



**ROSALIE RENDU
C E N T E R**

Rosalie Rendu Center ... where seeds are planted
1760 Bay Road, #24, East Palo Alto, CA 94303
(650) 473-9522 • www.rosalie-rendu-center.org

Fall 2015

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Dear Friends and Loyal Supporters,

Here we are two months into our new school year and I am excited to share with you all the comings and goings of the 2015-2016 school calendar year. Registration was the last two weeks of August, and we had more men and women sign-up for ESL classes than ever before. We are excited to announce that we hired a new teacher in order to add two new introductory ESL classes. Despite adding two new level one classes, we unfortunately turned away some students. We now have six classes, five during daytime hours and one evening class.

Due to our small space, our numbers are not grand but the attention each student receives is invaluable. We average 55 to 60 students per year and no more than 10-12 in each class.

Our students are eager to learn come rain or shine. Our playgroup is very full some days. I was complimenting our students about their good attendance when Maria (a student) said, "We are hungry to learn!" This kind of enthusiasm is very rewarding to our teachers and reinforces our mission of raising the self-esteem of the entire family.

As always, the Summer Reading Program was a success. The children were taken to a book store to select books they wished to read. If you ask the children, receiving books is good, but the reward at the end of summer is even better. Each year, those with excellent attendance are treated to pizza and a trip to the movies.

Our Conversation groups continue to assist our students in becoming more comfortable using their new language skills. As our new students learn, they too will be placed in a group. Every year we are in search of new volunteers to help with these groups. Please, let me know if you would be interested; it is only two hours a week and I promise you will be rewarded greatly.

All the accomplishments at the RRC are done with your help. Like any garden, it takes many hands to grow a beautiful flower or cultivate a good crop. Being here, we are blessed to hear the stories that our students share with us.

Many thanks for your continued support over the years. Please feel free to drop by for a visit. I'd love to see you, and the students would also like to meet the people who make this all possible. God bless you and your families.

Devotedly yours,

Sister Trinitas

Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C., Executive Director



Sponsored by the Daughters of Charity
Ministry Services Corporation



Sister T





Our Excursions Continue

Visits Include the Zoo and a Recycling Center

IN PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS, we have talked about the benefits of field trips to our English language learners. Our group excursions have helped build community, promote an interest in life-long learning and offer new, culturally rich experiences not found in a textbook. The trips have been very popular, so we found more places to go! Thanks to the generosity of our funders, in particular, the Carl Gellert and Celia Berta Gellert Foundation, we visited the San Francisco Zoo on a beautiful Saturday in early May. More than 85 adults and children piled aboard two rented buses for the trip north. Many fathers attended; some even took the day off to be with their families! We all got a lot of exercise walking around the big zoo and enjoyed interacting with the knowledgeable docents and reading in English about the animals and their habitats.

The Conversation Club members are very interested in learning about where their trash and recycling goes. So we took advantage of the free tours offered by Shoreway Environmental Center in San Carlos. Teacher Maria, volunteers Debbie and David, and several adult students donned hard hats, safety glasses, yellow vests and ear protection to learn first-hand what happens to their recyclables, yard trimmings, food scraps and garbage. We plan to bring more students on this great tour in the spring.

If you know of interesting places to visit with our students, and/or would like to support our outings, please contact us! We love to explore new opportunities.

PHOTOS: (Clockwise from the top left) Sister T and volunteer Ann Idzik with some of the families at the zoo. Patty and family in front of the lion den. Francisca and family enjoying their day out. Teacher Maria Lozano, volunteers Debbie and David and students ready to visit the recycling center. Some of the sights from the recycling tour.



Save the Date! Join us for the ROSALIE RENDU FRIENDS BREAKFAST
April 20, 2016 at 7:30 AM, Saint Seton School, Palo Alto
Invitation to arrive in March



New to the Center

Welcoming New ESL Teacher Raheleh Seifoddini

RAHELEH SEIFODDINI JOINED THE STAFF at the Rosalie Rendu Center this fall, teaching one of the new classes for beginning English language learners.

Raheleh was born in Louisiana and grew up in Iran, where she earned her Bachelor's degree. She later moved to Canada with her family, earned her TESL certification, and then came to California, where she earned her California Designated Subjects Adult Ed credential. Raheleh is dedicated to helping immigrants master the English language.

Raheleh is fluent in English and Farsi, and she is learning Spanish. Raheleh has also taught vocational English and citizenship preparation and worked as a family literacy instructor. She has volunteered as a conversation club facilitator at several branches of the San Jose Library. Currently, in addition to her paid work, she volunteers at Jewish Family Services Silicon Valley and with Read Santa Clara at the Mission Library in Santa Clara.

Raheleh says, "I enjoy working with people and learning something new every day. My students have taught me a lot. They bring with them their precious and unique life experiences, as well as different languages and cultures, into the classroom, and this creates an environment of mutual learning. I have a deep and strong desire for philanthropic activities as it quenches a fire inside me and

gives meaning to my life. I read and write poetry, love jogging and playing volleyball."

Raheleh's students enjoy her classes very much and attend faithfully, which is one of the best measures of success for beginning English language learners. Staff and students at the Center are very pleased that Raheleh has joined!

Raheleh shares two of her short poems with us:

1:

Permanency

A dream we live in

Till death comes awakening

2:

The Tree gave away

All she had, and Karma

Was waiting for Spring



Rosalie Rendu Center Alumni News

Congratulations Nancy Alvarez

WHEN NANCY ALVAREZ GRADUATED from the Rosalie Rendu Center's ESL program, she was one of Sister Trinita's top students. With Sister Trinita's encouragement, she took a paid job as a Parent Involvement Worker at Cesar Chavez School in East Palo Alto. Nancy has excelled at her position there—providing invaluable Spanish/English translation between parents and teachers, and mentoring and engaging parents to be more involved in their children's school.

