Esperanza Newsletter Winter 2020

Esperanza
Immigrant Rights Project

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

Esperanza's Community Education Program in action

Dear Esperanza Community,

International Women's Day is just around the corner on March 8th. What better way to lead into this important day than by dedicating this newsletter to our community education programs and the women who lead them? We are also excited to be able to shine a light on a stand-out volunteer, Norma Robles, who is a recent recipient of the HALO award for her contributions to Esperanza.

We are proud to have so many women in leadership positions and to work with so many outstanding female volunteers. I hope you enjoy getting to know some of these individuals a little better in this issue. Thank you for your continued support and keep an eye out for a new video we are releasing in honor of International Women's Day!

With Gratitude,

Patricia Ortiz

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Meet the Inspiring Women of Esperanza: Community Education Managers

At Esperanza, our Community Education (CE) programs help released youth, released adults & families, and detained adults. These programs are led by our inspiring CE managers. We took the time to sit down with these strong women and ask them more about what they do and what inspires them.

Claudia Leon, CE Manager for Detained Adults

Mercedes Nuñez-Roldan, CE Manager for Released Youth

Evelyn Cedeño-Naik, CE Manager for Released Adults and Families

Who is a female who inspires you?

Leon: Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Nuñez-Roldan: My Grandmother. She was a strong, determined, persistent and loving woman! There is no one like her for me!

Cedeño-Naik: Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She has fought so hard for gender equality in this country and did so while persevering through many of life's challenges, including being a parent. She's one of the reasons I went to law school and I read books about her to my child almost every day!

What motivates you on a daily basis to continue the fight on behalf of our immigrant community?

Leon: To fight for the injustices and the needs of the detained immigrant population.

Nuñez-Roldan: These resilient unaccompanied minors that I have the opportunity to meet in my day to day work.

Cedeño-Naik: I am fortunate to meet so many inspirational people through my program. Their strength and hopefulness in the face of danger and uncertainty drives me to continue fighting to ensure they receive a fair shot in this country.

Interview continued on next page.

What are the main challenges your program faces?

Leon: The main challenge facing our program at the moment is the greatly reduced access we have to effectively serve everyone in detention. We now only have 2 to 2 and 1/2 hours, three days a week, to offer our services. Additionally, the detention center is located in a very remote area and the poor administration by the company running the center, GEO, is demotivating for attorneys who might otherwise be interested in representing someone in detention.

Nuñez-Roldan: So many! Mainly, there is a lack of resources and will to provide unaccompanied minors with holistic programs to help them successfully integrate into their new communities. Each one needs a caseworker, legal representation and a support system that goes beyond when they turn 18 years old.

Cedeño-Naik: There are thousands of people facing deportation proceedings alone. Additionally, this administration has purposefully made it difficult for this population to meaningfully participate in the process. Our program does it's best to meet the increasing need for assistance, but it's difficult to do so with limited resources. To meet these challenges, we are constantly looking for dedicated and passionate volunteers who are willing to step out of their comfort zone and join us in the fight!

Volunteer Spotlight: Norma Robles

Congratulations to our volunteer, Norma Robles. She is the recent recipient of the Halo Award given by the Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation for her outstanding dedication as a volunteer to Esperanza.

Norma has been a volunteer interpreter with Esperanza since 2014 and has shown exceptional dedication and quality of work over the past 5 years, especially with our children clients.

In 2014 when she heard of the thousands of children crossing the border, seeking asylum, she began assisting these refugee children by interpreting in mock interviews, meeting at their homes and helping them pro se for their interviews. In 2015, Norma made her way to Esperanza after hearing about us through her network. She began by assisting volunteer attorneys at Esperanza and with her experience was able to make the clients feel comfortable enough to relive, and remember in detail their traumatic stories.

Despite having a full time job as a flight attendant, and volunteering with other organizations, she has managed to continue to contribute to our work, and step in when special help is needed.

We are so grateful to Norma and to all of our volunteers who continue to give so much to Esperanza and those we serve.

Norma Robles (right)

Get Involved: International Women's Day Campaign & Peer to Peer Fundraising Campaigns

INTERNATIONAL **WOMEN'S DAY:** MARCH 8TH

This year, for International Women's Day, Esperanza will be launching a video campaign highlighting the perseverance and achievements of women in our immigrant community who inspire us.

Every day we hear stories from those we serve, and those we work with, of the hardships that women face in society and the obstacles that they have had to overcome. Gender violence, lack of access to education and opportunity, are all common threads woven through the thousands of stories we hear from immigrant women every year. We are still so far away from a gender equal world.

Together, this International Women's Day, let us celebrate the strong female heroes among us who have overcome so much and who make up the backbone of our families and society. On March 8th we will be sending out our Video Campaign and ask you to help share it within your communities.

Stay tuned and thank you for your support!
#IWD2020

Peer-to-Peer Fundraising **CAMPAIGNS**

Esperanza is launching a new fundraising campaign to give everyone the opportunity to fundraise on behalf of Esperanza. This Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Campaign provides ideas on how you can utilize your own networks to raise awareness and support for the work that Esperanza does in serving our communities' most vulnerable immigrants. We provide you with support as you sign up to do one of the following:

Donations instead of Gifts

Throw a Party for a Cause

Race Sponsorship

For more information, please visit our website www.esperanza-la.org/fundraising and share with your friends! Thank you for your continued support. Your involvement is critical in ensuring that immigrants in deportation proceedings have access to due process!

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