

Amigos de Casa Marianella

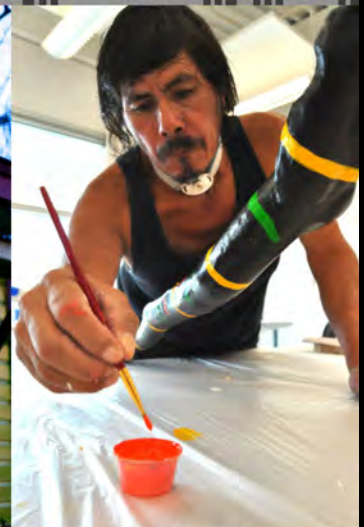


Annual Newsletter 2012

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Many nations, One home

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CASA MARIANELLA: ¡UN HOGAR PARA TODOS!



Our Mission:

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

THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS:

821 Gunter Adult Shelter:

270 people served, 240 exits, 183 successful exits, 76.25% moved out successfully

Posada Esperanza:

101 people served (30 families, 31 women, 70 children) , 75% moved out successfully

Casa Marianella Update:

Jennifer Long, Executive Director

Casa Marianella is blessed by the presence of volunteers. We have our full time volunteer staff, of course. They are our biggest donors and they help make Casa the youthful, vibrant place that it is. In addition, we have church groups, school classes, sororities, service organizations, and individuals who just care about our residents. These volunteers teach our ESL classes, help people write resumes, play cards with Don Jose, fold clothes, dig in the garden, translate documents for our legal clinic, and answer phones in the office. This month we had our most extraordinary group: over 100 staff of The Gables who painted 10 rooms, provided furniture and curtains, replaced ceiling fans, and planted gardens all over the property. Volunteers are essential to the work we do. Casa's residents live in a small corner of Austin at the end of a quiet street. Visitors not only perform essential tasks. They bring in the outside world: thoughtful conversation, technical help, and job and housing leads. The interaction between the public and our shelter is one of the primary purposes of Casa Marianella: to provide a bridge between the immigrants at Casa and the larger community. Thanks to all the 400 people who have volunteered at Casa in the past year. You are essential to the healing environment that we create.



Jennifer with Casa resident Macario and volunteer Francisco Chavez



Jennifer & resident Macario outside of Casa

Posada Esperanza Update:

Patti McCabe, Director

Last year we were filled with the excitement and anticipation of the coming of Casa Gloria. Josie Knight made the extraordinary gift of purchasing and renovating a house for Posada Esperanza in honor of her mom. This year we have been able to witness each day how the donation of this house has turned into the gift of home, safety, friendship, and opportunity for 30 women and children in just the first 10 months of use.

Casa Gloria has become a lovely home of mothers with babies and toddlers. New mothers supporting other new mothers and caring for each other's little ones is a lovely environment for babies to grow up in. Three of the women who came to Casa Gloria had nowhere safe to live while they were pregnant. They made their nest here and when their babies were born they proudly called Casa Gloria their babies' first home.

The need for Casa Gloria's hospitality has come from all over the world. Women who have found themselves homeless in Austin and then gratefully called Casa Gloria their home have come from Eritrea, Croatia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Honduras, and Iran. This beautiful diversity of language and culture has given life to our sweet home. These families have looked beyond their differences and supported each other in some of life's most difficult moments. Families come to Posada Esperanza seeking help but they in turn do their part to support Posada Esperanza's mission as they offer hospitality to the families who come in after them. Thank you to all of the families who have lived in Posada Esperanza's houses this year, caring for each other, and making our houses vibrant and welcoming homes.

Posada resident Brenda & kids in Casa Gloria



Posada's Promise and Nina's family on Nina's move out day

Director Patti plays with Posada children



Casa Marianella: Resident and House Stories

Macario's "Uprooted Dreams"

This summer Casa resident and laryngeal cancer survivor Macario Elisondo learned how to create the traditional craft of alebrije-making from two artisans from Oaxaca, Mexico as a participant in El Paso-based artist Margarita Cabrera's "Uprooted Dreams" project. He foraged for wood in a community walk in Guerrero Park, learned how to prepare the wood for carving, and painted the different patterns and shapes used in the alebrije technique. Charged by his artistic talent and creativity, Macario carved and painted two impressive alebrijes: a dragon and a jaguar. One of Macario's carvings is part of a community-based permanent installation at the Mexican American Cultural Center.



Casa Hosts UN Representative



Vincent Cochetel, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Regional Representative for the United States and the Caribbean, visited Casa Marianella in mid-July to talk to our asylees and asylum seekers about their experience in detention.

