

Kaiser Permanente Invests in San Francisco Children, Families

Mission Neighborhood Centers is using KP funds to increase access to health services and health education for 218 local children and their families. Pictured at a San Francisco press conference announcing the investment are Guy Chicoine, medical group administrator of Kaiser Permanente San Francisco, center, and Lila Carrillo, left, Mission Neighborhood Centers vice president of operations.

Kaiser Permanente awarded [Mission Neighborhood Centers](#) (MNC) \$1 million to help the nonprofit expand culturally sensitive, multi-generational, community based services to low-income families.

A large portion of these funds are going toward the purchase of a new building at 1240 Valencia Street in San Francisco. This will allow the centers to expand their comprehensive and holistic health and education programs through high-quality [Early Head Start](#) and [Head Start](#) programs that include health and wellness, nutrition, and parent engagement curricula.

“Creating healthier, more equitable communities starts by supporting the health of children and their families, and the neighborhoods where they live,” said [Janet Liang](#), president of the Kaiser Permanente Northern California region. “Children and their families cannot thrive without access to health services and early childhood development. When we meet these most basic needs of families, we know we will see both improved health and economic outcomes that reverberate throughout our communities.”

Mission Neighborhood Centers provides a broad base of supportive services that address issues such as health and wellness, housing, early childhood education, legal services, nutrition, and other basic needs. These services empower vulnerable communities to break the cycle of generational poverty.

The partnership with MNC builds upon previous work between the 2 organizations aimed at providing educational programs, social services, and health education to San Francisco’s most in need populations. The children in MNC’s program receive vision, dental, and health screenings. Additionally, promoting good nutrition and an active lifestyle is incorporated in everyday classroom activities and parent engagement events. This includes introducing children to vegetables and fruits, and teaching parents and children to prepare nutritious meals that celebrate their culture. Supportive services are offered to children with disabilities, such as speech and language therapy, self-regulation exercises, and mental health consultations.

Families that MNC serves in San Francisco are largely from low-income neighborhoods throughout the city, such as the Mission, Excelsior, and Bayview-Hunters Point. In San Francisco, approximately 7,000 of the city’s families with children are living below the federal poverty line and

70% of those families have a household income below the state median.

“MNC is proud and appreciative of our partnership with Kaiser Permanente as we collaborate and develop new early learning facilities in the Mission community, starting with our 1240 Valencia site, which will accommodate children and families in great need of childhood development opportunities, health and wellness wraparound services, and daily nutritious meals,” said Santiago Ruiz, CEO of Mission Neighborhood Centers. “We applaud Kaiser Permanente’s partnership and leadership as we both eagerly and intentionally continue to engage in practicing family empowerment and community well-being, starting with our youngest learners and ensuring that our children and families succeed and thrive.”

The nonprofit’s experience in community building has fostered an understanding of what leads to malnutrition, opportunity gaps, and violence in communities. With the help of Kaiser Permanente, the organization will now be able to offer enhanced family support services and full-day programs to 218 low-income families year-round.

“Kaiser Permanente’s mission includes supporting the well-being of the communities we serve,” said Ron Groepper, senior vice president and area manager, Kaiser Permanente Greater San Francisco Area. “This grant will help address critical community needs among underserved children and families by expanding access to health and educational services. These include important health screenings, assisting children with special needs, and offering mental health and nutritional health counseling to families. We are proud to continue our commitment to helping San Franciscans live healthier lives.”