

Sept 2013



# micronoticias

## CASA CENTRAL 2013 Annual Awards Dinner

Wednesday, October 23, 2013  
Palmer House Hilton  
17 E Monroe St Chicago, IL 60603  
6:00 p.m.

**Chair**  
Brian Huff, President,  
Kellogg Company, U.S. Snacks



**Special Guest**  
Mayor Rahm Emanuel

**Honorees**  
Community Builder Award



Corporate Partner Award  
**BMO Harris Bank**

Inaugural Pastora San Juan Cafferty  
Legacy Award

Frank Clark, Former Chairman and  
Chief Executive Officer ComEd

## Matching Gifts

Does your company offer a matching gift program? Please share this information with us so we can maximize your contribution!

Call Paty Vasquez,  
Director of External Affairs, at:  
(773) 645-2372  
or email:  
pvasquez@casacentral.org

## Mayor Daley Visits Casa Central



July 24th, former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley paid a visit to Casa Central's Children and Youth programs. President and CEO Ann Alvarez greeted Mayor Daley and gave him a personal tour of our Early Learning and Adult Wellness Center programs where he was given a hand crafted postcard and other arts and crafts created by our participants.

After the tour, Mayor Daley had the pleasure of viewing a dance performance by teenagers in Youth Opportunities Unlimited as well as hearing songs from children in the School Age Program. At the end of his visit, Mayor Daley addressed the children and youth with the following words:

*"I have known the Alvarez family for many years and what has impressed me the most is their commitment to teenagers and families in Humboldt Park. Casa Central has been a calling for them to help others. That is instilled in the Alvarez family and all the people that work here. They are committed to change. Take advantage of what you can... the education and opportunities offered at Casa Central. This generation will do better things than my generation. If you really believe in yourself, you can do it."*

## Recruiting for Early Learning Programs

Are you looking for a quality education for your children ages 2 - 5? This past year alone, over 150 children graduated from Casa Central's Headstart Programs and have advanced to kindergarten. Ninety percent of our students have met or exceeded standards in both Math and Literacy.

Give your child a headstart through one of Casa Central's three Early Learning Programs. We offer both full-day preschool and Home-based options in a bi-lingual and bi-cultural environment for children ages 2-5 years. We utilize curriculum that is fun and engaging with our highly qualified staff who provide an environment that is safe, nurturing, and will stimulate your child's education. Casa Central's preschool program is open from 7am - 6pm, Monday through Friday, and the home-based program provides weekly educational sessions within the convenience of your own home. Casa Central also welcomes children with special needs.

**Space is limited so call or email now to register your child:**  
(773) 645-2316, [eligibility@casacentral.org](mailto:eligibility@casacentral.org)



Children & Youth





**Above: Staff and Early Learning participants perform at our ABC Home Based Transition Celebration. (Bottom Left: ABC Graduates)**

In September of 2011, three year old Alexis started attending the early learning program, a seemingly normal student until staff noticed repeated signs of anxiety, physical outbursts, and emotional instability. Alexis' family along with Early Learning Program staff decided to refer her to Tuesday Child, an agency that evaluates children for mental health.

After classroom observations, gathering family history, and discussing in-class behavior with Casa Central staff, Alexis was diagnosed with ADHD and Bipolar Disorder. The consultant provided Early Learning Program staff with individualized learning activities for Alexis in addition to a Positive Behavior Plan; in addition, Alexis' parents received counseling.



## SUCCESS AND EXPANSIONS IN EARLY LEARNING

According to Site Director Yolanda Colon, what originally seemed to be a behavioral problem, ended up being a mental health issue. Casa Central along with partner agencies, was able to determine this after one year of building a trusting relationship with Alexis' mother.

Alexis' family received Medicaid for the prescriptions, which helped her focus more on her daily classroom routines. In addition, Alexis' mother and Casa Central staff witnessed her gain social; fine motor, cognitive, and language skills throughout this transition in her life. By June of 2013, Alexis successfully transitioned into kindergarten through a Positive Behavior Plan.

*"Seeing Alexis free to express herself and interact with other students has brought me great joy. It is amazing to see how Alexis and her mother grew closer to each other through this healing process"*

-Yolanda Colon, Director of Community Service Center-

**For more information about Casa Central's Early Learning Program, call: (773) 645-2316 or email: [eligibility@casacentral.org](mailto:eligibility@casacentral.org)**

## Additional Classrooms in C.S.C.



Our two newly refurbished Early Learning classrooms "Moonlight" and "Rainbow" will facilitate programming for 34 additional slots in our Community Service Center located at 1343 N. California Ave.



### CASA CENTRAL Needs

- Gift cards (of any amount) to be used for participants, recognition events and or program incentives.
- Kitchen items such as pots, pans, utensils, cups, plates, and dish towels.
- Laundry detergent and dryer sheets.
- Picture frames (various sizes).
- Art materials such as construction paper, glue sticks, poster boards, poster board letters, crayons, and pencils.
- Lounging blankets, puzzles, board-games, and books (2013 encyclopedia) for youth academics.

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**Ann R. Alvarez**  
President & CEO

**Omar Van Opstal**  
Editor



"Like" us on Facebook and find us on YouTube as Casa Central Chicago; Follow us on Twitter as Casa Central.



# LIFE TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SENIOR SERVICES

Senior Services



## Juanita Finds Community in the AWC

Juanita Torres would describe her life as one full of hardship. She began attending the Adult Wellness Center in April of 2010. Though she had been orphaned and lost a sister at a young age, as well as her son and husband in her old age, she experienced a deep sense of community at Casa Central's Adult Wellness Center. Through counseling and her participation in activities with newfound friends at the Adult Wellness Center, Juanita was able to overcome her depression.