He sat in our community center full of residents from Nepal, Rwanda, Guatemala, Eritrea, Mexico, and El Salvador to listen to stories about their time spent detained. He was an incredible listener who walked away with firsthand stories about detention centers to take back to Washington D.C.



On June 20th, Casa commemorated Eritrean Martyrs' Day with the planting of a fig tree and a candlelit ceremony. Many Eritreans observe this day to pay respect to those who died for their country's liberation from Ethiopia in 1991.

Gables Day Makeover!



This October Casa Marianella had the honor of being chosen by Gables Residential to receive a comprehensive makeover of our three adult shelter houses. After months of preparation, the Gables team arrived with over one-hundred people and thousands of dollars in supplies and construction equipment for a very full day of work. The already-colorful houses now look shinier and brighter and the residents and staff are very excited about the changes!



Ex-residents Isela and Rene welcomed the birth of their son Gabriel Aaron in August!

Posada Esperanza: Resident and House Stories

Youth Education Update

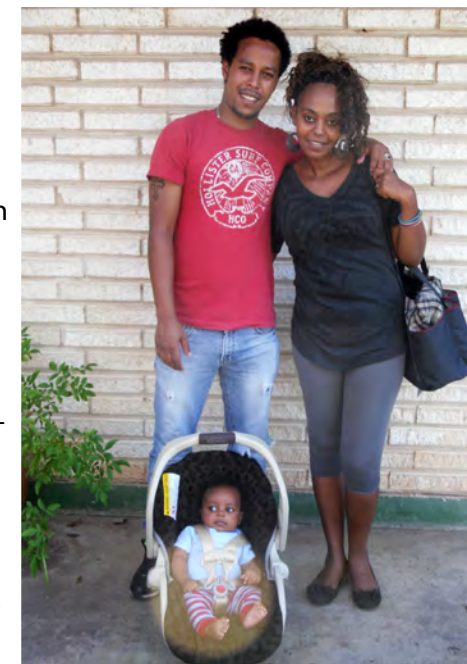
School has been in session for 2 months now, with a one hundred percent enrollment rate for all the Posada children! We've had some wonderful volunteer groups throw parties for back to school, Halloween, birthdays, and more. On Halloween, we had some ninjas, princesses, a Star Wars storm trooper, an X-Man, and a member of the band Kiss go out trick-or-treating with their mamas. A huge thanks to Vox Veniae, a local church who has adopted us as part of their community outreach, and a BIG ABRAZO to our St. Ed's Austin SERVE group and all our amazing volunteers. As one of our niños said to me today, "Homework is boring when you are by yourself. It's better when someone can tell you if you are doing okay." Thanks for making sure all our awesome kids know just how special and "okay" they are.



Posada ladies cook up a storm!

by Laura Smith, Posada volunteer

Promis and Eden were residents at Posada Esperanza with new babies when I met them. Every time I went over there to check in, a plate of some sort of delicious, freshly made food was placed in front of me. All this generosity gave me an idea -- to have them teach a cooking class. The class was very successful! Fourteen people, including several who have adopted children from Ethiopia, paid to come and learn doro wat, tibs, shiro, lentils, and injera. Promis and Eden were gracious, confident instructors, and took good care of their students. At the end, we had learned about Eritrean & Ethiopian cooking and sat down to a DELICIOUS plate of food! Another class is being organized -- please contact me via phone if you are interested: 512.228.9906!



Promis's Success Story

Promis came to Posada Esperanza from Eritrea by boat up through South America to the US border. She was pregnant and without any contacts in Austin, but her positive energy - and her eagerness to learn Spanish - earned her many friends at Posada. Though she suffered a very difficult birth, her beautiful giggly son Benjamin was born in July. Her husband finally made it to Casa this summer, and now the three live reunited in Lampasas, TX, where they found work. Promis, we miss you and we are so proud of all that you have accomplished since coming to us!

A Short Story for Posada

By Melody & Baby Arroyah



Me and baby Arroyah are from Papua New Guinea. Well, Arroyah is a mix. I moved out of my apartment in the last trimester of my pregnancy and later moved from home to home. I was homeless, so I looked up shelters for immigrants in Austin. I was able to talk to Posada on a Sunday morning and we moved in on a Monday. Living at Posada was the best choice I made. The volunteers who work here are skilled in handling and working with mothers and children. They serve with love and a smile on their face. Posada is very safe and the best haven for homeless women and children. Me and baby Arroyah would like to say THANK YOU to the community of Austin who donate food, pay utility bills, and offer your time and resources for free. Your help is worth it!



Casa and Posada Welcome New Staff!