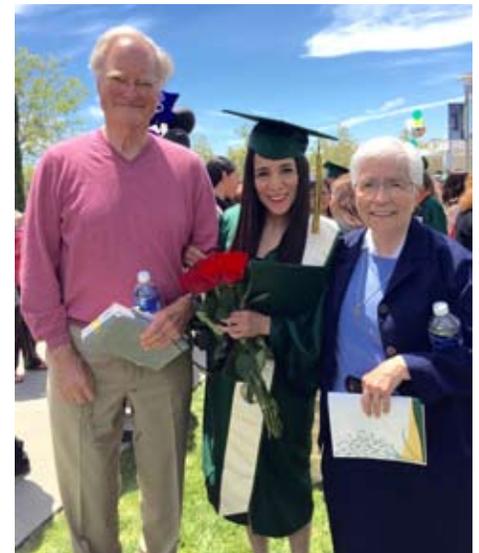
Nancy was ready for the next challenge. She said that she was really inspired by seeing the mom's dreams coming true when sending their kids to college. She realized that she too, could go to college. We are proud to announce that Nancy graduated from Cañada College on May 30, 2015 with an Associate of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. Nancy was on the Dean's List for several semesters. She is aiming higher still—she is applying to both San José State and San Francisco State,

to work towards a Bachelor's degree in social work or sociology starting in the Fall of 2016.

Nancy's impact in East Palo Alto extends far beyond her role as a Parent Involvement Worker. She is dedicated to helping improve the city of East Palo Alto. Nancy is a new board member for the new Ravenswood Family Health Center in East Palo Alto. In addition, she has been appointed by the City Council to serve on the Measure C (the Crime Fighting Act Fund) Citizen's Oversight Committee.

Nancy has accomplished all this while a single mom to daughters Nancy and Kimberly Lopez, both in high school at Castilleja School in Palo Alto. She works hard to show her daughters that education is the key to getting out and staying out of poverty.

Congratulations Rosalie Rendu Center alumna Nancy Alvarez!



Graduation Day: Bill Somerville, Nancy Alvarez and Sister T.



You Make a Difference

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a gift and not giving it.”

– WILLIAM WARD

The Rosalie Rendu Center is lucky to have hundreds of individual donors, many of whom have given generously since our very first fundraising campaign. This consistent financial support is what keeps the Rosalie Rendu Center thriving each year. We are incredibly grateful to the many people who consistently donate funds to support our work. Each envelope received represents a thumbs-up for our mission statement, and a vote of encouragement to our volunteers and staff.

At the last Rosalie Rendu Advisory Board meeting, we took extra time to reflect on some of the many long-term donors we have. We realized that for many people the number of non-profit fundraising requests received each year is overwhelming, yet you have chosen to support the Center. We wanted to let you know that we spent some time thinking about each of you and we expressed our gratitude during the meeting. As a special thank you, we want to review the financial impact your money has had.

1. New immigrants in San Mateo County face enormous challenges and it is often hard for them to integrate successfully. Housing costs in the Bay Area make their lives even more burdensome. Our work supports and encourages this group of community members, and we believe the Rosalie Rendu Center represents best practices for immigrant integration in San Mateo County.
2. When the Center was first opened, the goal was to break the cycle of poverty for the families served. We are now at a point where this vision is being realized, with so many of our children attending college. There is nothing more exciting to us than the success of this first generation of college students.
3. Many of the mothers we have worked with over the years are now leaders in the community. Some are working at local schools or volunteering to improve their community. One former student even serves on a non-profit board. All of these moms inspire us.
4. With gentrification is rippling through the Bay Area, we are all so proud that the Daughters of Charity own the Carriage Manor Apartment building and that these homes will remain affordable to residents of East Palo Alto. Many of our long-term donors were involved with the fundraising campaign to save the Carriage Manor Apartment Building, and you have stayed with us for all these years.

None of these things would have been possible without you. We are so grateful to have your on-going support, and we just cannot thank you enough.

“No one who achieves success does so without the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.”

– ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD



How You Can Help Us Reach Our Vision



At the RRC, we strive to help our families reach this vision: *Every client is educated, financially independent, computer literate and integrated into the community.*

WISH LIST

- Funding for books or books for Homework Club students to take home
- A volunteer computer teacher for a beginner's class
- Ongoing support for our current programs

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, Monday mornings at 8:30 AM: Conversation practice with our volunteers may be the most valuable tool available to our students. Join a group, or start a new one.
- 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.



Volunteer Spotlight

New Volunteer, But Not A Newcomer

A new school year has brought us a new volunteer teacher for our Level 3 class. However, David Riggs is not a newcomer to the Rosalie Rendu Center. Originally invited to become a volunteer by a Stanford colleague, David has been a regular participant of the Monday morning English Conversation Club for the past three years. In this friendly and open setting, he has come to know and admire the students for their sense of community, commitment, and courage. David echoes the sentiment of all who have the privilege of working with the Rosalie Rendu Center's students when he describes them simply as "lovely people." Desiring to take a more active role in helping the students achieve their English language goals, he has started teaching twice a week, focusing his lessons on writing skills. As an instructor, David's goals are to instill the value of writing in his students and to have them acquire the skill of producing good prose for their communicative needs.

David is a professor emeritus of English, having taught at Stanford University from 1969 to 2010. He has written biographies about two of Shakespeare's contemporaries, Ben Jonson *A Life and The World of Christopher Marlowe*. He is currently taking a course offered at UCSC Extension to learn about teaching methodologies in teaching English to speakers of other languages. We are grateful for David's interest and dedication to the students of the Rosalie Rendu Center.