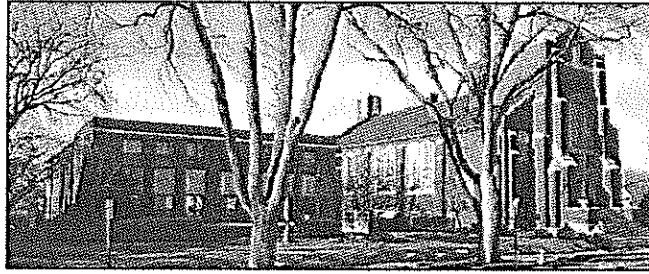


SM15007
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



June 13, 2015

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the First Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green, Ohio, I want to express our support to *La Conexión* application for funding by the Self Development of People fund of the Presbyterian Church.

Although the Latino population of NW Ohio has been growing at a higher rate than that of other segments of the population, the Latino community had remained invisible for the rest of the community in the early 21st century. In early 2013 *La Conexión* approached our church with a request for space for English as a Second Language classes. When I sat down with them, I quickly saw that this was an extraordinary group. Beginning with a short chat in my office, God has opened up an awesome relationship. Now, the *La Conexión* group not only uses our classrooms and nursery, they have become our friends and partners. Last summer, they offered to cook a "gracias" dinner for the congregation after the worship service. It wasn't only a dinner; it was a festival, with *la Conexión* members, with our own church members, and a feast with dishes from many countries south of the U.S. border. Now, for the second year, we are together organizing "Bienvenidos", a welcoming event for farm workers who come to this area every summer. And they assist us in our Christmas outreach to challenged folks in our area, providing outreach and translating.

As we came to know the group's mission and dynamics, we thought that *La Conexión* was an excellent choice for a SDOP grant. It was under our suggestion that they first applied to the Synod for a grant. The Synod grant administrators were so impressed with the *La Conexión* leadership, program, and vision that they awarded them a \$10,000 grant to help them move forward through their first year. With that funding, they grew their membership to 400 and empowered their community to increase their connection, solidarity and visibility as an important component of this community. This new application to National SDOP will strengthen the organization by building capacity both at the individual and the organizational level to increase their effectiveness, impact, and sustainability as a grassroots community-based organization.

There is no other group in our area that is even distantly comparable to the well-respected, self-help community of *La Conexión*. They go about their work with both integrity and delight, and have opened a doorway from the community to the Latino community. We highly recommend that this grant be awarded to *La Conexión*.

We at First Presbyterian Church in Bowling Green are so very grateful for our "connection" with the Latino community, and we look forward to a continuing partnership in God's future.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Gary Saunders, Co-Pastor

First Presbyterian Church 126 South Church Street Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
419-352-5176
bgpresb@wcnnet.org
www.bgpresb.org

The Cocoon

Safety • Healing • Justice



June 14, 2015

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202

To Whom It May Concern,

It is a privilege to write this letter on behalf of The Cocoon to recommend La Conexion in its application to the Self Development of People fund of the Presbyterian Church to build capacity both at the individual and the organizational level to increase their effectiveness, impact, and sustainability as a grassroots community-based organization.

The Cocoon exists to provide safety, healing, and justice across the lifespan for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, their children, and all of those affected by abuse. We work to educate and increase awareness about abuse and commit to building a compassionate and safe community. We provide crisis intervention, emergency safe housing, legal assistance, advocacy and support. The tragedy of domestic violence is a reality that affects us all. The Cocoon depends on collaboration with La Conexion to reach the growing Latino population in our community. La Conexion is now providing a vehicle for The Cocoon and other area agencies to reach out to this underserved population. La Conexion's work providing voice and representation for this population is commendable and their work to strengthen the Latino community and develop connections between this population and non-Latinos is invaluable for this community. In partnership with La Conexion we can better serve the community and reach those who need our support and services the most.

The Cocoon has successfully partnered with La Conexion to link the Latino community with services and programs, and we plan to continue this partnership to meet the needs of victims of abuse in the Latino community.

For the safety and empowerment of all families and community members we strongly support La Conexion's application. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Michelle Clossick, MS
Executive Director

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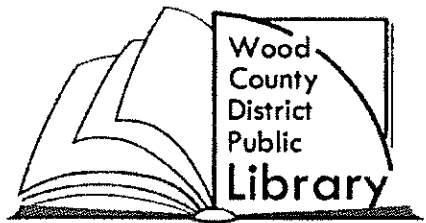
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We're Your Library wcdpl.org
Bowling Green Walbridge Bookmobile

June 14, 2015

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Committee:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation in support of La Conexión de Wood County for their tremendous efforts in working with the Latino/a community and broader community in Wood County. In my role as the Head of Youth Services for the Wood County District Public Library, I have seen first-hand the results of their efforts both in the library and in the community, and have collaborated directly with the group. Within a short time, the Wood County Public Library has been able to partner with La Conexión on a wide range of efforts. These efforts have introduced the public library to the Latino/a community, and have introduced to other library patrons the Latino/a culture. For the past two years, we have collaborated on a Book Fiesta held in April. The Book Fiesta is geared toward young children, where the children are introduced to bilingual readings and other cultural customs. We have also worked with La Conexión on bilingual readings at the local Bowling Green schools, and in book distribution efforts among low income Latino children, both in urban and farm worker camp settings. A number of youth are currently volunteering at the library. None of this would have been possible without their insights, knowledge, support and encouragement. In addition, La Conexión started a new partnership with the Library for computer literacy classes for their adult members, in an effort to build up skills and capacity in their community. This aligned nicely with a broader computer literacy initiative that the library was starting to develop. The library provided our computer lab space and they were able to recruit participants and provide the instructor that would teach in Spanish. This partnership and collaboration with the Wood County Library is a testament to their ongoing efforts to help make a difference within the Latino/a community in Wood County. In addition, they have made a difference in helping to educate the rest of the community about the Latino/a community. La Conexión de Wood County has demonstrated themselves to be an active and committed community partner, and is worthy of the continuation of the funding support provided by the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. We look forward to our continued partnerships and collaborations with La Conexión.

Sincerely,

Maria Simon
Head of Youth Services