



Rosalie Rendu Center ... where seeds are planted  
 1760 Bay Road, #24, East Palo Alto, CA 94303  
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**Fall 2013**

**ROSALIE RENDU  
 CENTER**

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**Greetings from the RRC**



Dear Friends and Supporters,

The older I get the faster time moves on. It seems like only yesterday school was out and our mothers were busy signing up their children for Hidden Villa Camp, thanks to the St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Francis for their generous scholarships. They were also enrolling them in baseball or soccer camps. The majority of our families cannot afford to go on a vacation, however we did lots of talking about places to go and things to do for the day. There was one lucky student who won tickets to Disneyland for her family. This was a great topic for our Monday morning Conversation Club.

This summer our Adult Classes concentrated on reading, getting to know several famous Latinos. In the afternoon we had about 20 children, reading and discussing age appropriate books. It seemed to me that the volunteers enjoyed themselves just as much as the children.

Mid-August we had registration for new classes. It was sad and gratifying all at the same time. It was heartwarming to see so many new faces and sad that I had to turn so many away or refer them to other programs. We truly need more volunteers, especially to teach a beginner/basic class and to start a new conversation group.

We ended our summer session with our annual Back to School Ice Cream Social. Again this year we set up a store and let the students come and pick out what they needed. This year along with backpacks and school supplies we were able to give the children new shoes. Marian Graney, Head Angel, at the Daughters of Charity Health System, Redwood Shores Business Office set-up a shoe drive, "Good soles for good souls." There were happy soles dancing their way to school on the first day.

Now we are in full swing with Fall/Winter classes and we have three very full groups. Working with Rick Anderson and Jane Stern has been a blessing for me and our students. The students come to class, work hard and enjoy themselves just as much as the teachers. I know it is the students who keep me young at heart. If any of you would like to be young at heart, contact me and we can talk about a volunteer spot for you with our children in the after school Homework Club, teaching ESL or joining a Conversation Club. Getting to know our wonderful students and helping them become comfortable speaking their new language is a wonderful experience.

Bless each of you and your families. Know that as we approach Thanksgiving you are on my list of blessings that I am thankful for.

*Sister Trinitas*

Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C., Executive Director

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## Fostering a Love of Reading!

Our extraordinary Homework Club volunteer Lynn Benas could have taken this past summer off. After all, she has been volunteering her time twice per week throughout the school year at the afterschool Homework Club. But Lynn loves to read, and she wanted to pass on that love to the children of the Rosalie Rendu Center. So she, along with longtime Homework Club volunteer Perry Marlon, started a summer reading program and it is still going strong three years later.



Photos: (Top) Lynn Benas works with students. (Bottom) Lynn and her students celebrate their hard work and enthusiasm for reading with a pizza party.

For six weeks over the summer, about 20 children met with volunteers twice per week for two hours. Sister Trinitas, Perry and Lynn recruited talented volunteers Carolyn Brennan, Linda Guyer, Sister Elizabeth Riddell, pre-postulant Georgina Severin, Nancy Alvarez, and Emily Denton. Staff member Ivan Barragan and RRC English students Claudia, Fidelia and Brigeda stepped in to help as needed. The children were divided into groups, based both on age and reading ability. The groups ranged in age from pre-kindergarten up to middle school students.

Happy Thanksgiving from the RRC!

Each child read the same book together with the others in his/her group — books that were hand selected as age and reading ability appropriate and were fun to read. The Center purchased the books, and each child got to take the book home at the end of the program. The activities in each group varied day-to-day and leader-to-leader and were often guided by the students' interests. In the older groups, the children took turns reading the book aloud, discussing characters and themes from the book. Some groups drew pictures of characters, and one group built Lego structures depicting scenes from the book. In the younger grades, when reading is still a work in progress for most children, the teachers read the books aloud, taught them letters and letter sounds, colors, shapes and played board games such as Candy Land and I Spy Memory Game.

