



Amigos de Casa Marianella
Annual Newsletter 2014

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Posada Esperanza Staff



Casa Marianella Staff

Services of Casa Marianella:

In addition to providing shelter and support to recently arrived immigrants, Casa Marianella is also proud to offer:

ESL (English as a Second Language) Classes:

Monday-Thursday, 7:30 PM-9:00 PM; beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels

Classes are FREE and open to all! No registration required!

Oriental Medicine Clinic:

The clinic is open every Monday and Friday with appointments upon request.

Legal Services Clinic:

The Casa Marianella legal clinic provides assistance with a wide variety of immigration law matters for current and former Casa residents and, as time allows, for other individuals who qualify for service.

Women's Health and Job Preparedness Classes

The Casa/Posada Staff

Emergency Shelter Directors

Jennifer Long

Melissa Buhr

Lupita Dominguez

Omar Navarro

Emergency Shelter Staff

Becky Daily

Josselin Garibo

Laurel Gray

Samone Nigam

Eliza Weeks

Mercedes Peña

Paula Blaha

Hector Kuhn Naranjo

Kathleen

Joshua Collier

Adarsh Bagrodia

Arely Sulvarán-Achenbach

Rockie Gonzalez

Posada Esperanza Directors

Patti McCabe

Katie Scheidler

Women and Children's Shelter Staff

Brooke Severe

Dounia Lomri

Jenny Taylor

Keiler Beers

Grants Manager

Karen Wolman

Casa Legal Clinic

Elise Harriger

Sarah Woelk

The Casa/Posada Board of Directors

Hannah Bronsnick

Jenny Baldwin

Gabriel Ornelas

Lora Petty

Leti Bueno

Mitzi Eastman

Wayne Krause Yang

Joel Sherzer

Oscar Benavidez

Nacho Gallardo

Cindy Wiewel

Elizabeth Hastings

Abby Frank

Moriah Looten

Our Mission:

Casa Marianella creates community with Latin American immigrants and international asylees by providing hospitality and promoting self-sufficiency.

Casa Marianella Update:

Jennifer Long, Executive Director

Casa Marianella's adult shelter has a capacity of 37 and we've been housing as many as 50 at a time with lot of people sleeping on the floor. Most of our residents are coming to us now from immigration detention centers. Unfortunately, detention is how our country welcomes anyone who comes to the border asking for help. If they win their cases or can use a letter from us to get released, we are happy to be able to receive these people and provide them with the support they need. Each person gets a bed, food, ESL classes, acupuncture and herbal medicine services, immigration legal services, and a case manager. Our goal is to stabilize and resettle our residents as quickly as possible because we know there are more people looking to us for a place to stay. We know this especially because there are only a few shelters that serve the immigrant community in the United States. It's possible that ours is the only one that gets support from a city. We are proud to have enjoyed the backing of the City of Austin for all of our 29 years. In addition to the recently arrived, we also like taking in people who are sick and have become homeless as a result of their illness. It's a pleasure to see people get better and we make sure each person has a safe place to go before they leave. Those of us who work at Casa Marianella are lucky to be able to do it. We participate in a rich and vibrant community every day. You are always welcome to come visit.



Holidays in the living room at Casa Marianella!



Jennifer, Sofia, and Jodi from Hospice Austin.



Above: Posada residents and Patti McCabe. Below: Posada kids ready for Halloween!



Posada Esperanza Update:

Patti McCabe, Director

This year Posada Esperanza's living rooms have been filled with the human stories of crisis around the world. As Posada Esperanza opens its doors to a new resident, in come the real people who have suffered pain and displacement from the violence and oppression inflicted by the governments, rebel groups, or gangs in their homelands. This year half of the residents who stayed at Posada came to the United States because they fear persecution, violence, or death if they were to return to their countries.

This year alone our simple East Austin homes have been the resting place for women and children from Central African Republic, Angola, India, Nepal, Mexico, Cuba, Nigeria, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Somalia, Guinea, D.R.Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, and Somalia. Alongside familiar voices of Spanish, and English, we have heard Portuguese, French, Somali, Arabic, Tigrinya, and Amharic.

