

Accession Numbers

JP-03-04-FN

fieldnotes audio recordings negatives color slides

Date(s): May 30, 2003

Related Accession Numbers: See previous SAU notes, JP-00-12-FN

Individual/Group: SPANISH AMERICAN UNION

Fieldworker(s): Jessica Payne

Location of Interview: telephone

Address: [REDACTED]

Phone: Daytime: [REDACTED] Evening: Other:

Traditions documented (traditional art/skills, occupational experience, ethnic or religious community):
Community based organization serving youth and elders in Spanish speaking community.

Traditions noted for follow-up:

Other Possible Contacts:

SAU Staff:

Robert Bailey, Fiscal manager

Marcel Mangual, Youth Director, artist, founder Access to the Arts through
Community Efforts presenting art objects in locations where they typically aren't
displayed.

Alvilda Torres-Anaya, artist in residence, works especially with youth.

Maria Rodriquez, Elder Director

James White, Tobacco Coalition Director

Elsa Dinez, Alzheimer' Programs

Olga Ellis, Elders at Risk programs

Summary Description: Now in its 36th year of operation, the Spanish American Union remains the oldest organization serving the Puerto Rican community in Springfield. For a general description of the organization see my earlier notes: JP-00-12-FN. During this year, I contacted SAU to determine whether they were still running Luis Melendez's "Proyecto Vida" and sponsoring William Cumpiano's cuatro work. The organization has undergone significant change since I first encountered it in 2000 and both of these activities have been discontinued. Their director Maria Morales is no longer there and a new director is yet to be identified. Their program director Linda Cooper (who was Cumpiano's primary contact) has left as well. The organization is currently being run by its fiscal manager and is operating with a significantly reduced budget due to radical reductions in state and federal funding. Budget cuts forced them to discontinue Luis Melendez's successful activities with Proyecto Vida (detailed in JP-00-12-FN). They operate with a much reduced and overworked staff to run a smaller number of programs and activities which include the following:

- **Elder Programs:** Alzheimers Program through Greater Senior Services. Elder Programs at Sacrament Church 3 times a week, elders gather, do activities, workshops (nutrition, diabetes), have a meal, do fieldtrips. Prostate Program for men. Former director **Elizer Torres** (?) still does guitar playing with elders.
- **Tobacco Program:** all smoking prevention programs which remain well-funded.
- **Youth Programs:** Childcare Program was cut due to lack of funding. For past five years, **Proyecto Vida Jovenes** has focused on public health, STDs, teen pregnancy, violence prevention (currently the main focus since funds are available); **Program for Urban Revitalization**, activities to improve the urban environment, music, presentations, murals; **Alvilda Torres-Anaya** is artist in residence for this program; **Springfield Youth Advocates**, advocate for youth activities in the city.

I spoke at some length with **Marcel Mangual**, who directs SAU's youth programs. He is interested in broadening SAU's arts programming and is himself involved in a range of community based arts endeavors. In 1998 he founded **Access to the Arts through Community Efforts** with a friend. They have done 608 presentations in which they take reproductions of major works of fine art and display them in schools, libraries, and other community centers in order to create access for those who are not comfortable or don't have the opportunity to go to museums, galleries, and other formal settings where these arts are presented. This is a volunteer activity.

Recommendations for further research and program support:

SAU is clearly in a state of transition but remains an important potential institutional base for the development of traditional cultural programming, depending on the directions it takes through its programs and staff. **Alvilda Torres-Anaya** is a potential future contact regarding her community-based arts programs with youth. I have recommended that Marcel Manguel be considered for inclusion in the START committee.