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The Wall-Las Memorias Project is a community health and wellness organization dedicated to serving Latino, LGBTQ and other underserved populations through advocacy, education and building a new generation of leaders.

As the AIDS epidemic continues to impact communities across the country the Las Memorias AIDS Monument in Lincoln Park, Los Angeles continues to anchor the work of The Wall- Las Memorias Project in local communities and across the country by addressing stigma, shame and health prevention.
FROM DREAM TO REALITY

Inspired by personal loss to AIDS in the early 1990’s, The Wall-Las Memorias Project (TWLMP) was created with the vision of bringing HIV/AIDS awareness to the Latino community. The movement began when founder Richard Zaldivar was informed that his close friend was battling HIV. After observing the reaction and guilt in his friend, Zaldivar was determined to create an avenue of dialogue dedicated to educating both his community and the rest of the world about HIV/AIDS prevention.

TWLMP was founded on December 1st, 1993 and work quickly began on bringing to life the vision of an AIDS monument in Lincoln Park. With strong community support for the project, local elected officials—including then State Assemblyman Gil Cedillo, Governor Gray Davis, and Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn—helped secure state and local funding for the monument, making it the first publicly funded AIDS monument.
ABOUT THE FOUNDER

Richard Zaldivar’s dream, passion and determination in the fight against HIV/AIDS comes from a lifetime of public service and community empowerment and mobilization. His personal battle with addiction and commitment to sobriety fuels his passion, creativity and drive to address the shame, silence and denial that drives HIV transmission, homophobia and social injustice.

In 1993, recognizing the lack of effort being made to educate Latinos about HIV/AIDS, Zaldivar organized the first annual Noche de las Memorias on World AIDS Day. Challenging what seemed insurmountable, Zalidvar created a space to begin addressing the cultural barriers that made education and outreach efforts possible. That night, he brought together friends, family, community residents, civic leaders and clergy to share with them his vision for an AIDS monument to memorialize those lost to AIDS by offering a place of remembrance and healing—marking the beginning of the movement known as The Wall Las Memorias Project.
The Wall-Las Memorias Project (TWLMP), established in the fall of 1993, provides a wide arrange of support services and community involvement opportunities for families, churches, LGBTQ, and individuals who face health and wellness disparities. The organization thrives to work in conjunction with communities of faith, schools, and men and women of all backgrounds and denominations.

The AIDS Monument was dedicated on December 1st in 2004 at Lincoln Park in the City of Los Angeles in order to address the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS in the Latino community. Designed in the image a Quetzalcoatl serpent, an Aztec symbol for rebirth, the monument consists of gardens, eight wall panels featuring six murals by renowned artists and the names of loved ones who have died from AIDS within a serene park setting.

The organization has evolved into a thriving force in the Latino and LGBTQ communities, advocating for prevention and awareness of various health and wellness issues.
As part of its renovation, the site of The Wall Las Memorias AIDS Monument will seek anticipated improvements including new landscaping, updated irrigation systems, new pedestrian level lighting, security cameras, interpretive signage and landscape/walkway improvements.

The monument was originally dedicated on December 1st, 2004 in Lincoln Park before a crowd of more than 1,500 community members. It was designed by architect David Angelo and public artist Robin Brailsford. A community advisory board selected the site in 1993, based upon its rich cultural and artistic history with the Latino community and its proximity to the local AIDS Treatment Center at County USC Hospital, the Rand Schrader AIDS Clinic.

The monument is expected to be rededicated in Summer 2019.
Men’s Connection is an integrated program of services that provides education and empowerment to men on issues of sexuality, HIV and sexual health, Hepatitis C, STDs, substance abuse, mental health, self-discovery, faith and spirituality, peer leadership and service to the community.

Services include HIV and Hep-C testing, HIV/STD risk-reduction counseling, and support groups— including the Men’s Group & POZ Men’s Group— that empower men to take a greater leadership in their own health as well as in their communities.

The client-centered program provides ongoing, individualized and culturally based prevention, support, and service brokerage. Referrels are provided on a needed basis, and linkage to care and treatment are made.
Substance Abuse Prevention Program aims to decrease alcohol and other drug abuse by underage youth as well as decrease social influences associated with illicit drug use among LGBTQ community members.

The program was initiated as a way to reduce the rate of alcohol & drug consumption in Los Angeles through retail framework, community wellness programs, life skills training & engagement. It provides substance abuse prevention to the LGBTQ community and supports advocacy engagement for sticker alcohol sales on a state and local level.

This innovative program targets youth, merchants, parents & other family members, along with law enforcement of the Southeast LA cities of Huntington Park, City of Bell, Bell Gardens, & South Gate as well as Southwest, Northeast & Downtown L.A. areas.
The Beyond Safe Spaces program includes advocacy for increased access to mental health services and stigma reduction to improve the health of LGBTQ individuals throughout Los Angeles County. The program comprises of LGBTQ individuals and allies, was created to further advocate for mental health and wellness services in our communities and increase utilization of services.