The stories of these women and children are chilling. We all hear these stories every day in the news, but to sit with the woman while her child snuggles on her lap and hear the details of their struggle through tear filled eyes makes you realize that these are people, not headlines. Here at Posada we feel so fortunate to help close these stories of crisis with a shared gratitude: that they have arrived to a place refuge, here at Posada, safe and well.

Then we have the privilege to create with these families a comfortable home and to work with them on their new goals of finding work, completing immigration paperwork, and caring for their children. And perhaps the most wonderful part of being at Posada is to go through the normal rhythms of life with these families. As I watch families return home from school or work to play, cook, and clean I think about the lives of fear and violence that they could be living instead. It makes a simple day at Posada's homes seem like such a great gift.

2014 at Casa Marianella

VOLUNTEERS CREATE COMMUNITY AND INSPIRE HOPE ON GUNTER STREET by Eliza Weeks

Casa staff and residents all agree that the volunteers who donate their time, energy, and compassion to this microcosm of diversity and occasionally controlled chaos on Gunter Street are what create the wonderful sense of community and spirit of hope and giving that defines Casa Marianella. This year we are particularly grateful for our volunteers and our partnerships with local organizations because they have allowed us to continue our mission of giving specialized care to our residents.

Anyone who has spent time at Casa Marianella in the past 9 years has most likely run across our most tenured resident, Maria from El Salvador, who is known for her polka-dotted skirts and her love of fresh fruits. Last year when Maria's mental health became a concern, the Casa staff decided that the best thing to do for her was give her a place she could call her own. With the help of various volunteer groups and the support of Treasure City Thrift on 7th Street we converted our women's clothing bodega at 822 Gunter Street into a small private apartment for Maria.

Now female residents who need clothing can go to Treasure City with free vouchers that we provide and Maria couldn't be happier or in better health. This fall, many volunteer groups, such as the UT H2O Group, St. Catherine of Siena, United Methodist Men of Emmanuel UMC, UT LaFe, and many more, have worked tirelessly to turn Maria's house into a cozy space and beautified the grounds with landscaping and gardening projects. Outside Maria's front step is a beautiful pink rose garden and inside a new linoleum floor has been installed and the walls have been painted. All of the colors were chosen by Maria, from the color of the roses to the "celestito" of the outside walls.



Volunteer group in front of Maria's newly remodeled home



Volunteers flex their green thumbs



Preparing the floor to install the tile!



Above: MISMA Organizers: Rosario Nava, Marichuy Perez, Magdalena Alvarez, Arely Sulvaran, Carmen Lopez & Rockie Gonzalez. Below: Ellen performs a coffee ceremony. Photo taken by Erin Birney



taken by Erin Birney

MUJERES INSPIRADAS EN SUEÑOS, METAS Y ACCIONES

By Rockie Gonzalez, MISMA Organizer

2014 has been a very exciting year for MISMA! Las Mujeres Inspiradas en Sueños, Metas y Acciones have been busy strengthening themselves, their community, and their roles as leaders in the immigrant rights movement. This spring, MISMA affirmed their membership in the National Domestic Workers Alliance by raising funds and attending the annual NDWA Congress in Washington, DC. They have continued working to recruit and develop leadership by bringing home lessons learned at the Congress on strategy, structures, and regional organizing.

The members also took on a new responsibility this fall: becoming instructors for the Job Preparedness course offered by Casa Marianella. Alumni of the course themselves, MISMA organizers have come full circle to take on these leadership roles and encourage others to participate in their organizing work. This fall, several members also traveled to Karnes City with Grassroots Leadership and the Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition to protest a family detention center. MISMA thanks Casa Marianella Executive Director Jennifer Long for her continued support and Job Preparedness Course Director Arely Sulvaran-Terres for her years of dedicated service, love, and support. As a community, MISMA has seen births, deaths, weddings, family members reunited, and more. The display of solidarity and the results of true community organizing itself are inspiring and beautiful. To support the work of these women, please make a donation to Casa Marianella with "MISMA" in the note.

