



ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.

CEO Report to the Board of Directors

Mid Year Report 2009-10

Introduction:

The attached report is an account of the major activities of ASPIRA of Florida during the first half of the fiscal year 2009-2010 (July-December). This report is intended for the internal use of informing the ASPIRA of Florida Board of Directors, ASPIRA of Florida Local (LAC) & School Advisory Councils (SAC), the National Association Board, Associate CEOs, Staff, parents, and Aspirantes.

The economic challenges of the Great Recession are still with us, as we enter a new fiscal year 2009-10. With this new version of recession it was apparent that budget cuts was the norm and not the exception. The crisis, which most economists have considered to be the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, had a direct negative impact on children, youth and families. The return of “latch-key” kids attending to younger siblings was on the increase, due to longer workdays for parents. The credit crunch, which nearly eliminated all gains in our Facility Master Plan, could have had a greater blow to our ASPIRA South project. Very little or no benefit of the Stimulus Package made it to the Social Service Sector. The Miami-Dade County Human Service Alliance Grants, six in total in the amount of \$359,975 was headed towards de-funding. The prognosis for education and prevention funding looked bleak.

Staff Development and Reorganization:

To address the uncertainties of funding and grant applications, the formulation of a new strategic direction was announced. Effective January 1, 2009 the CEO announced the formal creation of its Corporate Leadership and Management Team. Strategically the ASPIRA Corporate Leadership Team quickly addressed the major issues at hand; 1) reduction in funding streams, 2) budget recessions, 3) shortfalls/cuts in the United Way allocation and the 4) credit crisis and facility financing.

The main role of the Corporate Leadership & Management Team was to develop grant applications for the overall organization and formulate policy recommendations to the Board of Directors and their Local Advisory Councils during this economic crisis. Since most proposals are written for upcoming fiscal cycles, the effects are more long range in nature. However, there are immediate short-range goals to be expected.

The above efforts have resulted in 63 applications submitted, 26 approved grants and 11 pending outcome since January 2009, resulting in a brisk pace of approximately 5 grants developed per month.

Fiscal Reports:

The board at our July 2009 meeting approved the new budget projections for fiscal year 2009-10. The staff is proud to announce a budget of \$11,764,136 versus \$10,530,249 approved for last year's budget, which is a \$1,233,887 increase of over 10%. However, staff is optimistically cautious due to the unpredictability of the national economy and its effects on local policies. What is evident is ASPIRA's ability to adapt to change with positive outcomes.

In addition, ASPIRA was able to hire 42 new staff members. As of July 1, 2009, the Charter School Divisions employed 30 and the YLD Divisions employed 12 new hires. Also, the Board approved the 2009 Audit (9-26-09) with a record-breaking year of \$11,682,346 in revenues. Again, ASPIRA is a prime model of economic and community development.

ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.			
Projected Revenues & Expenses Budget			
2009 - 10 Proposed BUDGET			
REVENUES	2008-09 APPROVED BUDGET	2009-10 PROPOSED BUDGET	
YLD BROWARD	363,356	523,087	159,731
YLD MIAMI-DADE	787,719	678,543	(109,176)
YLD PALM BEACH	611,729	825,750	214,021
FAMILY LITERACY/ADULT ED	204,583	127,031	(77,552)
CHARTER NORTH	3,392,108	3,951,460	559,352
CHARTER SOUTH	1,578,955	1,994,010	415,055
CHARTER WYNWOOD	3,487,799	3,480,253	(7,546)
G.O. CORPORATE	104,000	184,000	80,000
	10,530,249	11,764,136	1,233,886
EXPENSES			
YLD BROWARD	362,606	523,087	160,481
YLD MIAMI-DADE	787,719	629,793	(157,926)
YLD PALM BEACH	611,729	825,750	214,021
FAMILY LITERACY/ADULT ED	204,583	127,031	(77,552)
CHARTER NORTH	3,386,946	3,921,607	534,661
CHARTER SOUTH	1,778,498	2,077,592	299,094
CHARTER WYNWOOD	3,453,834	3,492,609	38,775
CORPORATE	438,559	372,650	(65,909)
	11,024,474	11,970,119	733,201
Revenues over Expenses	(494,225)	(205,984)	

Facility Master Plan and Financing



In November 2008, NCB Capital Impact scaled down its intended loan commitment; jeopardizing the ASPIRA South project and causing a temporary halt to all development plans. The staff mobilized to seek new creditors and developed an aggressive proposal contacting Regions Bank, TD Bank, OmiVest Venture Capital, Florida Community Loan Bank, and the Fifth Third Bank.

After months of submitting proposals and meeting with potential creditors, the staff was able to secure a loan through Fifth Third Bank for the completion of ASPIRA South in the amount of \$2.4 million. On May 4, 2009 ASPIRA held closing and symbolic ground breaking ceremonies at the Corporate Offices in Miami, Florida, in anticipation of completing Phase I of the construction project for the 2009-10-school opening.

