

Building a Beacon of Hope

If providing health care for low-income and uninsured families isn't enough of a challenge, La Maestra Community Health Centers has to do so in a labyrinth of 13 old, patchworked buildings.

"It's just the way we grew, meeting the needs of our families," said CEO Zara Marselian, whose San Diego-based organization provides primary care, chronic disease screening, dentistry, prenatal and pediatric care as well as mental health counseling and job training and placement. La Maestra accommodates 50,000 visits a year, primarily from immigrants and refugees.

**"CDC's
COMMITMENT**
was instrumental to our
buying the land,"
said Marselian.
"It raised our profile and
credibility which will help us
secure the additional funding
we need to turn our
dream into reality."



Zara Marselian (foreground), chief executive officer, La Maestra Community Health Centers

Clearly having outgrown its cramped, serpentine quarters, La Maestra is moving full-speed ahead on plans to build a new, three-story health center. With a jump-start, \$300,000 loan from San Diego Bankers Small Business CDC (a multi-bank consortium administered by CDC Small Business Finance), La Maestra financed the purchase of a 2/3-acre parcel for the project.

The new, 32,000-square-foot center will be an integral part of a larger redevelopment area featuring affordable senior housing, retail stores and social services. The project will enable La Maestra to retain its status as the largest employer in the neighborhood with 140 staff that speak 19 different languages.

"We have become a beacon of care, sustenance and hope for so many people searching for a better life for themselves and their children," said Marselian.



**JOBS
CREATED/
PRESERVED:**
140