



Esperanza Courier

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HOLIDAY ISSUE



A New Year, A New Home

A new year marks a new beginning for Esperanza Services! We are thrilled to announce that we will be starting off 2013 in the new Esperanza Center! Nestled just one and a half miles away from our current

location, our new, spacious, and easily accessible office will afford further enhancement our services to the community. We are excited to increase the provision

of services, trainings, and activities for consumers and employees alike. We also look forward to integrating our Center into the community of



Alhambra by participating in more



activities that are beneficial to the clients we serve. "It is our mission to provide services to underserved communities, children, adults and families with special needs," said Evie Romero, CEO of Esperanza Services.

Please come and visit our new Esperanza Center at 2510 W. Main St., Alhambra, CA 91801. For further information about our services and business hours, please visit our website at www.esperanzaservices.com.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A New Year, A New Home	1
Client of the Month	1
Fiesta Time on Olvera Street	2
A Dream that Came True	2
RISE Program Launches	3
Against All Odds	3
Message from the CEO	4

Client of the Month

Jose Mongalo has been a client of Esperanza Services since 2007. Like most of our clients, he came to us with many dreams and goals, including marrying Sandra Olmedo, his one true love, whom he met at Mount San Antonio College. To avoid losing disability benefits when he married Sandra, they decided to only have a church ceremony but no legal documents have been drawn up.

His other goals included obtaining his U.S. citizenship and returning to his hometown in Nicaragua to visit his family that he has not seen for ten years. Since the agency acquired Jose as a client, it has been our mission to facilitate his dreams to

fruition. And it was not until October of 2012 that his dream



Jose showing off his Certificate of Naturalization.

of becoming a U.S. citizen came true with the assistance of

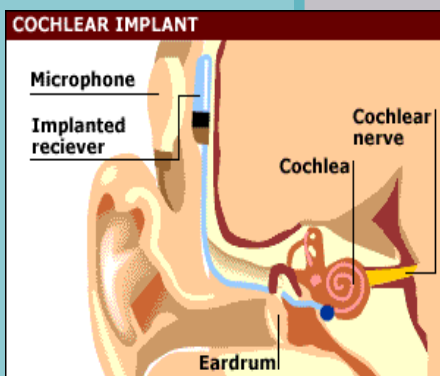
Beatriz Serrano. Esperanza Services was also able to loan Jose money to afford a trip to Nicaragua to visit his family. Jose will be able to pay back the loan monthly on his terms.

Unfortunately, on November 19, 2012, Jose received a call that his sister was hospitalized for cancer. After having booked a trip to his home country, Jose decided to postpone it until his sister undergoes surgery and is in the recovery stages. But rest assure, he will not be detoured. His dream of finally reuniting with his family will come true soon. Jose is very grateful to the agency – one that empowers clients and makes dreams come true.



Maria Julia Estrada and Teresa Guzman at the event.

“Reina Escobar’s dream was to get cochlear implants to enable her to hear after losing her hearing ten years ago.”



Fiesta Time on Olvera Street

What started out as an ordinary trip to Olvera Street on Sunday, October 21, 2012, turned into anything but when Teresa Guzman and her client Maria Julia Estrada decided to pay a visit to the birthplace of the City of Los Angeles, otherwise known as El Pueblo Historic Monument.

They had no idea the excursion would turn Maria Julia into a star. At La Placita Olvera, one can wander around the marketplace and shop for souvenirs, including handcrafted Mexican wares typical of old Mexico. You can also stroll through this beauti-

ful street and stop for the popular taquitos or tacos at the outdoor cafes. Olvera Street also offers a variety of traditional authentic Mexican cuisine, with delicious enchiladas, mole, and other native dishes.

It is located right across the street from Union Station and one block from Chinatown. It is also the host of many beautiful traditions held by the Latin community. On weekends, one can enjoy outdoor entertainment by strolling bolero musicians and folkloric dancing. That’s just what Teresa and Maria Julia planned on doing

when unbeknownst to them, they encountered Lupillo Rivera, a famous Mexican regional singer, who invited Maria Julia on “stage” to dazzle the people with her talented vocal chords. Social and outgoing as she is, Maria Julia did just that.

She entertained the audience, shining like the star she is, while dancing away with Teresa Guzman right by her side. This earned her free movie tickets and a McDonalds gift card. Good job, Maria! Felicidades!

A Dream that Came True



Reina Escobar’s dream was to get cochlear implants to enable her to hear after losing her hearing ten years ago. Reina’s primary means of communication was through writing, but she longed to have what so many of us take for granted: the ability to hear speech, sounds, music, and believe it or not, noise.

Reina’s Esperanza Services’ counselor, Norma Cenicerros, has been working with Reina since 2005 to try to make her dreams of hearing a reality.

But with any dream worth obtaining, there comes many struggles and obstacles. Reina’s insurance com-

pany denied her the costly surgery that would be unaffordable otherwise. But Norma did not give up. She continued advocating for Reina in every way, including making sure Reina scheduled and attended all her medical appointments, followed up with all medical recommendations and authorizations, and took all necessary tests required by the doctors at General Hospital.

After years of encouragement and support, Norma was able to schedule a hearing evaluation at USC Hospital, which was monumental progress — until it got cancelled because of changes in Reina’s insurance. But that did not deter Norma, who did not give up and contacted Reina’s insurance company to investigate the problem.

Finally, after years of advocacy, support, and dedication, the insurance company agreed to cover the entire cost of the surgery!

Reina received her implants on September 25, 2012 at USC Hospital and the surgery was successfully performed by Dennis R. Maceri, MD.

Now thanks to Norma’s hard work, persistence, and commitment, Reina’s dream came true — she is able to hear! This story proves that miracles are possible with just a little bit of faith, determination, and perseverance!

