

My current responsibilities restrict developing a full chapter/essay about the rscj involvement, through Casa del Sol, Boston, in *Community Development/Community Organizing*.

However, as one who participated in several ways, I would like to contribute and support those who prepare the final account. The following is a brief description of my time involved with Casa del Sol and South End community organizing.

In 1974 I joined the RSCJ community living at Casa del Sol, 10 Pembroke Street, in the South End of Boston. The intention of the rscj was to live in the neighborhood, without a project, but rather to learn from their neighbors in what way the nuns might serve.

Prior to rscj presence, in 1968, the Puerto Rican community living in what was designated Parcel 19 of the South End, began their struggle against displacement, resulting in the establishment of the Villa Victoria housing complex, which included Pembroke Street. The rscjs joined in the housing efforts, the Casa del Sol living room often serving as the meeting place for community participants. In addition, the nuns served their neighbors in other ways. This included the start of a job training program for women, featuring childcare in one room while the mothers learned office skills in another room.

With support from small grants, Susie Halligan and I worked with local women to create an artisan project to provide income for women in the neighborhood, who worked at home and later participated in the silkscreen workshop that became part of the project. At first Susie and I coordinated the program, including marketing the women's work at craft fairs, and later other women managed the activities.

My involvement in Casa del Sol and in the neighborhood, both while living there and later, consisted of a range of varied activities, including art workshops with residents in the senior citizen facilities that are part of Villa Victoria.

A Collaborative Photography Project

Within a week or so of my arrival in 1974, I began to photograph my Pembroke Street neighbors as way to meet them and to introduce myself. Early on we had an informal show on the playground chainlink fence and in 1975 we had a formal exhibition at the South End branch library. For the next several years I continued to photograph and we had another exhibition at the library in 1977. These exhibitions were also shown in Boston area alternative spaces, universities and Boston City Hall. After moving from the neighborhood interest in my neighbors and their community continued and in 1990 I began photographing the original Pembroke street residents who were still living in Villa Victoria. Completed in 1992, the final exhibition covering 1974-1992, was shown at the community cultural center, then the South End Library.

The core of the exhibit consists of portraits of the families and individuals who lived on the block of Pembroke street where Casa del Sol was begun, both before and then after they moved into what became the Villa Victoria housing complex. Additional exhibition material includes press and other documents about the history of the neighborhood and its success in achieving housing and other services.

Later in 1992, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston invited me to serve as one of the curators for a section of a major exhibition, *Ways to See*. My section included the Pembroke-Street materials and work by additional photographers working in several Boston neighborhoods.

All the material related to my photographic work in the South End is located in the Boston Public Library, Central Branch Print Department.

SEE Carlota Duarte resume and articles related to this work