

EMBEDDED PHILANTHROPY PROFILE

From “Moving Forward While Staying in Place: Embedded Funders and Community Change”
(Chapin Hall Discussion Paper, 2004)

PRICE CHARITIES

7979 Ivanhoe Avenue, Suite 520, La Jolla CA 92037, (858) 551-2323
www.pricecharities.com

SUMMARY

In 1994, Price Charities began an initiative to build an “urban village” in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego. Price takes a holistic approach focused on health services, housing, community service, elementary and postsecondary education, and commercial, economic and infrastructure development. Price provides about \$5 million to \$7 million annually and works to leverage additional funds from public and private sources. Price has set no end date for its work in City Heights.

HOW AND WHY DID THE FOUNDATION EMBED ITSELF IN THIS PARTICULAR NEIGHBORHOOD?

The principal reason Price chose to focus a substantial portion of its philanthropic investment on a single neighborhood was to have a greater impact. The idea was that by concentrating resources in a particular area of extensive need, Price would have a significantly larger effect than if it distributed its resources more broadly. City Heights, was chosen both because of the level of need and the personal interest it held for Sol Price, founder of Price Charities, who grew up nearby.

WHAT BELIEFS AND THEORIES OF CHANGE INFORM THE FOUNDATION’S WORK?

The fundamental assumption behind Price’s work in City Heights is that the concentration of resources to develop a sound, attractive, well-maintained urban core makes it possible to build out from that core and generate a broad impact on the neighborhood. The Foundation’s investments in this core become the at-risk capital, which private developers can use to secure their own projects.

Price undertakes its work with the conviction that a holistic understanding of neighborhood needs and circumstances is essential. Those working on the City Heights initiative conceive this holistic approach as a “wheel,” around the hub of which revolve several elements of a healthy community—safety, housing, jobs, health services, child care, schools, recreation, security and safety, and local organizations, among others. The “wheel” also suggests the importance of

EMBEDDED PHILANTHROPY PROFILE

From “Moving Forward While Staying in Place: Embedded Funders and Community Change”
(Chapin Hall Discussion Paper, 2004)

getting various community actors—residents, nonprofit organizations, business, government, labor, and churches—to work together on planning and implementation.

WHAT STRATEGIES HAS THE FOUNDATION USED?

Price’s main strategy is to develop the community’s physical and social sectors around a revitalizing commercial hub. Commercial, residential, and infrastructure development is targeted to an 8-square-block area (the Urban Village), which includes an office building built by Price Charities (City Heights Center) that houses the San Diego Revitalization Corporation (a Price subsidiary operating foundation) and several nonprofit service organizations. A new police substation, major shopping center (development of which was given to a private, independent firm to keep the nonprofit and for-profit aspects of the initiative separate), library, teen center, pool and recreation center, community meeting space, continuing education facilities, and a Head Start facility were all built in this area as part of the initiative as well.

Programs focused on housing include a community service program (which allows community service hours to be translated into pay-downs on rent or mortgage at \$12/hour equivalent), home loan programs, and a rental housing development called the Village Townhomes, which consists of 116 rental units, 34 of which are set aside for low-income residents and the rest of which are rented at market rate.

In close collaboration with San Diego State University’s Schools of Education and Nursing, Price Charities has launched the Educational Collaborative. The Collaborative works with an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school to develop and implement an enriched curriculum and to provide health and social services for students and their families. In addition, the foundation has plans to build a model school in City Heights, to develop a set of scholarship programs for neighborhood youth, and to develop the Community Builder Fellowship Program, which will connect recent graduates of San Diego State University’s School of Social Work with nonprofit organizations in City Heights and offer hands-on experience in exchange for scholarships toward the master’s degree in social work.

WHAT INTERNAL PRACTICES, STRUCTURES, AND POLICIES HAS THE FOUNDATION DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT THE WORK?

The San Diego Revitalization Corporation (SDRC) is a key component of the Price Charities’ work in City Heights. SDRC is the operating arm of Price Charities in the neighborhood, and it plays a planning, outreach, brokering, and project management and implementation role.

EMBEDDED PHILANTHROPY PROFILE

From “Moving Forward While Staying in Place: Embedded Funders and Community Change”
(Chapin Hall Discussion Paper, 2004)

Although grants are also given to local organizations, the lion’s share of activity is spearheaded by SDRC. Grant-making activity is a relatively small component, but when grants are given, the general process of application, review, and decision-making is the same as that for grants made to organizations outside the neighborhood. City Heights grantees are given greater attention and scrutiny, and the relationships that program officers have with organizations in City Heights is different—more intensive, more personal, more multifaceted (connecting grantees to one another, to other sources of information, and to other sources of money)—than with other grantees.

WHAT CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY DOES THE FOUNDATION POINT TO AS SIGNIFICANT?

A great deal has been accomplished around physical and commercial development; all of the facilities listed in the above section on strategies are built, in use, and well maintained. The Urban Village provides a solid core for drawing people to activities, providing quality commercial goods via franchise establishments, and attracting new resources to the neighborhood. The City Heights Center, owned and operated by Price Charities, provides a place to locate nonprofit organizations in the Urban Village, with resources to help cover their costs.

WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES? HOW DID THE FOUNDATION CONFRONT THEM?

Escalating development costs. Two of the greatest challenges have been capital and the dangers of gentrification. The value of land has increased significantly since the first stages of development, making it much more expensive to institute large-scale physical development projects. One of Price’s regrets is that more land was not purchased at the outset.

Displacement and gentrification. Resident displacement has occurred with each major City Heights development project—the Rosa Parks School, the Urban Village, and the privately financed shopping center. Although residents were provided with money and relocation assistance, few were relocated in the neighborhood. Developments such as the townhouses in the Urban Village are designed to provide opportunities for lower-income residents to stay in the neighborhood, and home loans, home renovation funds, volunteer “dollars” that can be applied to housing costs, and job training and other support services are similarly targeted to promoting home ownership and supporting lower-income residents. However, much of the housing stock (small single-family bungalows and small multi-unit apartment buildings) is owned by

EMBEDDED PHILANTHROPY PROFILE

From “Moving Forward While Staying in Place: Embedded Funders and Community Change”
(Chapin Hall Discussion Paper, 2004)

nonresident investors. Although Price has bought and renovated some of these, this has been a very small-scale effort.

Community engagement. At the very beginning of the City Heights initiative, the planning process began with a 72-hour marathon retreat session that pulled together a range of community representatives to brainstorm about goals and strategies. Participation in this retreat was hand-picked and largely organization- or agency-affiliated. The initiative has been quite successful in leveraging relationships with local elites to support dramatic physical revitalization and to provide facilities for both nonprofit operation and public use. However, grassroots community participation, where it has happened, has been largely episodic and advisory, and it required the solicitation of Price staff and consultants. The principal mechanisms for citizen input designed to address some of these obstacles are the Project Area Council and the City Heights Town Council.

INTERVIEWEES

Matthew Hervey, Community Development Director, San Diego Revitalization Corp.

Murray Galinson, Board Member, Price Charities

Ann Evons, Director of Program Development, Price Charities

Pat Rose Calloway, Housing Director, San Diego Revitalization Corporation

Elizabeth Tate, resident, member of City Heights Redevelopment Project Area Committee

Jesse Sargent, resident, member of City Heights Redevelopment Project Area Committee

Jim Varnador, resident, member of City Heights Redevelopment Project Area Committee

