

El Centro de Amistad Newsletter

Spring 2008



Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from the Executive Director
- 2 Inspirational Stories
- 2 Computer Literacy Program
- 2 Department of Mental Health
- 3 Employee News
- 3 Community Event
- 4 Employee Profile
- 4 News from HR
- 4 Birthdays
- 4 Upcoming Events

Message from the Executive Director

Greetings everyone! I know it's been a long time since our last newsletter and there is so much to share with you. First of all, I would like to wish you a Happy New Year and much prosperity in 2008.

El Centro de Amistad would like to make 2008 another successful year. This upcoming new fiscal year will begin July 1, 2008 and will be one of much transformation. There will be changes in our current system of maintaining and inputting clinical records and data that involves a county wide plan, implementation of new grants and the end of our current Bridges Program. We will continue with all of our other Programs and strive to expand our services and positively impact our community.

One new grant that will be initiated is called **Family Develop Network (FDN)**. This grant will be implemented in the Canoga Park area and will be run by Luann Rollens. New Economics for Women (NEW), The Guadalupe Center and Los Angeles Family Housing will be the team. NEW will be the lead agency and was responsible for making sure that the final proposal was completed and delivered. We are thankful to NEW and excited to work with them. ECDA will receive \$100,000 for providing the agreed services. A special thank you goes out to Luann Rollens and Tania Fallert for being instrumental in the development of this grant.

I also want to thank our staff and board members for providing valuable strategies in the implementation of the **Gang Reduction and Youth Development** proposal that was sent out by the Mayor's office this month. We were fortunate to have Jeff Carr, the GRYD director through the Mayor's office meet at our San Fernando office. He provided staff and board representatives with his vision for the new gang reduction and youth development plan. 24 millions dollars will be available for Request for Proposal (RFP) within next year's budget and we hope to receive some funding.

ECDA will sub-contract with two agencies for the amount of \$100,000. Only one of these lead agencies will get the contract for the Foothill/Pacoima service area. Communities In Schools (CIS) and New Directions for Youth (NDY) are the lead agencies that we are collaborating with. The total grant amount they are each soliciting for is \$500,000. Another RFP will be out for bid this August. With the high likelihood that ECDA receive the grant, we will be able to provide more services to children at risk.

With more programs comes the need for fundraising and once again we are in the process of organizing our annual fundraising dinner. Doug Barnett our Fund Development Chair and Past ECDA Chair has put together a great team of volunteers to head our annual **Friendship Awards Dinner**, scheduled for **October 23, 2008 at Palacios Torres**. We were able to have Assembly Member Felipe Fuentes of the 39th district be our honorary along with Doug as our co-chair for the event. Mr. Fuentes Field Deputy, Jerry Guzman, has recruited 20 volunteers to help us with the event.

Once again I want to thank the Staff and Board for their tireless efforts and goodwill. Best wishes for a vibrant, healthy, and happy 2008 with much success and passion for your work and play!

Sincerely,
Ed Viramontes,
Executive Director



Pictured here Ed Viramontes

Inspirational Stories



Joseph experienced what most would never imagine...Joseph witnessed his father murdering his mother and shortly after was told that his father committed suicide. Joseph was only 7 years-old when this trauma occurred and began therapy at age 8. Joseph initially presented as an isolated, timid child with low-self esteem. In addition, Joseph experienced much anxiety which manifested in his dreams, demeanor, relationships and school. Therapy provided a safe and non-judgmental environment for Joseph to express himself. Interventions used in therapy consisted of having Joseph act out his aggression and trauma through play, art and journaling. Repetitive themes of violence, loss and anger were presented in sessions and in his work. With the assistance of therapy and support from his grandparents, Joseph was able to become more communicative, playful and secure and increase his grades. Joseph is a true inspiration!

Computer Literacy Program



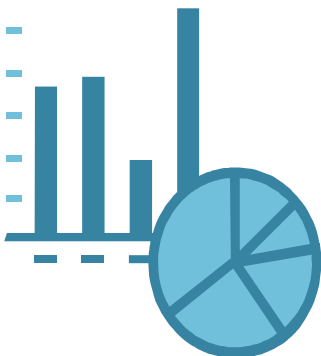
Pictured here, the computer literacy lab.

The Literacy and Computer Technology Program began in September 2007 with ten computer stations. The stations facilitate two groups of children from local schools ranging in age from 5 to 8 years old. The focus of the program is on education, literacy and technology. The program currently has a total of thirty children enrolled. The children all come from low income families where they are not exposed to literature or technology. Some of these students come from parents who are unable to help with their homework due to limited English. Most of these students enrolled in the program have low grades and the major problem observed is reading below grade level. One of the program's main goals is to expose students to literature so they can improve their reading ability. Funding for this project comes from UPS, Kaiser, California Wellness Foundation, the City of San Fernando and Verizon. A great deal of thanks goes out to our funding partners, staff and the children who attend.

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

Technology, productivity and budget issues are the main focus in regards to the overall DMH program. Staff is working diligently to be on target in terms of maximizing units in their appropriate funding streams. This is being analyzed and carefully monitored by supervisors in order to ensure that we have another successful financial year.

