The background is a collage of community activities, including people wearing masks, a person in a hard hat, and a Union Bank check. The collage is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The title text is centered over the collage.

# Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation

# PROGRESS 2020 ▶ FORWARD 2021

# REPORT



For additional information or to hear about *Ways to Pay it Forward*,  
please contact a member of our team at 619-957-8780 or  
[development@jacobscenter.org](mailto:development@jacobscenter.org).



**Reginald Jones**  
President &  
Chief Executive Officer



**Valerie Jacobs Hapke**  
Chairman of the Board

Last year was unprecedented. Between COVID-19, social issues and more, the country and community were challenged. Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation pivoted in response, working collaboratively to respond to Southeastern San Diego community needs. Through these hard times, we made progress – serving basic human needs, fostering economic opportunity and advancing real estate development.

As a community-centric nonprofit, the Jacobs Center's goal is to partner with area residents and those who care about the neighborhood to revitalize Southeastern San Diego. We regularly collaborate with neighboring businesses and organizations to bring resources, programs, entertainment and more to the Diamond District.

### To accomplish this, we focus on three areas:

- **Community Engagement (page 3): Working in partnership with local leaders and organizations to provide social services, resources, and arts and culture opportunities for community needs, growth and well-being**
- **Economic Development (page 4): Building businesses, bringing jobs and growing free business resources in a historically high poverty area**
- **Real Estate Development (page 5): Bringing accessible housing, key services and retail to revitalize Southeastern San Diego and enhance quality of life**

This year, Jacobs Center supported local nonprofit organizations through emergency grants with the Southeastern San Diego COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund. This fund began with the Jacobs Family Foundation and the San Diego COVID-19 Community Response Fund at The San Diego Foundation to support organizations in the Diamond District that offer pandemic emergency services, including food, educational services, transportation, senior support and mental health services. In total, more than \$107,000 was provided to 33 organizations, including \$10,000 in personal protective equipment.

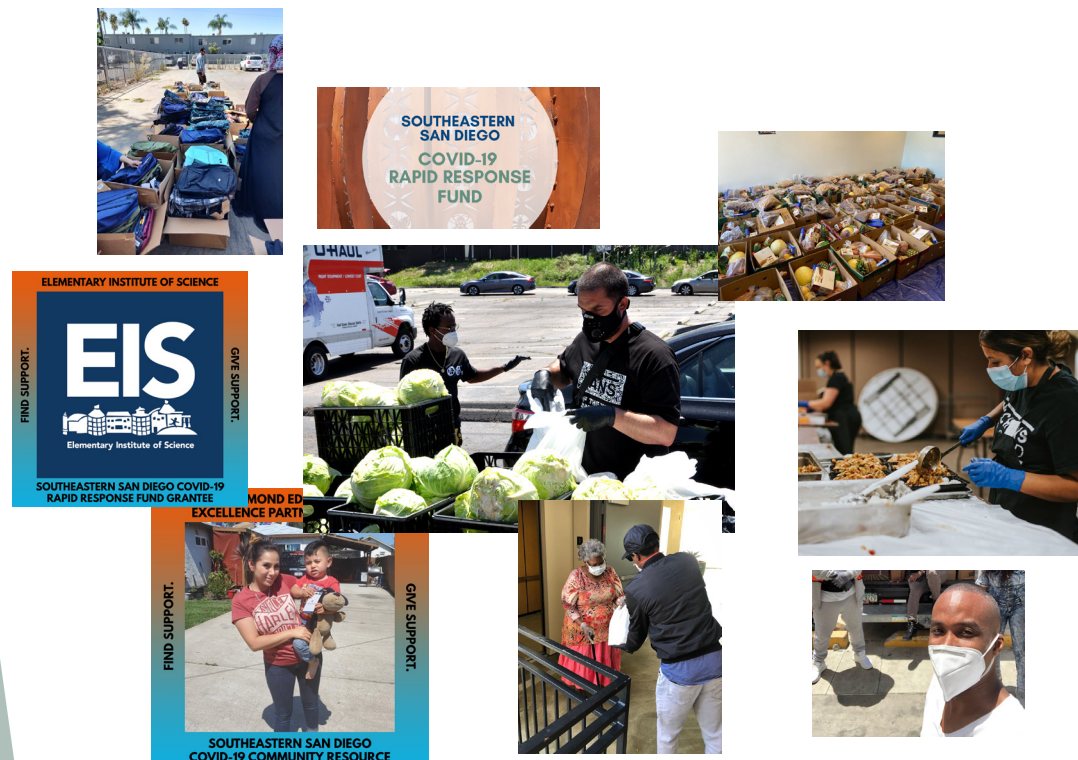
On behalf of our board and staff, we are pleased to present this report on our 2020 progress and provide a glimpse of 2021 plans and progress: **Progress 2020 – Forward 2021**. We also want to connect with you! We invite your questions and encourage you to learn more about our programs and how you can participate, and lastly, support our (your) organization (see page 12).