KEEPING CASA CAFFEINATED

by Lupita Dominguez

The coffee ceremony tradition, which can last anywhere from 1 to 4 hours, is a gathering of loved ones. Ex-resident Ellen shares this Ethiopian/Eritrean ritual with us by performing ceremonies at Casa Marianella on special occasions, such as on holidays or convivios. The woman who prepares the coffee always wears a white cotton dress and brews the coffee in a clay pot. In Ethiopia and Eritrea, coffee ceremonies usually take place three times a day and the oldest person present blesses the meal and their loved ones. The coffee grounds are brewed 4 times: *Awel* is the first and strongest pot of coffee; *Kalai* is the second pot to which water is simply added to the pot; *Bereka* is the third round, which is significantly weaker than the first two pots; and *Derja* is the weakest and last pot of coffee. Though our ceremonies aren't as frequent, the spirit of the ceremony remains, bringing our residents, staff, and community members together.

CASA MARIANELLA IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES

by Elise Harriger

Casa Marianella's legal clinic, Casa Marianella Immigration Legal Services (CMILS), exists to provide free immigration legal services to residents, ex-residents, and community members living under the poverty line. We have assisted many individuals with a variety of matters, such as U visas, T visas, Special Immigrant Juvenile petitions, Asylum, Withholding and Convention Against Torture, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), family petitions, applications for green cards, and applications for work permits.

This year, due to the surge of children from Central America, CMILS saw an increase of unaccompanied minors, many of whom have now been reunited with family members. CMILS joined a team of other nonprofit organizations, including American Gateways and Volunteer Legal Services, to train Austin-area attorneys to represent these children. CMILS is now helping these children find representation and serving as mentors to local attorneys volunteering on their cases. No matter what challenges lie ahead for our residents and local immigrant community, CMILS will be here ready to help. Lastly, CMILS thanks all of our wonderful donors! We could not do our legal work on behalf of Casa residents and the immigrant community without you.



ALICE KLEBERG REYNOLDS MEYER FOUNDATION



Sarah Woelk and UT law students consult a client.

OUR DEDICATED ESL TEACHERS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

by Kathleen

Our ESL teachers go above and beyond in their response to the challenges of a volunteer position that is like a part-time job. Teachers prepare and present their own interactive, practical lessons to one evening class a week and also take part in the English Forward ESL instructor training with the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas. Amy Knop-Narbutis has taught ESL all over Austin but she's continued volunteering at Casa Marianella because she loves the sense of community, the motivated students, and the support teachers get from staff. Amy has "definitely learned as much from [her] students as they have from [her], and it's been a privilege to work together each week to educate ourselves in a fun and supportive environment." Kayli Kallina loves that "amid the bustle there's this collaborative energy [in which] students are great about helping one another understand English and American culture. It's incredibly powerful to see educational interactions reach across different cultures and life histories. The experience [she's] had in the ESL program at Casa Marianella has provided [her] with valuable insight into the learning process. It's a reciprocal relationship."



BIKE PROGRAM TURNS ONE YEAR OLD

by Joshua Collier

In the past year, the Casa Marianella bike cooperative has grown in terms of both the number of bicycles in our fleet and a broadening of our goals. Posada Esperanza staff members are beginning to envision a way to integrate bicycles into the lives of the women and children. Bikes Across Borders has lent their ample cargo trailer to Casa with the goal of establishing a mobile bike repair shop. This is possible through a generous donation of three bicycle repair stands and two sets of basic bicycle tools from our partner, the Austin Yellow Bike Project (YBP). On weekly trips to YBP, residents and staff members help repair and maintain our large fleet and several residents have completed the YBP Earn-A-Bike program and now own their own bicycle. Both Casa Marianella and Posada Esperanza would like to invite interested volunteers to get involved--especially those with bicycle programming experience (or just a love for and basic mechanical knowledge of bicycles)!



Top: Casa ESL teachers Amy Knop-Narbutis, Kayli Kallina, Alexis Makrides, Sheridan Schaefer, and Renee Frederick take part in English Forward ESL teacher training with instructor Karen Milton (3rd from left) on October 18th. Middle: Casa Marianella residents and Jenny from Posada Esperanza at Austin Yellowbike Project fix bicycles. Bottom: A fleet of Casa Marianella residents are ready to ride to Zilker Park.

