




2023

Annual Report

**Florence-Firestone
Community Organization**

501c3 Non-Profit



Dear Friends and Supporters:

The Florence-Firestone Community Organization has been a steward and advocate serving community members in Florence-Firestone, a vicinity of 3.6 square miles. According to the 2020 US Census, the population stands at 61,983 with over 20% living below the federal poverty level. During the worst public health disaster in more than a century, our leadership team stepped up to the challenge of continuing to provide support and assistance to the most vulnerable.

The pandemic laid bare the structural inequities in our community, which lead our organization to provide free covid testing, technology assistance for renters, and food equity and safety resources. We stood up to the occasion and urged our government leaders to provide us with the necessary means for our constituents. This effort highlighted the resilience and passion of our organization's leaders and volunteers who fought every day for social health equity. While offices and agencies closed their doors to the public, our organization remained open throughout the week and on weekends to serve those in need.

With tenacity, strength and determination, our organization navigated through the challenging times and succeeded. In 2022, the Board of Directors unanimously voted in favor of officially chartering the Florence-Firestone Community Organization as a non-profit 501c3 IRS Tax exempt operation. Through the assistance and support of outside agencies, our Mission Statement, By-Laws, and office structural management operations were created. In 2023, the IRS officially approved our organization as a Tax Exempt, Charitable organization, an accomplishment that marks the beginning of a future partnership with our supporters and most of all continuing services to our residents.

For several years we have provided food equity, advocacy, and resources to thousands of households in the Florence-Firestone area and other communities. Through our partnerships and support with the Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse (LA CADA), Baby2Baby, Helping Hands, Southeast Collaborative, local businesses, and LA County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell's Office, we have provided free programs such as the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention, Domestic Violence Support Group, Semi-Monthly Food Giveaways, Quarterly Resource Fairs, Easter Basket Giveaway, National Night Out, Halloween Haunted House Maze, Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway, and the Holiday Christmas Children's Free Toy Program.

While there is still more work ahead, our organization remains committed to improving the quality of life for the residents in the Florence-Firestone area. We look forward to the future to expand existing programs and create new partnerships with those that will join us in serving Florence-Firestone.

Thank you,



Steve Quinonez, President

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



FOOD EQUITY PROGRAM

As the price of groceries has risen steadily for the past five years, our commitment is to ensure every family in our community has access to healthy food. We are proud to partner with our local food bank, Helping Hands, and provide free fruits, vegetables, bread, dairy products, meats, poultry, and beverages. Food should be affordable, sustainable, nutritious, high-quality, and culturally connected. We create awareness, knowledge, and the skills to educate the hundreds of household participants to select quality foods and how to quickly prepare them at home.

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION



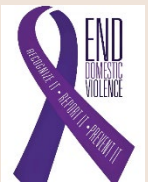
There are many effective substance abuse prevention interventions that differ from one area to another, and we are proud to provide a safe haven with structure, content, and support to those dealing with addiction. Our weekly sessions held at our facilities are free and open to the public from the ages of young adults to seniors. The workshops discuss information on drug laws and policies, causes, effects, plus training to develop skills to build and improve behaviors, and provide strategies on programs that target structural changes. We are grateful to our partner Los Angeles Center of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (LA CADA) for the grant to present such a successful program to the community.



BABY ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS

With the price of diapers averaging \$80 to \$100 a month per baby, and with our community in the high federal poverty level, we created a partnership with a nationwide organization Baby2Baby. Diapers are considered the 4th highest household expense after rent, food, and utilities. Assisting our babies in the community, we provided diapers, wipes, milk formula, shampoo, car seats, and clothes.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT



We recognize domestic violence can take many forms, including emotional, sexual, physical and threats of abuse. With the Peer to Peer Project Support Group, women and men can de-stress and share their stories with other participants. Through sharing experiences, peers provide validation, support, and skills to cope with challenges. The group meets weekly at our facility and is open to the public. After the sessions, the participants partake in crocheting and knitting.

