

SLACO Winter 2020 Newsletter

Dear Friends of SLACO,

Well, that year definitely happened. Covid cases continue to rise in the region, but our urban island is faring better than most. Thanks for wearing masks, everybody. The first light of the new year's dawn can now be seen. This week marked the approval of two vaccines, with more to come. With Missouri beginning vaccinations in the next few weeks, we can finally begin planning for a return to normal. We can see Spring.

Until then, SLACO remains committed to serving our member neighborhoods and community. At the start of the Pandemic we converted our Afterschool/Summer Program into a Food program, helping to take care of the families that had come to depend on our center. When school resumed, and with better knowledge of the virus, we re-opened our doors to those kids, for distance learning while parents worked, and our more traditional Afterschool program. Thanks to your financial support, we have employed masks, air purifiers, sanitation treatments, and a lot of distancing to keep our kids safe. We will continue in this mission until the end of the school year, or widespread vaccination.

This past year we had an unprecedented national election during a pandemic. SLACO engaged voters in a citywide holistic campaign to make our voices heard, in cooperation with the Missouri Foundation for Health and Neighborhood FORWARD. We held voter education sessions – over Zoom this time. We phonebanked thousands of voters in a Get Out The Vote Effort. We drove voters to the polls all day on election day. And we're not done! SLACO is committed to helping citizens understand the local process as much as the national one. We are hosting a Mayoral debate focusing on youth issues with our Emerging Leaders program. Your voice matters in March, too!

SLACO spent much of the last year helping to coordinate our member neighborhoods and other groups, even administering micro-grants to groups as small as a block. As the weather turns cold again, and outdoor activities are curtailed, we are committed to using technology to maintain connected. And we're always looking out for best practices on this front, so if you and your group have an idea, drop us a line.

Next year one of SLACO's most ambitious projects bears fruit: our successful Proposition NS campaign to stabilize our housing stock has come online. Check out the program on the city website: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/prop-NS/> You can now read through the rules, nominate a property, see a listing, and check out properties that have already been nominated. Next year the city starts approval and funding. Everyone who collected a signature, knocked a door, stuck with us through the lawsuit, and pressured the city to do the right thing: You won. Thank you.

We know that the next few months are going to be rough. But we also know that hope is at hand, and the end is in sight. With your year end contribution, you'll be supporting our efforts to maintain and build St. Louis neighborhoods. We focus on keeping kids fed and safe, engaging young adults, connecting our people, and repairing our buildings. It's been a hard year. Next year will be better. Thank you for your continued support.

SLACO is a tax-deductible 501(c)3. Donations to support these and other SLACO programs in the new year can be made online: <https://pages.donately.com/slaco-mo/donate>

Kevin McKinney
Executive Director
SLACO