

## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2022

### **CARECEN SF and Partners Launch The RAMA Blueprints Podcast Series Documenting the Oral History of San Francisco's Real Alternatives Program (RAP)**

**San Francisco, April 20, 2022** – CARECEN SF, Instituto Familiar de la Raza and HOMEY proudly launch the RAMA Blueprints Podcast series, which aims to capture the oral history of the legendary Real Alternatives Program (RAP), founded by Jim Queen in 1969. Through research, first hand interviews and archival footage, RAMA Blueprints Podcast series tells the story of how RAP, a revolutionary youth service organization, advocated for youth empowerment through leadership development and self-determination. Generations of San Francisco community leaders were trained while at RAP and to this day many work in leadership positions within community services locally and nationwide. Its legacy includes being one of the most pivotal youth service providers to influence both city, state and nation wide policies utilized by other city governments and organizations.

The history of the Real Alternatives Program is personal for the RAMA Blueprints Podcast series producers/hosts, Socorro Gamboa and Darren J. de Leon, who were both employees of RAP while its doors were open to the public. Gamboa is a former principal when RAP became a fully accredited high school and de Leon is a former teacher. *"What Jim Queen and the individuals who were working with him at the time started was a movement based on the principles and philosophy of self-determination,"* expresses Gamboa. She goes on to say, *"In the late '60s, Jim noticed that the police were harassing a group of young kids in the Mission District so he began gatherings where he had conversations with them about how to become self-determined. He pointed out that 'we need to create some real alternatives for these young kids,' and someone said, 'why don't we call it the Real Alternatives Program?' and that's the way the name came about."*

Darren de Leon explains that *“what we are doing by documenting the history of this program is creating a ‘blueprint’ for other generations to utilize for community organizing, leadership development and spiritual practices.” “It is important to leave a record of our own history for future generations,”* Gamboa exclaims.

Episode 01 of the series named “El Altar y La Vida” focuses on the story of the establishment of an altar at RAP’s Bryant street campus. The altar honored the young people who had died as a result of community violence and was the first of its kind in a SFUSD school setting. “El Altar y La Vida” describes how RAP and Instituto Familiar de La Raza (IFR) came together through cultural spiritual healing practices as a result of the loss of young lives.

Leading the effort to create and present the RAMA Blueprints Podcast series are three leading grassroots organizations based in San Francisco’s Mission District whose current leadership has deep roots in the Real Alternatives Program. They are CARECEN SF, Instituto Familiar de la Raza and HOMEY.

For more information about the RAMA Blueprints Podcast and to listen to the first episode, “El Altar y La Vida”, please visit [www.carecensf.org](http://www.carecensf.org).

##

CARECEN SF empowers and responds to the needs, rights and aspirations of Latino, immigrant, and under-resourced families in the San Francisco Bay Area — building leadership to pursue self-determination and justice. Rooted in its cultural strengths and inspired by the Central American justice struggles, CARECEN SF envisions our diverse immigrant community as thriving; where families prosper, build effective community institutions, and participate confidently in civic life. Learn more about our history and work at [www.carecensf.org](http://www.carecensf.org).