

# Community EWorks

a publication of Community First Fund

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[www.commfirstfund.org](http://www.commfirstfund.org)

## Welcome!

Community First Fund is experiencing a lot of excitement this month. We were featured in a USA Today article and one of our very own lender's received the SBA Small Business Advocate award! As the warmer months come, Community First is certain to have much more excitement due to this exposure. Thank you for helping make our work possible.

Sincerely,



Dan Betancourt, President and CEO

## USA Today Features Community First

USA Today featured Community First Fund in the paper's Money section Thursday, April 16, 2009. The article used Community First as an example of the work of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) across the nation in financing small businesses. CDFI's stand to gain additional federal funding through the stimulus package, which will help to bring even more business growth opportunities to communities such as those serviced by Community First. Since the article was published, Community First has received a lot of positive feedback from the community including another article in the local *Lancaster*



Champ Hall in front of Champ's Barber School, Lancaster, PA

*New Era* paper. When asked by the *Lancaster New Era* about the possible increase in Federal funding, Community First Fund's President and CEO, Dan Betancourt, said, "We're trying to stay ahead of the curve... this will allow us to serve all of our clients who qualify and have a need."

To read the articles, watch the *USA Today* video or learn more about Champ and other clients like him, see our website or follow the below links.

**USA Today article link:** [http://www.usatoday.com/money/economy/2009-04-15-community-boost-stimulus\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/economy/2009-04-15-community-boost-stimulus_N.htm)

**Lancaster New Era article link:** <http://articles.lancasteronline.com/local/4/236414>

30 W. Orange Street  
P.O. Box 524  
Lancaster, PA 17608-0524  
p:717-393-2351 f:717-393-1757  
For a full listing of regional offices see website

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For content management or questions contact [skessler@commfirstfund.org](mailto:skessler@commfirstfund.org)  
To subscribe to this mailing list contact [info@commfirstfund.org](mailto:info@commfirstfund.org)

## Miriam Soto receives SBA Minority Small Business Champion of the Year award



Miriam Soto

Miriam Soto was nominated by the staff of Community First Fund to receive the SBA's Minority Small Business Champion of the Year award for her tireless advocacy of women and minority owned small businesses. While never an entrepreneur herself, Ms. Soto has witnessed many businesses come and go in the neighborhood where she grew up and still resides. Her work has helped many to remain as permanent fixtures. Ms. Soto began working for Community First in January of 2003 and now plays a vital role at Community First as a lender, as a business counselor and as a trainer in the Women's Business Center. When asked, Ms. Soto said she was excited to receive the award, but more so

appreciated the recognition by her colleagues. "It is nice to be acknowledged for something that I love to do. Advocating, working with clients and helping them remove barriers comes easily to me."

## Client Chronicle: La Estrella

La Estrella (The Star) is Allison Hill's only neighborhood Mexican grocery store. Moises Sandoval first opened a small grocery store in 1997 with a personal investment of \$14,000. Over the years, La Estrella has developed and grown from a small corner store, to an extensive Mexican foods store. In 2007, Moises approached Community First Fund about a loan to purchase and renovate the store's building, which includes four apartments.

Recently, La Estrella has come to include a specialty clothing and boot section as well as room for music and DVD's. Moises' latest project is the addition of a restaurant in the back that will serve traditional Mexican cuisine including burritos, tacos and quesadillas. One day he hopes to corner another local area market by purchasing a tortilla maker and providing fresh tortillas for both his restaurant as well as for retail sale. Moises dream for his store continues to grow and may expand to new locations in Harrisburg as he continues to provide a valuable service to the area's community.



Moises Sandoval in La Estrella, Reading, PA

### May Classes 2009



#### Core Four:

May 2 9am-12pm (Reading)  
May 9 9am-12pm (Reading)  
May 16 9am-12pm (Reading)  
May 20 5:30-8:30pm (Hbg)  
May 23 9am-12pm (Reading)  
May 27 5:30-8:30pm (Hbg)

#### State Procurement:

May 11 9am-12pm (Hbg)

**For class descriptions, costs, and information on signing up see our website.**

**Or contact, [jfrey@commfirstfund.org](mailto:jfrey@commfirstfund.org)**