



# micronoticias

## “Inspiring Lifelong Learning,” at Annual Awards Dinner October 28th

Ron Huberman, Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools, was honored with the Community Builder Award at Casa Central’s Annual Awards Dinner on Thursday, October 28th.

The award was presented to Huberman at Chicago’s Westin River North Hotel, 320 N. Dearborn. This year’s dinner theme was “Inspiring Lifelong Learning,” in recognition of the organization’s longtime commitment to education at any age.

“Thank you, Casa Central, for being an advocate in the fight to save our kids,” said Huberman in his keynote remarks to hundreds of dinner guests.

The Corporate Partner Award was presented to The Boeing Company and was accepted by Nora Moreno-Cargie, the company’s Director of Global Corporate Citizenship. The Rev. John Buchanan, Pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, received the Faith in Action Award.

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Photo for Casa Central by Claudia Zuno-Ramirez

Ann R. Alvarez, President and CEO of Casa Central, second from right, with recipients of the 2010 Casa Central Awards at the Westin Hotel River North. L to R: Rev. John Buchanan, Fourth Presbyterian Church; Nora Moreno-Cargie, The Boeing Company; and Ron Huberman, CEO of the Chicago Public Schools.

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## New Playground Improves Access for Children’s Programs



A new playground installed across the street from Casa Central will make it easier for children in our Early Childhood Development programs to enjoy exercise. The playground, located within Chicago Park District property, opened to the public on November 4th at the corner of California Avenue and Evergreen Streets in Humboldt Park.

“We’re thrilled that we can have our children play so close to our site,” said Ann Alvarez, President and CEO of Casa Central.

The President Emeritus and Founder of Casa Central, Rev. Daniel Alvarez, spearheaded efforts to build the playground. The project was completed with strong support from 26th Ward Ald. Roberto Maldonado in collaboration with the Park District.



A group of participants at the Adult Wellness Center enjoy exercise during their twice-weekly aerobics session. The Center was recognized for its expertise, experience, and innovation in the daily care of adults ages 60 and up.

## Adult Wellness Center Recognized with National Award

The Adult Wellness Center at Casa Central is the 2010 recipient of the Outstanding Adult Day Services Award, sponsored by the National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA).

The Center was recognized for its expertise, experience, and innovation in the daily care of adults ages 60 and up, according to Linda Alexander-Lieblang, chairperson of NADSA.

The award was created in 2007 to recognize outstanding achievement in the operation of adult day centers. Wellness Center employees accepted the award at NADSA's annual

conference in Raleigh, North Carolina on August 21st.

**The award was created in 2007 to recognize outstanding achievement in the operation of adult day centers**

“Thank you for making a difference in the lives of older adults and persons with disabilities,” said Ms. Alexander-Lieblang. “The day center is recognized as a model on which others can learn from as ‘best practice.’”

Casa Central manages its Adult Wellness Center at 1343

North California Avenue in Chicago. The Center welcomes an average of 80 participants each weekday; participants socialize with their peers in a safe, supervised environment, where they receive breakfast and lunch and take part in a variety of health-promoting activities. Casa Central provides participants with round-trip transportation to and from their homes.

As a professional trade association, NADSA has succeeded in establishing an influential presence for adult day services at national policy and legislative tables.

## Our Commitment to Children

Casa Central welcomes over 700 children into its child development programs each weekday. Our Head Start program is sub-divided into four groups, one of which is home-based; teachers provide pre-school instruction and parenting classes right in the families’ living rooms. Our School Age program sends buses to eight elementary schools to pick up over 60 students each weekday.

family literacy activities, an array of health screenings, training in art and music, and services for children with special needs.

All of this activity costs Casa Central \$3.5 million per year, with an average annual cost of \$8,000 per child.

Although Casa Central works with several funding partners, it needs everyone’s support – including yours – to

**All of this activity costs Casa Central \$3.5 million per year...\$8,000 per child**

Casa Central has also established relationships with two elementary schools – one for Head Start and another for after-school activities. More than 100 students benefit from these relationships.

Our programs inspire and support learning by way of an evidence-based curriculum,

sustain our commitment to children, their education and their future.