Looking forward, there is still much to be done, but **together, we will achieve it.**

In partnership,

**Reginald Jones**  
President and CEO

**Valerie Jacobs Hapke**  
Chairman of the Board



# WHY IS THE CENSUS IMPORTANT?

THURSDAY, SEPT. 10 | 5-6 P.M.

## JOIN US FOR A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION HOSTED BY THE US CENSUS BUREAU ALONG WITH:



**Christie Marcella**  
Jacobs Center for  
Neighborhood Innovation



**Dhalia Balmir**  
Black American Political  
Association of CA, San Diego

Common Ground Theatre Announces 2020-2021 Season  
**ENTERTAINMENT** San Diego's Premier Black Theater Plans for Virtual, Outdoor Productions

■ By MARIEL CONCEPCION

For San Diego's home to one of the three longest running Black theater companies in the United States, Common Ground Theatre, located in southeastern San Diego, was founded in 1983. Additionally, it is the premier Black theater in the county, according to Walter de la Haza. Frankie, newly appointed executive artistic director, stepped into the role in 2018. With this in mind, the playwright has embarked on a pivotal 2020-2021 season around the theme of "Raising our voices to a higher level," which kicked off earlier this month.

This season's programming includes "Uplifting Black Voices," virtual play readings, a rendition of "Holiday Jubilee" and live performances in partnership with Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation. The latter organization fosters networks and programs that support early-stage entrepreneurs and growing existing neighborhood businesses and jobs.

"There is the duty to discuss and Black artists through their diverse period of time," said Frankie, who was appointed in July after coming to us from a previous director in 2015. When the previous artistic director joined the company as a permanent booth, "This year's season was put together with the thought that the African American Black experience is different for everyone and all these artists are worth telling," she added.

"We are sharing as many stories as we can this year, including through our premiere play reading series and holiday concert, so that everyone has a chance to take part."

**Uplifting Black Voices**  
Frankie, who is the first female artistic director in the theater's 37 years, made it



Common Ground Theatre, San Diego's premier Black theatre, is hosting virtual play readings during the 2020-2021 season.

of it helps amplify actors, she said, which is particularly important as the city comes back on recovery.

Frankie, newly appointed executive artistic director, stepped into the role in 2018. With this in mind, the playwright has embarked on a pivotal 2020-2021 season around the theme of "Raising our voices to a higher level," which kicked off earlier this month.

This season's programming includes "Uplifting Black Voices," virtual play readings, a rendition of "Holiday Jubilee" and live performances in partnership with Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation. The latter organization fosters networks and programs that support early-stage entrepreneurs and growing existing neighborhood businesses and jobs.

"There is the duty to discuss and Black artists through their diverse period of time," said Frankie, who was appointed in July after coming to us from a previous director in 2015. When the previous artistic director joined the company as a permanent booth, "This year's season was put together with the thought that the African American Black experience is different for everyone and all these artists are worth telling," she added.

"We are sharing as many stories as we can this year, including through our premiere play reading series and holiday concert, so that everyone has a chance to take part."