2014 at Posada Esperanza

WEDDING BELLS ON GUNTER STREET

by Katie Scheidler

This past Valentine's Day, Casa Marianella and Posada Esperanza hosted the wedding of Posada resident, Arminda, and Casa resident, Gabriel. The pair and their son, Francisco, fled from Angola to the US and chose to come to Austin after discovering Casa Marianella's website. Through gracious donations and help from the greater Casa Marianella community, we were fortunate to be witness to a beautiful celebration of love and new beginnings. Hosted at Casa Marianella, the wedding brought together both Casa and Posada residents to celebrate and also share in the laughter of the rambunctious Posada children. Since the wedding, the entire family has reunited and is now living under the same roof. Both Arminda and Gabriel are now working in hopes of providing Francisco with a bright future.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MOLLY COSTIGAN

Although helping kids with homework is my favorite thing to do at Posada, I did have a really great experience last summer going to the SFC Farmers' Market East with one of the moms and her two kids. Being out at the market reminded her of the markets in Mexico, so I got to hear about how those markets are set up, and I especially loved hearing about how she planned to cook all the vegetables she bought. When I'm at Posada I always enjoy the liveliness of the kitchen and the stories that residents tell while cooking. It was fun to be a part of this whole process.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: LOUISE

What is your favorite thing about volunteering at Posada?

I am happy that the students are beginners, as I myself learned Spanish very recently. I know what it feels like to make mistakes and be embarrassed. When you are learning a new language, you feel exhausted after saying three complete sentences. I think it is fun to be able to work with people who have just started, and I definitely understand how important and thrilling it is to communicate and start creating enriching relationships and friendships in a new country.

Any advice you have for people who have just arrived to the US?

There is a concept called "Brain Soaking" where you try to capture as much of the new language as you can. Listen to the radio, watch TV, speak whenever you can, and although it may be stepping out of your comfort zone, it will give your brain a chance to get used to those new sounds. Like the Suzuki method, you pick up sounds by training your ear to them. Going to ESL classes is great, but it is not enough! Listening is key.

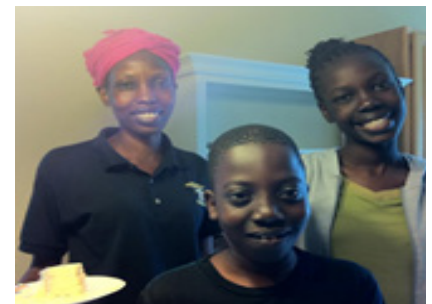
How do you see yourself growing at Posada?

I would love to help in whatever way I can. I love children and I love spending time with the ladies at Posada. I would really like to get to know them in a different setting. I think Posada is a wonderful organization and it has been a privilege to meet people from different backgrounds, countries, and of different ages. For me, volunteering is also about learning from the women; they are so strong and incredible.

FORMER RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Katie Scheidler

Since this past February, steaming cups of tea in the staff office remind me of a wonderful family that has now moved on from Posada. Rebecca and her two children, Consulate, 14, and Christian, 11, came to stay with us last fall. Though initially frustrated by life in a shelter, her children quickly warmed up to the staff and other families. During her time at Posada, Rebecca became a role model to other mothers and in our late night conversations over cups of tea, she became an inspiration to me as well. Consulate not only impressed the Posada community with her maturity with the younger children, but also in her determination in school when she was chosen as the top African-American female student in her high school. Christian never ceased to put a smile on our faces with his dance moves, warm personality, or his love of increasingly difficult math challenges. Though those of us lucky enough to know Rebecca and her children miss them dearly, since she works long hours to save money for Consulate and Christian's college tuitions, but the once-in-a-while visits over cups of tea bring us joy and remind us of great memories.



Rebecca and her children, Christian and Consulate



NAYELY AND SARAH'S STORY

By Jenny Taylor

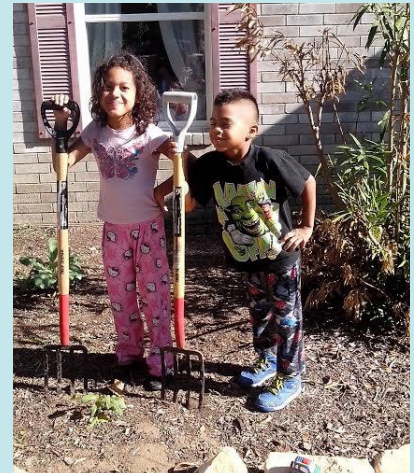
In early September, a special pair was welcomed to Posada Esperanza. Sara and her daughter Nayely had just been released from detention at the Karnes County Residential Center under unique circumstances. Nayely, who was diagnosed with brain cancer in her home country of El Salvador at a young age, was being detained at the border without proper medical care. After their case came to the attention of a prominent Austin immigration lawyer, Kate Lincoln-Goldfinch, mother and daughter were released from Karnes in an unprecedented case of release with parole. Since their release, Nayely has received excellent medical attention at Dell Children's Medical Center in Austin and is doing well. We're excited to see where they will go next!



