



**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

Spring 2015

Rosalie Rendu Center Advisory Board

Sr. Trinitas Hernandez, D.C.
Executive Director

Sally Falkenhagen
Advisory Board Chair

Lynn Benas

Sr. Fran Ciluaga, D.C.

Jacqueline Day

Debbie Denton

Carrie Du Bois

Sr. Betty Marie Dunkel, D.C.

Sr. Paule Freeburg, D.C.

Ann Idzik

Bill Somerville

Marianne Stoner

Melanie Yunk



Dear Friends, Supports and Volunteers,

Writing this letter is a struggle for me because there is so much I want to share with each of you. Our little center is certainly a place where “seeds are planted,” seeds of love, advancement, happiness, broadening and education. This garden is tended to by many loving and supportive folks.

Those of you who donate help us, among other things, to buy books for our adult reading program. Thus far our 10:30 class has been introduced to Rosa Parks, Anne Frank, Cesar Chavez and Helen Keller. One student said reading about these women and men has been good because they are also learning history as well as different cultures. Then there are our treasured volunteers who run our after school homework club, come to conversation clubs helping our adult students become more at ease with speaking and sharing in English. If anyone would like to come and visit our classes, conversation clubs or just check us out please, contact me at (650) 315-7258.

If you and your family or group would like to do a project or share a special event, but can only commit for a one-time event, that’s also fine. The more experiences we can offer our students, the more opportunities they will have in becoming acclimated to their life in a bilingual society.

These past several months hurrahs, cheers and applause can be heard coming from our three classes as our students are passing their written and road tests for their California Drivers Licenses. Here again your generosity has made you a special part of this experience. I have been able to make contact with the Stanford Driving School in order to give our students experience similar to the DMV road test. It has helped tremendously and all have passed the first time! I only hope I pass with as good a score as theirs.

Recently I was asked a poignant question by a member of The Carl Gellert & Celia Berta Gellert Foundation. He asked if we see any return of the kindnesses given to our students, and I was proud to respond positively. Their response is not monetary, but more in actions and sharing. As Luis grows out of his clothes, I noticed his mother bringing a bag of his clothes to a mother with a younger son. Our students also share cereal, formula and rides to doctors, not to mention helping each other find the driving test online and with words of encouragement—small but important actions.

They receive many blessings from so many of you—beautiful Thanksgiving food baskets, generous Christmas gifts and school supplies—all given with real feelings that make them feel special and loved. Bless each and every one of you for being a part of our garden.

God bless you and your families for helping me help these very special families.

Devotedly yours,

Sister Trinitas

Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C., Executive Director

IN THIS ISSUE

- *A Culture of Encounter*
- *First Generation Success*
- *Volunteer Profile: Perry Marlon*
- *Our Generous Supporters*



 Sponsored by the Daughters of Charity
Ministry Services Corporation

A Culture of Encounter

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE EXPRESSION, “to create a culture of encounter.” Pope Francis uses it a lot, and many non-profits have embraced its core message. Creating a culture of encounter generally refers to reaching out, fostering dialogue and friendship outside one’s usual circles, and often makes a special point of encountering people who are neglected and ignored by the wider world.

The Rosalie Rendu Center is ahead of the curve on this. Since the Center’s inception, Sister T, the other Daughters of Charity, and all of the volunteers have firmly established an environment where friendship and dialogue has flowed both ways across perceived divides. The culture of encounter, where personal and meaningful conversations take place, permeates all aspects of the program, from the daily English classes, to the afterschool

Creating a culture of encounter means reaching out, fostering dialogue and friendship outside one’s usual circles.

homework program and especially in the Monday conversation clubs.

Here are few of the many stories of personal connections that volunteers and students have made at the Rosalie Rendu Center:

Jane Stern, a teacher and current volunteer, brought Carolina (a student in the more advanced English class) to a performance at the San Francisco Ballet. It was Carolina’s first time at the Ballet. Says Carolina “at first I was scared because I thought that I would feel out of place, but when I got there with Jane everything just felt natural and I really enjoyed it.” Jane shared, “That was one of the best experiences I personally have ever had! Carolina’s excitement was palpable, and she was very sophisticated and poised and beautifully dressed. She just took it all in—BART and all. We became friends that night!

Jane also shared that students Patty and Esperanza attended a bead show with her in San Mateo, enjoying lunch and buying beads for their jewelry making. Another student,

Maricela, invited Jane and her husband to lunch where Maricela’s mother taught them how to make tortillas.

Conversation Club volunteer Ann shares what she has learned from the women in the Club: “When Sister Trinitas invited me to be part of the conversation group, I had no idea what a profound impact it would have on my life. One morning students began to tell stories of how they came to the United States, risking their lives so their families would have opportunities they could only dream of experiencing. I was speechless hearing these tales. Women, young women, strong and tenacious, were quietly sharing with us stories of their lives. They work hard; they have a love for and celebrate their family. Many of their children are now going to college. Sister T’s mantra has been: when you educate the women, you grow a family. We are watching these families grow. What an amazing privilege to be in conversation with them.”

