



FALL 2016



RELIABLE WORKERS



READY TO SERVE

day worker center of mountain view



20 YEARS OF SERVICE! AN EVENING OF STORIES, MUSIC & FEAST

We celebrated our 20th anniversary in November with a huge party at the Community School of Music and Arts where employers, workers, Board members, staff, volunteers, and donors chowed down on a bountiful feast catered entirely by our wonderful workers. An enormous “¡Gracias!” to...

- ♦ the kids and instructors of **Reach Potential Movement** for the exciting dance performances,
- ♦ MC **Celina Rodriguez**;
- ♦ **Angel Santuario** and **Sofia Balog** for the video of our history;
- ♦ all the **workers** who set up before and cleaned up after the party; and
- ♦ the **Anniversary Planning Committee** members whose tireless work created a memorable evening.



Music Dreams ... and a Day Gig

Before wowing the audience at our anniversary party, worker **Ivan Canseco** had a long history of performing, beginning at the age of five when his mother enrolled him in theater in Durango, Mexico. “It’s incredibly meaningful — almost a magical experience,” says Ivan. He loves seeing audience members’ faces “full of wonder and happiness when my music transports them to a different reality.”

But a music career doesn’t always put food on the table. For his “day gig,” Ivan works through the Center as a carpenter, handyman, and general laborer.

Economic opportunities brought Ivan to the Bay Area. The journey from Durango was fraught with difficulty. “At one point, we had to eat food from the garbage just to survive.” Worse, he was forced to leave behind his beautiful 11-year-old son. Ivan worries that his son “will grow up without me, and that he could get the wrong directions from those around him.”

Reflecting on his experiences here, Ivan says, “I thought that once I stepped onto American soil, I would be a free person. “I

thought, ‘Here is a nation made by immigrants, full of opportunity, full of jobs.’ That is the dream.”

He continues, “People who are born here—even our own kids, at times—don’t understand the struggle to make life better for yourself and your family. They don’t understand extreme poverty, not to have shoes to wear, not to be able to go to school, not to even have food to eat. They don’t see the desperation that people feel when they have absolutely nothing.”

Now settled in the Bay Area, Ivan sees it as being rife with opportunities. And he finds an incredible support network at the Day Worker Center. “A large portion of the community here speaks Spanish,” he says, “which gives me a voice and a chance to take part in more jobs and activities.”

Through the Center, Ivan has found work, community, and an eager audience for his music.



Ivan believes the Day Worker Center is the “perfect place to learn new jobs — and English ... and that’s only a tiny fraction of the services they provide!”



P2 “THAT’S ¡AMORE!”
CENTER WORKERS FIND LOVE

P3 EMPLOYER PROFILE:
BUILDING LIVES

P3 VOLUNTEER PROFILE:
LIFE-LONG LEARNING



Workers Berta and Gregorio heartily endorse the Day Worker Center: "I love that they can help me find work, that there's a community in place."

At the Day Worker Center, day laborers find jobs, boost their education, and get access to medical, dental and legal care. They also find instant community, a place to network and share challenges. But **Berta** and **Gregorio** found a rare and surprising bonus: **love!**



The long journey toward each other began in Mexico where **Berta Ruiz** was a vendor for a small business and **Gregorio Perez** a supervisor at a department store. With little advancement opportunity, each decided to pursue work in the U.S. Separately, they said painful goodbyes to loved ones and made the arduous trek across mountains and desert. Arriving at the Day Worker Center, they found community—and amore.

Now they're passionate about each other—and their new jobs. "The work I do is very important to me," says Gregorio, who picked up construction skills on his own.

Gregorio's favorite job is laying tile, but he does all the jobs needed to renovate homes, like installing doors and hardwood floors, re-facing cabinets, and patching and painting walls.

And Berta has learned from him. She explains, "I assist Gregorio with his construction projects, lend him a pair of

hands. I can now help him with all aspects of his assignments." Says Berta, "I love knowing I've done all the work I can."

For the last 16 months, the pair has worked side by side, remodeling rental homes for long-time Center employer **Vikash** (see story, next page). That steady job, however, is coming to an end.

Berta is concerned about their financial future. "I worry about what jobs we'll maintain and how everything will work out."

