1969
Dionicio Morales leads festivities at the grand opening of MAOF's office on Whittier Blvd. in East Los Angeles.
March 2014

As CEO of one of the largest and oldest Latino-serving organizations in the nation, I’m often asked how the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation has managed to survive the cultural changes, economic rollercoasters, and political uncertainty that have marked the last fifty years. MAOF turned 50 in February – a milestone that has become unfeasible for many other organizations who were founded with the vision of improving our communities. Reflecting on my organization’s history, I see a common thread in its story: determination.

It is this spirit of determination that has shaped MAOF’s values and driven its mission over the past 50 years. When MAOF suffered severe budget cuts to its child care program beginning in 2009, management and staff unblinkingly tackled the monumental task of ensuring our littlest clients would not lose services. Although the organization was forced to close facilities and lay off staff, MAOF managed to keep every one of its preschoolers enrolled and thriving in an early education program.

Determination is also at the root of the MAOF employee experience, with staff members fully embracing the organization’s mission and becoming deeply invested in positive outcomes. This selfless loyalty propels MAOF towards its goals and, in turn, feeds the culture of determination that helps clients along the path toward the American Dream.

The MAOF family – management, staff, Board of Directors, and constituents – stand proud of all we have accomplished over the last 50 years and acknowledge the determination that brought us here.

Sincerely,

Martin Castro
President & CEO
Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
The mission of the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF) is to provide for the socio-economic betterment of the greater Latino community of California, while preserving the pride, values and heritage of the Mexican American culture. This is accomplished through programs in early childhood education and family services, job training, and senior lifestyle development throughout the multi-cultural communities served by MAOF.
Administration

Martin Castro
President & CEO

Vicky Santos
Vice President Operations

Orlando Sayson
Chief Financial Officer

Claudia Rufino
Director of Human Resources

Suzanne Gonzalez
Chief Development Officer
Since its inception, MAOF’s service area has expanded to cover the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, San Diego, Kern, and Monterey. Annually, more than 100,000 Californians (95% of which are in the low to moderate income level) benefit from the organization’s innovative programs in 46 service locations. MAOF’s programs provide free or low cost services to individuals, families and seniors who are socially and economically challenged, and serves nearly 8,000 in child care and early childhood education programs every day.
Los Angeles County
421 employees across 26 sites
Early Education • Head Start • Child Care • CalWorks/APP • Resource & Referral • Youth • Senior Services • Food Bank • Financial Literacy • Parent Engagement & Advocacy • Administration

Monterey County
101 employees across 9 sites
Early Education • Child Care • CalWorks/APP • Resource & Referral • Administration

Kern County
70 employees across 4 sites
Early Education • Child Care • Job Training

San Bernardino County
31 employees across 3 sites
Early Education • Child Care

Ventura County
16 employees across 2 sites
Early Education • Child Care

San Diego County
17 employees at 1 site
Early Education

Orange County
9 employees at 1 site
Early Education
MAOF continues to display fiscal prudence and responsibility, ensuring that every dollar of revenue is spent wisely and efficiently.

Fiscal year 2012-2013 saw the tail end of an economic downturn that heavily impacted MAOF’s bottom line. With California coming out of this downturn, MAOF was able to avoid staff cutbacks for the first time since 2008.

A History of Service

2013 marked the 50th anniversary of MAOF’s service toward the improvement of families and their communities. The organization was established in 1963 by Dionicio Morales as a community organization for low-income individuals and families in the East Los Angeles area. MAOF has steadily grown to the wide-reaching agency it is today and continues to evolve and develop programming that helps everyone achieve the American Dream.
The Equal Opportunity Foundation is incorporated on February 7 and opens an office on Brooklyn Avenue in East Los Angeles. A previous office - a bungalow in Pico Rivera, was destroyed in a fire just one week after its grand opening.

1964
The organization secures its first contract, $40,000 to be used for a job training program, after a legendary meeting between Dionicio Morales and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson.
Early education continues to be an area of high focus for MAOF. Research shows that children who enroll in formal education programs before the age of five benefit from long-term effects that impact academic achievement, emotional development, and social skills. Unfortunately, children in low-income families are overwhelmingly left out of the early education system due to a combination of economics, logistics, or misinformation. Since 1973, MAOF has aimed to close the gap in early education access by operating clean, efficient, and professionally-staffed centers in key communities across the state of California.