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*Lynn's goal is that every child going in to kindergarten is able to read. She reports that if she works with the pre-kindergarteners throughout the school year and in the summer, that goal has always been achieved.*

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The students were rewarded for good attendance and enthusiastic participation at the end of the program with great treats—a movie followed by a pizza. The younger children saw *Despicable Me 2* while the older children enjoyed *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters*. One of the groups got to make their own pizzas at Pizza My Heart, rolling out the dough and adding toppings for a great end of program dinner.

We thank all of the wonderful volunteers, in particular Lynn and Perry, for giving our children the gift of reading and for helping to make reading a part of our children's every day lives.

## *Moving Out Into the Community* **Parent Involvement Workers**

Learning to speak English opens a world of opportunity for students of the Rosalie Rendu Center, including employment for some of the graduates as Parent Involvement Workers (PIW's) at Cesar Chavez Academy. This is a twelve-year old program developed by Bill Somerville of Philanthropic Ventures Foundation.

Sister T tells the story of one of the students. "Education truly is the only way out of poverty. When one of our students, Nancy, graduated from the ESL program at Rosalie Rendu, I encouraged her to become a Parent Involvement Worker at Cesar Chavez Academy, a local elementary school. Parent Involvement Workers encourage Spanish-speaking parents to become engaged in their children's education. Nancy has grown in her position and sees that she can become a teacher. She started attending Cañada College recently."

The principal of Cesar Chavez Academy, Amika Guillaume, appreciates the sincere and authentic connection that Parent Involvement Workers make with the parents of her students as they work toward a common understanding of parental concerns. The PIW's also help the teachers immeasurably with translation and understanding cultural differences. Amika believes that the PIW's have been integral to creating a family friendly atmosphere at her school. She says, "Through their efforts, our school was nominated and selected by the Fatherhood Collaborative of San Mateo County as the 'Most Family Friendly School in the County.'" The increased involvement of non-English speaking parents has helped the students achieve greater academic success. [Cesar Chavez Academy attracts a diverse student body, 4% African-American, 85% Latino, 1% Asian, 9% Pacific Islander. 93% are English language learners, and 98% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunches. Over the past three years, Cesar Chavez Academy has improved its similar-school ranking from 1 to 6 (out of 10), and they have doubled the percentage of students proficient in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. Read more about the school at <http://www.ravenswood.k12.ca.us/domain/27>.]

As Bill Somerville says, "The Parent Involvement Workers have become real professionals in their work at the school. Their English proficiency is excellent. They have grown into the work and are ready for new challenges."

Thank you, Bill, for providing this wonderful opportunity for graduates of the Rosalie Rendu Center!





## Good Soles for Good Souls

Going back to school is more fun when you're wearing new shoes. In August, the Rosalie Rendu Center provided new shoes for every child who needed a pair, thanks to the generosity of our friends. In particular, Caritas Business Services and the Daughters of Charity Health Systems Offices in Redwood Shores, Los Altos Hills, and Pasadena contributed nearly \$3,400 toward this effort, increasing the number of friends to the Center by forty over the past couple of years. Marian Graney's "Good Soles for Good Souls" appeal to her colleagues began seven years ago and has blossomed mightily! Seton Hospital Foundation gave \$1,000, and Footlocker helped us with a 10% discount. It is our hope to continue to provide new shoes to those children who need them. A great back-to-school tradition!

**SAVE  
THE DATE!**

*Rosalie Rendu  
Friends Luncheon*

*Wednesday  
April 9, 2014*

*St. Elizabeth Seton School*

Invitations will be mailed  
at the beginning of March.

## Help the Rosalie Rendu Center Reach Our Vision

We encourage each client to be educated, financially independent, computer literate and integrated into the community.

### WISH LIST

- Monetary support of our "Family Enrichment Program."  
(Family field trips to local points of interest, expanding opportunities for our young families)
- Wireless routers and power over ethernet (PoE) kits
- Books for ESL students (all levels)

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering at the Rosalie Rendu Center is easy and fun. We will train you for meaningful volunteer opportunities. Day and night options are available.

- Conversation Club: Conversation practice with our volunteers may be the most valuable tool available to our students. Join a group, or start a new one.
- Day/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.

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

