



Rosalie Rendu Center ... where seeds are planted

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(650) 473-9522 • <https://www.rosalie-rendu-center.org/>

SPRING 2024

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

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I begin to write to you on a gray, rainy day, I see a few pink blossoms starting to appear on a cherry tree, signaling that the clouds will soon give way to brighter days. Hope really is all around us.

I recently returned from a Borderlands Pilgrimage trip to San Diego and Tijuana with some fellow church members where we saw and heard about the migrant experience from a variety of perspectives and lived experiences. It confirmed for me that when people with the capacity for compassion, respect, and generosity partner with people who possess great love, determination, and resilience, they bear witness to hope fulfilled in transformed lives.

With your generous partnership as donors and volunteers, sounds and words that were once incomprehensible to our students now make sense, and strangers are now friends. Our students' hope for a new life for themselves and their families has become a reality because of your help.

Through valuable collaborations with organizations such as the Silicon Valley YMCA's Project Cornerstone and Hidden Villa, parents learn to talk with their children about difficult topics like racism and understand the opportunities for learning embedded in loads of summer camp fun.

Since the beginning of the year, we have shared the joy of three more students passing their naturalization test and becoming citizens. One former citizenship student recently expressed her excitement over casting her first vote and making her voice heard.

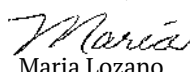
Thanks to your long-term commitment to the Rosalie Rendu Center, we are here to serve and build relationships with our students and their families as they progress through their immigrant journey. In this Newsletter, you will meet Nadia and join us in celebrating her accomplishments along this road.

We are truly privileged to be a part of our students' lives and to be entrusted with their potential for growth through learning English and finding a safe and encouraging community. You are a vital part of cultivating the soil for this growth.

We have a long waiting list of students ready to embark on their English learning journey in September. The greatest need is for an evening introductory level class. Our hope is to open a second off-site evening class at a local school, but we need teachers. Who in your circle of friends would make a caring and motivating teacher, classroom assistant, or language partner? Maybe you!

We have been blessed beyond measure to be a blessing to others. May the God of hope bless you all.

Yours truly,


Maria Lozano

Executive Director

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





Fun Workshops at The Rosalie Rendu Center Enhance Both Endorphins and Learning

By Carrie Du Bois

As an elected school board member, I always keep my eye on the “fun” that happens in high school, so it’s interesting that I was assigned this article for our newsletter. A few years ago at a school board meeting, there was a presentation from the administrators at one of our small schools. I asked about the fun activities at the school. The presenters were caught off guard by my question because they were so focused on telling us about the academic program.

A few weeks later, I was with students from that same school and I asked them about fun things they do at school. Their answer was “School is not fun.” I was so disappointed in that response. It’s been a couple of years and I’m happy to say that school has made a lot of progress in growing the fun on campus. There are now fun clubs, field trips and other activities offered at the school.

The Rosalie Rendu Center didn’t add in the fun learning activities after the academic program was in place. The fun learning has been a part of the program from the earliest days.



A few years ago, I was even able to offer a fun learning opportunity myself. I love decorating cakes and was invited to do a cake decorating class at the center. I worked with the women and taught them how to decorate mini Barbie doll cakes. It was super fun and the cakes were amazing to see.

There is a new book out on the importance of fun in the process of learning: *Research-Based Strategies To Ignite Student Learning*. Neurologist Judy Willis shows how fun experiences increase levels of dopamine and endorphins in our brain. These hormones are important for successful learning.

Dopamine is known as the ‘feel-good hormone’ with good reason. It has the power to make learning feel pleasurable and rewarding. Endorphins, on the other hand, help people deal with stressful situations — such as compliance deadlines.

A good mood has also been shown to improve the value of perceived rewards. This includes the gratification that comes with learning something new, or that sense of accomplishment we feel when we pick up a new skill.

Do you have a skill that you would like to share with our students that would be fun? We would love to hear from you.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- <https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/dopamine-learning/>
- <https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/endorphins-help-you-learn-better/>
- <https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/resources/infographics/neurotransmitters-of-learning/>
- <https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/compliance-training>
- <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1981-31724-001>

ESL and Citizenship Preparation Classes Are Changing Lives

By Jane Stern

When Nadia Govea walked into the Rosalie Rendu Center she had no idea how her life would change!