MAOF’s Preschool Early Learning Program is a part-day, comprehensive developmental program for three to five-year-old children from low-income families. Our 17 centers use the High Scope approach to early education which encourages hands-on learning and high parent involvement. Classes are taught in English and Spanish with the goal of achieving bilingual fluency.

Already a respected early education provider in the state, MAOF secured contracts to operate new centers in Delano and Santa Paula in 2013 and its Bakersfield Preschool received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
Operated with funds made possible by the Los Angeles County Office of Education, MAOF delivers Head Start services to 677 children at nine sites in Southeast Los Angeles. In addition to its center-based program, MAOF is the largest provider of in-home Head Start services in California, bringing early education to the living rooms of 581 children in Huntington Park, Walnut Park, and South Gate.

MAOF’s Head Start programming impacts the entire family through a holistic approach to child development that includes parent advocacy training and the introduction of a lifelong learning culture.

1968
The first Aztec Awards ceremony takes place at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles.

1970
The United Way funds MAOF programs for the first time and includes the organization in its roster of member agencies.
Child Care

Affordable, high-quality child care is a priority for MAOF and it has offered child care services across the state of California for 40 years. In addition to providing an affordable and geographically convenient option for low-income families, MAOF’s bilingual and bicultural staff make the transition between the home and the center an easy one for parents and children alike.

MAOF operates ten child care centers in Los Angeles, Monterey, and San Diego counties, and continues to grow its reputation as a leader in the care and development of children.

1971
Thirty women attend the first MAOF Hispanic Women’s Conference and Job Fair.

1973
MAOF opens its first licensed child care center in East Los Angeles and implements a unique bilingual and bicultural curriculum.
At the heart of MAOF's community services are our Resource & Referral offices in East Los Angeles and Monterey County. Here, parents can find trusted referrals to licensed child care providers and receive assistance locating services and benefits outside of MAOF’s realm.

The Resource & Referral offices also serve as a resource for aspiring and licensed day-care providers, offering guidance through the license process and delivering training on best practices and business management.

In 2012-2013, the Monterey County Resource & Referral office helped 15 entrepreneurs launch their own child care business.

1976
MAOF enters a half-decade of tremendous growth as it expands its services to Kern, San Diego, Ventura, and Monterey Counties.

1981
MAOF joins the newly-created California Child Care Resource & Referral Network and adds the Resource and Referral Program to its expanding list of services.
MAOF manages child care subsidy programs for residents of

Bell
Bell Gardens
Boyle Heights
City Terrace
City of Commerce
Cudahy
Downey
East Los Angeles
El Sereno
Huntington Park
Lincoln Heights
Los Angeles
Montebello
Monterey Park
Paramount
Pico Rivera
Santa Fe Springs
South Gate

and all of Monterey County

Child Care Subsidies

One of MAOF’s largest programs is its Child Care Subsidy Program, also known as CalWorks. In 2012-2013, nearly 4,000 families received subsidized child care through funds allocated by the County of Los Angeles, County of Monterey, or the California Department of Education and managed by MAOF.

Thanks to consistently successful audits and recognition as a model contract agency, MAOF CalWorks was recently selected to acquire additional contracts in Monterey County and in the cities of Paramount, South Gate, and Downey in Los Angeles County.

1984

After 21 years in operation MAOF continues to grow steadily, boasting a $5.48 million budget largely devoted to job training and job placement.

1987

MAOF plays a vital role in the implementation of the landmark Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 after securing a grant to assist thousands of undocumented immigrants apply for residency.
The MAOF Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN) is comprised of licensed home-based day care providers who specialize in the care of infants and toddlers. Child care professionals in the network benefit from special trainings, workshops, and materials. Parents of children enrolled at a FCCHEN center may be eligible to receive free or reduced cost day care.

In 2012-2013, MAOF launched Abriendo Puertas, a series of Saturday workshops aimed at educating parents in topics of child development including, physical and motor skills, language, cognition, social and emotional wellbeing, and creative expression. Additionally, the workshops are designed to function as a group forum that enables parents, many of them single, to share their stories and receive the support they need from a community of parents with similar experiences.

“I am a single father in every sense of the word, without any contact with or support from my daughter’s mother. Thanks to Abriendo Puertas, I learned that I can be an exemplary father on my own. I know that I am not alone and that there are many resources in the community for parents like me.”