**Uplifting Black Voices**  
Frankie, who is the first female artistic director in the theater's 37 years, made it

FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD:  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Jacobs Center maintains its commitment to fostering community-centric engagement and support. What does community-centric mean? It's a concept grounded in equity and social justice, prioritizing everyone over individual organizations, promoting a sense of belonging and emphasizing collaboration.

We support emerging groups, partner with nonprofits to meet basic needs and serve as a support organization for community groups focused on collective impact. Partnerships bring free and low-cost activities to the neighborhood, representing a variety of needs, themes and cultures, including African American/Black, Latinx and Asian American/Pacific Islander. While our indoor and outdoor venues weren't filled with people and celebrations this year, we look forward to bringing the community back together in-person soon.



COMMUNITY VITALITY

Art Matters

Hosting a different series of artists each month, the **Pop-Up Art Gallery @ Market Creek Plaza** shines the spotlight on Southeastern San Diego's dynamic emerging art scene and beyond. The art gallery – the first in the area – is running from October 2020 to May 2021.

Earning rave reviews from local media, **Common Ground Theatre** is San Diego's premier Black theater company showcasing compelling works reflecting the African American experience. The 2020-21 season, in partnership with the Jacobs Center, included "Uplifting Black Voices," a free digital reading series that highlighted short play readings by Black playwrights.

We All Count: The 2020 Census

Many Diamond District residents fall under the U.S. Census Bureau's "hard to count" categories. To help, we hosted our first-ever virtual event, "Why is the Census Important?" led by Jacobs Center's Christie Marcella, a Census Bureau representative and Black American Political Association of California, San Diego (BAPAC)'s Dhalia Balmir. Watch the conversation: [bit.ly/JCNICensus](https://bit.ly/JCNICensus).

Storytelling Celebration

We hosted our second "Be About It" event in November that celebrated community organizations through performances. Curated by spoken word artist Gill Sotu, this virtual concert paired local performing artists with San Diego nonprofit groups. Check it out: [bit.ly/BeAboutItVid](https://bit.ly/BeAboutItVid).



*"Look at our children.*

*Ain't no smile like a smile of a child who finishes her first book ON HER OWN AND KNOWS IT.*

*Ain't no joy like entering la biblioteca and really beginning to understand,*

*'Wait a minute, you telling me I can read ANY of these books, and they're ALL FREE for me to use?'*

*YEAH ... THAT FEELING!"*

*— Gill Sotu's poem written for Diamond Educational Excellence Program*

BOOSTING INNOVATION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Jacobs Center is dedicated to improving Southeastern San Diego’s economic well-being and quality of life. We empower small businesses, contributing to a network of support. This work has helped keep doors open during a time when minority small businesses were closing at rates far higher than their counterparts.

CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center Impact

52

Local businesses jumpstarted from the business accelerator since May 2019

25

Female head of household business owners

55

Program participants are ethnic minorities

\$65,000

in grants to program participants in the Union Bank Start-Up Pitch Competitions

44

Are low-to moderate-income business owners

38+

FREE Business Resource Center workshops in 2020

11

Companies referred from the Business Resource Center to business accelerator

Lifting Up Business

The region’s first business accelerator program focused on low-to-moderate income and diverse business owners, CONNECT ALL @the Jacobs Center (CAJC), offers connections, expert mentors and weekly workshops to all participants – with no equity stake or fees required. CAJC also hosts a no-cost Business Resource Center for business owners to connect and get services and resources. CAJC’s goal is to grow local businesses, jobs and the economy. Learn more at [connectallsd.org](https://connectallsd.org).

CAJC is a strategic partnership between the City of San Diego, the Jacobs Center and CONNECT w/ San Diego Venture Group. This program is funded in whole or in part with Community Development Block Grant program funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to the City of San Diego. Private funding is also provided by partners MUFG Union Bank N.A. and bkm OfficeWorks.

Accessible Retail Hub

Market Creek Plaza serves as an economic engine to the area, a hub for shopping, dining and job opportunities. During the pandemic, Market Creek Plaza was an accessible place for families to pick up groceries, an affordable meal, run errands and more.