GARDENING AT POSADA ESPERANZA by Dounia Lormi

Posada now has lots of different vegetables growing! Green Corn volunteers came on a sunny morning and planted seeds, transplanted seedlings, and filled our backyards with crunchy, delicious vegetables. We now have brussels sprouts, cauliflower, collards, cabbage, chinese cabbage, broccoli, peppers, carrots, and much more! As the weather cools down, we are expecting to harvest vegetables in the next few weeks. Coming from all over the world, a lot of our residents love to cook with different vegetables and have learned techniques from one another. With vegetables growing in our own backyard, residents will be able to eat fresh and organic produce on a daily basis. In addition, residents have been going to the farmers' market in East Austin, helping them add nutrients and vitamins to their and their children's diets.

Thank you, Green Corn Project, for your work and generosity.



TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE CLINIC

by Omar Navarro

Casa Marianella prides itself in the unique services we offer to our residents and members of the community. Among these is an herbal medical clinic run by longtime Casa supporter and health care practitioner Hector Kuhn Naranjo. Hector's treatments offer a holistic approach that utilizes oriental medicine, which includes acupuncture, Chinese herbology, nutritional support, homeopathy, and massage treatment. For the past seven years, the clinic has helped about ten clients per week, made up of community members and Casa Marianella and Posada Esperanza residents. Many of the residents of Casa Marianella seek Hector's help in treating both physical and psychological ailments which are common after traumatic events encountered by migrants fleeing persecution en route to the US and then exacerbated upon entering detention centers.



THE JOURNEY TO AUSTIN, TX

by Laurel Gray

The immigration path for residents is a long one. For individuals emigrating from Eritrea, the most difficult border crossing is frequently that of leaving their home country. Some escape to Sudan or Somalia, where they live for months to years before they are forced to move farther away. Others navigate the Red Sea in a rowboat to Yemen and later cross into Saudi Arabia. Traversing the Atlantic Ocean to arrive in the Americas continues their long immigration journey. Many residents have flown to Dubai and then to Venezuela; others have stowed away in a boat bound for Brazil. They then continue their journey by foot over the mountains of Colombia into Panama, then by foot, car, and boat through the Americas. At this point, the journeys of the African assylum seekers converge with those of Central Americans making their way north. Many are detained in southern Mexico before arriving to the northern border with the United States where they are detained once more. The timeline of this journey varies from two weeks to many months, but is invariably grueling in its rigor. We want to thank our residents for sharing their immigration stories. Please stop by and have a look at residents' journeys outlined with colored string on a big world map in the living room at Casa Marianella.

“In the future I want to have studied geographical science...I started in my country but didn't finish.”

-Henok

“My dream is to be a civic engineer.”

-Sharma' arke

“Living in the jail (detention) was very bad...you have very bad jails.”

-Samson

“Me, a mechanical engineer. When I was in high school I worked at a private car shop.”

-Eyob

“I hope my children can come and learn. I hope to have a pleasant life in America.”

-Mekdes

“I want to reunite my family as soon as possible.”

“My biggest challenge was crossing the border from Eritrea to Sudan.”