Gerardo R.
Program Participant
Youth Programs

Computer Clubhouse

Focusing on the need for Latino representation within the STEM fields, MAOF introduces motivated teenagers to technology-based careers through its Computer Clubhouse, a safe after-school learning environment that places skilled tutors, mentors, and equipment within reach of students. The MAOF Computer Clubhouse is operated with license from the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network of after school programs, offering Clubhouse members the unique experience of connecting with members at more than 100 Computer Clubhouses around the world. Membership at MAOF’s Computer Clubhouse is free and open to all middle and high school students who reside or attend school within or near Walnut Park. In 2012-2013, the Computer Clubhouse in Walnut Park served more than 50 students on a daily basis.

WIA In-School Youth Program

Funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the In-School Youth Program makes it possible for more than 100 youth to gain valuable experience through volunteering, job trainings, and internships. Additionally, eligible teens may qualify for job placement throughout the school year. All work experience is accompanied by weekly life and job skill training as well as tutoring, mentoring, career exploration, and college admission assistance. In 2012-2013, MAOF’s In-School Youth Program secured a $600,000 WIA grant to continue operating the program for three years.

1993

MAOF is awarded a $2.5 million grant to open the first Head Start centers in the Southeast Los Angeles communities of Huntington Park and South Gate.

1995

Wishing to establish a permanent headquarters that will meet the organization’s ever-expanding needs, MAOF’s sister agency, MAOF Properties, Inc. purchases the former Sacred Heart of Mary High School campus in Montebello.

“The Workforce Investment Youth Program was a key to my success; helping transform me from the discouraged high school graduate I was to the professional I am today. It acted as a catalyst for professional development even before I knew what that meant.”

Jason
Program Participant
One of MAOF’s newest additions and strongest testaments to its integrity and positive reputation is its new partnership with the County of Los Angeles. Together with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), MAOF staffs The Children’s Welcome Center, a 24-hour, 365-day facility that provides temporary shelter, meals, and care for foster children under the age of twelve. Highly-trained MAOF staff apply the same caregiving principals used at our other child care and preschool facilities and ensure that children receive a nurturing and safe experience as they await long-term placement.

The Children’s Welcome Center received nearly 3,000 children in 2012-2013. The high demand for the Center’s services has already resulted in a staff increase.

“...this new partnership with the LA County Department of Children and Family Services. It is our hope that this new partnership flourishes into additional opportunities for collaboration.”

Martin Castro
MAOF President & CEO
MAOF’s Job Training programs continue to represent the core ideals with which the organization was founded in 1963: to enhance opportunities for success and place the American Dream within grasp for those who seek it.

To that end, MAOF’s Bakersfield office enrolled more than 100 adults in free Bookkeeping, Medical Office Assistant, and Clerical training programs. An additional 83 adults participated in a program funded by the Department of Human Services that allowed them to gain work experience in areas of retail, clerical, or maintenance.

In 2012-2013, MAOF received funding from the state’s Public Safety Realignment bill to pilot a work training program for non-violent, non-serious offenders with the goal of reducing the prison population. Five former prisoners benefitted from the program.

2000
MAOF is awarded $534,000 for early-childhood development programs in Orange County from Proposition 10 grants.

2000
Founder Dionicio Morales retires and the MAOF Board of Directors appoints Martin Castro as the organization’s second President and CEO.
MAOF has been at the forefront of new efforts to increase financial literacy and increase assets within the Latino community. In 2012-2013 MAOF provided one-on-one financial coaching that covered topics in credit, debt management, and budgeting, to more than 500 individuals. Of these participants, 135 opened incentivized savings account through the Get Paid to Save program, an initiative sponsored by United Way and Citigroup that matched each participant’s deposits.

MAOF is a proud participant in the IRS Volunteer Tax Assistance (VITA) Program which offers free tax help to families earning under $51,000 annually. This year, staff at MAOF’s Montebello and Bakersfield offices helped prepare 1575 tax returns that resulted in $3,581,425 in refunds.

“...I participated in MAOF’s Get Paid to Save Program and have found the organization an invaluable help to reaching my goals. I have opened a savings account for my daughter Nikita, who is 11 and an avid piano player. It is my hope that with the savings I earn from my account I will be able to hire a teacher who can take her to the next musical level and on towards her dream of becoming a musician. Thank you MAOF for helping this dream slowly become a reality.”