Working Together

Jacobs Center is part of the Southeast San Diego Business Collaborative, supported by JPMorgan Chase, along with Accion, Small Business Development Center and Logan Heights CDC. Our mission is to serve the San Diego Promise Zone, working to increase access to credit education, technical assistance and lending capital for small business owners.

In its first year:

- 307 businesses assisted, all low-to-moderate income/vulnerable population
- 33 quality jobs created/retained
- Served businesses in the 92102, 92113 and 92114 zip codes
- \$1,063,081 attracted in investments (debt or equity)

*“I officially launched my business, Meri Consulting Services, during a global pandemic, so having CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center’s support, as well as access to various business resources and training, was crucial. I cannot believe this was all free. Anyone who needs help launching their business should apply to join this program. I also won a life-changing \$5,000 in CAJC’s Union Bank Start-up Pitch Competition. As my business grows, my goal is to continue giving back to other diverse business leaders and hiring diverse and underrepresented talent.”*

*-- Meri Birhane, Meri Consulting Services, CAJC Cohort 3*



## BUILDING QUALITY COMMUNITIES: REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

We are keenly focused on introducing sustainable development, housing, retail, educational and community resources to Southeastern San Diego. These improvements help keep the Diamond District as a desirable place to live and work.

### Transforming Lives

Nearing completion on a stunning two-story athletic and academic facility in the Diamond District, Access Youth Academy is a nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of youth through the sport of squash with leadership training and mentorship. This new project will serve as a hub for future first-generation college students, as well as provide services and outdoor activities to thousands of youth and the community at-large – a key request from the neighborhood – upon its completion, planned for June 2021.



### Paving the Way

Through the Euclid and Market Complete Streets project, we support the City of San Diego in encouraging active modes of transportation to connect the community with surrounding neighborhoods. Improvements include new and expanded sidewalks, bicycle lanes, crosswalks, streetlights, landscaping and curb extensions to help with traffic. Project construction has begun, and is anticipated to be complete by March 2022.

### Knowledge is Power

The KIPP Adelante Preparatory Academy recently relocated to its newly constructed buildings, an extension of the Joe & Vi Jacobs Center campus. The new middle school – 5th-8th grades – is part of the national KIPP (Knowledge is Power) program, a nonprofit operating tuition-free, open-enrollment charter public schools across the country.



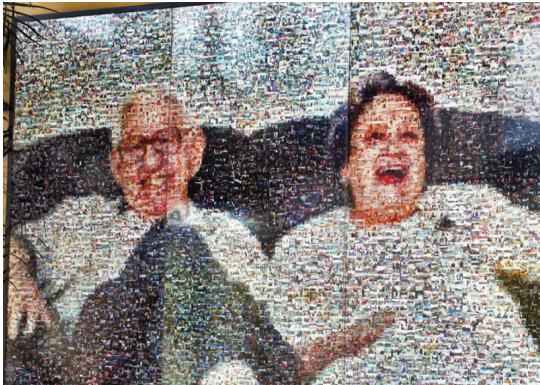
*“While we hoped to hear the sound of our middle schoolers laughing throughout our brand new school building this year, we have faced the pandemic’s challenges creatively by supporting our Southeastern San Diego students and families through free daily meal distributions, one-on-one technology and internet access and support, mental health and special education support services, and a comprehensive distance learning program. We look forward to welcoming them to our new campus as soon as possible!”*

*— Rachelle Minix, KIPP Adelante School Leader*

**PROGRESS:**  
**VISION COMMITMENT**

The organization remains focused on realizing the founding vision to support community sustainability through development and engagement – benefiting generations past, present and future.

The Jacobs Center staff works side-by-side with the Jacobs family and community board members (meet our three newest board members on page 9). Bringing Joe and Vi’s plans to life, community board members serve two-year terms and volunteer on specific committees based on their expertise and interests.



