

Tom Waldman

OVP holds Community Meeting at East LA Housing Complex

Nueva Maravilla Residents
Recovering from Recent Trauma

Nueva Maravilla is a 504-unit housing complex in East Los Angeles designed for families and seniors. Last summer, a teen-aged resident died at the location as the result of a penetrating wound. His body remained on the outdoor basketball court for hours while authorities completed their work.

The Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) convened a meeting on November 17 in the Nueva Maravilla main hall to discuss the murder, its aftereffects, and other issues of community interest. OVP was represented by Ivette Diaz-Quintero, Regional Coordinator, Trauma Prevention Initiative, and Patty Hernandez, Community Engagement Coordinator. East Los Angeles is one of nine communities of OVP's Trauma Prevention Initiative, which invests in community-driven public safety, including supporting community leadership, and investing in peer community violence intervention strategies.

Some 70 people attended, filling the room. Sandwiches and water were sponsored by the Los Angeles County Development Authority. Also, selfcare kits were provided to all participants.

In addition to OVP, representatives from Supervisor Hilda Solis's office, Soledad Enrichment Action, Community Health Councils, and Los Angeles County, Public Health SPA 7 assisted in facilitating the discussion.



Trauma Prevention Initiative Community Engagement Coordinator, Patricia Hernandez, and Expansion Coordinator, Ivette Diaz-Quintero engaging with local community members.

The group was asked to consider these questions:

- What do you love about your community and what is something you would like to see different?
- What does safety look like in Nueva Maravilla? What would make you feel safe?
- What steps do you take to contribute to your own safety?
- What programming and activities would you like to participate in?

The group paid tribute to the deceased victim and noted the importance of public safety, including additional patrols. Members of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department were in attendance and took note.

At the same time, it was clear from the comments and responses that this tight-knit community takes pride in what they have collectively achieved at Maravilla. People repeatedly referenced the fact that the complex is clean and, for the most part, safe.

And they requested a variety of programs to enhance everyday quality of life; additional lighting, additional patrols, more sports programs for youths, exercise equipment, movement classes, walking club, Zumba, and Cumbia Dance Nights.

The residents cited at least as many things they love about their community as things they would like to see changed. Under the former category, one of the lists noted: "The gardens," "harmony," and "great customer service of Development Authority."

After the formal presentation, Glenda Linares, an East Los Angeles resident, led the room in a fun grounding activity (exercises designed to position one in the present moment).

Ivette said that she and her team will schedule a follow-up meeting soon to discuss next steps.

“Our goal is to keep this momentum, create meaningful change that will save lives, and bring lasting healing to Nueva Maravilla and greater East Los Angeles.”