Each year Casa and Posada have the fortune of receiving a fresh batch of intelligent and driven individuals who want to take direct actions towards making this world a better place. This year's new staff has exceeded even our greatest expectations. The new hirees have been quick to pick up the ropes and take charge with the demanding balance of shelter shifts, case management, and a myriad of tasks. Each individual has made the commitment to a minimum of a year of service as a full-time stipended volunteer, living in solidarity with those they serve. New staff are funded through Keep Austin House AmeriCorps, the Catholic Volunteer Network, and the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Please come stop by the office and thank them for their hard work and dedication!



Casa Marianella Staff 2012-2013
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: *Front row-* Anthony Radovesich , Jamie Hartman, Margo Johnson, Erin Birney, Hannah Willingham, Maddy McDaniel. *Back Row:* David Thompson, Emily Hayes, Jennifer Long, Eric Askenas, Katie Jones, Paula Blaha, Hector Kuhn-Naranjo, Addy Bagrodia, Roman Sanchez, Nick Gianaris
(not pictured Mercedes Peña)



Posada Esperanza Staff for 2012-2013
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Christa Sohl, Leslie Olmos, Casey Quilan, Catie Johnston, Brigdet Brewer, Amanda Coldewey
(not pictured: Patti McCabe)



New Staff on the Border

Casey Quinlan, Posada Staff

This November new Casa and Posada staff journeyed to El Paso, TX to learn first-hand about immigration realities on the border. They attended a border mass, visited the Farm Workers Center and Mexican Consulate, and met with a woman from Mercado Mayapan, who talked about the damaging effects of NAFTA. The staff returned to Austin with a more comprehensive perspective on border issues and are excited to continue serving the immigrant community of Austin!

Casa Marianella Opens a Case Management Office

One of the many exciting changes happening at Casa this year is the grand-opening of a new case management office, located in the 822 Gunter street property. Assistant directors Margo Johnson and Erin Birney now work full-time in the space, coordinating and streamlining Casa's case management systems as well as holding individual resident and staff meetings. The need for such a change had become increasingly obvious over the past few years as the legal status of immigrants grew in complexity and the number of residents and community members served continued to climb. Margo and Erin work to not only provide greater support and clarity in case management, but also to pursue new avenues for Casa to increase its impact and presence in the Austin community, including fundraising, volunteer coordination, newsletters, social media, and networking with other agencies.



Casa Marianella Immigration Legal Services Assists Hundreds of Dreamers, Wins Visa for Disabled Resident



So far in 2012, Casa Marianella Immigration Legal Services (CMILS) has provided 240 free legal consultations to residents, ex-residents, and community members living under the poverty line. We have also assisted many of the Dreamers in pursuing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), conducting weekly information sessions and clinics to help prepare applications. We have held preparation clinics at Casa Marianella, as well as in Amarillo and Odessa, where there are large immigrant populations and a scarcity of free legal services, and have assisted more than 125 young people in filing their applications.

CMILS recently had a great victory that will make a huge impact on one former resident's life. Juana, a wonderful young woman who is confined to a wheelchair due to disabilities, lived at Casa Marianella and was the first client of CMILS after our opening in September 2010. As a child, Juana moved by dragging herself on the ground and could not leave her house without being carried because her family could not afford a wheelchair. Juana was brought to the United States as a teenager in the hopes of a better life. Once in the United States, she received a donated wheelchair and was able to attend and graduate from high school in Texas. Due to the

complexities of her case, CMILS attorneys fought for more than a year to obtain all the necessary documents to file her application for a visa as a victim of crime. On October 31, 2012, Juana gained lawful status in the United States!

CMILS says thank you to all of our wonderful donors! We could not do our legal work on behalf of Casa residents and the immigration community without you.

Since its inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than \$14 million in grants to law-related programs. Supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nation's largest charitably-funded bar foundation. The CMILS project is brought to you in part by the Austin Bar Foundation.



A Story that's Da Bomb-a!!

Sara Mullally and Adarsh Bagrodia

If you mentioned the word "Bomba" around mealtime at Casa, it wouldn't matter the language- anyone who has tasted or heard the legend of his culinary treats would be rushing to the kitchen! As a resident and for years after, Bombahadur, or "Bomba," would spend hours preparing festive, five course Nepali meals for the residents. This is easy to believe after learning that he was head chef in 4-star restaurants in his home country before arriving in the U.S.

What you might not know is that he found his way to Casa Marianella in late 2009 after escaping political persecution from Nepal. After a lengthy and difficult trek navigating through the U.S. Immigration system, Bomba was granted political asylum in 2011 and went on to work as a head chef in several restaurants across the United States. That is, until a few months ago, when he was finally able to bring his wife and kids to Austin, TX to start their new life in safety.