**FORWARD:**  
**COMMUNITY LEGACY**

Looking ahead, the organization will be adding more community board members, completing real estate development, updating existing properties and focusing on financial sustainability.

Please join us – participation opportunities include feedback on current and future projects, volunteering with partner organizations, peer to peer fundraisers and donations of all sizes. Community involvement is critical to keep the nonprofit working and growing with Southeastern San Diego. Learn more on page 12.



STRATEGIC OUTREACH:  
POWERED IN PARTNERSHIP

Throughout more than two decades’ worth of community engagement, neighborhood surveys, one-on-one community feedback, focus groups, research and “boots on the ground” work, Jacobs Center continues to identify ways to create support and connections with the community in 2021 and beyond.

TOWN CENTER  
MASTER PLAN





Community Engagement

Jacobs Center embraces the entire community and is committed to doing that in 2021, including by developing Spanish and Tagalog versions of our website to better spread information about resources, programs and events.

We will deepen existing partnerships and explore new ones in the arts and culture, social, economic and sustainability sectors, that will help neighborhood organizations grow and succeed, while fostering local leadership.



Economic Development

Job opportunities, training and business support are major needs in the Diamond District, so we'll continue to provide resources and guidance through programs like CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center's business accelerator program and the Southeast San Diego Business Collaborative.

In the coming years, we will continue expanding Business Resource Center services, webinars and one-on-one support to assist businesses at all stages. This past year, we helped 226 companies and plan to increase small businesses support by 15% every year.

Credit issues and lack of business infrastructure continues to impede access to loan capital for small businesses, and in 2021, the Southeast San Diego Business Collaborative will seek funding for programs that will complement its work with specific barriers, including bad or lack of credit.



Real Estate Development

Our Town Center Master Plan prioritizes the community, working with development partners to build spaces that bring a variety of community benefits, such as housing, jobs and education.

Upcoming developments include Southwest Village with 81 affordable apartments/homes, Parcel #7 with multifamily housing and more socially distanced and outdoor community events in Celebration Hall and Market Creek Amphitheater.

*“As a Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation employee and resident of District 4, I am making a difference by being a part of the mission, growth and redevelopment of my community. I work very hard with my coworkers to assure there are opportunities available for others to access information, programs and resources – not to mention PPE supplies, food distribution and grants during this pandemic. I will continue to stay involved to improve the conditions of the underserved and hopefully motivate this community as well as other communities to do the same.”*

*— Alvenesia Sims, Operations Supervisor,  
Property Management Department*



Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation  
Board of Directors 2020



**Valerie Jacobs Hapke**  
Chairman of the Board



**Norman F. Hapke, Jr.**  
Secretary



**Andrew Hapke**  
Treasurer/CFO



**Claire Hapke**  
Board Member



**Juan Carlos Hernandez**  
Board Member



**Louie Nguyen**  
Board Member



**Paul Robinson**  
Board Member

GREETINGS FROM THE JACOBS CENTER TEAM

At Jacobs Center, we have an active and engaged board of directors who work alongside our staff and partners, advocating for our community and supporting our vision. We value our board members – from the Jacobs family and community members – who play a critical role in making the Diamond District a dynamic place to live, work, play and learn.

Making a Difference

**Juan Carlos Hernandez, Board Member**

*What prompted you to join the board of the Jacobs Center?*

*I have been participating in the Southeastern community for several years, primarily assisting small business owners access affordable working capital for their businesses. I saw the work that Jacobs Center was doing in this realm and felt the need to join their mission in serving the community.*

**Louie Nguyen, Board Member**

*How has life experience made you the community leader you are today?*

*Our family came to the U.S. as refugees with no more than hope and prayers. My life has been blessed by many generous individuals who have helped me along the way. I believe in providing opportunities for those less fortunate.*

**Paul Robinson, Board Member**

*What do you like most about your work with the Jacobs Center?*

*Having input in shaping transformation that will hopefully grow Southeastern San Diego into a vibrant, economically wealthy and sustainable community.*

