



## ROSALIE RENDU C E N T E R

Rosalie Rendu Center ... where seeds are planted  
1760 Bay Road, #24, East Palo Alto, CA 94303  
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# Fall 2016

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*Dear Friends and Supporters,*

One day the skies are a beautiful blue with white puffy clouds, then the next day the rain clouds gather. This is kind of how our days go here at the Rosalie Rendu Center. Most days are warm and sunny like the day Maria, our first Leamos Student (Spanish Literacy), told me she had signed her name for the first time. She even wrote "mama" next to it. In August, she didn't know how to spell or write her name. Her smile and my tears filled the classroom with warmth and sunshine.

Alone it is difficult to make an impact, but together we can do much to help people make positive changes in their lives. An example is the summer we sent Miguel to Sylvan Learning Center, an expensive tutoring program, to ensure he would graduate from eighth grade and attend a good high school. In June, he graduated from Serra High School and is now attending college at Norte Dame de Namur in Belmont.

Thanks to your generous support, we have been able to help our students in a variety of practical ways. Some of our students have broader smiles due to much needed dental work, our children have books in their homes and art supplies for various projects. Our adult ESL students have individual textbooks and workbooks.

This summer we were able to refurbish, furnish and expand Classroom #2, increasing the number of students in this class. Our playroom, The Tot Spot, now has a beautiful carpet. This warm, friendly classroom is very helpful in teaching the children their numbers and colors. Also, thanks to Supervisor Warren Slocum and Measure A funds, we now have a great teaching tool – a large Smart Board in Room #2.

Your financial support has always been important to the running of the Center, but without the many volunteer hours, there would be no program at all. Our conversation club has been a blessing for both the students and the volunteers. In December, we hope to add two more clubs. A knowledge of Spanish is not necessary for volunteers, because we want the students to begin feeling comfortable conversing in English. If you think you could give an hour and a half every week, or every other week, please contact me. I guarantee you that hour and a half will light up your week. Also, if you, or you and your friends, would like to share a talent or skill by giving a workshop, for example: flower arranging, putting together an emergency kit, etc., please give us a call.

As we prepare for Thanksgiving our hearts are full of gratitude for all your support.

Sincerely Yours,

Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C., Executive Director



Sister T





A beautifully remodelled classroom and website thanks to our staff, volunteers, Connor and Michele Grason, 428 Design, Emily Nelson and Roaring Pajamas.

# Rosalie Rendu Center Gets a Makeover

## Inside and Online

This year involved a lot of change around the Rosalie Rendu Center. Thanks to our donors, we created a larger classroom with a new Smart Board and made over the original classroom. The result, in these two remodeled classrooms, is an increase of our possible daily capacity from 48 students to 84. Also, our website received a major overhaul including a fresh design and search engine optimization (SEO) to help students and donors find us online.

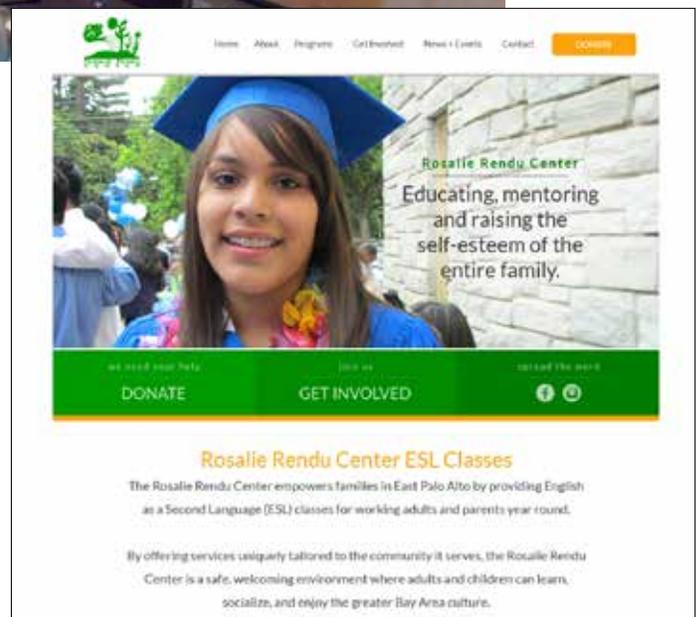
Originally a one-bedroom apartment that housed the Tot Spot, our new classroom was created by removing the wall between the living room and bedroom to create one large classroom that now holds up to 18 students. A fresh coat of paint, bookshelves and a Smart Board make a beautiful and state-of-the-art place to learn.

Volunteers and staff worked together to reorganize the original classroom to make the classroom and computer room more comfortable for students. Eagle Scout Connor Grason painted both rooms with

the help of his mother, Michele Grason. We're very grateful for their efforts to improve our space.

Not to worry – our Tot Spot now exists in the smaller of our three classrooms. Students are welcome to bring their children, who engage in structured play, while their parents attend classes.

Our 7-year-old website needed a lot of work to create a better experience for students and donors. With the help of staff, volunteers, 428 Designs (design and development), Emily Nelson (copywriting) and Roaring Pajamas (SEO), we've developed a new website, and we're happy to invite you to visit us online at <http://www.rosalie-rendu-center.org>. You'll find our class schedule, program descriptions and online donations page are easy to navigate. Thanks to our fabulous team for all their hard work!





## Volunteer of the Year

The RRC Advisory Board is so happy to share exciting news! On August 22, 2016, Martha Perez, a member of our volunteer advisory board, has been named as “Volunteer of the Year” for the Sequoia Union High School District.