Another Conversation Club volunteer offers this observation about the students he volunteers with: “In my estimation the ladies have been remarkably successful in identifying opportunities for their children and then having the wherewithal to effectively take advantage of the opportunities presented. There are so many examples of children getting in to private schools and getting scholarships to attend summer camps all over the world. So many of their children are going to and completing college. My sense is that these accomplishments take place under significant economic pressures, but remarkably with humor and a firm sense of hope.”

Student Fidelia says: “I appreciate every volunteer. They have shown me that class is important and that they enjoy volunteering and value our friendships. They make me feel important and comfortable in having conversations during the session. Despite some of the violence in our community, they still believe in me and my classmates and continue to commit to the Center.”

Student Isabella shared that she now understands that different people have different ways of pronouncing English words. She admits that she did not understand some of the volunteers when she started coming, despite a good grasp of English. She says she



Jane and Carolina attend a performance of the San Francisco Ballet.

now feels much more comfortable interacting with English speakers both in class and out of class, and she directly attributes that to the Conversation Club.

In addition to English class, student Nadia and Conversation Club volunteer Debbie, have been working on math together for two years now. Not only is Nadia now able to help her young children with math homework, she has gained a large amount of confidence from the one-on-one English conversations she has had with Debbie (admittedly sometimes not about math). Nadia recently shared that she now speaks more English at her work and with her children. She is especially proud of the fact that for the first time, she was able to talk to her daughter’s doctor on her own—without help from her husband or a translator. For Debbie, hearing Nadia tell this story, “was one of the highlights of her life—all the hours I have spent at the Center were totally worth it.” It solidified her commitment to the students of the Rosalie Rendu Center.

We invite you to join us as we continue to establish the culture of encounter—for students and volunteers alike—at the Rosalie Rendu Center.



First Generation Success!

Youth of families from the Rosalie Rendu Center are finding success academically as many of them head to college—the first in their families to attend. (Many are the first in their families to graduate from high school, too!) Their stories are inspirational testaments to the power of education to break the cycle of poverty.



Sonia S.

Sonia S. came to this country from Mexico when she was eight years old. She struggled to learn the language and culture, but her parents always emphasized the importance of getting a good education. Her mother has nearly perfected her command of English by taking classes at the Rosalie Rendu Center, inspiring her children to persist in their own academic efforts.

Sonia always earned good grades, but she realized while she was in high school that she needed to be doing much more to get to college. Her teachers helped her find resources outside of her high school. Sonia spent three summers at UC Berkeley in SMASH (Summer Math and Science Honors Academy), a program of the Level Playing Field Institute (lpfi.org), and received helping during the school year from EPA's Foundation for a College Education (collegefoundation.org) with SAT prep, college application prep, and general support. Enrolling through her high school, she was able to take some classes at Cañada Junior College so that she got a taste of academically challenging work. Sonia also captained the Girls' Varsity Soccer Team during her high school career. Sonia says she was lucky to get six hours' sleep most nights. Her efforts paid off when she was admitted to ten of the eleven universities that she applied to for admission. She chose UC Berkeley because it is so widely recognized and respected, and she graduated from the university last year with a double major in Legal Studies and American Studies with an emphasis on Education Policy.

Sonia talks of her parent's encouragement ... and their unique punishment for misbehavior. If the children misbehaved, they had to accompany their parents to their job cleaning offices. They cleaned the bathrooms, vacuumed the offices and emptied the trash. It was a vivid experience of the paycheck-to-paycheck labor available to those without education. Sonia has visited the Homework Club at the Rosalie Rendu Center to talk to the elementary school kids about the steps she took to get to college and to widen their horizons about what is possible for them.

Sonia is currently working as an instructional aide for 9th graders at a predominately Hispanic high school in Sunnyvale. She is deciding whether to pursue a teaching credential or whether to aim higher, for a PhD in Education so that she is qualified for a wide variety of jobs in education, including those that require policy work related to education. As an instructional aide, she supports students in their math classes, English learners, and other students in their academic efforts. She has suggested ways to encourage EL (English learners) in their efforts to graduate from high school and continue on to college.

Sonia has developed a deep understanding of ways to improve her community's educational prospects while finding a most successful path for her own life.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Perry Marlon



For the past six years, the Rosalie Rendu Center has been blessed to have Perry Marlon volunteer at the Homework Club. This woman's love for children and teaching is evident in her weekly tutoring sessions.

Perry learned about the work of Sister Trinitas from a friend who was considering volunteering in East Palo Alto. This friend asked Perry to join her as she visited the Rosalie Rendu Center to determine if it was the right volunteer match for her. Although the friend chose another volunteer role, Perry became excited about the Center and signed up as a Homework Club volunteer.

Under the guidance of Lynn Benas, this dynamic duo has built a strong after school homework center. They work to keep the children caught up with their weekly homework assignments but put a special emphasis on building confidence. They also spend as much time as possible working with the children on how to think through complex problems. "We don't always quickly move on but use our sessions to help the children look at problems from multiple angles," Perry said.