*“As we begin to expand the board and share the responsibilities of governance with community leaders, I am more and more confident in the future of the Jacobs Center and its role in Southeastern San Diego. The expertise, capabilities and commitment we have on the board today are the foundation for an exciting future – one where my family’s involvement begins to subside, and community leaders chart our path forward.”*

*— Andrew Hapke, Board Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer*

STAFF UPDATES IN 2020

- We are thrilled to announce the promotion of Christie Marcella, who as executive director will continue her focus on strengthening partnerships. Previously as community and economic development officer, Marcella focused on building and advancing partnerships with local organizations, fostering a collaborative environment of shared resources, including Joe & Vi Jacobs Center’s meeting spaces, communications expertise and regional relationships.
- As our new director of development operations and institutional advancement, Selina Castillo Hudgins will put her fund development expertise to good work – building much needed philanthropic support for neighborhood projects. Hudgins will collaborate to grow key programs important to the Diamond District like the Business Resource Center, cultural arts partnerships, community engagement opportunities and general operations support.

*“Jacobs Center’s mission has always been about a thriving community envisioned and realized by its residents. Our team members have a proven passion for this mission.*

*In partnership with others, we continue to prioritize the entire community through physical development, economic opportunities, neighborhood resources and cultural arts. Our approach is simple and grounded in equity and social justice.”*

*— Reginald Jones, President and CEO,  
Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation*

2020 Staff



**Reginald Jones**  
President &  
Chief Executive Officer



**Christie Marcella**  
Executive Director



**Carlynn Yu**  
Director of Accounting



**Selina C. Hudgins**  
Director of Development &  
Institutional Advancement



**Selena Ellis-Vizcarra**  
Senior Program Manager



**Danea Ramos**  
Economic Development  
Program Manager



**Michelle Gonzaba**  
Community Engagement  
Assistant Program Manager



**Deidra Brown**  
Economic Development  
Program Associate



**Jose Venegas**  
Community Engagement  
Program Coordinator



**Alvenesia Sims**  
Operations Supervisor



**Stephen McKenzie**  
Building Maintenance

2020 DONORS & PARTNERS

- Accenture

Accion San Diego

Asian Business Association San Diego

Laila Aziz

Bank of America

The Legler Benbough Foundation

Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC SD)

Black American Political Assn. of California - San Diego (BAPAC SD)

Breakwater Law Group

California Arts Council

Central San Diego Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

JPMorgan Chase

City Heights Community Development

The City of San Diego

County of San Diego

Cox Communications

Dammeyer Charitable Gift Fund

Andrew Hapke

Claire Hapke

Norm Hapke

Valerie Jacobs Hapke

Juan Carlos Hernandez

Hitachi Data Systems

The James Irvine Foundation
- Jacobs Family Foundation

Las Patronas

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Logan Heights Community Development Corporation (CDC)

Lynx Investment Advisory

Kenneth Malbrough

Marsh & McLennan Agency

Judith McDonald

Mission Edge

National Endowment for the Arts

Louie Nguyen

Nuera Group

Pacific Western Bank

The Parker Foundation

RISE San Diego

Paul Robinson

Rotary Club South East San Diego (District 5340)

San Diego City Firefighters

San Diego Continuing Education

The San Diego Foundation

San Diego Gas & Electric

Supplier Diversity San Diego

The William and Ruth Tippettt Foundation

MUFG Union Bank, N.A.

Weil Family Foundation

YouthWill

Joseph and Vera Zilber Charitable Foundation, Inc

IN GRATITUDE

We are so grateful for our team of changemakers, whether their support is on-the-ground volunteer work or charitable giving. There are so many ways to make a difference in the ongoing revitalization of the Diamond District.

Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation relies on the help and generosity from individuals, corporations, foundations and government organizations to bring resources and opportunities to Southeastern San Diego. If you or your employer are interested in learning how you can give back to your community, please contact Selina Hudgins at [schudgins@jacobscenter.org](mailto:schudgins@jacobscenter.org).



