

## Political Forum



### Economic Development Is Human Development

by Eric Garcetti, Councilmember, 13<sup>th</sup> District

Silvia R. lives in Hollywood, in a neighborhood not far from the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Western Avenue. An immigrant from El Salvador, she had worked in low-wage service sector jobs until the autumn of 2001. That year, she began working in a living-wage job at the Kodak Theater at the Hollywood and Highland development.

Blanca M. lives in Echo Park. Also an immigrant, Blanca recently took a class in health care. After studying anatomy, basic care and vocational ESL, she began work as an in-home medical aide. She is now a union member, and she plans to continue taking classes and advancing in her chosen field of health care.

These two women have a lot in common. They are both immigrants, and they are both community activists in the 13th District. What's more, they are both living out opportunities that they won because of investments made by the City of Los Angeles in its own economy.

Silvia's job met living wage standards because the Community Redevelopment Agency required the developer of the Hollywood and Highland to create real opportunities for local residents in exchange for the public support for the project. Community Benefits Agreements are now standard in CRA projects, and legislation will soon codify the application of the Living Wage Ordinance and other benefits to economic developments that receive public investment.

Blanca fought for her own opportunity.

*Each month, Alive! invites political leaders to speak directly to City and DWP employees and retirees. Alive! brings you these views as a public service. The opinions of those on this monthly column are independent of Alive! and the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.*

#### Council District 13 includes these communities:

- LAX
- Hollywood
- Silver Lake
- Glassell Park
- Atwater Village
- Echo Park
- Elysian Valley
- Historic Filipinotown

Her community group approached me with a vision for using public job training money to partner with local hospitals. Working with the Community Development Department's workforce division, city staff and community members crafted a Healthcare Careers Ladder, which gives low-income Angelenos a foot in the door to the health care industry and allows workers in entry-level jobs to develop the skills to advance into better-paying, more satisfying jobs in that field. It also addresses two crucial problems in our local economy: the lack of adequate health care in the inner city, and the staffing crisis in that industry.

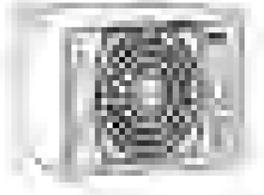
It's too easy to forget that development must have a soul. But each of us touches countless lives in the work that we do. These two programs are proof that economic development in our City is about more than bricks and mortar. The work we do is human development. ■

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