During the summer months, the volunteers operate a book club that is popular with the children. Through a more relaxed summer structure, the volunteers work to instill a deep love of reading. At the end of the summer session, the kids are treated to pizza and the movies as a special reward for participating in the reading club. Perry is especially proud of the many preschool students who are ready to read when they enter kindergarten. This gives them a big advantage as they start school with enthusiasm for books and reading.

"Our work helps to really build confidence in the kids, and they go into the classroom much better prepared," said Perry, who is a former educator and brings a high caliber of volunteer skills to the Homework Club. "We work on thinking skills and how to get the kids to solve problems on their own by learning how to compare and contrast."

Kids from preschool through high school come to the center, and Perry is always willing and able to help. This drop-in program allows kids to use the service as much as they need to.

Perry credits both Lynn and Sister Trinitas for their strong support. Sister Trinitas will often visit the Homework Club to check in with the many students. This team effort makes the volunteer job more enjoyable for everyone, and the children learn that much community support is available to them. "I am there to help as much as I can," she said.

The Rosalie Rendu Center is grateful to have Perry Marlon as one of our star volunteers!



Thank You

Thank you to our friends who supported us from April, 2014 through April, 2015. Our apologies if we have missed anyone. Please let us know if we missed your name inadvertently.

Lucie Marie and Keith Albee
John and Marlene Arnold
Susan A. Barkan
Sam and Trisha Battles
Missy Bechtel
Beverly Beeler
Lynn and Daniel Benas
Leslie Berlin
Carolyn Brennan
Deb Brown
Michelle Scoville and Michael Burke
The Carl Gellert & Celia Berta Gellert
Foundation
Victor and Barbara Carranza
Norman and Deanna Chang
Tatiana Chervinski
George and Ruth Chippendale
Colin and Kathleen Cho
Sr. Fran Ciluaga, D.C.
George Clark
and Susan Williams-Clark
Rev. Gerald Coleman
Robert Cook
Frederique Dame
Daughters of Charity Foundation
Daughters of Charity Health System
Jacqueline Day
Vincent DeSalvo
Paul and Deborah Denton
Colleen Devlin
John and Sandra Dhuey
Nadelyn Hoya Dremalas
Grant and Carrie Du Bois
Duane Bay and Barbara Noparstak
Sr. Betty Marie Dunkel, D.C.
Alain and Rosemary Enthoven
David and Sally Ewald
Craig and Sally Falkenhagen
Margaret Feuer
Bret and Caitie Field
Anita Fiorini
Kim Forbes Tramel
Sr. Paule Freeburg, D.C.
Sr. Martha Garcia, D.C.
Albert and Barbara Gelpi
Robert and Virginia Glockner
Orville Goering
Barry and Claire Goss
Robert Grassilli
Nicolas and Amika Guillaume
Wendy Haesemeyer
Irene Haggerty
Sharon Y. Hamilton
Rev. George Hazler
Clifton L. Herndon
Ann Idzik

Mitra Javaheri
Bob Jones and Laura Roberts
David and Maureen Kennedy
Patty Kenney
Thomas and Kathleen Kraft
William and Donna Krepick
Ruth Lang
Kathleen Lange-Garcia
Ron and Marilyn Long
Peter and Julie Mahowald
Sidney Marks
Perry Marlon
Dan Marshall
Janet Trostel Martin
Lucy McCrary
Patrick and Nancy McGaraghan
Annie Melikian
Jon and Danielle Mewes
Mark and Elizabeth Moragne
Robert and Wife Nelson
Charles R. Nile
Mary O'Connor
Carolyn O'Donnell
Option 1 Staffing Services
Henry Organ
Sr. Carol Padilla
Chris and Naomi Peters
Beatrice Peterson
Philanthropic Ventures Foundation
Lynn and Michael Pierce
Claire Quesnel and Shafic Queini
Mary Ratner
Razoo Foundation
David and Sue Riggs
Carl and Sarah Rosendahl
Salesforce Foundation
Mary Esther Schnaubelt
Schniedwind Family Trust
Todd Schroeder
Madalyn M. Schwartz
Martha Schwarz
Stanley G. Scott and Willis Marie Scott
John and Marianne Stoner
Lisa and Tom Tayeri
The William and Flora Hewlett
Foundation
Union Bank N.A.
Marian Verlot
Sofia Vinokurov
Anne Vitullo and Jonathan Poe
Alexandra and Randall Von Feldt
Patricia Weiss
Michel and Steven Williams
Jan Woolsey
Kent and Melanie Yunk
Anna Zara and Robert English

How You Can Help the Rosalie Rendu Center 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) 473-9592



Generous Gifts at Christmas Time

The Rosalie Rendu Center is fortunate to have friends and donors who generously support our families at Christmas time with food, gifts and gift cards. Eleven families were adopted by **The Playschool** (www.knoxplayschools.com). **Caritas Business Services** and the **Daughters of Charity Health Systems Office** gave a present for every child who lives in Carriage Manor Apartments and for each child of our students at the Center. Every one of the families from the Center received a gift or gift card, making Christmas a little merrier!

