



# Rosalie Rendu Center ... where seeds are planted

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## Spring 2019

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

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### Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I begin this letter, my heart is full of gratitude for all your support, friendship, time, and sharing of yourselves to assist us to reach our goal of mentoring and elevating entire families through our educational programs.

Language Partners are a recent addition to the learning opportunities that we offer. These volunteers meet one-on-one with students for an hour once a week. Thanks to your patience and interest in their lives and progress, our students feel accepted and encouraged. The feedback from students has been most gratifying. They experience less nervousness and participate more readily in English conversations, especially outside of class. Their classmates have noticed the difference, too, and have requested a Language Partner of their own. The students are growing in self-confidence, shedding their fear of speaking, and the volunteers are growing in their understanding of the immigrant community. Also, a much-requested weekly Citizenship class has been added to our program. At the end of this class, our students will likely have more knowledge about our government than most native-born citizens!



Sister Trinitas

Our Family Enrichment Outings continue to give our students and their families an opportunity to share learning experiences. Whether it's assembling a robot at the Tech Museum of Innovation or watching a live theater performance, these shared moments of discovery spark conversations in our classes and at home. Further, they strengthen family bonds and broaden horizons.

Maria and I are busy planning our summer program. We will do as we have for the past two years and not have formal classes but have workshops instead. Our families are living under much stress these days and the workshops bring them together in a less structured learning environment. If any of you dear friends have a talent, hobby, skill, or knowledge that you would like to share with our students, please let us know. It is fun and satisfying to share a special craft, favorite recipe, dance step, or health and beauty tip with our wonderful and adventurous students. Bring a friend or two and you will be surprised at how much fun you will have. Stress dissipates as new friends laugh and learn together.

We are grateful for all you have done through your support over the years. The RRC is truly a place where seeds are planted. As I step back and see how Marisela comes to class and immediately starts conversing in English with our volunteer or see Cintia confidently stand and introduce herself to a visitor, I imagine each of you there beside me, nurturing our very special flowers in the Lord's garden.

God bless each of you and your families. As we move into warmer weather, may the sun warm your hearts and fill you with health and happiness. Many thanks for everything you have helped us and our students accomplish at the Center.

Devotedly yours,

Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C., Executive Director

MINISTRY SERVICES OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

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# An Educational, Fun-Filled Year!

## *Family Enrichment Programs Thrive*

The Center's family enrichment programs are designed to open our families' minds to the life-enhancing opportunities available to them through education. We are SO grateful to our philanthropic donors—both individuals and foundations—who have allowed us to significantly expand our offerings of family enrichment field trips this year.

We would especially like to thank:

- **Palo Alto Community Fund**
- **Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund**
- **Chan Zuckerberg Initiative**
- **Junior League of Palo Alto-Mid Peninsula**

for giving us the means to complement our classroom curriculum with field trips for the entire family.

In November, the docent-led tour and interactive exhibits at Hiller Aviation provided our families with an adventure in the world of flight. Highlights of the trip included using actual flight simulators,

“piloting” a real airplane and looking up old friends and family on the large Google earth screen. Several of our children are interested in returning this summer for the Aviation Summer Camp.

In December, our families enjoyed a new experience—attending the local Dancers Repertory Theater production of “’Twas the Night.” The beautiful holiday dance/theatre performance—with its colorful costumes and lively dancing—certainly enchanted our young boys and girls.

Thanks to the Junior League, our largest trip of the year so far was a visit to The Tech Museum in San Jose, complete with an IMAX movie about the living oceans. Our trip was made extra special because it was “Girls in Tech” day at the museum, so there were more than the usual number of hands-on activities for learning about all kinds of science and technology.

And we are not done yet with our awesome experiences for the year! We are looking forward to planetarium shows at DeAnza college in April and attending the always stimulating Maker Faire in May.



# Highlights of Expanded and New Classes

## Basic Computer Skills

Walk into any business, classroom, or clinic and you will see someone working on a computer. Try to obtain information about your children's school or sign them up for an activity, and you will need to know how to navigate a website.

For the last couple of years, we have offered a basic skills computer class every Friday morning taught by volunteer Richard Hutsell. Thanks to funds from the CZI grant, we purchased five new laptops. Our students recognize the value of computer skills and have been learning the fundamentals.

