



Rosalie Rendu Center ... where seeds are planted
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Fall 2010

**ROSALIE RENDU
 CENTER**

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IN THIS ISSUE

- *A Backpack and New Books for Every Child*
- *Summer Reading Program*
- *Giving Thanks*
- *Mission Moment*
- *RRC Needs*



A Message From Sister T



Dear Friends of the Rosalie Rendu Center,

It's fall, the weather is changing, and our thoughts turn to family, and friends. I cannot think of friends without the words, "Thank you," jumping into my mind. I have so much to be thankful for: beautiful students, generous supporters and dedicated volunteers.

Our students continue to make slow but sure progress in English. They would learn more quickly if they practiced more when they leave class, but living in East Palo Alto gives them few opportunities to speak their new language. The students who work or send their children to schools outside EPA become comfortable using English. That is why our Conversation Clubs have been so important. For three hours a month the students have an opportunity to practice speaking English in a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere. The students, even the shyest, soon realize that the only difference between English speakers and Spanish speakers is the language. It has been wonderful to see them becoming more and more comfortable sharing stories and laughing with our volunteers.

The children living at the Carriage Manor Apartments also continue to grow in stature as their recent progress reports show. Many thanks to our after-school volunteers who faithfully come once or twice a week to help with homework and reading. Our new college students are also doing very well and seem happy. When I see Luis returning from Cañada College he always has a big smile. Your generous donations have kept that smile on his face.

In September, I attended the fall reception for grantees, sponsored by the Palo Alto Community Foundation. It was a lovely evening shared by many wonderful organizations. I felt privileged and grateful to be a part of such a group. People have done so many nice things for us at the Rosalie Rendu Center. I wish I could have a reception with wine, song and delicious food to show each donor and friend just how special and important you are to our daily operations. You have touched so many lives, and each gift no matter how small, be it time or money, is working to help change a life.

As our logo states, we are "planting seeds," seeds of self-confidence, seeds of friendship, seeds of joy and laughter. These seeds are not planted by any one of us but by all of us, friends, supports and volunteers of the Rosalie Rendu Center. May God bless each of you for your interest and concern.

Devotedly yours,

Sister Trinitas

Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C., Executive Director



Sponsored by the
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A Backpack and New Books for Every Child

Every August, excitement fills the air at the Rosalie Rendu Center as the children prepare to go back to school. Each year, Sister T and her staff go through the same process of making a list of all the children who need a backpack and the age-appropriate school supplies to go along. Then, Sister T, Sister Mary Loretta, Ivan and various board members start shopping for pencils, erasers, paper, backpacks, composition books, binders, etc. We all come together to fill the packs and mark them by grade. Then everyone waits for the Big Day.

On August 22, smiling children big and small arrived at the Center for an ice cream social and to pick up their backpacks and free books. Sister Mary Loretta and her assistants carefully selected just the right bag for each child who came to the classroom with a ticket.

In addition to the backpacks, the Center offers a selection of free books for all ages. Each child is welcome to peruse the book table and take home any books that they find interesting. We encourage reading, especially at home where children can share books with their parents. We had a great time at this yearly event and are looking forward to seeing our children succeed at school this year!

The Rosalie Rendu Center strives to help children by providing the school supplies necessary to start the year off right. We also want to be sure our children have books at home to read with their parents.



A Trip to the Bookstore

The Rosalie Rendu Center supports all types of literacy. While we focus on speaking English, we also recognize the value of books and early reading. During the summer, when the children are looking for something to do, Sister T and Sister Mary Loretta took several children to Books Inc. in Palo Alto. On one occasion, there was a children's book club in session. The children were thrilled to be a part of it. They listened very carefully. How exciting it was to walk into the store and see all of the books! Before leaving each child was able to select a book to take home. It made for a very exciting summer evening.

Did You Know?

Bring Me A Book Foundation, www.bringmeabook.org, supports the RRC with its Bookcase Library and Bookbags. These tools are designed to encourage age appropriate reading at home.

When parents read to their children, they help develop their children's pre-literacy skills.

This will positively impact future performance in school.

Consider this:

- Many children are not read to daily because they don't have age appropriate books at home.*
- Many children enter kindergarten lacking pre-literacy skills because many childcare centers and pre-schools lack age appropriate reading materials.*
- Two thirds of fourth graders cannot read proficiently because many parents do not understand the critical importance of reading aloud.*

*Source: Bring Me A Book Foundation website



Summer Writing Program

We all want our children to have fun over the summer, but we don't want them to forget about their academics. This past summer, two of our extraordinarily committed volunteers, Lynn Benas and Perry Marlon, developed an exciting, but academically enriching program for the students at the Center's Homework Club. Lynn and Perry decided to focus on improving the students' writing skills. During the school year, the Homework Club volunteers must focus on helping the children with their homework, so they haven't had a lot of opportunity to let the children just write.