I think that is true of all the students who found this magical place. Nadia had never been to school—even in Mexico. Her mother needed her to help her with her sewing so the family could survive. As a young woman she immigrated to the United States, met and married Jose, supported him in his successful businesses, and raised two healthy children who are now college students.

Nadia was determined to learn English. She heard of a place — supported by the generosity of many donors — where she could do so for free. Little did she know when she crossed the threshold in Sister T’s then-very-small office that there was a miracle waiting for her. She now speaks almost flawless English and is learning to read and write.

Months ago she even passed her citizenship test. The Rosalie Rendu Center has become a place where miracles do happen. Supported completely by grants and donations, it mirrors the vision of Margaret Mead:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Volunteer Spotlight

Judy Deggeller's volunteer work as a Language Partner proliferated as she took on multiple roles and recruited new volunteers.

By Sally Falkenhagen

Fond memories of her elementary school years spent with the Sisters of Providence at St. Michael's, in Olympia, Washington, sparked Judy Deggeller's interest when a friend told her about volunteering possibilities at the Rosalie Rendu Center.

After meeting Sister T and Maria, Judy knew she had found a new home and immediately was paired with an advanced ESL student as a Language Partner.

At the same time, Judy recognized that the Center could use some site improvements and suggested involving her husband's local Kiwanis club.

Like magic, the landscape was transformed by Judy's husband Martin and landscape designer John Erving. When the tree-planting non-profit Canopy got involved, Sister T then started a long honey-do list for her new Kiwanian friends.

Judy also got involved helping organize the many books gifted by the Bring Me A Book Foundation, teaching craft classes, sorting through boxes, and creating more storage in the small conference room.



In addition to her regular weekly meetings with her single Language Partner, Judy meets with three beginning ESL students weekly to reinforce what they are learning in class and to promote a comfort in early conversation. The women know they will not be judged and can stumble with lots of encouragement. Judy quips, "As an intermediate Spanish student, I am well aware of the embarrassment that can come in learning a new language. The women in my small class are very patient with me. We love being together!"

Judy has volunteered her entire life for non-profit organizations including the Girls Club of East Palo Alto, Association of Senior Day Health, Palo Alto University Rotary, Bring Me A Book Foundation, and Ecumenical Hunger. She was recently recognized as a recipient of the Avenidas Lifetime Achievement Award for 2024.

All of us at the Rosalie Rendu Center are grateful to have this talented and energetic volunteer among us!
Thank you, Judy!

Making Donations From IRA Distributions Has a Double Benefit: One for You and One for RRC

By Richard Hutsell

Are you of a certain age? And making a taxable minimum required distribution from your individual retirement account (IRA)? Did you know that you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA to the Rosalie Rendu Center

and potentially reduce your tax bill? Please check with the IRS or your financial advisor on the details.

I have done it for the past three years and it has helped me give a little more to the Center.

The Silicon Valley Community Foundation Provides Multiple Grants To The Center

They include funds for leadership and fundraising training.

By Debbie Denton

The Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) awards several community action grants to programs that are focused on "supporting strong and engaged communities that are building equity for Silicon Valley residents."

For the last three years, the Rosalie Rendu Center has been generously funded by their **Faith initiative**, which supports faith-based organizations working with local communities of color to increase community participation and leadership.

This past year, we were also fortunate to receive a timely **Capacity-Building and Leadership Investment grant**, which funded leadership training for Maria Lozano as a new Executive Director, administrative assistant training for Sandra Godoy to enhance her skills, volunteer training sessions, and a total revamp of our website.

SVCF also invests in strategic initiatives and special projects. For the last three years, we have greatly benefited from being selected as a member of the LatinXCEL fund cohort. **The LatinXCEL fund** was launched to invest long-term in Latinx-led organizations to help overcome long standing racial inequities, with the goal to make the region more inclusive. Not only has the fund provided the Center with very generous unrestricted funding, we have received fundraising training and executive coaching. We've also learned about how to better address our community needs through our collaborations with fellow members of the cohort.

For more information on the SVCF community grants, please see their website at <https://www.siliconvalleycf.org/>



Thank You!

Thank you to our friends who supported us from March 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024.
Our apologies if we have missed anyone. Please let us know if we mistakenly missed your name.

