

November 30, 2010

Dear Friends,

In early October we announced that Resource Center of the Americas had initiated discussions with nonprofit partners with the intent of forming a merger. We're writing to provide you a brief update on developments.

THE MERGER

Today, we're pleased to announce that the Boards of Directors of Resource Center of the Americas and La Conexión have authorized the formation of a merger. Our organizations have formed a "merge team" that will come together to develop a unified vision for the future, and at our January member meeting we will ask for the support of our membership in completing the merger.

The underlying drivers for both organizations are both financial and mission-based. We need to establish better financial footing and achieve critical mass, and we're fundamentally motivated to reshape our organizations to become yet more meaningful and effective—more powerful.

A NEW MODEL: MELDING SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Our merge team needs time to do its work, yet we'd like to highlight some preliminary thoughts that have contributed to this direction.

La Conexión connects Twin Cities Latino communities to educational, economic and community resources and opportunities. Working with over 2,000 clients each year, La Conexión operates out of the Hans Christian Andersen School in a neighborhood with a strong Latino immigrant population. Over its five years, La Conexión has been growing and developing a sound reputation for its work, while receiving outstanding support from Minnesota's foundations.

Resource Center of the Americas, as you know, has worked to educate on the interconnected relationship of the U.S. and Latin-America, and in more recent years has developed programs to build relationships between Latino and non-Latino communities locally. Over the years we've developed specialized projects, striving to demonstrate that "a better world is possible" including fair trade, sweat-free and workers' rights initiatives.

Together, we are motivated to continue our current programming, with an eye toward transforming underlying system problems that result in inequalities of power and resources. Everything each organization is doing today will become more meaningful and effective, and we're creating a platform to enhance services or ramp up specialized future projects including research and advocacy. We are developing the framework for a powerful, multicultural organization that will educate, empower, connect, research, organize and advocate.

NEXT STEPS

Each organization will remain separate for the time being, until Resource Center of the Americas' membership has approved the structural changes required to conduct a merger. During this interim period, Jason has been designated Executive Director of both organizations.

The merge team is charged with making recommendations on strategic issues as well as certain details which we know are important to our stakeholders. We are certainly sensitive to the very personal connection that our constituents have with each organization, and we will strive to approach every decision with integrity and well-considered strategy.

Merging as an organizational strategy is of continuing interest to us. We are in discussions with a third partner, currently operating with a confidentiality agreement, as this is a sensitive discussion that every organization wishes to approach directly with its constituents. Whether we end our merger activity with La Conexión, or continue to form a larger three-party merger, we know we wish to preserve the identity and legacy of Resource Center of the Americas.

We would like to invite you to our annual member meeting, January 29th from 9:30am-11:30am at Holy Trinity Church 2730 East 31st Street. At this meeting we will present more extensive background information and welcome any questions from members and the community. Current Members have voting rights on formal actions related to this merger proposal.

In the interim, please do not hesitate to call or write Jason with any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,

Eva Benavidez
Board Chair, Resource Center of the Americas
board@americas.org

Jean Lougee
Board Chair, La Conexión
jean.lougee@gmail.com

Jason Stone
Executive Director, Resource Center of the Americas and La Conexión
jason.stone@americas.org
(612) 276-0788 ext. 3