Simon B.
Program Participant

2001
The Southeast Los Angeles community and MAOF celebrate the opening of the Florence-Holmes Preschool. The school has the capacity to enroll up to 240 children in a community deprived of affordable day care options.

2001
MAOF grows its presence in Kern County by opening its first preschool center in Bakersfield.
Supported and funded by the Los Angeles Department on Aging, the MAOF Senior Hispanic Information and Assistance (SHIAS) Program provides information and assistance services to seniors. These services are offered throughout Los Angeles in six different locations and at no cost. From health care to housing to transportation and nutrition, the MAOF SHIAS staff connects clients to the services that keep them healthy and independent.

This year MAOF provided transportation assistance by distributing 4,992 taxi vouchers and 6,000 bus tokens to seniors. Through the Health and Wellness program seniors were offered Zumba classes twice a week, as well as health and education workshops once a week. Thanks to the Department of Aging and DWP, qualifying seniors have received close to 100 fans to keep cool during the warm summer days. During the last fiscal year, the MAOF Food Bank was able to service 22,000 families of which 55% are seniors. MAOF SHIAS services approximately 1,000 seniors each month.

To commemorate its 40th anniversary, MAOF inaugurates the Dionicio Morales Hall of Fame, a gallery space within MAOF’s headquarters in Montebello, created with the goal of celebrating the contributions of Mexican-Americans.

MAOF adds San Bernardino to its service area after the California Department of Education’s Office of Child Development awards a preschool operation contract in Montclair.
MAOF’s Nutritional Assistance Program addresses food insecurity in the East Los Angeles community by making it possible for self-selecting families to receive free groceries every week. More than half of the program’s participants have incomes under the federal poverty level but only 15% receive CalFresh support or other forms of food assistance.

Thanks to a weekly disbursement by the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, more than 400 bags of fresh and canned goods are distributed every Thursday at MAOF’s Goodrich site in Commerce. Approximately 22,000 bags were distributed in 2012-2013.

“... My friends told me about the food bank a while ago but I didn’t need the free food because my husband was working. Once he got laid off, I was glad I knew about the program and made sure to come every Thursday. I still come, even though my husband is working again, because we can’t always make ends meet. It’s reassuring to know that I will always have rice, beans, juice, cereal, and sometimes eggs, thanks to MAOF. Imagine if this wasn’t available?”

Maria
Program Participant
2010

MAOF is ranked second in *Hispanic Magazine*’s annual Top 25 Hispanic Non-Profits list.

The Computer Clubhouse opens in the unincorporated neighborhood of Walnut Park.

2011

MAOF begins its expansion outside of California by incorporating in Nevada and piloting Financial Literacy classes in North Las Vegas.

Handyworker Program

Funded by the City of Los Angeles Housing Department, MAOF’s Handyworker makes it possible for low-income residents over the age of 62 and disabled residents to receive minor home repairs that bring properties up to code or ensure safety.

In 2012-2013, MAOF completed improvements at 59 single family homes and 132 multi-family properties in the City of Los Angeles, effectively restoring pride in ownership and protecting property values.
MAOF is grateful to those individuals who give generously of their time and energy on behalf of the children and families we serve. It is in large part due to the assistance of volunteers that MAOF achieves its mission. Individuals participate in many facets of our volunteer program which include our social services programs and special events. Volunteers represent various communities and corporate sectors in MAOF service areas.

MAOF also offers unique experiences for interns and volunteers interested in working in the non-profit sector. Valuable insight and training is gained through direct interaction with our program participants. Opportunities are available in Early Education, Head Start, Senior Services, Marketing & Communications and Resource Development. MAOF’s Internship Program includes young professionals from various academic institutions including USC and UCLA.

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2012

President Martin Castro solidifies MAOF’s position as an early education advocate after testifying on the negative impacts of proposed early education budget cuts before the California Assembly and Senate.