*"It is a very therapeutic thing," stated Juanita, "to be amidst conversations and actively involved with a community of people when you are going through hardship."*

Activities that helped Juliana overcome her depression were painting, sewing, designing arts and crafts, and field trips. The Adult Wellness Center program provides important respite and assistance to family members. It gives program participants a meaningful avenue by which to remain active and valuable within their community.

**For more information on the Adult Wellness Center, call: (773) 645-2486.**



## New Certificates in Employment Training

Casa Central's Employment & Training Programs help individuals transition from unemployment/underemployment to employment. Through our comprehensive Employment Training Program model, individuals receive training, gain confidence and are equipped with resources that propel them towards self-sufficiency and a higher quality of life.

Our participants receive orientations, acquisition of Certification, Employment Placement Assistance, and Workplace Coaching. Our Employment Training Program is pleased to announce new Certifications in Food Service Handling as well as a Social Service Aide.

In addition to our certification programs, we also offer employment training for adults over 55, Home Care Aide training, ESL classes, and a Family Bridges Program, which includes case management, workshops and job readiness training.

**For more information about the Employment Training Programs, please call: (773) 645-2431.**



**Casa Central continues to offer a Homecare Services Private Pay Program, which extends the same service available to seniors and families who may not qualify for services under Medicare or who prefer our Private Pay option.**



# THANK YOU DONORS

We are grateful to the following donors for their commitment to Casa Central.



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# CELEBRATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS



**Left:** John Bisio, Chicago Director of Public Affairs & Government Relations for Walmart  
**Middle:** Rebecca Gonzalez, Vice President of Programs & Operations  
**Right:** Patricia Vasquez, Director of External Affairs

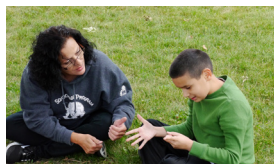
## Partnering with Walmart to Make Our Children Healthier

On Wednesday, July 17th, John Bisio, Chicago Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations for Walmart presented a fifty-thousand dollar check to Casa Central at the grand opening of a new Supercenter in the Belmont Cragin neighborhood.

This generous donation from Walmart developed as a response to the unmet nutritional needs of children ages 2-18. The Healthy Children Initiative exposes participants to an in-depth nutrition and education curriculum that focuses on four key goals: (1) incorporating the major food groups in daily eating, (2) portion control, (3) daily physical activity, and (4) focusing on the importance of taking small steps for success.

Support from the Walmart Foundation allowed Casa Central to expand this initiative to include our early learning program, and our Youth Opportunities Unlimited Program for teens, thus reaching over 400 children, youth, and families. According to Deputy Director Amanda McMillen:

*"Casa Central strives to strengthen the educational, social-emotional, and physical needs of our children so they may have the best future possible."*



## Merge Within Youth Opportunities Unlimited

This past August "El Comienzo", an Adolescent Parenting Program, merged with the Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) program. Two Home Educators, Yahayra Martinez and Anita Barrera, were recently hired in Y.O.U. to visit young parents in the comfort of their own home to coach them through vital parenting skills using the "Baby Talk" curriculum.

In addition, Youth Opportunities Unlimited has recently added an additional day to the Tutoring program in which over 15 adult volunteers work on academics with over 30 students on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6pm - 8pm.

Alejandro Delgado, an 8th Grader at Erie Charter Elementary School, began attending Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) in November of 2012. He was able to increase his Math and Social Studies grades from D's to A's. "I learned how to study by observing other youth at Y.O.U.," said Alejandro, "...I have seen how kids don't waste their time and focus on their work." Alejandro has a new outlook on school and life as a result of the after-school program.

Casa Central's Youth Opportunities Unlimited Program provides an array of programming to at-risk youth in Chicago's inner-city. Y.O.U. fosters strong leadership and life-skills through academics, mentoring, and recreation.

**For more information on the Youth Opportunities Unlimited program, call: (773) 645-2400.**



**Yahayra Martinez, a Home Educator from Youth Opportunities Unlimited works with Nayeli, a participant from "El Comienzo."**



## UPCOMING WORKSHOPS IN V.P.I.

### The "Circle of Security"

Beginning September 25th, the Safe Start program will host "Circle of Security," a 9-week group for parents of children ages 5 and under. This a relationship-based parent education and support program is based on attachment theory and is designed to enhance the bond and sense of security for both parent and young child.

The main goal of the program is to help build caregivers' capabilities to view young children's behavior from a secure base and safe haven perspective and then identify the children's need, both of which are crucial to helping young children develop a secure attachment pattern.

Another goal is to help parents improve the quality of their relationship with their child, which, in turn, strengthens and repairs the child's foundation for their future development. By creating secure attachments, children are reinforcing factors that protect them against child abuse and neglect.

**For details, call: (773) 645-2376. Space is limited!**

### Fifth Annual La Posada Bar-B-Que



**Trini Hernandez hosted the 5th Annual, Year end La Posada Bar-B-Que in Humboldt Park.**

Over 50 participants representing 20 families engage in games, win prizes and eat delectable and abundant food.

This year they had over 20 food items on the menu, a bike to raffle, a water balloon fight, volleyball, and more.

According to Millie Hernandez, Director of La Posada: *"I am humbled by the work that Trini Hernandez, his friend Brenda, and his daughter Samantha do in order to help the families enjoy their summer. He is a wonderful man!"*



# Individuals & Families

Casa Central  
1343 N. California Ave  
Chicago, IL 60622  
(773) 645-2300  
[www.casacentral.org](http://www.casacentral.org)

Casa Central transforms lives and strengthens communities, with a special focus on Hispanics. Our network of social services propels a diverse population of all ages toward self-sufficiency and a higher quality of life.

### OUR MISSION

