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Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción launches capital campaign for The CASA - a \$26 million project

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Shown (from left) are: Ann Beha, Annum Architects; Natasha Espada, Studio Enée; Dr. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, IBA; and Danniely Staback Rodriguez, Rhode Island School of Design.

Newton, MA Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA) launched the public phase of its capital campaign for the Center for Arts, Self-determination, and Activism (The CASA) on June 6, during an event at Brae Burn Country Club. IBA will break ground in the fall for The CASA, which will be home to its bilingual youth development, financial empowerment, resident services, and arts programs, as well as its administrative offices. This is IBA's first capital campaign in its 55-year history.

The project's anticipated cost of \$26 million is being met through a combination of public and private funds. The project is supported by a \$1 million earmark from senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, and congresswoman Ayanna Pressley. Other early supporters include campaign co-chairs Aixa Beauchamp and Thomas Meléndez, Maloney Properties, entrepreneur and philanthropist Elias Torres, and former governor Deval Patrick. In addition, every IBA board member and campaign committee member has made a campaign pledge. IBA has raised over \$3.5 million during the quiet phase of the campaign, which began about a year ago.

"We are thrilled to formally launch the capital campaign for The CASA and take this important step closer to making Boston's new home for Latinx community empowerment and arts a reality," said Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, CEO of IBA. "We are profoundly grateful to our early investors who have believed in this project from the start. We would also like to thank our campaign committee, especially our campaign co-chairs, Aixa Beauchamp and Thomas Meléndez, for their deep commitment and exemplary leadership."

Beyond the physical space of the new building, The CASA represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for IBA to enhance and invigorate the arts scene and to create bold new initiatives to address the root causes of inequities and create opportunities for social and economic mobility for families. The CASA will be a place where Greater Boston's Latinx community can thrive.

"We are truly honored to lead this important effort to invest in our community, now and for the future," said Beauchamp and Meléndez. "We are inspired by IBA's vision for a game-changing community center that will showcase the arts, bring diverse people together, and inspire the next generation to be activists and leaders. We are grateful to those in the public and private sectors who share IBA's vision and have already pledged their support. We invite others to join us in making a meaningful difference in the South End, in Boston's Latinx and Caribbean communities, and well beyond."

At the campaign kickoff event, Tori Valle, a Latinx artist and former resident of Villa Victoria, spoke about the significance of IBA in her life and career, and how The CASA will provide a much-needed place for residents to learn, grow, perform, and, most of all, to gather. Other speakers included Vanessa Calderón-Rosado and the campaign co-chairs, who announced a major gift to the campaign. Approximately 60 guests gathered to celebrate this milestone for The CASA, including Bob Rivers, Eastern Bank; Bob Giannino, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley; Joseph Betancourt, M.D., Commonwealth Fund; David Howse, ArtsEmerson; Maureen Bleday, Yawkey Foundation; Francisco Torres, Barr Foundation; Yvonne Garcia, State Street, entrepreneur Elias Torres, and state representative John Moran.

The CASA, a four-story, 25,897 s/f project, will enable IBA to expand its usable space by 65%. Designed by STUDIO ENÉE architects and collaborating architects Ann Beha and Annum, The CASA will include an open, two-story performance space that will also host community meetings

and events, multiple classrooms, community spaces, offices, conference rooms, a staff gym, lactation room, bicycle storage and roof terrace. Construction is expected to be completed on the LEED Silver+, ADA compliant project in late 2024. The current IBA program headquarters at 2 San Juan St. and 405 Shawmut Ave. will be converted to 45-55 new affordable housing units following The CASA's completion, adding to IBA's 667 existing units.

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