The goal of many asylum seekers in the United States is ultimately to bring their family out of danger and start a new life in a place where they don't have to fear persecution for their beliefs. Although Casa will miss his chicken tika masala and famous pickled pakoras, we bet Bomba's family is glad to have their head chef back!



Bomba celebrates his family's arrival to Austin with a Nepali meal at Casa

Volunteer Spotlights

Casa and Posada are so grateful for the hundreds of volunteers who donate their time and talent to keep our houses running!

To volunteer, email us at volunteer@casamarianella.org.



Elvin Lubrin and his Bon Appetit crew love cooking dinner for Casa. Thank you for bringing wonderful flavors to Gunter Street!



Austin S.E.R.V.E. from St. Edward's University volunteer every Monday!



You're welcome to help cook dinner with a Casa staff member! Every day from 3-6pm there's a meal to prepare. Come cook and eat with Casa staff and residents!



From coordinating groups to painting walls, Russell and David Ward love volunteering at Casa!

Gables Residential volunteers made over all of the adult shelter houses, including transforming a bedroom into the new case management office (image to right)



Grant Loomis has been volunteering at Posada Esperanza since April as a homework tutor with kids, giving rides to moms to important appointments, fixing things that are broken around the house, and getting to know the families.



Posada volunteer Brittany Kerr applied for a grant through her yoga school to get mats, blankets, and blocks!



ESL and Tuesday Night Language Exchange

It's 7:30 on a Tuesday evening at Casa Marianella as the street darkens, cars start to fill the shoulder of Gunter Street. It is the Language Exchange, an interactive class for Spanish speakers and English speakers to help each other improve their language skills. To have a special interaction in a different language on a Tuesday highlights the special community at Casa.

ESL classes are held every week, Monday through Thursday at 7:30 til 9pm at Casa Marianella. Only on Tuesday does the class structure change to a Language Exchange, less formal class setting that focuses on learning Spanish & English, otherwise ESL focuses on teaching and improving English speaking skills for non-English speakers. The classes are obligatory for residents living at Casa Marianella, and are open to members of the Austin community for free. No sign-up is necessary, no need for anything except yourself, a pen, and some paper. For more information contact ESL@CasaMarianella.org.



Hector's Oriental Medicine Clinic

Since 2008 Oriental Medicine Practitioner Hector Kuhn Naranjo (M.Ac.O.M., L.Ac.) has been promoting health through Holistic Medicare at his Casa Clinic. Resident Gustavo, one of Hector's first clients, has been receiving treatments for four years! Gustavo has always been very grateful for the acupuncture treatments and nutritional support.

From working with senior citizens to treating Casa's asylum seekers and asylees, Hector is readily available to everyone who wants an appointment. Hector's donation-based clinic is open to everyone in Austin: current residents, volunteers, and community members. The consultation is free and there's a recommended donation for the next appointment. Hector does acupuncture, Tui Na (massage-like bodywork), herbal medicine, and provides nutritional support with whole food supplements donated by Standard Process. If you are interested, please call Casa Marianella to make an appointment: 385-5571.



Health and empowerment programs continue to serve the Austin community

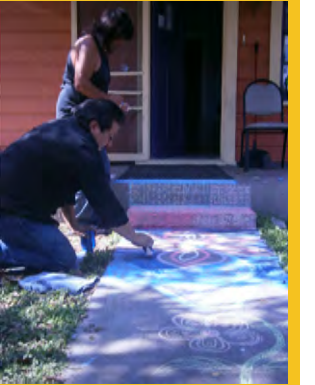
This year Casa and Posada have expanded efforts to offer free health and empowerment programs to both residents and the community at large, particularly focusing on the needs of low-income Spanish speaking women. Casa Marianella continues to host a women's job preparedness course run by prior staff member Arely Sulvachenter and her assistant Rocky Gonzalez. Her courses include important subjects such as how to approach a potential employer, how to present job skills, ways to confront sexual harassment in the workplace, and CPR/ first aid training. Participants receive a diploma upon completion of the course and most build lasting friendships with their classmates.

Arely has also teamed up this year with another prior staff member, Nicole DeGreg, who has offered her nursing expertise pro-bono to teach women's health classes. The classes consist of a series of topics relating to women and their health, ranging from anxiety and depression to hypertension and diabetes to sexually transmitted diseases. When asked about her experience teaching, Nicole responded that, "while these classes are certainly an opportunity for me to share my medical knowledge, more importantly, they create a space where immigrant women can openly discuss their bodies, health and wellbeing, and feel empowered to share what they learn with their friends and families".

