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Foundation Gives \$20,000 Grant for Worker Center

By Bonnie Hobbs
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The possibility of a worker center in Centreville got a boost last week when the group that will run it — the Centreville Immigration Forum (CIF) — received a \$20,000 grant from the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation.

Delighted with the new infusion of funds, CIF head Alice Foltz said the organization “has received small donations and grants from dozens of local community groups, churches and individuals, but the Meyer grant is the largest single gift.”

Viewed as a “launch grant,” this money will help cover the cost of hiring trained staff to supervise the center operations, Monday-Saturday, from 6 a.m.-noon. Foltz said the Meyer Foundation made its decision to help CIF after evaluating the organization, its fund-raising efforts and proposed budget, plus its attempts to share its intentions with the local community.

“CIF was begun in late 2007 as a project of Wellspring UCC to provide a space for the community to share ideas and fears about immigration,” said Foltz. “But the organization is today a broad community group dedicated to ‘enhancing the quality of life for immigrants in Centreville.’”

According to its mission statement, the CIF also seeks “to build community recognition of the strength in Centreville's diversity.” Said Foltz: “This grant brings us closer to realizing our goal of establishing a worker center to strengthen the health and safety of the entire community, both workers and long-time residents.”

However, she added, the CIF still has a ways to go before the worker center — earmarked for somewhere within the Centreville Square Shopping Center — can open its doors.

The group hopes to raise about \$80,000; some \$55,000 of that amount would cover one year's salary for a full-time director. Foltz said this person should have a college degree and communication skills and speak Spanish, as well as English.

“We still need to raise about \$30,000 more to reach our funding goal for the center for the first year,” she said. “Foundations and large donations are wonderful, but we need both large and small donors to make this a reality.”

Those wishing to contribute may mail checks to CIF, Box 81, Centreville, VA. 20122. Checks should be made payable to Virginia Organizing, with "CIF" written on the memo line. Online donations may be made at www.virginia-organizing.org; click on “donate” and designate CIF as the recipient. All donations are tax-deductible.



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