Please consider sponsoring a child in Casa Central’s programs this year by making an investment in their education. Find out how you can help by calling (773) 645-2476 or writing to [alonso@casacentral.org](mailto:alonso@casacentral.org).

TRANSFORMING LIVES  
**micronoticias**

**Ann R. Alvarez**  
President

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Casa Central is a United Way Member agency.  
For more information about our programs, please call (773) 645-2300 or fax (773) 645-2475, or visit [www.casacentral.org](http://www.casacentral.org).

## CNA Training Opening Doors in the Medical World

Brandy Rivera lost her job after she went into the hospital with a blood clot in her left lung.

Once she recovered, 22-year-old Brandy needed to bounce back and return to the workforce. A friend recommended that she enroll for training as a certified nursing assistant, or CNA. “I wasn’t very sure I would go through with it, so I had another friend sign up with me,” she said.

Brandy’s challenge to finish CNA training meant she was determined to avoid the unemployment line. In the Chicago Metro area, the jobless rate stood at 9.4 percent in September, according to the Illinois Department of Employment Services. The national unemployment rate, at 9.5 percent in September, is almost identical to the local rate.

The CNA training program provides participants a chance to become employed and learn more about the healthcare professions. The program offers vocational training and other marketable job skills, employment prospects, and possibilities for future advancement.

“We aim to give participants the skills that carry long-term impact, and our employment training programs are a great example,” said Ann Alvarez,



Brandy Rivera receives her certification and lapel pin representing completion of the CNA program from Nancy Roddy, R.N.

President and CEO of Casa Central. “Students in the CNA program can conceivably go from high school straight into the medical field and move up from there.”

Students undergo a 13-week course at Casa Central with the help of instructors from Harold Washington College. They perform their practice duties at Center Home, the nursing home for Latino elderly, and at Norwegian American Hospital.

Brandy completed the course and now works at a retirement center in Chicago’s Rogers Park neighborhood. She keeps fond memories of her start at Casa Central and of the certification ceremony in May of 2010. “It was a very emotional day for me, because my family was there at the ceremony,” Brandy said. “But I got through it, and I did it for my daughter, so she would know that I could succeed.”

## Casa Central Observes Domestic Violence Awareness Month

On October 1st, agency staff, participants and volunteers were out in front of Casa Central’s main building at 1343 North California Avenue, tying 3,000 purple ribbons to the fences to

remember and honor those who have lost their lives as a result of domestic violence. The event also raised awareness and drew attention to the ways we can all work together to prevent these senseless deaths. These ribbons were on display at Casa Central throughout the month of October.

“Domestic violence affects one in every four families in this country—no matter

their race, religion, economic status, sexual orientation, age, or background,” said Mary Reynolds, Director of Violence Prevention and Intervention Services at Casa Central.

“We believe that all of us can make a difference,” said Ann R. Alvarez, President and CEO of Casa Central. “We can control how we express anger and solve problems, learn as much as possible about preventing and responding to domestic violence, and intervene early when we suspect that children and families might need help.”

**Domestic violence has an impact on millions of people in America each year.**

- More than 10 million children are exposed to violence in their homes each year.
- Sixty percent of teens say they have a friend who has experienced abuse in a dating relationship.
- One in three women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.
- An estimated 3,000 people lose their lives each year as a result of domestic violence.



Purple ribbons tied onto the fence at the 1300 block of North California Avenue serve as a reminder that domestic violence has an impact on millions of people in America each year.



## Inspiring Lifelong Learning at the CSC

Pre-schooler Perseis Walls does a balance exercise in the "Sensory Room" with the help of Education Coordinator Jennifer Duarte of the Community Service Center.

The success of the Community Service Center, one of Casa Central's pre-school programs, prompted program staff to open a new space for meeting each child's specific needs. The Sensory Resource Room was created to help children with their speech, social-emotional and sensory needs.

The room is made up of three main sections: Tactile (for exploring the senses of touch), Physical (which includes a variety of child-size fitness equipment, sensory disks, and other unique activities to encourage development), and the Quiet/ Visual area (which is a good place for reading, speech therapy, or calming down).