QUARTERLY RESOURCE FAIRS

To provide our community with as much information as possible, every quarter throughout the year we present Community Resource Fairs. County agencies, public safety, small businesses, and community organizations participate and provide free information on services and resources to the residents of the area. The quarterly resource fairs also provide a platform for partnering organizations who need to promote or conduct surveys for certain community-wide projects such as pedestrian and traffic safety, violence prevention and government benefits.



EASTER BASKET/CANDY GIVEAWAY



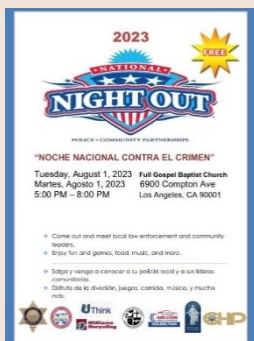
Over one hundred children of the area are hosted at a free Easter egg hunt and pinata breaking contest on the weekend before Easter. Free pictures, games, food, and beverages are provided to all the families in attendance. We partner with local elementary schools, day care centers, small businesses, and the LA County public library on this event.

LUAU YEARLY FUNDRAISER

To ensure organizational funding for programs and operations, the Board of Directors every year hosts a Luau Fundraiser in the month of June. Local businesses, community organizations, County representatives and state officials take part in the event that unites the community. Food, beverages, live entertainment, music, door prizes and raffles are all part of the festivities.



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



In partnership with the L.A. County Sheriffs, California Highway Patrol, and County Fire Department, we host a National Night Out event on the first Tuesday in August. Families enjoy games, food, music and resources from various County agencies, schools, and organizations. This year with the support of the Honda Helpers, free ice cream was provided to everyone. The event attracts nearly 2,000 families.



CHILDREN’S BACKPACK GIVEAWAY

To prepare the children of the area with proper tools, our Annual Children Backpack Giveaway Program is presented two weeks prior to the end of summer vacation. Items included in the Backpacks are writing notebooks, crayons, hand sanitizers, pencils, glue sticks, erasers, along with pencil and ink pen holders. The special activity was held in conjunction with the food giveaway program in the month of August.

HALLOWEEN HAUNTED HOUSE MAZE

Every year hundreds of families in the area and surrounding communities participate in our annual Halloween Haunted House Maze. This year’s event was presented for three days on the last week of October, and included volunteer zombie actors, a light taser game, and a vortex tunnel. The community event is presented to keep the children safe from the streets and providing a secure local area for fun and excitement in Florence-Firestone.



THANKSGIVING TURKEY GIVEAWAY

Through the sponsorship support of the New Start Housing Corporation and other agencies, our organization was able to provide over one hundred turkeys to families in need. Along with the free Turkeys, other items included were side dishes of vegetables, stuffing, bread, desserts, plus beverages to compliment the Thanksgiving meal for the entire family. The goal for the new year will be to provide double the amount.

HOLIDAY CHRISTMAS TOY GIVEAWAY

At the end of the year, our organization presents the annual Holiday Christmas Toy Giveaway. This year, we partnered with the California Highway Patrol, Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Southern California Gas Company, Carlitos Tires, Full Gospel Church, and Florence-Firestone Community Leaders. Over five hundred children received free quality toys, bikes, and hosted free hot chocolate beverages, pictures with Santa Claus, and with Chipper, the Highway Patrol Mascot. The event also featured a snow creating affect machine with the children who were able to play and video their fun.



2023 IMPACT

50 Volunteers



Hours of volunteer service donated.

9,500

Equivalent to over \$150,000

7,000+

Households

Provided with food resources and education on healthy eating.



250+

Participants

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention
Domestic Violence Group
Baby Essential Products



3,000+

Attendees

Easter Basket Backpack Giveaway
National Night Out
Halloween Haunted Maze
Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway
Holiday-Christmas Toy Giveaway

10,000 + Happy Residents





ADVOCACY REPORT

COMMUNITY LEADERS MEETING

We continued our partnership with the Florence-Firestone Community Leaders, a civic engagement organization lead by residents and local business owners that meet once a month on the second Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. at the Full Gospel Church. The meetings allow the opportunity for members of the community to voice their concerns regarding public safety, parking, street sweeping, homeless encampments, and other matters affecting the quality of life in the Florence-Firestone area. Board Members of the Florence-Firestone Community Organization express concerns received from the community directly to the County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell's Office.