Part of East Palo Alto Academy’s description of Martha is included to illustrate Martha’s many contributions. “Martha Perez, East Palo Alto Academy’s parent liaison, has been an incredible asset to the school and community. Martha is a passionate, humble and dedicated volunteer who provides a bridge between families, students and teachers. Parents seek her support and guidance on a regular basis. In addition to connecting parents with community resources, Martha makes hundreds of positive phone calls weekly to share good news about student progress with families. Thanks to Martha, EPAA has seen a significant increase in parent involvement and participation. Martha has created a culture of trust, inclusion and community among the students and their families that profoundly supports the work of the school”.

Congratulations Martha!

## Service Learning at Stanford

In the spring, six Stanford undergraduate students enrolled in a service-learning course offered by Stanford University Professor Amado Padilla on immigrant children. They had the opportunity to work for nine weeks with a group of immigrant women at the Rosalie Rendu Center in East Palo Alto. Four of the students focused on relevant health issues. Felipe Guillen and Caroline Flores assisted the women in writing a personal life story in English. For the Stanford students, this was a unique experience as they witnessed the women struggle to bring their personal story to fruition in a format that they could share with each other at a potluck luncheon. Each woman read her story in English. In their own report Felipe and Caroline wrote, “Working with the Rosalie Rendu Center was an honor and one of the most enlightening experiences we have had at Stanford.”

Service learning classes at Stanford are becoming an important part of undergraduate education and are supported through the Haas Center for Public Service. A service learning course is an opportunity for Stanford

students can take what they learn in the classroom and see how things work in a community organization or school setting.

Another Stanford student, Patricia Flores, enrolled in Professor Padilla’s class this fall, is doing her service learning with women at the Rosalie Rendu Center. Patricia, whose parents emigrated from Peru, is excited about the prospects of assisting the women to learn English. Like her Stanford student predecessors, Patricia will work with women as they write a life story that is personal and reflective of the life of an immigrant woman living in East Palo Alto.

An important aspect of the student’s service learning is that the Stanford professor, the Haas Center and its staff, the students and the Rosalie Rendu Center are all in a partnership with each other. In the end, the biggest benefactors of the partnership are the Stanford students who learn from their service-learning experience what it is like to be an immigrant woman struggling to learn English and raise a family in this country.

## Volunteer Spotlight

David Riggs joined the Conversation Club at the Rosalie Rendu Center five years ago on the recommendation of Barbara Gelpi, his long-time colleague in the Stanford English Department. Last year, when Joan L’Heureux stepped down from the talented group of English teachers at the Center, David jumped at the chance to join the team. Drawing on his decades of teaching Stanford students how to write, David is offering a twice a week course on English composition together with Maria Lozano.

David has found a lot to like in this venture. Teaching without grades, in a class where students are motivated by the desire to better their lives, has been a welcome change of pace. Although the learning curve is steep, encompassing punctuation, spelling, sentence

structure, and the composition of well-formed paragraphs, it has been a joy to watch our students acquire these skills over a short period of time. Since they draw on their daily lives for material to write about, the classroom offers a forum for thinking through the challenges of living in East Palo Alto on a modest income in 2016. Over the long run, David and Maria are encouraging their students to build a written archive of personal memoirs about their experiences as first generation immigrants perched on the edge of Silicon Valley.





Longtime volunteers read to our children.

## Volunteers Say Students Inspire Us

Our volunteers make the work of the Center possible. But, it is the students who inspire our volunteers, by their efforts to improve the lives of their families. A Conversation Club volunteer says, "I have often expressed to the ladies at the Conversation Club how special they are in that they strive so hard to provide special opportunities to their children and families. I am overwhelmed by their efforts. There are a variety of ways that they do this, such as ensuring their children participate in the summer reading club at the Rosalie Rendu Center or the EPA Library, enrolling the children in great schools like St. Elizabeth Seton School, public Palo Alto schools via the Tinsley program

or Castellija, going on to college prep high schools like Sacred Heart, Eastside Prep or Menlo School, and then going to college. They participate in summer internships at Stanford and take up leadership opportunities with local youth organizations. I am sure there are many other examples of ways that the parents support their children, despite challenges of poverty and lack of access."

Volunteers have many roles at the Rosalie Rendu Center: providing practice in English conversation through our Conversation Clubs (once/week for an hour or so), creating and mailing this newsletter and providing other advisory help to Sister Trinitas. They assist the

young children with after school homework and with summer programs to maintain their academic mastery from the past year through to the next year. They help with special occasion celebrations like our 4th of July celebration and our Christmas party. By attending our family field trips, they join in the fun of learning something new.

All of us who work or volunteer at the Rosalie Rendu Center are grateful for the opportunity to work with students who are striving so hard to gain the language and other skills they need to improve the lives of their family members. We enjoy sharing their successes with them and respect and admire their determination and hard work!

## Help the Rosalie Rendu Center Reach Our Vision:

*Every Client is educated, financially independent, integrated into the community and computer literate.*

### Wish List and Volunteer Opportunities:

- Monetary support for the Center's programs and operations
- Children's books for all ages, including in Spanish
- Gift Cards for Christmas for families from the Center (Mi Pueblo, Target or similar)
- Our Educational Assistance Program helps fund Sports Fees, Tutors, Science Camp, Junior College Tuition, Field Trip costs
- Opportunity for two Conversation Club volunteers (No Spanish required)
- Come share a skill with our students on a one-time basis. Teach something you love.



## Big Lift Little Library Opens

The children of the Carriage Manor Apartments are the happy recipients of a Big Lift Little Library. This book exchange initiative is an extension of the Rosalie Rendu Center's efforts to encourage families to discover the joy and benefits of reading together. Under the guidance of volunteer Art Club teacher, Elisa Madrigal, the children

painted and personalized the Little Library with pictures and quotes from their favorite books. What a wonderful addition to the Carriage Manor Apartments! We are grateful to the San Mateo County Library System for generously providing us with the Big Lift Little Library and children's books.