2013

MAOF commemorates its 50th anniversary with a yearlong celebration that culminates with a special performance by Grammy-winning band Ozomatli at the Annual Aztec Awards.
2013 Aztec Awards
Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina receives the Civic Leader Aztec Award from Former United States Congressman Esteban Torres (left) and MAOF President & CEO Martin Castro
MAOF Friends and Supporters
2012-2013

Corporate
ABC-7
Advance Beverage
AERA Energy
AFLAC
Allied Systems
AltaMed
Arte Printing
AT&T
AT&T Employee Giving
Bank of the West
Bill Wong LLC
Boeing
Bright House Networks
Brown Armstrong
Caremore Health
Chevron
Clinica Sierra Vista
Clorex Company
CM School Supply
Coca-Cola
Compete 4 Causes
Corinthian Colleges
Disney Worldwide
Family Motors
Firefly
Fiscal Credit Union
Floyd’s General Store
Fuentes Family Child Care
Garcia’s Woodworks
Gem Communication Group
GMA
Grimmway Farms
H&R Block
Health Care Partners
Heffeman Insurance Brokers
Independent Oil Producers’ Agency
KGET 17

Foundation and Community Partners
Bakersfield Foundation
Banning High School
Best Buy Children’s Foundation
Bienvenidos
Bright House Networks
Brown County United Way
California Community Foundation
California State University, Bakersfield
Chapman & Associates Foundation
Child Care Alliance
Citi Foundation
Community Action Partnership of Kern
Consulado General de Mexico
Corona Norco School District
Crystal Stairs Inc.
Dignity Health Mercy & Memorial Hospitals
Dolores Huerta Foundation
East Bakersfield Richard Prado Senior Ctr
El Monte Union School District
El Proyecto del Barrio
Ford Park Adult Center
Granada School
Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce
Health Foundation of America
Hefferman Group Foundation
Hero Appreciation
Jumpstart
Keck Medical Center of USC
Kern Community College District
Kern Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Kern Valley Printing
L.A. Chamber Charity Foundation
L.A. County Nephrology Associates
LA Neighborhood Land Trust
LAUP Workforce
Listo America
MAOF Properties, Inc.
Montebello Unified School District
Monterey Community Foundation
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
PG&E Foundation
Proyecto de Compasion
Rio Honda College
SafeWay Foundation
SEIU Local 99
Southern California Association of Education United Way
University of La Verne
VIP Community Mental Health
Vons Foundation
West Los Angeles College
White Memorial Medical Center
Wise and Healthy Aging

Government
California Department of Education
City of Los Angeles
County of Kern
County of Los Angeles
County of Monterey
First 5 Monterey County
Los Angeles Universal Preschool

Individuals
Alfredo Aguilar
Eva Alejandre
Olivia Alejandre
Bea Andarza
Rosemarie Arredondo
Baber Family
Barbosa Family
Aidee Bautista
Edna Becerra
Rudy Beserra
Ellen Brown
Jazmin Casillas
Martin Castro
Blanca Cavazos
Chavez Family
Fernando Del Rio
Bryan Erckenbrach
Ramona Fernandez
Jean Fuller
Anita Gabrielan
Gilseth Family
Suzanne Gonzalez
Barbara Guerrero
Bambi Gutierrez
Denise Gutierrez
Harvey Hall and Family
Tak Hamabata
Abel Hernandez
Christopher Hernandez
Bill Izabal
Patricia Jaramillo
Carolyn Karpin
Gilbert Lafferty
Ofelia Lariviere
Matthew Lewis

David Lizarraga
Ariabel Lopez
Carmen Lugo
Martinez Family
Siranoush Mrktchian
Maria Monteon
Ernesto Morales
Estela Morales
Trino Moreno
Olarte Family
Carmen Patlan
Carol Peppler
Alma Peraza
Leticia Perez
Edward Reyes
Mike Roddy
Roddy Rodger
Carol Rodriguez
Susan Rosales
Ruelas Family
Claudia Rufino
Rafael Rufino
H.A. Sala
Fernanda Sanchez
Rafael Sanchez
Brenda Sandoval
Virginia Santos
Herman Sillas
Carlos Silva
Trias Family
Valenzuela Family
Vazquez Family
James Viveros
Lisa Viveros
Michael Wheeler
As the Latino population continues to meet growth projections and establishes itself as a powerhouse demographic with the numbers to sway and shift the national political and economic discourse, MAOF is playing a key role in ensuring the community establishes itself firmly within the middle class.

We are incredibly optimistic about the future of MAOF and the Latino community. The thought that a future American President might be learning her ABC’s at one of our early education centers or that the first American on Mars is learning engineering basics at our Computer Clubhouse feeds our determination to get them there.
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