-Abraham

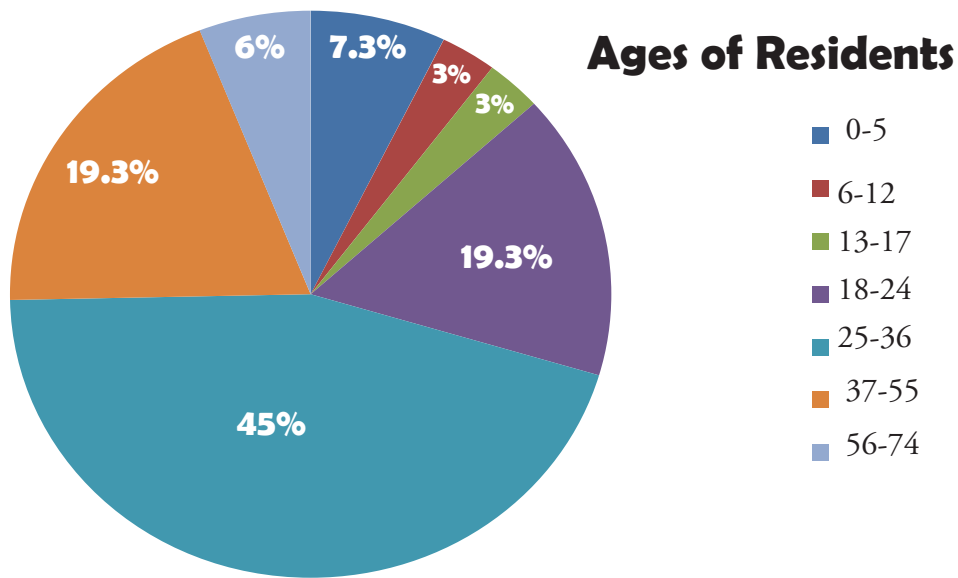
“I want to be a manager of my own company.”

- Mengs

“ I want to have a successful life and family. I want to be self-sufficient.”

-Samson

The past year at Casa Marianella and Posada Esperanza in numbers



Casa Marianella- Adult Shelter

183 Entered **88%** Successful exits

141 Male
40 Female
2 Transgender

Posada Esperanza- Women and Children Shelter

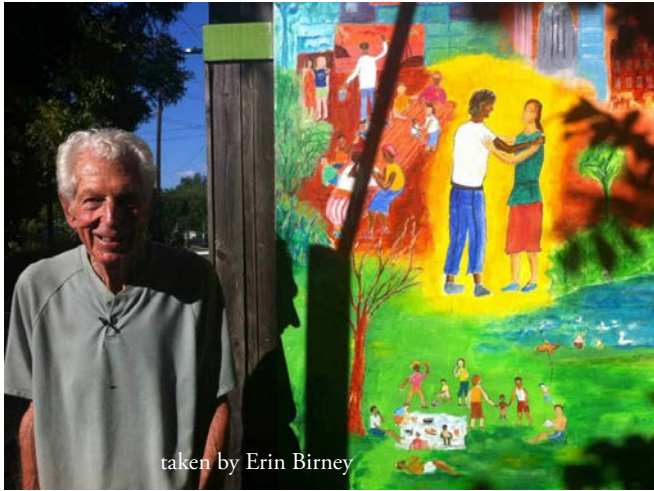
50 Entered **80%** Successful exits

12 Male
38 Female

28 Countries of Origin

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Mexico | Dominican Republic | Nicaragua |
| Eritrea | Honduras | Nigeria |
| Iran | Rwanda | Burundi |
| Ecuador | Puerto Rico | Ghana |
| Ethiopia | Cuba | Nepal |
| Pakistan | Cameroon | United States |
| El Salvador | Costa Rica | Guatemala |
| Somalia | Colombia | Sudan |
| Slovakia | Congo | |
| Haiti | Democratic Republic of Congo | |

Data represents time period from 1/1/14- 9/30/14



ABOUT THE ARTIST

by Eliza Weeks

Special thanks to Karel Dahmen who painted the front cover art of this year's newsletter which captures his favorite part of Casa Marianella, the outdoor patio, a place where the community comes together.

Karel, an Austin transplant originally from Holland, has become a familiar face and an important member of the Casa Marianella family since he began volunteering in the kitchen in 2013. Before settling in Austin, Karel filled his life with adventures across the globe. When he is not traveling or happily chopping onions in the Casa Marianella kitchen, Karel spends his time painting watercolors of his favorite scenes he has encountered. He is not a stranger to the Casa Marianella art scene: Karel contributed to the beautiful mural that adds color and life to the side of 821 Gunter.



Children dance "zapateado" at the Fandango Fronterizo Convivio in May.