They also fret about the future for their eight children from previous marriages, now all in their twenties. "I'm

a father," says Gregorio simply. "I will always worry about my children."

Whether working, relaxing with movies, hanging out with friends, or worrying about their kids, Berta and Gregorio are now inseparable. Whatever the future brings, they'll face it together.

“
*I love knowing
I've done all
the work I can.*
— Berta Ruiz

RENOVATING HOMES, BUILDING LIVES

Years ago, before the Day Worker Center existed, employer **Vikash** hired extra help for his properties off the street corner or from the Home Depot parking lot. After the Center opened in 1996, he happily began using its more equitable, friendly hiring process.

As an immigrant himself from Kenya, Vikash can empathize with newcomers to this country who are seeking to support their families. Immediately after college, Vikash hired on with Hewlett-Packard and built a 25-year career with the Bay Area companies. He now owns several rental properties and finds great satisfaction in being able to provide steady home-remodeling work for new arrivals.

Long-term jobs give compañer@s a chance to build their skills. For a year and a half, Center workers like **Gregorio** and **Berta** (see story, previous page) have helped Vikash paint, remodel kitchens and baths, and install insulation and hardwood floors. Another compañer@, Edi, has worked with Vikash for almost four years.

Many of Vikash's friends and neighbors now hire from the Day Worker Center, too. Says Vikash, "[People] come to this country looking for opportunity. I like giving them an opportunity."

Vikash and worker Edi take a break from home remodeling.



A lifetime of learning for students ... and teacher

"¿Como se llama?" With this basic question volunteer ESL (English as a Second Language) coordinator **Patricia Markee** begins the journey of finding out about a new class of English language learners. Each student's answer, in English, helps Patricia gain a sense of the student's experience in and knowledge of their new language.

Once a week for 90 minutes, Patricia teaches up to 18 workers to read and speak English. ESL classes are mandatory for those looking for work at the Center. They help compañer@s better negotiate the work world and more readily adapt to living in the U.S.

Teaching ESL at the Day Worker Center



Patricia Markee reviews a textbook.

comes with particular challenges. As new workers arrive, staff assign them to either a beginning or advanced class. ESL is taught year-round, Monday through Friday.

But with jobs being the top priority, work schedules may prevent students from attending class for several weeks in a row. So teachers must gear lessons to students with widely varying knowledge skills. Those who need extra help may receive tutoring in small groups, if the teacher has an assistant.

Patricia compares this challenge to teaching in the one-room schoolhouse of yore.

see **Volunteer**, page 4

WATCH YOUR
DOLLARS
TRANSFORM
LIVES!

YOUR Donation

AT THE DAY WORKER CENTER,
WE PUT YOUR MONEY TO GOOD USE.
HERE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF
HOW WE STRETCH YOUR DOLLARS.

\$20

FEED 50 WORKERS

With 15 seasonal vegetable seeds
workers will harvest 45 pounds of food.

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TRAIN A WORKER FOR 8 HOURS

Just think of the number of lives you save!

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Keeps our doors open and lights on
for an entire week!

**MAIL YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CHECK
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DONATE AT OUR WEBSITE.**





One of our youngest supporters, Michiko, enjoys the 20th anniversary party — along with her mom, former jobs coordinator Robyn Goka.

Volunteer, from page 3

Beyond teaching, in her role as coordinator Patricia chooses the students' texts. She also helps to screen new ESL tutors, teaching assistants, and teachers. About the Center's instructors, Patricia says that ultimately "María chooses teachers with heart."

According to Patricia, student turnover can make personal connections challenging; instructors may begin to feel isolated. To help overcome this, Patricia arranges regular meetings where instructors can discuss their challenges with one another.

Although now retired, Patricia's several careers as software engineer, dissertation editor for a local university, and credentialed ESL teacher of teens and adults gave her a rich, extensive background for this volunteer work teaching English to newcomers.

Enthusiastic yet unassuming, this long-time volunteer claims she still "stumbles" in Spanish, even after several semesters of Spanish. But one thing is clear: Patricia embraces life-long learning — for herself, and for her students.



HIRE YOUR OWN HERO!

Is your home ready for holiday guests? Need help hanging decorations? Yard ready for the

winter? Get help with these chores and many more! Call **650.903.4102** today.



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