Accomplishments include collection of 1,500 petition signatures in petition for quality mental health services. The Leadership Circle has also presented before the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) Mental Health Commission through its Speaker’s Bureau program and work closely with the LA County Board of Supervisors Public Health representatives. TWLMP also hosted its first Todos Para La Salud Mental Health Career Conference, empowering and recruiting LGBTQ into the workforce.
TRANS CONNECTION

As part of our efforts to promote health and wellness, The Wall-Las Memorias Project has created the Trans Connection program targeting trans individuals of color. Services offered under the Trans Connection program include HIV/AIDS prevention and testing, substance abuse counseling, support groups, safe sex practice counseling, and leadership building.

Connecting culture, faith, health, and wellness, the Trans Connection program connects trans individuals of all ages with the necessary resources needed to live healthy balanced lives. In addition, Trans Connection provides peer-to-peer support and group counseling through its newly developed Trans-Cending Cis-Stems support group.
The Wall Las Memorias Project strives to improve the health and wellness of others by empowering individuals through its network of support groups.

Support groups include the long running Men’s Group, Las Sirenas for transgender women, Enby Entities for gender non-conforming and non-binary individuals, and Poz Power for HIV positive individuals.

These groups serve as a safe place to come together and talk about issues such as dealing with the stigma around health issues, sexual health, mental health, social justice issues, spirituality, and much more.

Participants are able to share their ideas and beliefs without fear of being judged or discriminated against.
The Wall Las Memorias Project is a co-anchor of the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Boyle Heights project funded by the California Endowment.

The collaborative was established in 2010 to advance statewide policy, change the narrative, and transform 14 Californian communities devastated by health inequities into places where all people and neighborhoods thrive.

TWLMP organizes, facilitates and leads grassroots community mobilization efforts working closely with 35 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to address mental health and medical coverage for the uninsured.
The Wall Las Memorias Project supports the plight of economic justice for workers, works in collaboration to support the right of transgender individuals, immigrants, Muslims, and other represented communities for equality.

From sharing a dream to constructing an AIDS monument, The Wall Las Memorias Project has been in the forefront of change in the Los Angeles community. The organization is deeply rooted in its commitment to bringing about change in order to generate collective power for the powerless.

TWLMP’s work in social justice is centered around addressing health disparities and increasing access to care -- after all, healthcare is a right, not a privilege.
STRIKE OUT AIDS

To create further awareness about HIV and AIDS in the community, The Wall-Las Memorias Project created Strike Out AIDS at Dodger Stadium in 2000. Today, the annual event brings together friends and families from across Los Angeles for a day of Dodger baseball and HIV/AIDS awareness.

For over 15 years, over 30,000 supporters have participated in the Strike Out AIDS audience—making it the largest AIDS awareness event in California. The event includes the presentation of a human AIDS ribbon as part of the pregame ceremony consisting of over 400 supporters dressed in red commemorative shirts.

Key community leaders and heroes are also introduced along the first base line. Educational materials are disseminated at the event that included information on HIV biomedical prevention tools PrEP/PEP as well as Hepatitis C—a first in Dodger history.
In celebration of twenty-five years of service to the community, The Wall Las Memorias Project will be hosting its 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner on September 21st at La Plaza de Cultura y Artes in Downtown Los Angeles.

The sit-down formal dinner will feature an evening of exquisite food, love musical entertainment from legendary and local musicians, art installations, and a presentation of the history and future of the organization.
L.A. FAITH IN ACTION CONFERENCE

The annual conference is the only one of its kind bringing together pastors, ministry leaders and congregants of faith communities. The conference includes plenary speakers and workshops on HIV, mental health, substance abuse, and other emerging health issues—using language that the faith community understands.

Speakers from faith institutions, academia and public health participate by engaging in and discuss recent trends that explore the obstacles faced by the LGBTQ and other under-served communities. The Wall-Las Memorias Project has created this conference in this critical time of need for the purpose of uplifting spirits, nourishing the soul, and educating from the heart.
Noche de las Memorias is commemorated on World AIDS Day each year, marking the founding of the organization as well as the ceremonial dedication to those who have died of AIDS in our communities.

The World AIDS Day event is hosted at the Las Memorias AIDS Monument (Lincoln Park, Los Angeles) and is free and open to the community. It is an evening of prayer, music, and poetry in commemoration of the national awareness day.

New names of those lost to the epidemic are added to the AIDS monument on that night and revealed in a special candle lighting ceremony. 2017 also marked the beginning of the Las Memorias AIDS Monument Renovation Project--an effort to revitalize the existing monument and its gardens.
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

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