

July 2012



RICHMOND MAIN STREET INITIATIVE, INC.

# 2011 Annual Report

## Letter From the Executive Director



It's an exciting time for Richmond Main Street. As we embark on implementing the newly approved Downtown Richmond Property Based Business Improvement District (PBID), we are thrilled to have accomplished something some thought was virtually impossible to do—engage a group of property and business owners to support the revitalization efforts of Downtown. Not only are these stakeholders willing to get involved, they understand the importance of protecting their investments and are willing to financially support the effort. Neighboring cities (Berkeley and Oakland, for example) have used similar revitalization mechanisms to transform their districts into thriving commercial centers. The Downtown Richmond PBID will build on the momentum and investments already made in Downtown such as the new, beautiful streetscape on Macdonald Avenue and plaza on Nevin Avenue implemented by the former Redevelopment Agency and the newly renovated East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, which has brought a state of the art performing arts institution to Downtown. Ultimately, the PBID will create lasting results, making Downtown more economically viable, attractive, and safe.

Thus far this year, RMSI has experienced great success with our signature activities: promoting the arts and Downtown with Music on the Main and Art In Windows; developing job skills through the 5th Annual Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program; and, with the support of West County HEAL, increasing access to healthy foods and fitness opportunities with Healthy Village Farm Stand and free, bi-weekly Zumba classes. Additionally, we accomplished a long-standing goal of establishing a full-scale, weekly certified Farmers' Market downtown. Through these events and many others, we have attracted more people downtown than ever before and we only expect this trend to continue.

As the executive director for Richmond Main Street I have the distinct pleasure to work with a diverse group of stakeholders who support our work, including residents, business owners, city government officials, and community-based organizations. I am delighted to work with a group of committed, hard-working staff, board members, and volunteers who have helped RMSI attain remarkable achievements, such as our Neighborhood Ambassador Program, which has been recognized locally and nationally for the remarkable positive difference it has made in keeping Downtown clean and safe.

Through our partnership with Rubicon Programs we've been able to train 13 transitional workers who last year resolved 1,165 of the 1,342 (86%) issues they identified on their patrols. We're happy to report that we're also providing a pathway to employment. One of our ambassadors was recently hired by Chevron as a janitor and one other is completing final testing for a custodial position with the West Contra Costa School District.

Richmond Main Street is growing by leaps and bounds. We have a bright future ahead and expect to continue to be the catalyst for positive change downtown. We invite everyone to join our efforts building on this momentum as we work to implement a PBID that will provide a public/private partnership to revitalize downtown. ■



*Our Healthy Village Farm Stand events provided fresh produce and nutrition information to hundreds of residents in 2011. (Photo credit: RMSI)*

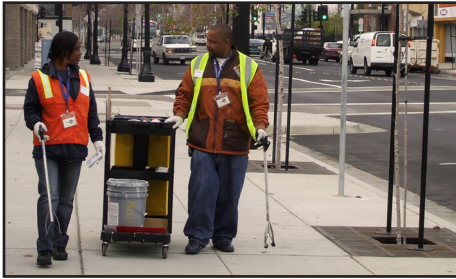
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**Thank you to our sponsors and community partners. Your support makes our work possible!**

*City of Richmond, LISC, Chevron Corporation, Dean & Margaret Leshar Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Mechanics Bank, Wells Fargo, Sims Metal, Richmond Community Foundation, State Farm, DP Security, Richmond Convention & Visitors Bureau, Zoe's Cookies, Richmond Sanitary Service, Kiwanis Club of Richmond, Earth Blend Mulch, The Redwood Clinic, GenX Clothing, Cooperative Center Federal Credit Union, Martin Realty, Joanne's Boutique, M.A. Hays Co, Inc., On the Move Staffing Services, Richmond Public Library Foundation, Contra Costa College, CHDC, Snazz Enterprises*

# 2011 Highlights



*Neighborhood Ambassadors, Annetreece and Lance help resolve issues and present a friendly face to visitors of the district.*

## **Neighborhood Ambassador Program (NAP)**

The NAP continued to grow in 2011. In May 2011, we strengthened NAP by partnering with Rubicon Programs, which helped to expand the number of ambassadors and increase their presence on the corridor, as well as provide stipends for the ambassadors and to offer additional training and support services to ambassadors. The RMSI ambassador program received local and national recognition in early 2012: Amanda Elliott delivered a presentation about the program at the National Main Streets Conference in Baltimore, the City of Richmond recognized the program and its participants for outstanding service to the downtown district, and the program was selected as a second round finalist for the MetLife Community Police Partnership award.

