



AAA Bank Advisory Board Meeting

Our next Bank Advisory Board Meeting will be hosted by Frank Gonzalez at MBAF in Miami, FL, on Friday, October 27th from 11:30 am - 2:00 pm.

Danny Santivasci, Senior Examiner at the Federal Reserve Bank, will be our featured speaker.

Bankers will receive CRA service credit for participating on the advisory board.

To attend, or for more information please contact Kerri Vaughan at (786) 367-0823 or kerri@aaascholarships.org.

Tax Credits Still Available

AAA Scholarship Foundation provides banks with an innovative CRA investment opportunity at no cost to the corporation. You can earn CRA credit by simply redirecting your state tax liability to AAA to fund scholarships for low-income children.

We are in the midst of application season and we are seeing a tremendous need for scholarships. Children are seeking an environment that will help them overcome the struggles they are facing, while parents are desperate to break the cycle and save their children from an uncertain future. With your help, we can make their dreams come true. By simply redirecting your state tax liability, you can provide valuable educational options for low-income children.

Tax credits are still available in Florida and Nevada. For more information go to <http://www.aaascholarships.org/donors>.



Gibraltar Private Bank & Trust President and CEO, Angel Medina welcomed AAA Bank Advisory Board members to the inaugural board meeting hosted by the bank in March. Dr. Kenneth Thomas was the featured speaker and Miriam Alonso shared the positive impact the members work has on the community.

CRA Questions Answered



Q. Are all commercial loans for over \$1 million issued to finance properties which are located in a low- or moderate-income geographies considered community development loans?

A. The short answer is “No.” Some loans may provide only indirect or short-term benefits in low or moderate-income (LMI) geographies. These loans are not considered to have a community development purpose. For example, a loan for upper-income housing in an LMI area is not considered to have a community development purpose simply because of the indirect benefit to LMI persons from construction jobs or the increase in the local tax base that supports enhanced services to residents. On the other hand, a loan for an anchor business in an LMI area (or a nearby tract) that employs or serves residents of the area and thus stabilizes the area, may be considered to have a community development purpose. For example, a loan for a pharmacy, medical facility or supermarket that employs and serves residents of an LMI area promotes community development and should receive positive consideration.

Erbi Blanco-True, professional CRA consultant to the banking industry, CRA advisor to Gibraltar Private Bank and Trust, serves as AAA’s voluntary CRA specialist. **Ask Erbi a question at erblanco-true@gibraltarprivate.com.**

This Q&A segment is intended to assist CRA Officers with common CRA-related questions. All answers are based on the opinion of a CRA expert, however, bankers are encouraged to contact their regulator if they need detailed answers on specific cases.

CRA & Community Development Forum

AAA Scholarship Foundation was asked to be one of the expert panel members at the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce’s annual CRA and Community Development Forum to explain the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program and how banks can participate to obtain CRA investment credit.



Updated CRA Information for Bank Contributors

Since the community development purpose of the Tax Credit Scholarship Programs is to serve low-income children (only those that qualify for the national free or reduced lunch program), over 85 percent of AAA Scholarships are distributed to children at or below 185 percent of poverty. Below are the demographics of the children served (this information is updated every quarter):

Average Family Size: 4

Average Family Income: \$32,265*

Single-Parent Home: 60%

**This income needs to be compared to the area median income (“AMI”) of the bank’s assessment areas to determine whether it’s at or below 30 percent (extremely low), 50 percent (low) or 80 percent (moderate) of the AMI to insure qualifying as a CRA investment.*

School Spotlight - Champagnat Catholic School



It has been nearly 50 years since Isabel Alonso's parents, Dr. Reinaldo Alonso and Maria I. Alonso, founded Champagnat Catholic School in Miami, Fla., located in a community built around the immigrants that came to the area to start a better life for their families. Over the years, the school has grown and evolved to meet the unique needs of the children living in the multi-cultural South Florida communities. However, Isabel, who now leads the school, has remained dedicated to continuing the school's original purpose to serve the diverse community –

especially the economically disadvantaged and immigrant families in need of educational options for their children.

As Cuban immigrants themselves, and with a history in leading educational institutions in Cuba, Dr. and Mrs. Alonso started Champagnat Catholic School at a time when there was a shortage of schools to serve the many families migrating to South Florida from Cuba and Central and South America. The school started with 123 students and over the years, as its popularity and a sheer need for educational choices for the families in the area grew, the school eventually added a second location in Hialeah, Fla. Today Champagnat serves students in sixth through 12th grade, and has had more than 5,000 graduates and counting.

One of those graduates, of course, was Isabel Alonso and she remained involved in the school even while pursuing her own higher education. When she was just a sophomore in college, she started the athletics program at Champagnat, something the school had not been able to offer previously. She helped build the program from the ground up to eventually become the competitive athletic program the school offers today, which includes state championships for their basketball and football teams, as well as successful baseball and track teams, among others. But her reason behind engaging the school in a successful sports program was beyond just the athleticism and awards.

“Working in this community from a young age, I saw a tremendous need for children to rise above their means and circumstances,” Isabel says. “The athletic programs help to motivate students to want to continue their education, to stay in school, and to dream bigger. The goal is to move them towards college scholarships and higher education so that they can create better futures for themselves.”

After successfully establishing Champagnat's athletics program, Isabel eventually left to pursue her own degree in hospitality management and spent several years opening restaurants and working long hours that left her feeling exhausted and not quite fulfilled. It was during one visit home with her parents that she felt an unshakeable calling to help Champagnat and the surrounding community as a whole. Soon after, she quit her job and returned to South Florida to once again help her parents run the school that they had spent so many years of their life building. Not long after she returned, however, her mother was

School Spotlight Cont.

diagnosed with cancer, and Isabel realized that perhaps that unshakeable feeling she had months earlier is what led her to be in the right place and the right time – not only to be with her family during a great time of need, but also to help keep the school afloat and continue her parents mission and life's work.

Sadly, Isabel's mother and Champagnat's co-founder, Maria Alonso, passed away in 2010. However, Isabel has kept her promise of continuing on her parents' good work through Champagnat. The school fulfills a great need in the community, where all too often at-risk youth are in danger of falling through the cracks. Champagnat serves as another option for families, especially those with limited financial resources, by providing their children with a safe learning environment and a quality education designed to prepare them for future success.

More than 90 percent of the students at Champagnat are either on the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program for low-income families (like those provided by the AAA Scholarship Foundation), or the McKay Scholarship for students with disabilities. The diverse student body of the school has fluctuated over the years depending on the influx of immigrants moving into the community. Currently, about 30 percent of the students are African-American, and about 70 percent are Hispanic.



Isabel and her team of dedicated teachers and staff work to create a family-like atmosphere at the school, providing students with individualized attention and a quality college preparatory education. Isabel has seen countless success stories at her school, such as the timid teen that came to them from Columbia, unable to speak English and with a tremendous fear of attending school in a new country. She overcame her struggles and is now attending college. Or the young man that took advantage of Champagnat's academic and athletic programs as a means to gain access to higher education at the University of Miami and eventually a career in professional basketball overseas.

In explaining why families need options for their children's education, Isabel sums it up pretty simply. *"A child that has the tools to be successful is likely going to succeed in their environment," she says. "However, we must reach the ones that are struggling and help provide a way to turn their situation around. Our goal is to educate and support them so that they can get on the path to be successful members of society."*