On November 20th, 2009, the ASPIRA Board held Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies for the ASPIRA South construction project, the second of three capital development programs. Phase I of the ASPIRA South project included renovations of two existing motels with over 21,000 SF, on a 3.5 acres campus, including site work, parking lots, playgrounds, bus lanes, sidewalks and emergency entrances. Built within budget and just in time for

the start of the 2009-10 school year, at a cost of approximate \$3.5 million, ASPIRA opened its doors.



Joining in the celebrations was Guest Speaker, Mr. William A. Ramos, U.S. Department of Commerce Director for Intergovernmental Affairs. Pictured here in the center with ASPIRA Board Members Miream Sierra, Lisette Piloto, Dr. Victor Vazquez and others. Also in the celebration was School

Board Members Dr. Ana Rivas-Logan, Janice Kriwanek of Fifth Third Bank, the loaning agent for the project, former ASPIRA Board Member Lee Ramos and over 90 other guests.

The ASPIRA South project represented one of ASPIRA's toughest construction challenges. Still pending to be built is a Phase II, which includes a new 20,000 SF

structure, which will increase our capacity to reach a critical mass of 600 students. Currently the new project can only house 300 students.

As a reminder of the purpose of our Facility Master Plan the following is a recap: On March 19, 2003 the ASPIRA of Florida Board of Directors approved a policy to pursue a strategic plan to meet the growing educational and developmental needs of youth by seeking to acquire the facilities in which to conduct its charter school operations.

Upon completing all construction phases of three new community education campuses, ASPIRA will have tripled its square footage to over 155,000 SF with nearly 6 acres of prime South Florida Miami-Dade County real estate. This plan will increase ASPIRA's capacity to serve an additional 900 middle school students annually, raising enrollment to 1,800 students. Currently ASPIRA's total enrollment is approximate 1,300 students.



ASPIRA is engaged in creating an educational environment that will produce positive outcomes by raising FCAT scores, reduce the achievement gap, improve student achievement, increase school attendance, improve student behavior, and promote parental involvement for our students, their families and communities.

Eugenio Maria De Hostos Charter: The ASPIRA Wynwood purchase has been rescinded due to lack of financing and will be under a lease option for the next 2.5 years until which time financing becomes available. Current efforts are focused on completing all life safety and rezoning issues with the landlord.

Local Advisory Council (LAC) & Board Development:

The Board of Directors started the new fiscal year by choosing new executive officers for a one-year term. They are: Dr. Victor Vazquez, Chair, Miream Sierra, VC Programs & Planning, Ruth Pacheco, VC Fundraising, Edward Hernandez, Secretary and Tulia Badillo, Treasurer.

Efforts within the tri-county region to identify and recruit new volunteers paid dividends with Broward and Miami-Dade Local Advisory Councils adding new membership and each hosting a retreat for greater commitments. These Councils are led by the experienced Ruth Pacheco, Dean at DeVry University in Broward, and newcomer Edward Hernandez a local attorney in Miami and former Aspirante. In addition, the Miami-Dade LAC hosted a fundraiser silent auction in Coral Gables with over 50 invited guests raising over \$6,000.

A Fundraising Committee, led by Ruth Pacheco was organized to meet and kick-off two major objectives this year. The Envelope Campaign has successfully been launched among all Aspirantes and shortly will be mailed to friends and staff of ASPIRA. The purpose of the Envelope Campaign is to “create a culture of “giving” an annual

individual campaign. The goal is to raise \$3,000 per year. The other objective of the fundraising committee was to seek a signature spokesperson/celebrity for ASPIRA. The goal is to increase ASPIRA's awareness among the general public, since ASPIRA is the probably the best kept secret for youth services. The Development staff drafted and created a presentation package, which was delivered to Marc Anthony's manager. Results are pending.

The highlights of ASPIRA's volunteer effort culminated when the ASPIRA National office hosted the reception Honoring Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The Florida delegation, pictured right and from left to right, Edward Hernandez LAC Miami-Dade, Nydia Cabrera President PR Bar Association, Raul A. Martinez ASPIRA President & CEO Giselle Velazquez, Brown Mackie College and Marisol Gomez local Attorney and LAC Member attended this event.



The month of November 2009 was a good month for ASPIRA, with its Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, PR Day Celebration and recognition honored by the Puerto Rican Bar Association of Florida for outstanding work with the community. This award recognition was made possible through the work performed by the volunteer LAC & Board members to increase ASPIRA awareness.



Raul A. Martinez, Sandra Sanchez, Miream Sierra with Broward County Commissioner Diana Wasserman



Raul A. Martinez with Miami-Dade County Commissioner Barbara Jordan at the District I Hispanic Heritage Festival



Raul A. Martinez receives Miami-Dade County Puerto Rico Day Proclamation from Commissioner Dennis Moss's Aide Ms. Sandra Perez and ASPIRA Vice President Aymet Chaples, Nov.21, 2009.