



Hundreds of Supporters Advocate for new Saint Anthony Hospital and Focal Point Community Campus

Community members and leaders voice their support to have a mixed-use campus on old Washburne Trade School Site.

CHICAGO – Nearly 250 community members, leaders and Saint Anthony Hospital patients and employees voiced their support for a new community hospital and multi-use sustainable campus known as Focal Point Community Campus, at a community meeting last night hosted by 22nd Ward Alderman Michael D. Rodriguez.

Jim Sifuentes, Senior Vice President of Community Development for Saint Anthony Hospital presented the Alderman with more than 1500 signatures from residents of Little Village and the Alderman's ward in support of Focal Point including letters from 30 community-based organizations – including the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, I AM ABLE, and the National Latino Education Institute.

A new state-of-the-future Saint Anthony Hospital will serve as the health care anchor at Focal Point which is being developed at the southwest corner of West 31st Street and South Kedzie Avenue on 32-acres, currently a blighted tract of land. The hospital will provide greater access to higher quality care and wellness programs.

"I'm a cancer survivor," said a meeting attendee and 50-year resident of Little Village. "Thanks to the hospital, I'm here. We need wellness in this area. I give thanks to all the doctors from Saint Anthony."

One third of Saint Anthony Hospital's employees live in the surrounding communities, and have a stake in their wellness and that of their neighbors.

"I grew up in Little Village and still live here," said Saint Anthony Hospital employee Andres Ruvalcaba. "I've been a nurse at this hospital for 16 years and proud of being here. We need to keep this hospital in the community."

Community leaders and elected officials that spoke in support of Focal Point included: North Lawndale community activists, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Jaime di Paulo, Resurrection Project CEO Raul Raymundo and Illinois State Senator Martin Sandoval.

"The Mexican-American and African-American community deserves more," said Illinois State Senator Martin Sandoval. "Together we can promote Focal Point and achieve greater investment for the benefit of our community."

Jaime Di Paulo, President and CEO of the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and former Executive Director of the Little Village Chamber of Commerce, reminded the crowd that several of the evening's attendees have been involved in the Focal Point project for almost decade.

"We all – people in this room – have attended community meetings about Focal Point, including the alderman when he was then the president of Enlace. How can you say no to this project?"

Raul Raymundo, CEO of the Resurrection Project added, “Cinespace wasn’t around eight years ago, we were. This project can be a model for our neighborhood and the country. This is what the community has asked for and is now waiting for it.”

On Wednesday, August 28, 2019, the Chicago Southwest Development Corporation (CSDC) will go before the Chicago Board of Education for a hearing to decide if the 11-acres of land – owned by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) - will be sold to CSDC for the new home of Saint Anthony Hospital at Focal Point Community Campus.

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