Neighborhood Ambassadors walk through Historic Downtown on a daily basis to help keep the area clean and safe by identifying and resolving blight issues such as graffiti and litter. They also help visitors find their way around the neighborhood. In 2011, nine ambassadors performed 1000 hours of service and resolved 86% of the issues they identified.

## **Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program (SYEP)**

In 2011, RMSI graduated its 4th SYEP class. This year, nine Richmond youths participated in a two-week work readiness and entrepreneurship training course, where they learned professionalism, active listening, and communication skills. They met with business professionals and

worked together to develop business plans. Upon completing the training program, the youths earned real-world work experience—and some income—at local businesses.

## **Healthy Village Farm Stand**

In partnership with the West County HEAL Collaborative, Richmond Main Street sponsored its second year of the Healthy Village Farm Stand, an event all about health and wellness in Downtown Richmond. Hundreds of residents and workers came downtown on the 1st Friday of the month, June-August, to enjoy free, farm-fresh produce courtesy of EcoVillage Farm, flower salad samples and healing herb seedlings from CURME, information about services and resources offered through RecycleMore, Weigh of Life, First 5, GRIP, and others, as well as pony rides and educational arts and crafts activities for kids.



*Downtown residents pick up a bag of free produce courtesy of EcoVillage and HEAL at Healthy Village Farm Stand.*

## **Property-based Business Improvement District (PBID)**

Early in 2011, RMSI began exploring the creation of a PBID in Downtown Richmond. A PBID is a public-private partnership where property owners contribute to the improvement and

maintenance efforts of the district. More than 1,000 BIDs have been formed throughout the country and many of them provide services like street cleaning, beautification, and marketing support. To help lead the feasibility study and implementation, RMSI selected a consultant team from Civitas in early August. The PBID has received wide support from community stakeholders made up of property owners, business owners and residents and passed with 74.3% of the weighted vote from local property owners and approved by the City of Richmond City Council.

## **Smart and Grow Smart**

In partnership with the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, RMSI provided over 90 hours of training and technical assistance to 12 entrepreneurs and established businesses through “Start & Grow Smart”, an innovative program focused on providing small business assistance through business modeling and individualized one-on-one consulting sessions. Small businesses are an integral part of creating a sustainable downtown district and the demand for this program was great. Classes were free for all participants and made possible by generous support from Wells Fargo, Chevron, and Mechanics Bank.

## **Business Openings and Re-openings**

2011 witnessed a rapid increase of new businesses in Downtown, including Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO), the Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA), the Alliance of Californians for

*(Continued on next page...)*

## **Our Mission:**

*The Richmond Main Street Initiative is a community-based nonprofit corporation dedicated to revitalizing historic downtown Richmond as a pedestrian-friendly urban village, offering products, services, arts and entertainment that reflect the community's rich and diverse heritage.*

# Highlights *(continued from p. 2)*

Community Empowerment (ACCE), Richmond Spokes Bike Lounge, West County First 5, Old School Barbershop, and the Family Market. In October, the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts celebrated the renovation of their permanent facility with a month of special performances. Visit [www.richmondmainstreet.org](http://www.richmondmainstreet.org) for a complete directory of downtown businesses.

## Music on the Main Summer Concerts

Downtown celebrated 10 years of Music on the Main in 2011. Over 800 residents, community members, and music lovers gathered in Downtown Richmond on the 4th Wednesday of June, July, and August to enjoy an evening of great performances by local musicians and dancers—including Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic, the Reed Fromer Band, the Iron Triangle Urban Ballet, Jesse James, Ray McCoy, Hula Ohana Hokulani, the College Prep Dancers, Richmond Bloco Steel band, and LAVA—and a wide range of goods, services, and activities for guests of all ages.

Adults and children alike flocked to the Healthy Village zone for free, farm-fresh produce and refreshing natural lemonade samples. Families rejoiced in the musically-themed arts & crafts activities, face painting, and dancing. Audience members also enjoyed the outdoor bazaar atmosphere offered by the vendor and information booths at each concert, which provided a unique shopping experience, supported local entrepreneurs, and offered access to a variety of community resources.