Casa and Posada are also proud to offer free yoga and meditation classes in Spanish to both residents and visitors. Teachers this year have included volunteer Brittany Kerr, ex-staff Laura Martin, and current staff Margo Johnson, to name a few.

Artsy Tuesdays

On Tuesday afternoons, volunteer Francisco Chavez and Casa resident Macario Elisondo bring creativity and crafts to Casa! They have made masks and pinatas, paint paintings, and built a Day of the Dead altar with other residents. Thank you Francisco for your artful spirit and time spent making Gunter Street a more colorful place!



Casa's Margo Johnson and resident Anabella with mats donated by Black Swan Yoga

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
Tuesday nights Language Exchange
Classes are FREE and open to all and three levels are offered

The Oriental Medicine Clinic:
The clinic is open every Monday and Friday with appointments upon request.

The Legal Services Clinic:
Appointments and walk-ins every Thursday from 1-5 PM. Visits are free of charge.
Also now offering Deferred Action clinics about once a month

Women’s Health and Job Preparedness Classes

Yoga and Meditation Classes

Community Art and Music Classes



Don't forget to join us the last Sunday of every month for...

¡CONVIVIO!

From 5:30-7:30 PM

...A big, free, friendly community dinner and celebration at Casa.
Live music, good conversation, and delicious food for all.
¡Nos vemos en Casa Marianella!

Also, mark your calendars for a special block party Convivio February 24th, 2012
More information to come soon!

The Casa/Posada Staff

Emergency Shelter Directors

Jennifer Long
Margo Johnson
Erin Birney

Emergency Shelter Staff:

Katie Jones
Nick Gianaris
Emily Hayes
Roman Sanchez
Hannah Willingham
Eric Ashkenas
Anthony Radosevich
Mercedes Peña
Hector Kuhn Naranjo
Addy Bagrodia

Posada Esperanza Directors

Patti McCabe
Catie Johnston
Bridget Brewer

Women and Children’s Shelter Staff

Christina Sohl
Leslie Olmos
Amanda Codeway
Casey Quinlan

Casa/Posada Grant Writer

Karen Wolman

The Casa/Posada Board of Directors

Bob Rankin, President

Hermelinda Zamarripa

Jenny White
Gabriel Ornelas
James Edsel
Lora Petty
Leti Bueno
Carol Walker
Wayne Krause Yang
Mitzi Eastman
Hannah Bronsnick



27 years of stories!

*** WISH LIST ***

All items can be dropped off at Casa Marianella from 9am-7pm daily.
Thank you for taking care of our residents!

Casa Marianella:

Soap and Shampoo
Toothpaste, brushes, razors
Towels and bedding
Men’s and Women’s clothes
Undergarments and socks
Housewares
Beds and small furniture items
Fresh fruits, veggies, milk, and eggs
Kitchenware

Posada Esperanza:

Jackets (kids and women’s sizes)
Diapers and Wipes
Shampoo and Laundry Detergent
Socks

Our Key Collaborators:

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

Caritas of Austin
 Capital Area Food Bank
 SafePlace
 Capital Metro Transit
 UT Law Clinic

Center for Survivors of Torture
 Capital Area Counseling
 CommUnity Care Clinics
 RAICES, Inc.
 St. Lukes Episcopal Health

Churches:

Congregational Church of Littleton	Plum Blossom Sangha
St. Austin Catholic Church	St. James Episcopal Church
St. Matthews Episcopal Church	St. Davids Episcopal Church
The Catholic Diocese of Austin	St Georges Episcopal Church
Cristo Rey Catholic Church	University United Methodist
Faith Presbyterian Church	Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church
St. David's Episcopal Church	Prince of Peace Lutheran
Oak Hill United Methodist	Central Christian Church
Knights of Columbus	First Presbyterian Church
of St. Catherine of Siena	University Catholic Center
St. Thomas More Catholic Church	Emmanuel United Methodist
St Julia Catholic Church	Austin Stone
Unitarian Universalist Church	

Groups:

The City of Austin
 A Glimmer of Hope
 Travis County Women's Law Foundation
 Alice Kleburg Reynolds
 Texas Bar Foundation
 Austin Bar Foundation
 Donald D. Hanmill Foundation
 Shield-Ayres Foundation
 Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services
 UT School of Human Ecology
 Albert and Marie-Helen Milhomme
 Still Water Foundation
 Trull Foundation
 Villa Esperanza
 Texas Coffee Traders
 Farmhouse Delivery
 Boggy Creek Farm
 Religious Coalition to Assist the Homeless