This report represents A Place Called Home’s responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

Mission:
A Place Called Home is a safe haven in South Central Los Angeles where underserved youth are empowered to take ownership of the quality and direction of their lives through programs in education, arts, and well-being and are inspired to make a meaningful difference in their community and the world.
The content of this Charting Impact Report is the sole product and responsibility of A Place Called Home. This report does not in any way represent an endorsement from Independent Sector, BBB Wise Giving Alliance, or GuideStar, nor does it represent fulfillment of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance's Standards for Charity Accountability. For more information on Charting Impact, visit www.guidestar.org/chartingimpact
1. What are we aiming to accomplish?

A Place Called Home is a safe haven in South Central Los Angeles where underserved youth are empowered to take ownership of the quality and direction of their lives through programs in education, arts, and well-being and are inspired to make a meaningful difference in their community and the world. Four key objectives are associated with the Center's mission. They are: (1) to increase the likelihood that members will remain in school, graduate, and go on to pursue higher learning and/or meaningful employment; (2) to increase each member's capacity for positive, non-prejudicial and nonviolent interaction with peers, teachers, adults, family and community members; (3) to reduce members’ involvement or likelihood to be involved in criminal behavior or gang activity; and (4) to empower members and inspire them to take ownership of their lives and to make a positive difference in their communities and in the world. While these objectives are relatively broad, APCH's comprehensive menu of programs has a unique capacity to realize the underlying goals, and because of that menu, we are able to attract a large number of youth on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. Moreover, because APCH welcomes youth as young as eight years old, we have the advantage of time. We can help a younger member and his/her family take full advantage of all of our programs and services, and through, for example, the free, comprehensive mental health counseling services that we provide to individual members and their families, we can address challenges early on, thereby helping youth acquire the psycho-social tools they need to take full advantage of the programs offered to older members. Our current 2013-2017 strategic plan outlines immediate organizational goals to help us reach these objectives. They are: (1) to expand and improve the physical plant to safely and effectively serve a full membership, the community and the staff with excellence; (2) to sustain and grow a strong, diverse volunteer leadership; (3) to sustain and grow a thriving, excellent staff; (4) to research, develop, codify and implement an integrated multi-disciplinary methodology, curriculum, staff training protocol; program evaluation, staff performance evaluation and support protocols; and (5) to secure the necessary resources to support and sustain the strategic goals of A Place Called Home.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?

Our “action plan” is clearly holistic, and whether a youth is participating in the tutoring program, learning digital media, working with a mental health counselor, or visiting a college campus in anticipation of receiving an APCH Shaheen Scholarship, the Center's hope is that s/he will transcend the South Central community's decades-long reputation for substandard living conditions and education, violence and crime, and poverty and desperation. Currently, APCH offers five core programs: Educational Services; Health, Nutrition & Well-Being; Community Service & Outreach; Bridge to the Future; and Creative Expressions. The relationship of these programs to the mission statement is evident: The programs work in conjunction with one another to support APCH members in avoiding destructive behaviors. They help youth members develop life skills and motivation to overcome adversity. They encourage participants to make healthy, productive choices, and to take advantage of the opportunities that lie before them.

3. What are our organization's capabilities for doing this?

APCH's leadership as well as the Center's large cadre of volunteers, 50+ personnel and strong connections with other community organizations and businesses make fulfilling program initiatives a successful process. Our partnerships with Los Angeles Trade Tech and CD Tech, for example, help teens and parents acquire skills to overcome challenges that result in unemployment and low educational attainment. The executive director reports directly to the Board of Directors, whose 25 members volunteer their services and resources. The Board meets four times annually, while its six committees each have their own, needs-based schedules of meetings. The Center benefits from the annual involvement of over 1,300 volunteers, who collectively donate a yearly average of about 23,000 hours.
4. How will we know if we're making progress?

Across the Center, APCH measures progress and impact through a variety of methods. For example, the Educational Services program now uses a Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) instrument to assess students' academic proficiency at the beginning and end of each of our program sessions. Standardized instruments also are utilized for activities related to fitness (which fall under the Health, Nutrition and Well-Being banner). Other programs – e.g., Creative Expressions and components of Bridge to the Future – utilize program-specific pre- and post-test evaluation strategies. There also are qualitative assessments: for example, we count the number of individual nutritional meals we serve on a monthly basis (6,000-7,000 being our average), and we record the number of APCH members attending colleges on APCH/Shaheen Scholarships. (As indicated earlier, that number is currently 70.) Significantly, too, we recently introduced academic evaluation protocols to support the creation of an agency transcript protocol that will eventually include the majority of our members. We also have instituted pre- and post- surveys for members in order to quantify individual and overall development in a number of psychosocial areas. This tracking of ongoing progress will enable us to assess each youth in realizing his/her potential and will also alert us to needed adjustments and improvements in our program-delivery strategies. These developments also reflect our enhanced case management approach. Staff meet no fewer than four times annually to review program developments, discuss successes and challenges, and refine delivery structure as needed. In the process and on an ongoing basis, individual members' needs are assessed and addressed, and participants' progress is documented.

5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?

Now in its 23rd year, APCH has provided direct services to no fewer than 18,000 unduplicated youth, many entering the Center as 2nd or 3rd graders. Success has been demonstrated through various evaluative instruments designed for and used by specific programs. The most compelling outcome is indicated by our Shaheen Scholarship Program, which – since 2002 – has enabled 300+ APCH members to attend colleges and universities. Those youth most often are the first in their family to pursue higher education. In recent years, APCH has made great strides in bolstering all of our programs and improving our physical space. While we have witnessed and documented our youth members' growth in a variety of cognitive, psychological and social areas, we also have engaged their parents more substantively. At the same time, we have honored our community by changing our appearance both outside and in. In 2012, APCH made dramatic improvements to the athletic field, basketball court, and exterior of the main building. We now are currently in the process of converting our Annex building, which was formerly comprised of a large warehouse space and some administrative offices, into a new Teen Center and Gallery and Performing Arts Space. This will address the first goal of our current strategic plan and APCH's highest priority need and challenge – space and our long waiting list – allowing us to provide additional services and reach more youth and community members. We broke ground on the new building in August 2015 and plan to have the space operational in fall 2016. beginning to realize the goals of Phase Two, which will include interior work, a new Welcome Lobby/Membership Center, and the beginning of expansion to our APCH Annex across the street. Ultimately, we plan to construct new space that will include a Teen Haven, a Performing and Media Arts Center, a Gallery Space, and more. The Center's current four-year Strategic Plan – which was informed by twice annual APCH Staff Retreats and three annual Stakeholder Circle meetings that gathered input from parents, members, volunteers, staff, and board members – was launched on July 1, 2013. It is driven by five goals: (1) to expand and improve the physical plant to safely and effectively serve a full membership, the community and the staff with excellence; (2) to sustain and grow a strong, diverse, volunteer leadership; (3) to sustain a thriving, excellent staff; (4) to research, develop, codify and implement an integrated multi-disciplinary methodology, curriculum, staff training protocol; program evaluation, staff performance evaluation and support protocols; and (5) to secure the necessary resources to support and sustain the strategic goals of APCH. It is expected that the goals laid forth in the Strategic Plan will be completed by 2017.