The first half hour is spent practicing typing skills with a free online typing tutorial program. The students have started progressing from frustratingly hunting and pecking to consciously matching each finger to its assigned keys. The balance of the time is spent creating a WORD document entitled *My Story*. Through this creative exercise, students are learning to use font and color, import online photographs, create a folder, and save it to the hard drive. The writing aspect of the exercise provides them with an opportunity to review and apply English grammar, spelling, vocabulary, reading, and punctuation learned in their ESL classes. The students are writing about their own lives: vivid childhood memories, first jobs, favorite activities, and family. The emerging self-portraits are truly beautiful and give us greater insight into the people we have the privilege to serve.

## Citizenship Test Preparation

In March, we began a citizenship test preparation class led by new volunteer Debra Strichartz (see the back page for more on Debra) and longtime volunteer Jane Stern. The class meets once a week with the goal of mastering the 100 questions and answers on the test and practicing the personal interview.

Topics covered by the questions are American government, history, civics, and geography. A cheer goes up each time a student commits a new question and answer to memory. Applicants also must demonstrate their ability to read, write, and speak English. Since speaking, in general, causes the greatest anxiety for those who are still learning English, practicing the personal interview helps to calm those jitters. Texts and workbooks take the students through the material systematically and reinforce English acquisition. Most important, offering this class allows us to support our students in their decision to make a commitment to this country for the future of their families and for the benefit of our community as well.

## Pronunciation

Our Level 3 students began refining their English listening and speaking skills in the Pronunciation class which began in January. With the assistance of the excellent materials created by retired Mission College Professor Marsha Chan and her extensive instructional videos available on YouTube, the students are acquiring the musicality of English and improving their fluency.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

# Debra Strichartz



After 20 years in health care working at Stanford and Lucile Packard in organ donation and transplantation, I recently retired and had given a lot of thought where to put my volunteer time. I had done some work with adult learners in an ESL class and wanted to do even more classes. I was introduced to the Rosalie Rendu Center by Jane Stern, a teacher there. Right away, I knew it was a great fit. I am currently teaching a class at the Center on preparation for taking the citizenship exam, and I'm also speaking English with a student in one-on-one practice sessions.

I am truly enjoying the experience personally and am excited to help advance skills with this community. I am so impressed with the energy and commitment from the adult students. I want my volunteering to help adults learn English and life skills so that they can advance and advocate for themselves.

I have traveled extensively in Mexico and Central and South America and am currently studying Spanish. My previous volunteering includes multiple service trips to Haiti with the Los Altos High School Haiti Solidarity Club. We partnered with a grassroots organization SOPUDEP to build the Delmas 83 school with support of the Los Altos Rotary [<https://www.sopudep.org/>]. I have worked on many political campaigns registering voters and phone banking, including canvassing to reach Spanish speaking voters and helping with a fundraiser for Mi Familia Vota.

## A NOTE FROM

# Bill Somerville



Bill Somerville,  
Founder of  
Philanthropic  
Ventures Foundation

I have known Sister T for over 20 years and have supported her work ever since. Her dedication is contagious and most impressive. Her secret, I think, is keeping it simple—doing good work and staying focused.

Sister T is a no nonsense person—loving, dedicated, and a delight to work with. She is also very productive in making her dreams come true and serving a large number of people, just a few at a time. Sister T likes people and it shows. She also respects people of all walks and is one of those persons who makes our world what it is—a loving place. I am honored to be able to work with her.

# Thank You!

Thank you to our friends who supported us from April, 2018 through May 1, 2019. Our apologies if we have missed anyone. Please let us know if we missed your name inadvertently.

<i>Cris Adair</i>	<i>Google</i>	<i>Cecile O'Driscoll</i>
<i>Lucie Marie and Keith Albee</i>	<i>Barry and Claire Goss</i>	<i>Martha Edwards and John Orcutt</i>
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<i>Alice Cotton</i>	<i>Stephan and Heather Keller</i>	<i>Colleen Devlin and Rick Rosenthal</i>
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<i>Daughters of Charity Foundation</i>	<i>Patty Kenney</i>	<i>Seton Sister's Home</i>
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