**Southeastern San Diego COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund recipient Muslim Community Services provided urgent and short-term assistance to local clients to help with rent, utilities, food, medication, mental health resources and more. The nonprofit also guided clients to government programs and job search agencies for those experiencing job loss. To increase food security, the organization created a program to provide families in need with vouchers to local grocery stores.**

*“[Muslim Community Services] has been a blessing to my life. They’ve always come through and helped me pay my bills. As a black man I sometimes struggle, being a single father with two young kids and without them I would be homeless. I appreciate the support and volunteer whenever I can. They have been a complete blessing ... ”*  
— Robert, MCSSD client

## WILL YOU JOIN US?

As a creative catalyst and community resource, Jacobs Center works to improve lives by fostering growth and collaboration. To do that, we rely on the spirit of generosity. How can you help? Donate, volunteer or partner today!

- **Make a donation:**  
Donations of any size are welcome online at [jacobscenter.org/give](https://jacobscenter.org/give).
- **Set up automatic payments:**  
Give monthly or annually and sustain programming for years to come.  
Set up a monthly, quarterly or annual payment at [jacobscenter.org/give](https://jacobscenter.org/give).
- **Join the Partnership Program @ Jacobs Center:**  
Individual and corporate leaders can give annually to support day-to-day operations and bask in highly visible recognition opportunities.
- **Host your own personalized fundraising campaign:**  
Create your own DIY peer-to-peer fundraising campaign at [give.jacobscenter.org/peertopeer](https://give.jacobscenter.org/peertopeer).
- **Check out our volunteer opportunities:**  
Connect with staff to learn how you can pay it forward at [development@jacobscenter.org](mailto:development@jacobscenter.org).

## Every gift helps:

### CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center

Scale up early-stage businesses through mentorship, workshop speaker opportunities and sponsorships.

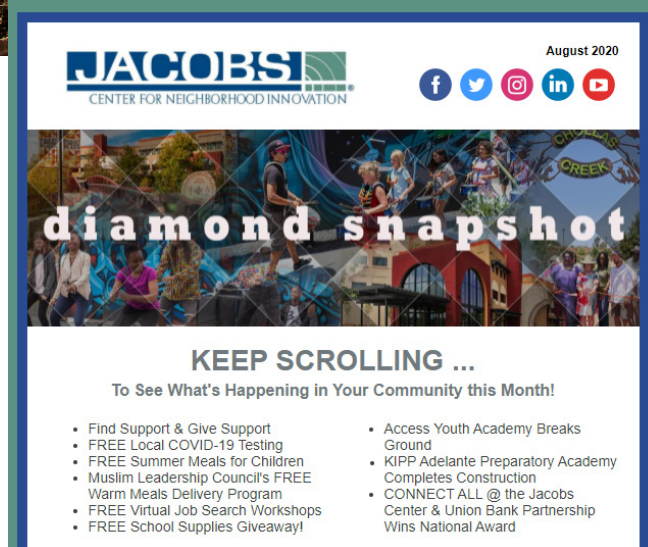
### Youth education and development

Support enrichment programs, through volunteering or financial backing.

### Diverse cultural and arts programs

Help provide opportunities for social, civic and cultural celebration by sponsoring existing community events or creating a new one.





## THANK YOU!

For your support, encouragement and engagement with our organization, we thank you and encourage you to stay connected through:

## The Diamond Snapshot

Our monthly e-newsletter with community resources, updates and events

## Social Media

 LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/jacobs-center-for-neighborhood-innovation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/jacobs-center-for-neighborhood-innovation)

 Facebook: [facebook.com/JacobsCenter](https://www.facebook.com/JacobsCenter)

 Twitter: [twitter.com/JacobsCenter](https://twitter.com/JacobsCenter)

 Instagram: [instagram.com/jacobscenter](https://www.instagram.com/jacobscenter)

## What's New in the Diamond

Our blog with the latest updates – from (virtual) events and local business news to free resources and assistance.



[jacobscenter.org](https://www.jacobscenter.org)

info@jacobscenter.org | 619-527-6161

404 Euclid Avenue

San Diego, CA 92114