective and comprehensive approach that utilizes the resources, regulatory oversight and expertise of every agency and organization at the local, regional and state level.

We propose to institute a program through three levels:

1) keep the pollution from getting worse through advocating a moratorium on the expansion of current facilities and siting of any new polluting facilities in that neighborhood;

2) reduce the current exposure to the high levels of pollution through an aggressive intervention program; and

3) begin a community-led planning process to create a more healthy and sustainable community.

This project seeks to change the piece meal approach to health impacts in heavily polluted communities and instead looks at the community as a whole, utilizing the various services and resources at hand in a coordinated and cooperative manner to build a healthy community.

CCAEJ realizes that such a dramatic social change in the current system requires assistance and support from every segment of our communities. The response we’ve received so far has been strong, supportive and energetic. Building on the base of affected community residents we believe the time is right.

Members of CCAEJ’s Community Action Team (CAT) met with San Bernardino City Mayor, Pat Morris on June 23, at the Ruben Campos Community Center. Mayor Morris listened to the heart-wrenching stories of the conditions under which residents must live and how it affects their health and quality of life. He also listened to the suggested solutions the CAT had compiled in a Platform for Action. He offered his pledge to help in any way - starting with the formation of Task Force to bring the affected residents together with staff from various agencies to explore what programs may be available to assist in addressing this exposure.

“If they know they are polluting and they’re hurting people, they should do something.”
This health crisis is happening along with the economic crisis presenting some real challenges but also offering some real opportunities. In the stimulus package is funding designated “to build clean, healthy communities” with money going to various agencies and program designed to address pollution. Weatherization Assistance Programs are to receive funding to retrofit buildings. One of the quickest steps we can take to reduce exposure is to weatherize homes, businesses and schools in the immediate area of the rail yard. Ms. Pat Nichols, CEO of Community Action Partnership, has stepped forward to help through their weatherization program. Barry Wallerstein from South Coast AQMD has agreed to participate and Supervisor Josie Gonzales has offered her assistance. CCAEJ is partnering with Loma Linda University on several grants that would provide health studies and health intervention on the Westside.

Leading this effort is the Community Action Team (CAT) which consists of local affected residents. They are: Maria Birrueta, Rudi Flores, Ericka Flores, Maria Hernandez, Juan Carlos Aispuro, Josefina Gonzalez, Marilyn Alcantar, Jose Velasco, Consuelo De La Cruz, Teresa Flores Lopez, Luis Enriqu Muniz, Marcia Reyes, and Estela Hernandez.

**San Bernardino’s CAT’s Platform for Action**

- **Buffers**: Add trees and brick walls as buffers between the community and railyard so that the trees can absorb the ultra fine particles and the walls can reduce noise pollution.

- **Retrofit-Weatherize Homes**: Seal doors and windows to prevent air pollution from entering. Install AC units with filters in structures with sensitive receptors like homes, schools day care centers. Install dual pane and tinted windows to protect from light and noise pollution.

- **New Alternative technology**: clean and green locomotives, operating equipment, and trucks.

- **Health Clinic**: in the community and a Breath Mobile for testing in the local schools, day care centers.

- **Move the gate**: and reconfigure operations away from neighborhoods.

- **Control truck**: congestions and diesel emissions in the neighborhoods. Apply alternative truck routes.

- **Enforce noise regulations**: on neighboring companies.

- **Recreation Centers**

- **Maintain a clearly defined method of communication and accountability to the community**.

- **Create a Task Force**: of community members, relevant agencies and local, state, federal elected officials that can help implement our solutions.

- **No More studies without Action!**
Connecting the Struggles for Environmental Justice, Workers’ Rights, and Immigrants’ Rights

Sylvia Betancourt, Organizing Director

CCEAJ, Teamsters Local 63, International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), Warehouse Workers United, Change to Win, and the UC Riverside Labor Studies Program have been working in collaboration to raise awareness within the community and among workers.

In drawing connections between the environmental justice and labor movements, it sometimes appears that the fight for good jobs is seen as in conflict with the struggle for environmental justice. However, this isn’t necessarily true. In fact, the effort to bring jobs with fair wages and safe working conditions is part and parcel to our efforts to bring environmental justice to our communities. After all, workers in these industries often live in these same environmental justice communities. These seemingly dissimilar groups are actually one and the same.

Riverside and San Bernardino Counties’ goods movement industry offers workers low wage jobs, and exposes workers and the community to dangerously high levels of pollution. The Inland Valley has the largest concentration of warehouse space on the planet, and is home to the rail intermodal facility with the highest cancer risk in the state. Its freeways and major roadways serve as the cargo transport corridor from the Los Angeles port complex en route to other states in the US. This industry brings large amounts of pollution to the region, causing a public health crisis by exposing workers in this industry and surrounding communities to noxious diesel emissions. Multiple studies show that the closer one is to a diesel source, the higher the health risk. At ground zero, workers and nearby community members are paying a high price – with underpaid and unstable jobs, unhealthy work conditions, health impacts, and an overall deterioration in their quality of life.

We and our collaborative partners are addressing three major issues that community members and workers face on a daily basis in the areas of labor, environment and immigration. Our purpose is to inform people of their rights when exploited by their employer, targeted by polluting facilities, ignored by government officials, and confronted by authorities. Particularly, by those authorities who have recently increased their efforts in exploiting and intimidating the Latino community through racial profiling. Due to the increasing number of raids and check-points targeting the Latino population, we’ve included immigrant rights information in our workshops and brought in the knowledge and experience of immigrant rights organizations.

We have and will continue to hold 3-hour multi-issue ‘Know Your Rights’ workshops addressing immigrant rights, labor rights, and environmental/community rights. These events are family-friendly, including child care, and provide information-sharing by local organizations so that people can also learn about local resources. Our workshops inform workers and community members of their rights in multiple situations so they can identify when they are being exploited and use these tools to defend themselves. This collaborative partnership gives us the ability to act as a resource for and with this vulnerable population. Issues addressed: Environmental justice; the fight for good jobs and workers’ rights; sustainable development; community empowerment; Impact of logistics industry on local development; rights of immigrant & Latino workers – the largest number of those employed in this industry; and, activist-oriented and Activist-based scholarship for university students.