



GLANCING BACK

Resident Leadership: Most Important Tool

BY CHARLOTTE UNDERWOOD

Who could have predicted that a woman with an idea to tutor children in her garage would see her dream replicated over and over years later? That's the case with Rose Espinoza, better known as Rosie. Ten years ago in *bright ideas* (May/June 1992), Espinoza was featured in the "People" section of *bright ideas* for being recognized by the Human Relations Commission of Orange County, California, for providing tutoring services for children.

Espinoza's leadership is a prime example how one person can make a positive change in a community. Her tutoring program began with 12 students. Currently, it proudly serves 76. (See her story on page 16.)

Today resident leadership is more important than ever before. As crime in low-income communities rises, and the resources available decline, it's easy to complain. It's easier to point to our political representatives and blame them for not doing enough. However, it takes a special person to ask, "What can I do to change this?"

The challenges faced in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods are not easy to overcome. It takes courage to stand up and confront them. Residents who are empowered with knowledge and leadership skills give their neighborhoods a better chance to survive. Residents with leadership skills understand that there is no special program that will save their neighborhood without their involvement. When program funds are depleted, it's the residents' responsibility to make sure that the investments made in their neighborhoods remain profitable in every sense of the word.

Espinoza's story remains a great example for communities nationwide. She's a great motivator for that average resident who thinks, "There's nothing I can do." Resident leadership is still the most important tool in "Rosie's Garage." ■

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10 years ago in

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