Says Perry, "Our focuses for the summer writing program were to sharpen the kids thinking skills, help them to organize their thoughts more effectively, and give the kids a chance to exercise their imaginative powers."

Perry, who found the Rosalie Rendu Center four years ago when a friend "convinced her to come visit", and is "now hooked", has a background in teaching English ("a million years ago") and English curriculum publishing. Last summer, Lynn and Perry came to the Center one or two afternoons a week armed with weekly writing assignments. For example, one week they asked each child to go outside into the courtyard, and examine something (e.g. a flower, a crack in the sidewalk) in detail, and then come back in to write about it. Other themes included writing thank you

letters, writing about themselves, and imagining a silly day for their dentist or someone they know. Each day started out with a group activity to set the theme. After writing was completed, Children were encouraged to read their essays aloud. Each class session ended with a super fun activity. Lynn did a lot of cooking with the kids. Perry brought

in a jewelry making kit, played games, and let the kids decorate cupcakes.

Perry has a 7 year old grandson living in New Hampshire, who makes her "heart sing". She believes there is nothing better than working with kids and watching them succeed. We hope that helping the children of the Homework Club helps make Perry and Lynn's hearts sing as well.

Giving Thanks

During this time of the year, we realize that we all have much to be thankful for. The teachers of the English classes asked students to share some of their thoughts. Here are some of their responses.

- *I am thankful for my family.*
- *I am thankful for my confidence in speaking.*
- *I am thankful for the opportunity to learn.*
- *I am thankful to have a job.*
- *I am thankful when my husband cooks.*
- *I am thankful for dancing.*
- *I am thankful for my good health.*
- *I am thankful that I live with my sister and brother. We are a small family, but very happy.*
- *I am thankful for my job, because I earn money for food, rent and clothes for my daughter.*

We all have a lot in common!



Mission Moment

We are thankful for the Maltby Family

The mission of the Rosalie Rendu Center is to break the cycle of poverty by educating, mentoring and raising the self-esteem of the entire family. Our periodic piece "Mission Moment" provides examples of how our mission is lived out on a daily basis.

At the Rosalie Rendu Center, we are very grateful for our friends in the community, who provide funding, volunteers and many special experiences that the Center cannot provide on its own. Since the Rosalie Rendu Center was founded in 1998, our families have been enjoying a wonderful Thanksgiving celebration each year at Maltby's Restaurant and Tavern in Los Altos. The Maltby family has closed their restaurant to the public to serve a delicious meal to families from the Center. James and Katy, their 15- and 13-year-old

children, local friends and regular customers pitch in to cook, serve and clean up a Thanksgiving feast with all the trimmings. Friends and customers donate the turkeys and pies.

James says that he and his wife have always felt that it was better "to do something" because they had the facilities and the willing helpers to make Thanksgiving Day special for a group of people who might not celebrate otherwise.



James says that his children's whole understanding of Thanksgiving is that the family goes down to the restaurant to cook and serve this meal.

All of us from the Rosalie Rendu Center appreciate Maltby's Restaurant and the family, friends, and customers who have made Thanksgiving a special day for families from the Center. *Thank you!*

Help the Rosalie Rendu Center Reach Our Vision

At the Rosalie Rendu center, our vision for our families is: Every client is educated, financially independent, integrated into the community and computer literate.

WISH LIST

- Funding for special dictionaries used in the English classes
- Monetary support for the Center's programming

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering at The Rosalie Rendu Center is easy and fun. We provide meaningful volunteer opportunities at a variety of times during the day and evening, and we'll train you before you begin helping out. Consider:

- **Conversation Club** – Spend ninety minutes on Monday morning talking with adult students from the Center. Individual conversation practice with our volunteers may be the most valuable tool available to our students. Additional days will come available as more volunteers sign up.
- **Evening English** – Join a seasoned volunteer to help provide more individualized instruction.
- **Homework Club** – Come twice a month on Tuesday or Thursday to help our young students with homework and reading.
- **Financial Management** – The Center offers life skills classes when our students indicate interest. We are planning to offer a simple, practical class in financial management, and we're looking for a teacher and a curriculum.

For more information, please contact Sister Trinitas Hernandez at (650) 473-9522.