## Spirit & Soul Festival and Fundraiser

On Saturday, September 17, over 150 residents and community members gathered in the beautiful Community Green Space Park for an afternoon of music, wine, and community togetherness. This year's Spirit & Soul Festival featured spectacular performances by LaChic!, Derrick Hall, Sekhou Senegal, and Ray Obiedo, delicious healthy soul food by the Natural Healing Tree, delectable wines, and an open air market featuring local

artisans—all in the heart of downtown. Richmond Main Street honored downtown champions Janet Johnson, Bennie Singleton, Joanne King, Betty Reid Soskin, and Fred D. Jackson for their

commitment to improving downtown.



*Passing out gifts and creating happy memories for Iron Triangle youth at the annual Holiday Festival. (Photo credit: RMSI)*

## 2011 Holiday Festival

The 2011 Holiday Festival record-breaking attendance: over the course of the day nearly 1000 residents visited the festival—

located at the Nevin Community Center—to enjoy live seasonal music performed by the Richmond Jazz Collective and St. Mark's Mariachi Band, engaging arts and crafts activities, healthy snacks, a puppet show by Nick Barone and jokes by Buki the Clown, and visits with Santa. Every child left with a present, gift bag filled with goodies, and memories that are sure to last. The 2nd annual Holiday Bazaar turned the Market Square Mall into a one-stop shopping destination and supported local businesses and entrepreneurs.

*(Continued on next page...)*

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Cynthia Haden, Chair  
Arnie Kasendorf, Past Chair  
Xavier Abrams, Vice Chair  
Maria Alegria, Secretary  
Jerrold Hatchett  
Charlene Smith  
Gary Bell  
Mary Lavergne  
Janet L. Johnson, Ex-Officio  
James Goins, Advisory  
Joanne King, Advisory  
Amanda Elliott, Executive Director*

## OUR STAFF

*Amanda Elliott, Executive Director  
Alicia Gallo, Outreach & Neighborhood Ambassador Coordinator  
Johnasies McGraw, Development Consultant  
Amelia Segi, Administrative Assistant*

# Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2011 Income		
Foundation	15%	\$ 45,000
Individual	3%	\$ 9,860
Corporate	20%	\$ 59,000
Public	58%	\$ 175,000
Other	4%	\$ 12,000
	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 301,360</b>

Fiscal Year 2011 Expenses		
Program	56%	\$ 138,040
General and Administration	14%	\$ 34,510
Development	30%	\$ 73,950
	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 246,500</b>

*"I appreciate the efforts of Richmond Main Street for their clear vision, extraordinary energy, and effective advocacy of this downtown district and the City of Richmond." -- Alvin Herring, former CCISCO employee*





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## RMSI 2011 Work Plan

### **Economic Restructuring Committee:**

*Chair - Charlene Smith*

- Raise \$150,000
- Conduct downtown survey and outreach to determine support for implementation of an Arts and Culture District. Confer with local leaders to gain an understanding of how they envision downtown
- Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program
- Work with City Economic Development Commission to explore and implement a Business Improvement District (BID)

### **Design Committee:**

*Chair – Anyka Barber*

- Continue Art In Windows campaign to enliven downtown and enhance vacant storefronts
- Work on banner campaign for downtown
- Iron Triangle Legacy Project

### **Promotion Committee:**

*Chair – Jerrold Hatchett*

- Continue to update and upgrade website; Create blog
- Produce commercial for Web and radio/TV broadcast
- Expand online presence – Facebook, Flickr, WordPress.com ([www.richmondmainstreet.org](http://www.richmondmainstreet.org)), Twitter
- 3 Summer Concert Series - Music on the Main
- Annual Fundraiser: Spirit & Soul Festival
- Healthy Village Farm Stand
- Holiday Festival and Holiday Bazaar

### **Clean & Safe Committee:**

*Chair – Cindy Haden*

- Community Garden Plantings and Clean Ups
- Neighborhood Ambassador Program
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) visits to downtown businesses to tackle blight and address safety concerns
- Recycling Campaign



*Local artists display their artwork in a vacant storefront on Macdonald Avenue as part of the Art In Windows program. (Photo credit: RMSI)*

## Highlights *(continued from p. 3)*

### **Art In Windows**

We proudly collaborated with downtown property owners Paradigm Contractors and Nasser Real Estate, local artists, and the Richmond Arts and Culture Commission to bring two Art In Windows exhibitions to Downtown. These multidisciplinary public art projects highlighted the works of local artists Virginia Jourdan, Malik Seneferu, Ron C. Smith, and Slimm Buick, whose art transformed vacant storefronts into 24-hour galleries. ■