In terms of technology, DMH is going to provide funding for agencies to improve the current methods of data entry and analysis, and tracking of documentation. The funding distribution is proposed to start in January of 2009. The funding would allow ECDA to enhance their current system and also to enter and process data and progress notes. This would mean that documentation could be paperless, thus reducing need for more storage space and creating a more efficient monitoring and tracking system. Between the months of January 2009 to the end of June 2009, management will chose a provider that will assist with the software and technology needed, and implement a plan of action to go "electronic" July 1, 2009.



"Staff is working diligently to be on target"

El Centro Staff Helping Fight Sexual Abuse

Thank you to our wonderful staff that is helping to stop the cycle of sexual abuse. Therapists Lilliana Hernandez, Adriana Cervantes, Maria Di Battista and Dr. Jose Cardenas are all part of ongoing groups that have been addressing issues of sexual abuse. One group involves both adolescent females and males and the other group focuses on their caretakers and generations of abuse and family dynamics. Many of these adolescents initially started treatment and felt like they had no voice. Now these adolescents are sharing their experiences and having hope towards a brighter future. The adolescent females have been invited to participate in a 1 week camp in Georgia that will continue to address their trauma and to further assist with their healing process. Ms. Hernandez and Ms. Cervantes will be facilitators at the camp. This is just one of the many examples of loyal and dedicated staff demonstrating their commitment towards making this world a safer place for those that have been victimized. **We would like to thank Harris & Linda Toibb for their donation of \$1000 and Alex Padilla for donating care packages in order to send the girls on their way!**



ECDA Celebrates Day of Service!



Pictured here from left to right Sonia Fuentes, Ibet Garibay, Adriana Valenzuela, Katherine Fleisher, Ed Viramontes, Maria Di Battista, and Karla LeBrun.

ECDA joined forces with Mayor Villaraigosa to give back to the community. ECDA held a garage sale at the San Fernando site on Saturday, May 3rd with the proceeds going to agency clients in need. The proceeds provided clothing, food and school supplies for children and adults who have limited resources. Staff members who participated were: Ed Viramontes, Tania Fallert, Maria Di Battista, Katherine Fleisher, Karla Le Brun, Ibet Garibay, Adriana Valenzuela, Sonia Fuentes, Jessica Morales & Dr. Jose Cardenas. ECDA would like to thank all those who participated at the event and those who donated. You are making a difference!



Adriana and Karla helping ECDA have a successful Day of Service.

L.A. Bridges @ Fulton Program

ECDA has been the lead agency for the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department (CDD) Bridges Program at Robert Fulton College Preparatory School in Van Nuys since 1997. ECDA has been providing youth achievement services, family foundation activities and community mobilization events to L.A. Bridges participants and their families. These developmental services include: individual and group counseling, recreational activities, organized sports, mentoring, anger management and/or conflict resolution training, tutoring/homework assistance along with life skills training and youth leadership groups. Families are provided with educational workshops, parenting support groups and case management. The L.A. Bridges program will be terminated on December 31, 2008 and a new gang reduction/youth development program will be implemented by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's office. An acknowledgement goes out to all the staff that worked under the Bridges program for a job well done.



Bridges @ Fulton Program Valley Sports League

Employee Profile: Sandra Leal

Welcome to Ms. Sandra Leal, our newest employee for the Canoga Park Children’s Program under the Department of Mental Health. Sandra started ECDA on November 13, 2007; she is a graduate student at Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena and is majoring in Marriage and Family Therapy with a focus on Latino Studies. Sandra is a native Californian and a Pacoima/San Fernando local. Sandra attended San Fernando High (Magnet) and received her bachelor’s of arts in psychology at Occidental College in Eagle Rock, California. Sandra has worked in the mental health field since 2004.

Some fun facts...Sandra was born in Lake View Terrace, enjoys running, is engaged, wants to obtain a PhD in clinical or educational psychology, her favorite food is chicken mole, favorite color is blue, favorite type of music is Latin Pop or Mariachi (Vicente Fernandez).

Interesting fact...An airplane crashed into her home in 1996.



Pictured here Sandra Leal

News from Human Resources

ECDA has a 401(k) retirement program. This is an excellent way to save for the future and be able to deposit money tax free. Please contact Gary Kudlow or go to citistreet.com for general information.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Tania Fallert	May 25
Dr. Grosz	May 26
Nancy Menchaca	June 1
Cynthia Ulloa	June 6
Erika Krueger	June 10
Carmen Tobar	July 9
Rosa Herrera	July 18

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Board Installation Dinner at Odyssey	May 18, 6:30 pm
Company Holiday	May 26
Company Holiday	July 4
Board Meetings at San Fernando	May 21, June 28 & July 17 at 6:30 pm
Finance Meetings at San Fernando	May 18, June 28 & July 17 at 4:30 pm
Dinner Event Planning Meetings at SF	May 22, June 26 & July 24 at 4:45 pm
Dinner Event at Palacio Torres	October 23

MAY 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

JULY 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		