Cris Adair	Paul and Deborah Denton	David and Maureen Kennedy	Shafic Quesnel and Claire Oueini
Lucie Marie and Keith Albee	John and Sandra Dhuey	Sr. Eileen Kenny, D.C.	Ricardo and Guillermina Ramos
Christine S. Alloo	Michael Disabato and Nancy Ponstein	William and Donna Krepick	Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities
Desola Amos	Gary and Lani Dorff	Mildred Lee	Shirley Riggio
John and Marlene Arnold	Grant and Carrie Du Bois	Maria Lozano	David and Sue Riggs
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Barbara Noparstak	Bret and Caitie Field	Patrick and Nancy McGaraghan	John and Kathy Schniedwind
Cynthia Beeger	Anita Fiorini	Matt McWright and Ann Morrival	Phillip Sheridan
Jan Bergman	Sr. Paule Freeburg, D.C.	Ana Mejia Calderon	Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Bob and Connie Lurie Foundation	Gregory and Penny Gallo	Annie Melikian	Deborah Skidmore
Pamela Brandin	Albert and Barbara Gelpi	Wallace D. Mersereau	Roger V. Smith
Carolyn Brennan	Virginia Glockner	Meta Local Community Fund	Bill Somerville
Michael Burke and Michelle Scoville	Paul Goldstein and Diane Guinta	Jon and Danielle Mewes	William and Jane Stocklin
Nancy Carragee	Barry and Claire Goss	Loretta Mingram	Tom and Lisa Tayeri
Victor and Barbara Carranza	Graniterock/Woolpert Family Fund / Rose Ann Woolpert	Mark and Elizabeth Moragne	The San Francisco Foundation
Jennifer Castello	Michele Grason	Terri Muschott	Sr. Ellen Van Zandt, D.C.
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative DAF	Peter and Melissa Guenther	Charlotte Muse	Randall and Alexandra Von Feldt
Michael and Judy Chin	Irene Haggerty	Robert Nelson	Victoria Vozza
Colin and Kathleen Cho	Melanie Hauck and Jim Hertel	New Community Church	Richard and Karen Walker
Christ is Love	Eunice Hawran	Karen O'Leary Engelbart	Cora Wallace
Sr. Fran Ciluaga, D.C.	Father George Hazler	John Orcutt and Martha Edwards	Elizabeth Weal
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Betty Clasey	James Holmlund and Nancy McClenny	Palo Alto Community Fund	Catherine Wolff
Jody Clasey	Richard and Barbara Hutsell	Palo Alto Weekly	Jan Woolsey and Lora Perkins
Richard Cline	Stewart Hyland	Bill Parkhurst and Amy Wright	Melanie Yunk
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Robert K. Cook	Kimberly Itanen	Philanthropic Ventures Foundation	
Nicole Crummett	Tracey Jedrzejeh	Jonathan Poe and Anne Vitullo	
Daughters of Charity—Seton Provincialate	Sr. Margaret Keaveney, D.C.	Vicky Powers	
Daughters of Charity Foundation			
Marty and Judy Deggeller			
Sr. Martin Dehlinger, D.C.			
Bruce Delagi and Dan Jepson			



Help Wanted

By Martha Edwards

We are looking for volunteers to help with our students and our programs. Volunteering may be either ongoing or on a limited basis.

Language Partners

This is an ongoing commitment. Students practice their speaking skills one-on-one with a volunteer — either in-person, by phone or by Zoom — once a week for an hour. The time of day is flexible. (We provide training in advance.)

Classroom Instructors and Assistants

This is an ongoing commitment. Volunteers partner with an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor to co-teach weekly classes or be an assistant to the teacher. Knowledge of Spanish is helpful but not required.

Drivers

Take our students to appointments around the Bay Area on an as-needed basis.

Special Events

The Center provides events for students and their families several times a year. These are typically in the evenings. Volunteers can either take responsibility for the menu for an event or help with a dish or two. Typically, 15–20 people attend. Volunteers can also help with arts and crafts for the children of the families who attend the events.

Citizenship Test Preparation

This is an ongoing commitment. Volunteers partner with a student and help them prepare for their citizenship test. Knowledge of Spanish is helpful as the test would be taken in Spanish.