RISE Program Launches

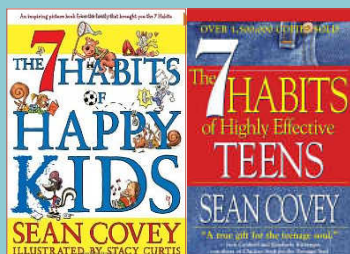


Esperanza Services' long-standing commitment to individuals, families, and parents with developmental disabilities has led to a pronounced observation that the children living in these households are severely underserved. Parents with a disability often lack the capacity to adequately secure services and leverage support not only for themselves, but also their children. This reality has compelled Esperanza Services to expand its reach to these very children that are desperate for mental, emotional, social, and academic support and intervention.

Consequently, in 2011, Esperanza Services sought after funding through the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Prevention, Education, and Intervention (PEI) program, that would afford opportunities to directly address the aforementioned needs. In the summer of 2012, Esperanza Services received news that it was awarded this grant to develop its Reaching Independence and Self-Empowerment (RISE) program!

RISE's main objective is to assist children living with a parent diagnosed with a mental or developmental disability in becoming self-sufficient, successful, empowered, and thriving individuals in their communities. We accomplish this through weekly, in-

home, one-on-one life skills mentoring and monthly group workshops facilitated throughout Los Angeles County.



RISE mentors provide youth ages 7 through 17 with ongoing education, support, and advocacy in myriad areas, to directly reduce prevalent risk factors, such as social isolation, untreated depression, anti-social behavior, and/or low academic performance. Supplemented by Sean Covey's highly acclaimed bestseller, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and *The Seven Habits of Happy Kids*, RISE's mentoring is tailored to each youth's unique, individual needs through a personalized assessment and service plan. The service plan encompasses goals that include, but are not limited to, conflict resolution skills, anger management, effective communication, goal-setting, self-esteem/identity, advocacy, social skills, school navigation, and academic intervention.

RISE also provides life skills group workshops for its existing participants, as well as non-program individuals, throughout the community at local agencies and schools. Topics covered in the workshops include parent education, stress management, leadership skill development, problem-solving techniques, and self advocacy.

Moreover, a core component of RISE is its comprehensive case management and linkages to community resources, which parents and children have immense difficulty accessing on their own. RISE primarily serves Los Angeles County's Service Planning Areas 3 and 7; all services are free of charge and funded through the Los Angeles County's DMH-PEI grant.

As is true of all programs at Esperanza Services, RISE is founded on the philosophy that each person is able to recognize their innate ability to make empowered choices. This philosophy is crucial for children and youth as they formulate educated decisions that will impact the rest of their lives. To learn more about the RISE program and how you can receive services, please contact Jenny Vu, Program Manager, and/or Diana Barcia, Program Coordinator, at 626-457-5242.

Against All Odds

Vanessa Barnes is a 27-year old female diagnosed with Mild Mental Retardation and has been a client of Esperanza Services since 2003. Vanessa lives with both her parents, Gene and Elva Barnes, and younger brother, Timothy. Vanessa receives support from her loving family along with Esperanza Services.

Vanessa participates yearly in the Special Olympics summer games and partakes in the 3-on-3 basketball tournament games. She is the only female on her basketball team and strives to be the best player she can be, giving it 100%. Vanessa's basketball team won the first ever Special Olympics 3-on-3 tournament in 2010. At the Special Olympics summer games 2012, Vanessa and her team won the championship game, which Vanessa dedicated to her grandmother, Flor, who passed away in 2011.

Vanessa was very happy to win and to have the support of her parents and Esperanza Services' counselor, Maria Leyva. Vanessa states that she will continue to attend the Special Olympics summer games for as long as she can.

In addition, Vanessa has received a lot of support from Esperanza Services and was recently assisted with locating a job at Gateway Montessori Preschool as a part-time art teacher. This was a significant accomplishment for Vanessa to work in the community and gaining a sense of inclusion, despite her disability.

Vanessa enjoys working with children. When Vanessa reports feeling frustrated and overwhelmed with the children, she finds comfort in talking with her parents and Maria Leyva for sup-

port. Although this last year has been difficult for Vanessa after losing her grandmother, she has pulled through and remains strong. Vanessa has so much charisma and determination that not even her disability can stop her.



**Vanessa and her counselor,
Maria Leyva.**



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OUR MISSION

Esperanza Services is a non-profit organization that provides personalized, high quality supportive services and advocacy to underserved communities, especially children, adults, and families with special needs to achieve self-sufficiency with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Esperanza Services empowers people with developmental disabilities, by providing culturally competent, comprehensive Independent Living and Supported Living services, that focuses on developing the client's innate potential for successful living.



Message from the CEO



As we enter the holiday season, we have much to be thankful for this year. The holidays are a wonderful

time for us to step back from our busy lives and reflect on our many blessings.

Over the years, I have come to realize how special Esperanza Services is. I am very thankful that we have a team that is committed to our mission of providing the very best service for our clients and their families, which often leads to a dramatically

better quality of life for those we serve, our families, and our children.

I am thankful that we have not only survived, but thrived, during our nation's recent economic challenges. We have done it by focusing on our mission and finding new ways to help those in need. Our new RISE program is only one example of the innovation that has become a hallmark of Esperanza Services.

I am also thankful that we will soon be moving into our beautiful new building. We will finally have our very own home and we want to share it with all of our friends!

From the Esperanza family to yours, we wish you giant blessings of love

and happiness to go with the gifts and trimmings you will share with your families on this special holiday.

Happy Holidays!

With warmest holiday wishes,

Evie Romero

President & CEO

