

# investment summary

## *Making Connections* San Antonio

For nearly a decade, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has worked with a broad range of partners in San Antonio to demonstrate through the *Making Connections* initiative that when families are strong, outcomes for even the most disadvantaged children will substantially improve.

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Our work in San Antonio and in other sites across the country seeks to help:

- *Families work, earn, and save their way toward self-sufficiency; and*
- *Ensure that their children are healthy, prepared to succeed in school, and read proficiently by the end of third grade.*

These goals advance a “two-generation” approach—promoting families’ economic success while assuring that their children get a good start in life. Casey’s investments in San Antonio since 1999 have demonstrated how these results can be achieved by building communities’ capacity to connect families to economic opportunities, strong social networks, and effective services and supports.

Moving forward, Casey investments will focus on families with children in the Edgewood Independent School District (EISD) on the city’s West Side, seeking major gains in third grade reading as well as accelerated efforts to protect the jobs of EISD families in tough economic

times through a revamped jobs pipeline, the Centers for Working Families network, and maximizing federal stimulus dollars.

### A PLATFORM FOR SUCCESS

In 2007, *Making Connections* San Antonio announced a public-private partnership between residents, the City’s Department of Community Initiatives (DCI), EISD, Catholic Charities, and Family Service to manage the initiative locally. This partnership would not have been formed without the accomplishments and support built by *Making Connections* during the past decade, including:

- *Development of the second largest Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) campaign in the United States.* *Making Connections* helped form the Alamo City Coalition for Economic Self Sufficiency (ACCESS)—including banks, city government, Catholic Charities, and the United Way—which spearheads citywide efforts to increase access to the EITC through free tax preparation

## *Making Connections* San Antonio Local Management Partnership

**City of San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives** As the city’s human services agency, the department works to strengthen the community, children, and families through strategic investments and partnerships.

**Edgewood Independent School District** EISD prepares students for college and career pathways through strong partnerships, parent engagement, and a culture that fosters academic success.

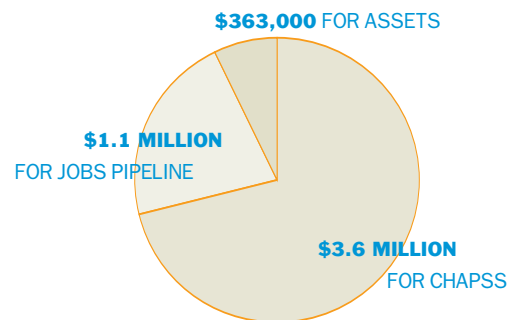
**Catholic Charities** Established in 1941, Catholic Charities works to foster self-sufficiency among families in need.

**Family Service Association of San Antonio** Established in 1903, Family Service is the oldest human service agency in the city dedicated to helping children and families.

services. In 2008, the campaign returned \$36 million in EITC and child care tax credit refunds to nearly 43,000 residents citywide—a total second only to New York City.

- **Shifting city human services funding to a results-driven approach.** In 2004, the San Antonio City Council approved changes advanced by *Making Connections* and DCI that hold agencies awarded millions in city funds accountable to specific results.
- **Promoting new business start-ups on the West Side and citywide.** Accion Texas used an initial \$1 million Program Related Investment (PRI) from Casey to launch over 30 new businesses. Casey has since expanded the PRI to \$1.5 million.
- **Establishment of the Westside Education and Training Center (WETC).** Opened in 2006 through public-private partners, including Alamo Colleges, working with *Making Connections*, the WETC provides state-of-the-art manufacturing technology and technical skills training. More than 2,200 residents have used the center during the past two-and-a-half years.
- **Creation of The Neighborhood Place as a trusted center for family strengthening services and resources.** Developed by *Making Connections*, city and state officials, Family Service, and EISD, The Neighborhood Place had more than 90,000 resident visits in 2008, connecting families to asset building, school readiness, and family support services.
- **Strengthened capacity of resident leaders and organizations.** Small grant programs launched by *Making Connections* and local partners have trained more than 500 residents in leadership skills and helped spur civic participation. Time Dollar, Benitia Family Center, and other programs connected families to one another in networks of mutual support.
- **Increased co-investment.** Co-investments from the public sector, local foundations, the United Way, and the private sector for *Making Connections* San Antonio strategies have totaled more than \$11 million since 2006, a ratio of 3:1 with Casey's investments locally during that time.

#### 2009 PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT



**\$1.1 million** in city and federal funds for job pipeline outreach, placement, training, and retention supports for EISD families.

**\$3.6 million** for CHAPSS strategies, including more than \$2 million from the city in additional Head Start funding for the EISD, and nearly \$200,000 from the school district for strategies to assure children are healthy and developing on track.

**\$363,000** for asset strategies, including \$70,000 in city matching funds for Individual Development Accounts and \$75,000 for financial education focused on EISD families.

#### A TRACK RECORD OF RESULTS

The collaboration of high-capacity, credible, and influential partners with residents' leadership and support has leveraged these early investments into significant results for children and families.

#### More Children Are Healthy and Prepared to Succeed in School

*Making Connections* San Antonio places strategies to promote success in early grades at the forefront of its work. Working with the city, school district, and other partners, the initiative has helped assure that:

*More EISD children are ready for kindergarten.* Since 2006, EISD and *Making Connections* partners have increased by nearly 13 percent the number of children assessed as ready for kindergarten using proven, literacy-focused parent engagement and teacher training programs.

