

April 24, 2024

Building Trust in Boyle Heights and Eastside Communities

By Janay S. Riley

Vision y Compromiso and White Memorial Community Health Center came together to form a Community Public Health Team (CPHT) in Boyle Heights. Operating under the name, Su Salud Está En Sus Manos, their goal is to engage people in Boyle Heights in a new way. I had the pleasure of meeting with two Promotores working on this project to learn more about their experience and their hopes for this new project.



Armando joined Vision y Compromiso during the COVID-19 pandemic ready to provide health education and support to communities like his own. With a background in nursing, he found a calling in community-based health education, and is excited to continue doing this work in CPHT.

Armando experienced the benefits Promotores can have on a person's life firsthand. Someone took the time to walk him through Medi-Cal and having health coverage had a significant impact on his health. He was able to get support for a process that he wasn't familiar with and wouldn't have completed on his own. He's wants to have that same impact on others—to be the person that connects someone to a resource they didn't know they could benefit from.

Angel is a fresh face in the Promotor role, but he's no stranger to health spaces and engaging community members. Last month, he made a career change from security into community health education. While working in security in East LA hospitals, his wife worked as a Promotor in East LA, which allowed him connect patients he encountered to needed resources. Now that he's a Promotor, too, he can provide that support full time. He wants to be someone who makes connections and helps his own community. Living in Boyle Heights for a decade has provided Angel some insight on how best to engage community members post-COVID-19 and he's hoping to use that skill for CPHT.

Armando and Angel began by getting the word out for their project launch event. Talking with people in the community helped them get acquainted with more areas in Boyle Heights and become known in the community. It also helped them prepare for home visits, where they'll offer a household assessment to each home. Although they connected with most people, they didn't reach all of them. Angel understands why some people wouldn't be receptive at first; many of them are not expecting someone to approach them with health resources in their home. He's aware of fraud increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and he's willing to work to earn the trust of people in his community. He hopes people will share this resource by word of mouth to expand their reach. Armando agrees that trust must be earned over time, and he hopes their uniforms will signal who they are and how they can be used as a resource.

At the project launch event on March 28, Angel and Armando recognized some people they spoke with previously and felt proud that their efforts were paying off. They look forward to more people getting involved and are proud to work on this first of its' kind project here in Boyle Heights as CPHTs.