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## CLUES partnership powers Neighborhood Integration's work

As HealthEast's Neighborhood Integration team and a growing group of partner organizations plan to launch a pilot health, well-being and resilience initiative in St. Paul's East Side in 2016, one of the most established and influential organizations serving immigrant populations in Minnesota is proving to be a key player.

CLUES (Latino Communities United in Service), a nonprofit approaching its 35th year, boasts a staff of nearly 100 and runs three locations in the Twin Cities along with satellite offices in greater Minnesota.

"CLUES is widely respected, and we're fortunate to have them at the table," said Neighborhood Integration System Director Diane Tran. "They've had a robust, smart and talented team involved throughout these conversations and we're looking forward to deepening our relationship with them. No doubt they'll continue to be very involved due to their wide breadth of services."

Twin Cities social workers founded CLUES in 1981 to address a shortfall of bilingual community services. Today, it operates services and programs under four pillars: health and family wellness, economic vitality, education, and cultural and community engagement.

Often, clients come to CLUES for English classes and end up linked to other programming or one-on-one coaching. "You just don't know how you're going to impact people's lives," said CLUES President Ruby Azurdia-Lee. "We try to be a one-stop shop."

Demand will continue to soar along with the state's Latino population, which has grown from 30,000 when CLUES launched to 300,000. And it's not only Latinos flocking to CLUES. The majority of its daytime ESL students are of other ethnicities, primarily Hmong and Karen.

Accordingly, the organization's St. Paul location is slated for an expansion that will double its footprint at 797 E. Seventh Street. Azurdia-Lee expects ground to break in fall 2016 or early 2017 and hopes to glean insight from the HealthEast Neighborhood Integration collaboration on how best to utilize the extra space. The addition promises to factor into the collaboration's goals for the East Side regarding mental health, access to healthy food and exercise, and the sharing of resources.

"CLUES fits very well in those categories," Azurdia-Lee said. "Our goal is to eliminate barriers and provide opportunities for people to be healthy, prosperous and engaged."

Azurdia-Lee, who works in partnership with dozens of community organizations, is impressed with the depth and potential of Neighborhood Integration's East Side effort.

"What I really appreciate with this partnership is that HealthEast's top people have been at every meeting," she said. "That's very unique, and I really think they've done it right. Even though today we don't know what will be there at the end of this process, I know that good will come out of it."

Submitted by [Clinton Riese](#), Communication Consultant, on Dec 1, 2015

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English classes are one feature of a deep educational program CLUES offers for youth and adults.

