

**From:** [Karen Menéndez Coller](#)  
**To:** [Stoiber, Jennifer](#)  
**Cc:** [Saiz, Nancy](#); [Nina Gehan](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: EOP Application\_2019\_Centro Hispano- ReGeneracion - STATEMENT of SUPPORT  
**Date:** Thursday, November 29, 2018 3:12:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [EOP Application\\_2019\\_Centro Hispano- ReGeneracion.pdf](#)  
[ATT00001.htm](#)

---

Jennifer and Nancy,

Thank you for the opportunity to send in a testimony in support of our EOP application: ***[Re]Generacion: Integrating a Youth-Led Approach to Strategic Planning at Centro Hispano of Dane County*** and the current City staff funding recommendations.

At Centro, culturally relevant youth development is one of the main pillars to our mission. We firmly believe that through proper community engagement, the community where we work has the answers to even the greatest neighborhood challenges.

[Re]Generacion is a youth-led initiative based at Centro, that is centered on the perspective that young people can create effective community change. The program supports positive youth development, through activities that emphasize existing assets, strengths, and youth resources, as a way to grow the innate potential of young people to be successful at overcoming any challenges. Research has described how youth-based approaches are necessary and all too often lacking. Unfortunately, adult-centered programming, while well-meaning can be misdirected. For Latinx youth in particular positive socioemotional development is key to their educational and professional success and we believe programming that emphasizes "youth supporting youth" is crucial.

One of the founding members of [Re]Generacion describes:

"The program means a lot to me, as an indigenous womxn we are constantly being under attack by the system, my form of survival was to create and build community where we could hold each other, support each other, and walk together. I never saw myself as a youth organizer or as a "leader", but as me actively living, In Lak'ech. [Re]Generacion is my community, my family, my healing space, and where I get my strength to continue fighting these oppressive systems we face. I don't do the work I do for myself, but for the youth, the community, and the generation to come"

Another [Re]Generacion participant explains:

"Coming to this program at Centro as a high schooler, I was able to quickly develop a sense of pride in myself that made me branch out, have a role as an activist within this community. As a Latinx undocumented immigrant coming from a low-income family, the program meant

everything to me...it allowed me to take pride in the complex intersectionalities that make up my character. I want to do everything in my power to become a physician who is able to pull up others who have had the exact same experience that I have had.

I am now a Junior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a co-facilitator for [Re]Generación and my wish for the program is to be able to grow it, to inspire more youth in this community to take pride in themselves so that they can achieve. My job is easy because the name of the program, [Re]Generación, means to give birth to a new generation of empowered youth. Students come from all over to make their voices heard and we want to make it clear that this is their city, their country, and they are the new generation of change. [Re]Generación has the power to easily give them the tools to create change."

This EOP application would provide much needed funding to be able to fully integrate youth voice into the next phase of Centro's strategic direction. This one-time funding will make a meaningful long-term impact in our direction as an organization, helping to further ground our work in the community, and support our vision for a more equitable City of Madison.

Thank you so much for this opportunity and look forward to hearing the final decision. - Karen

**Karen Menéndez Coller, PhD**

*Executive Director*

Centro Hispano of Dane County

810 W. Badger Road

Madison, WI 53713

608-442-4010

---