¡CONVIVIO!

Join us for live music, delicious food, and good conversation every last Sunday of the month at 821 Gunter St. We've danced to son jarocho, samba, salsa, and much more! Feel free to bring a dish to share and a friend. If you have a musical group that would like to perform at Convivio, don't be shy about reaching out to us!



Maracatu plays at the October Convivio

Wish List

All items can be dropped off at Casa Marianella from 9am-7pm daily.

Thank you for thinking of our residents!

Casa Marianella:

soap and shampoo
toothpaste, brushes, razors
towels and bedding
men's clothes
undergarments and socks

mattresses and bed frames
small furniture items
fresh fruit, veggies, milk, and eggs
kitchenware and housewares

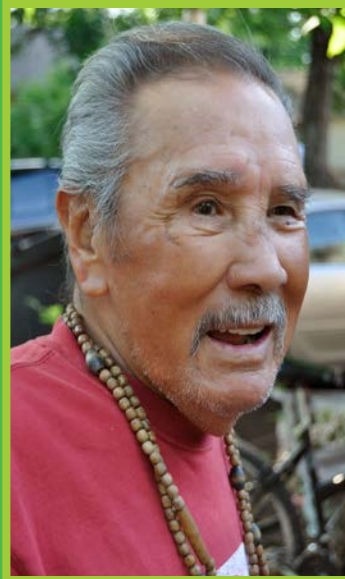
Posada Esperanza:

jackets and socks (for kids and women)
diapers and wipes
shampoo and deodorant
laundry detergent
ziplock bags
socks

G-rated movies



MEMORIAL SERVICE



Don Gustavo



Jose Luis



Ana Dominguez



Don Jose

Earlier this year, Casa Marianella lost four wonderful community members. Casa Marianella thanks Hospice Austin for partnering in the care of terminally ill patients. Through their home-health visits, bathing, social work, and pastoral care, they made it possible for Casa residents to live in dignity in their own home. Two of these people also lived their last days at Christopher House in a remarkably warm and reassuring setting that allowed for friends and family to accompany our loved ones on their journey.

Thank you Hospice Austin!

Winner of Casa Marianella's 2014 Ed Wendler Award for outstanding service to the immigrant community.

Our Key Collaborators:

Keep Austin Housed AmeriCorps
 Jesuit Volunteer Corps
 Catholic Volunteer Network
 American Gateways
 Bernard Kohler Center
 UT Immigration Clinic

RAICES, Inc.
 Caritas of Austin
 Refugee Services of Texas
 Capital Area Food Bank
 Workers Defense Project

Center for Survivors of Torture
 Capital Area Counseling
 Community Care Clinics
 Catholic Charities
 Capital Metro Transit

Churches:

1st Unitarian Universalist Church	St. John's United Methodist
Live Oak Unitarian	University United Methodist
Wildflower Unitarian	Oak Hill United Methodist
Friends Meeting of Austin	Emmanuel United Methodist
St. Catherine of Siena	Austin Stone Community Church
St. Austin Catholic Church	Central Christian Church
Cristo Rey Catholic Church	Westminster Presbyterian Church
St. Thomas More Catholic Church	Unity of the Hills Church
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church	
St. Julia Catholic Church	
St. John Neumann Catholic Church	
University Catholic Center	
The Catholic Diocese of Austin	
St. Matthews Episcopal Church	
St. David's Episcopal Church	
St. James Episcopal Church	
St. George's Episcopal Church	
Prince of Peace Lutheran	
First Presbyterian Church	
Faith Presbyterian Church	

Groups:

Lola Wright Foundation	Amplify Austin
Austin Community Foundation	AILA
The City of Austin	Boggy Creek Farm
Texas Bar Foundation	
Austin Bar Foundation	
Travis County Women's Law Foundation	
Alice Kleburg Reynolds	
Pan-American Round Table	
Donald D. Hanmill Foundation	
Shield-Ayres Foundation	
Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services	
Still Water Foundation	
Trull Foundation	
Treasure City Thrift	
Texas Coffee Traders	
Farmhouse Delivery	
National Christian Foundation	
Religious Coalition to Assist the Homeless	
Episcopal Health Charities	
A Glimmer of Hope	
Travis County Medical Alliance	