COMMUNITY BIKE AND WALK AUDIT

Three community audits were held in the months of August and September. The bike ride on August 6th gave our Board Members, students, and community members an opportunity to assess roadway safety along Makee, Slauson Avenue, Miramonte Blvd, and Florence Avenue. The second was a walking audit held on August 23rd to analyze various sidewalk and road conditions along Compton Avenue, Miramonte Blvd and Florence Avenue. The third was another walking audit held on September 24 by our Board Members, community residents, and representatives from LA County Public Health. This walk identified unsafe pathways for pedestrians along E. 92nd Street including blocks in Florence-Firestone and Watts within LA City. During all events, participants analyzed public spaces, social history, and community issues in Florence-Firestone. Events were through a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety and Bike L.A.s

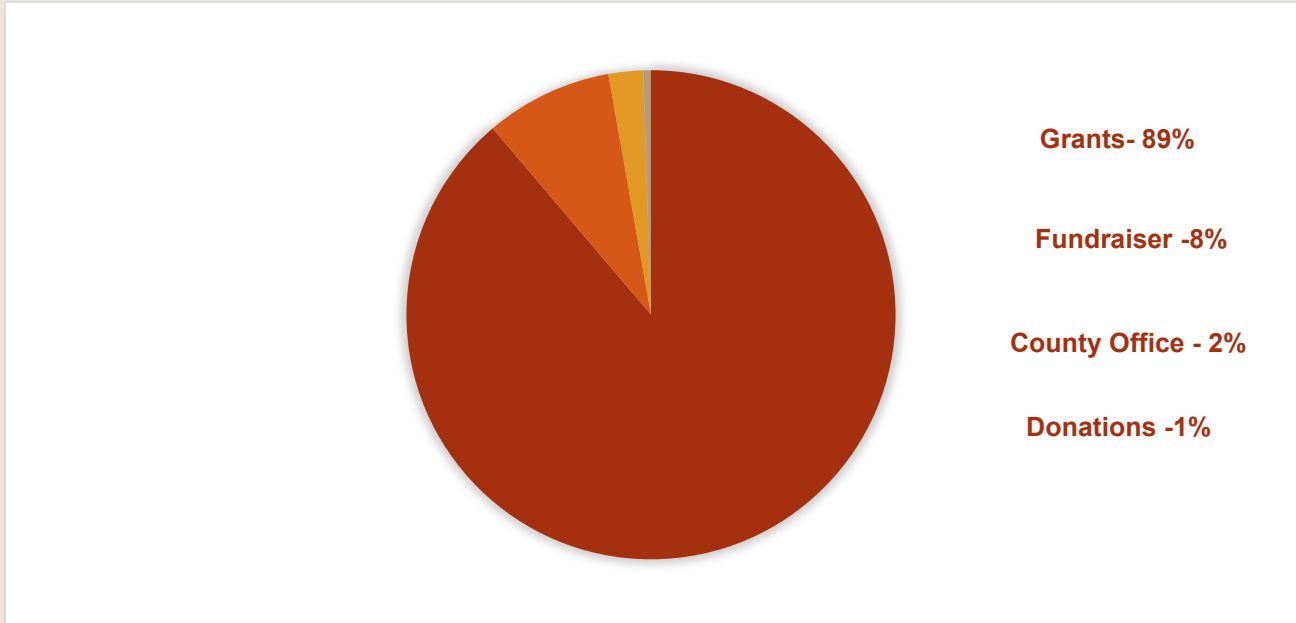
BUSINESS POWER WALK

With various business owners along the Alameda Street corridor, we coordinated a Power Walk with County Representatives of Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell's Office. The walk was held in the month of September, and it was to address the homeless encampments, parked vacant motorhomes, plus the maintenance and upkeep needs that are affecting the residents and business entrances. The walk-through was for approximately one hour followed by a meeting to discuss solutions and partnerships on how businesses can assist the county in improving the safety and cleanliness of the streets affected by the current homelessness.

