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***Dane County*-Governor Evers announces 4.8 million grant to Centro Hispano of Dane County to build a new home on the Southside of Madison, WI**

Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro) has received a 4.8 million grant from the State of Wisconsin as part of the Neighborhood Investment Grant Program. The grant will be invested in building a new facility for the organization that will make it possible for Centro to continue the critically needed development of its workforce and youth programs. The announcement was made by Governor Tony Evers at Madison College - Goodman South Campus on Thursday and comes as part of 21 million given by the State to the City of Madison to invest in local projects.

The agency will be celebrating 40 years in 2023 and is the leading organization serving the Latinx community in Dane County, WI. Core program areas include youth programs, workforce development, family wrap-around support, and community engagement. The organization sees upward of 6,000 individuals each year, receives an average of 2,000 calls a month, and offers more than 10,000 hours of programming annually.

Centro has grown exponentially over the last ten years to keep pace with shifting demographic trends and the growing needs of the Latinx community. Hispanics currently represent 7% of Dane County's total population and are the largest minority group in the city, county, and state with 100%+ growth over the last ten years. To keep up with this growth the annual budget at Centro has tripled in size with three times more programs being offered, double the number of staff, and four times more people being served than ten years ago. Centro is literally bursting at the seams and in need of added space for critical program development.

“With this gift, we are one significant step closer in the creation of a safe, strong, and sustainable Centro that will honor the relentless work of our staff and the 7,000+ Latinx members of our community who will walk through those doors each year. A place for action, collaboration, Esperanza, dreaming, laughing, and transforming our City, County, and State, together,” stated Karen Collier, Centro Hispano Executive Director.

The new Centro facility will be part of an innovative collaboration with the City of Madison where Centro will do a “land swap” of its current facility for a larger more accessible plot of land located right around the corner. The city has already purchased a property at 833 Hughes Place to combine with city-owned properties at 837 Hughes Place and 2405 Cypress Way to help create new facilities on the block.

Other organizations to receive the award from Governor Evers include three other future and existing pillars of the Southside community: The ULGM Black Business Hub, Center for Black Excellence, and the Bayview Foundation. All are in the midst of capital campaigns, the outcome of which will reshape the landscape on the Southside of Madison.

Centro is the only one of these organizations that serves the Latinx community specifically – and the investment is key to supporting the thousands of community members living within blocks of Centro. The Burr Oaks neighborhood has the highest concentration of Hispanics in the city, and Hispanics are the dominant demographic group in the immediate area surrounding the agency.

With a new facility and seed funds Centro expects to double the number of youth in its afterschool programs, support at least 1,000 more individuals annually, and develop a full bilingual nursing career pathway by 2030.

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