Children are offered speech and mental health therapy as needed, along with guidance on social interaction. Other school-based themes, such as literacy, mathematics, and social studies are included as well.

"The idea is to create play experiences that help individualize education and meet the needs of each child," said Jennifer Duarte, education coordinator for the Head Start programs. "Teachers can plan special activities to bring children in small groups or individually into the room."

Casa Central's early childhood programs have been designed to provide at-risk children and youth with the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe, bilingual and bicultural environment. It encourages them to establish the good habits that will help them to become lifelong learners even before they enter kindergarten.

## volunteer spotlight

### The Art of the Piñata: Wrigley Employees Bond with After-School Program

Destiny Ogando, age 7, Xiomaris Escalante, 9, and an unidentified piñata join Wrigley Co. employees Kevin Barnes and Susan Goldberg during their piñata-making session at our School Age Program. Some volunteers from Wrigley also played table games with the school children, while others visited the seniors who participate in the Adult Wellness Center. Another volunteer team from Wrigley had visited Casa Central in August to fill book bags with school supplies during our back-to-school drive.



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casa central

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## Teens Unveil Mural And Art Exhibit

On August 13th, the teens from Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) presented "Painting Peace," which featured a three-panel mural depicting violent and peaceful scenes, based on the students' perspective.

Twenty participants in the after school program, from several area middle schools and high schools, worked together on "Painting Peace." They also created individual artwork related to the same theme. The young muralists attend Y.O.U. at Casa Central each weekday.

According to Omar Van Opstal, education coordinator and project supervisor, the students learned how to manage a very complicated subject – the family's influence on a person's behavior – while also learning the artistic technique behind painting.

"This group's effort proves that youth can really do anything they set their sights on doing, especially when it's productive," said Ann R. Alvarez, President and CEO of Casa Central, at the unveiling.

## Annual Dinner

*continued from page 1*

Guests at the dinner received information about the organization's Children's Services Campaign, which puts the spotlight on our pre-school and after-school programs. "As you've learned



Fernando Palomino, a participant in the Y.O.U. program, displays his work at the unveiling of "Painting Peace" on Aug. 13th.

Y.O.U. helps youth develop and maintain healthy lifestyles by engaging them in constructive activities during after-school and summer hours.

tonight, we work to exponentially increase our children's opportunities for success – from school to the workplace, to their families and in their lives," said Ann R. Alvarez, President and CEO of Casa Central.



**OUR MISSION**  
 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.



## Hispanic Heritage Highlights

For the second year in a row, Casa Central celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month in recognition of the rich and diverse fabric of Latino culture. Five participants in the School Age Program pose before their appearance onstage at the Hispanic Heritage Showcase, presented by Casa Central on Sept. 30th. From left: Shanice Cabrera, age 10; Karen Validivia, 9; Anastazia Lopez, 8; Xaris Nuñez, 6, and Kealy Figueroa, 7.



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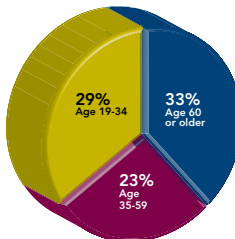
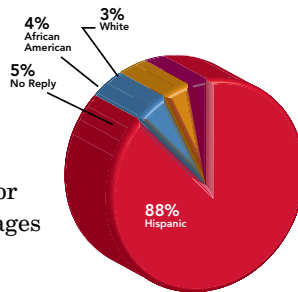
## Casa Central, By The Numbers

In Casa Central's most recent survey of its clients and participants, 88 percent identified themselves as Hispanic; five percent did not reply; four percent said they are African-American, and three percent identified themselves as white.

In that same survey, 33 percent said they are age 60 or older; 23 percent are ages 35 to 59, and 29 percent are ages 19-34.

The survey is conducted by the Consumer Input subcommittee of the Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) committee, an employee-based group which surveys participants each year.

In 2008, a total of 712 surveys were distributed randomly to 50% of each program's primary participant population and 534 completed surveys were returned. This return rate reflects 38% of Casa Central's population.



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