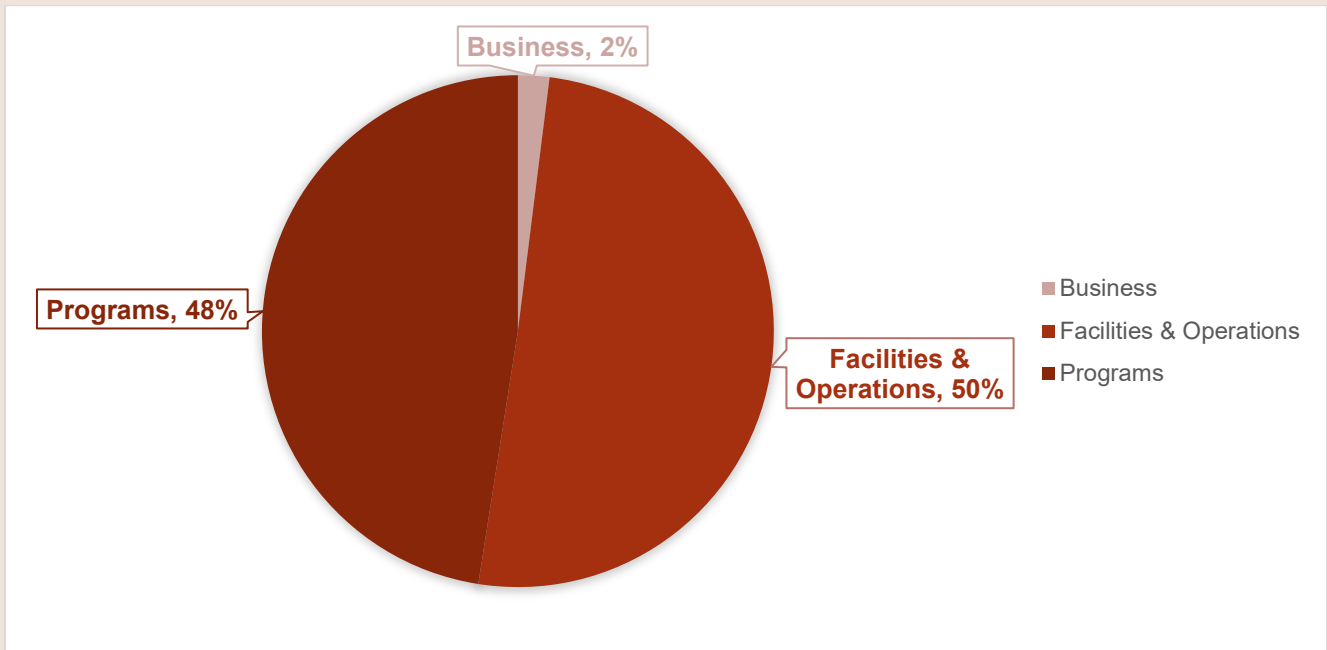
STEP BY STEP – LA COUNTY PEDESTRIAN PLAN

The County of Los Angeles was awarded a grant from the federal government in the amount of \$21.5 million from the safety highway funds. The effort was made through the work of the County's Public Works for the purpose of creating safer streets, crosswalks, and sidewalks for community members. Our organization representatives worked with Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) on analyzing various areas in the Florence-Firestone area to create walkable, green, safe neighborhoods. Our organization continues monitoring the progress of the project as it is scheduled to still be approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

INCOME - \$87,283



EXPENSE - \$91,584



All Figures are Subject to Accountant's Reconciliation.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR SUPPORTERS

- Baby2Baby
- California State Highway Patrol
- Carlito's Tires and Auto Repair
- Florence-Firestone Community Leaders
- Full Gospel Church
- Helping Hands
- L.A. County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
- L.A. County Sheriff's Department
- Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse (LA CADA)
- Mas Alla de La Confianza
- UThink

Florence-Firestone Community Organization

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Steve Quinonez, President and Founder

Jonathan Pacheco Bell, Vice President

Alexandra Melgoza, Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer

Patty Mijares, Secretary

Rafael Acevedo

Art Jones

Ramses Nicholson

Pastor Reginald Payn

Leticia Martinez, Operations Analyst, Consultant