OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE

Neighborhood Centers Inc. exists to keep our region a place of opportunity for everyone. With more than 100 years of experience, we help connect families in emerging neighborhoods to the regional opportunities that will allow them to advance economically by bringing resources, education, and connection that transform communities.

What makes our region dynamic and vibrant are our neighborhoods and most importantly, the people in them. When we invest in community and in our neighbors—hardworking people who want nothing more than a chance for a better life—our entire region becomes stronger.

Leaders and residents in East Aldine are deeply committed to positive change and have been working with us to identify the individual and community strengths that will help us design a plan to make their vision a reality. We have been fortunate to meet and work with amazing people every day—with families and neighbors who are working together and supporting one another.

They have aspirations, they have dreams... They've shared them with us and we've listened. Now, we have the opportunity to share them with you.

31% of individuals residing in East Aldine are foreign born.

70% of these foreign-born are not yet U.S. citizens.

30% of East Aldine is of prime working age—between the ages of 20 and 39.

"Don't tell 'em you're from Houston; tell 'em you're from Aldine... We're Aldine proud, you know?"

– Marivel Mascorro, Resident

East Aldine is a community of bootstrappers—people who care for themselves and one another, value their independence, and are working hard to create a better future for their families and community.

Families in the community describe East Aldine as a place where individuals can establish their roots and become successful. Residents are hardworking, determined and have strong family values. They are also resourceful—constantly engineering solutions to maximize the resources available to them.

East Aldine is home to more than 53,000 residents. In the past two decades, the population of the community has grown immensely; in fact, it has quadrupled. Its newest neighbors arrive ambitious and motivated, looking for pathways and tools to build a brighter future for their families.
COMMITTED TO TRANSFORMATION

East Aldine residents carry an undeniable entrepreneurial spirit; 12% of residents own their business and there is a 97% retail occupancy rate for mom and pop shops along the major corridors.

However, many families are struggling to become financially self-sufficient. Businesses are fragile and entrepreneurs lack access to capital, business development, and trustworthy financial institutions. 70% of community members earn less than $50,000 annually and 53% of residents have less than a high school diploma. As an unincorporated area of Harris County, there are limited resources for basic infrastructure which represents another major difficulty for the community.

Unwavering in their efforts to tackle these ongoing challenges, community residents unite. In 2001, local leaders established the East Aldine Management District to address key issues in the community. Soon after, residents successfully raised $7.4 million for water and sewer projects to support the community's infrastructure.

As our region and economy continue to grow, many are left behind, unable to take advantage of the regional opportunities. In East Aldine, families are working hard to make ends meet, yet many do not have access to the resources that can help them move up the ladder of opportunity. East Aldine is a community full of potential—with residents who want nothing more than to build a better life for themselves and their families. Working side-by-side with community members, organizations, businesses and local leaders, Neighborhood Centers is committed to helping families achieve their aspirations and transform their community.

HISTORY

The community of East Aldine has a deep sense of pride that dates back to the 1800’s when an influx of Swedish and Norwegian farmers from nearby states settled on the banks of Greens Bayou. Those early residents took advantage of the newly laid railway by the International and Great Northern Railroad and transformed the area into a successful farming and dairy community. From these early roots, East Aldine attracted a diverse working-class population enticed by the affordability and flexibility of housing, land and taxes which allowed residents to experience an important sense of freedom.
COMMON THREADS

Three most frequent themes that emerged from our conversations with residents were later validated and built upon by East Aldine families during a forum in September 2014.

WE ARE A COMMUNITY OF HARDWORKING INDIVIDUALS WHO VALUE OUR INDEPENDENCE AND OUR COMMUNITY.

We have a number of talented people in our community. We are proud of our leaders, many of whom are "products of East Aldine," working in the schools, churches, community organizations and civic clubs in the area. The East Aldine Management District, for example, has been an Integral part of our community because of its positive impact.

As residents, we have a great sense of independence that is unique to East Aldine. Because we are a separate entity from the City of Houston, we value having more freedom with regard to planning and property and lower taxation.

We have many individuals who have their own business or would like to start one. We recognize the hard work of our neighbors who are entrepreneurs and small business owners and, therefore, strongly support our local economy by shopping and using local services. Having a strong connection to community has allowed business owners to build lasting relationships with us, as customers. However, there is a need for training and business development support to get new ideas off the ground and prevent existing enterprises from failing.

“I care about the neighborhood. And I know a lot of people here. I know that they care about this neighborhood, about this community. I know they want to improve it. Many folks don’t want to leave. They believe in this neighborhood, and that’s what brought me here. Because I just… believe in East Aldine.”

– Myriam Saldivar,
  District Director
  (TX House Representative Armando Walle)
WE ARE MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN OR RETURN TO EAST ALDINE BECAUSE IT IS HOME. WE FEEL LIKE WE BELONG HERE.

We feel a strong sense of belonging to our community and often can’t imagine living away from home. Family is important to us. In fact, many multi-generation families have chosen to stay in the community to remain close and connected. We have a deep love for our community. Whether we are new to Aldine or were born-and-raised here, we have strong ties with one another as neighbors.

“Giving Back” to community and helping each other is important to us. We were eager to attend community meetings and help Neighborhood Centers find other participants for the interview process. We are excited to be a part of the journey that will build a brighter future for all of us. We have many aspirations for our community—improving our infrastructure, creating activities for families and having out-of-school programs for our youth are critical to carry on business and community legacy.

“Just educating the parents. Whether it’s... teaching them how to speak English, or just the processes the kids go through in school. Helping the kids apply for colleges, and showing them through the school year, having the parents be able to help the students apply for financial aid, or whatever. So that they can encourage them to go to college. Because a lot of them don’t get that, because the parents don’t know anything about it.”

– Valentina Lizcano, Teacher at Parker Intermediate and Resident
COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The East Aldine community holds a promising future. Residents are ready to work together and transform their community to one that gives everyone a chance for a better life so that families can earn a good living and have access to education and resources.

Today we live in a region that is presenting us with unlimited opportunities. It is up to us to take advantage of what lies ahead.

Imagine a community...
Where students are able to continue their education and more importantly, have a pathway to employment.
Where small businesses are thriving...
Where families are earning more because they have access to better job opportunities and financial tools...
Where individuals can learn new skills...

This and more can all be possible if we work together and build upon the dreams and aspirations—upon everything that is already working in the community—and transform our community. For Good.

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