RESULT	2005/06	2008/09
EISD children are assessed as ready for kindergarten	25.9%	38.7%

At Loma Park Elementary, the focus school for Casey-supported early grade success work, the increase was nearly doubled from roughly 29 percent in 2005–06 to 58.9 percent in 2008–09.

*More EISD students are reading proficiently in third grade.* Results from state reading tests in EISD neighborhoods show an increase of 9 percentage points from 2004–05 to 2007–08 in the number of third grade children scoring at the commended level.

RESULT	2004/05	2007/08
Loma Park children reading at the TAKS Commended level in third grade	20.8%	29.8%
Loma Park children reading at the TAKS Standard level in third grade	87.3%	89.5%

### More Families Have Increased Earnings and Income

*Making Connections* San Antonio has developed partnerships with workforce training providers, community colleges, and others to assure that:

*More West Side residents are getting connected to jobs.* In partnership with the city, Workforce Solutions Alamo, Goodwill Industries, and Alamo Labor Properties/Bridges to Work, *Making Connections* San Antonio placed a total of 683 West Side residents in jobs in 2007 and 2008.

### PROMOTING SUCCESS IN EARLY GRADES: PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR 2009–11

- Assure that, by 2010–11, 65 percent of all children entering Loma Park are assessed as ready for kindergarten by expanding use of evidence-based strategies. This goal will be achieved using the Families and Schools Together (FAST) and the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) to help bolster the skills of preschool teachers and work with parents to ensure that preschool-age children are ready to enter kindergarten. The district is already expanding both programs to an additional 300 children at EISD schools, preschool classrooms, Head Start programs, and child care centers. In addition, the city will contract with EISD and Family Service to expand Head Start to an additional 665 children.
- Increase to 40 percent by 2010–11 the number of Loma Park third graders reading at the TAKS Commended level through expanded interventions for striving readers. Intensive strategies to increase reading proficiency at Loma Park Elementary include on-site professional development and coaching for K-3 teachers, revamping instructional planning and reading curriculum, and providing literacy enriched summer school and after-school programs. EISD will take successful strategies to scale across district elementary schools.
- Cut the EISD district rate of chronic absenteeism in half by 2010–11. Aggressive parent engagement and health strategies will be piloted at Loma Park to assure that students in grades K-3 are developmentally screened, and that families get help accessing health insurance, medical homes, and follow-up services. The efforts are part of a campaign to combat absenteeism and promote good student health.

*More West Side residents are getting jobs that provide health benefits.* In 2008, 50 percent of West Side residents were placed in jobs that offered health care benefits.

RESULT	2007	2008
West Side residents are placed in jobs	309	374
West Side residents are placed in jobs that offer health benefits	35%	50% (approx.)

### More Families Have Increased Levels of Assets

*Making Connections* San Antonio has worked with the city's EITC campaign to increase the number of West Side families who have savings accounts and alternatives to high-cost financial services offered by check-cashing and tax preparation services. Results to date show that:

*More West Side residents are opening savings accounts.* Residents who use free tax preparation services use their EITC refund to open a savings account or an Individual Development Account, which matches the contributions of eligible participants up to \$1,000. The number of West Side residents who opened accounts increased from 277 in 2006 to 702 in 2008. More than 2,000 tax filers used an alternative Rapid Anticipation Loan developed by the city and Generations Federal Credit Union.

*The EITC campaign is returning more dollars in tax refunds to the West Side.* The total dollar amount of refunds to West Side residents has increased nearly 20 percent, from \$7.9 million in 2006 to \$10.4 million in 2008.

### SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

*Making Connections* San Antonio and the robust public-private partnership that has been formed to lead the work forward is well positioned to assure that, despite tough economic times, more families will

### PROMOTING FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS: PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR 2009-11

- *Protect the jobs of employed residents, while continuing to build opportunities for West Side/EISD residents to get the skills they need to move ahead in the labor force.* *Making Connections* San Antonio is working with the city, the Workforce Investment Board, and others to develop a network of Centers for Working Families at EISD schools, The Neighborhood Place, the WETC, and other locations. The network seeks to help more than 1,500 families stretch wages in tough economic times by bundling EITC, child tax credit, Food Stamp, utility assistance, housing, and other benefits. A revamped jobs pipeline supported by the Greater San Antonio and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce will work to connect more than 900 EISD families to high-growth sector jobs, with up to 50 percent providing health benefits. Job strategies will also support employers and other partners in increasing 12-month retention rates to 60 percent by 2011.

- *Increase the number of EISD families connected to asset building supports and services.* *Making Connections* San Antonio will help more than 530 EISD families use mainstream financial services/products by 2011 through expanded financial education and coaching, and work to boost total EITC refunds in the district from \$2.7 million in 2009 to \$3 million in 2011.

succeed economically and more children will succeed in the critical early grades. Partners have built the capacity to develop powerful strategies, forge new alliances, engage residents, and stay accountable to results. As a result, stimulus funds will be leveraged to scale up and sustain what works, from expanding quality preschool, school readiness, and literacy strategies through additional Head Start dollars to maximizing job training, placement, and retention programs and targeting federal community revitalization, weatherization, transportation, and other efforts so that they provide long-term opportunities for EISD families.