



El Sol Shines

"Working Together for a Better Community"



August 2011

Volume 3, Issue 6



An empty hiring hall? Wow!

Worker hiring rate is at an all-time high, thanks to Hire-a-Worker campaign

On most days when 25 – 30 percent of the El Sol workers are hired, it's considered a good day. That's why the first of August started a banner week.

On Thursday, Aug. 4, a total of 74 workers signed in to El Sol when it opened for the day. By 11:30, almost all workers had been called for work. Walk-in employer requests accounted for 37 workers going out on a job, and another 33 workers signed out after responding to direct calls from former employers.

Wilberto Luna, labor coordinator, reported that one worker, Mateo Diaz, was hired early in the day for a three-hour job and then went out on a second job when he returned to El Sol.

Jocelyn Skolnik, center director at El Sol, said that hiring rates had been high this week, but Thursday was exceptional.

"I think that this spike in hiring is probably due to the combination of an improved

economy and the outstanding experiences people have had with our workers," Skolnik said.

The 70 jobs filled that day was the largest single day job placement in El Sol's history,

"I think that this spike in hiring is probably due to the combination of an improved economy and the outstanding experiences people have had with our workers."

*Jocelyn Skolnik
El Sol director*

since the center opened in 2006.

El Sol continues to promote hiring through an ongoing "Hire-a-Worker" campaign. Ads and press releases have been placed in local

newspapers. In addition, Seabreeze Publications, which publishes newsletters for neighborhood associations, agreed to include a story about El Sol workers in several communities.

The theme of the current campaign focuses on preparing for storm season, which includes early yard preparation and maintenance, tree and shrubbery trimming, shuttering and general clean-up.

"We're encouraged that more people are learning about El Sol and are coming in to hire workers here," said Skolnik, "but we can't become complacent. Let's use this good news to continue to tell our story. We have reliable, trained workers available seven days a week who are eager to work."

In the photos above, the empty hiring hall shows off El Sol's new tables and chairs, donated by Toojays. El Sol has been working to spruce up the hiring hall.

FROM THE
DIRECTOR'S DESK

Eagle Scout candidate Jake Moore just brightened the day for 10 families who received bookcases filled with children's books.



The Jupiter High School senior designed and built the shelves as part of his Eagle Scout certification project and delivered them to each family with the help of his Scout Troop 132.

Jake raised funds to buy materials for the shelves and recruited support from friends, family, and classmates. In total he received more than 2,000 books which he was able to distribute among families who otherwise would not have had this opportunity.

The project was filled with intercultural exchange and discovery. One of the mothers expressed her appreciation and asked if it had been "officers" who had delivered the books. She learned about scouts and the importance of their Eagle projects.

Jake, and his mom (who helped him deliver the bookshelves), expressed that "it had been a humbling experience" and liked the opportunity of visiting parts of Jupiter they hadn't frequented before. They were happy to see the kids' faces when they received the box full of children's books.



In this photo with one of the recipients of the books, are (from left) Dylan Butcher, Kevin Brown, Jake Moore and Keith Moore.

Thank you, Jake, for your generous work, we wish you good luck!

Jocelyn Skolnik

El Sol workers volunteer to spruce up Heights home

El Sol's workers made home a little happier for a Jupiter couple, in a July community service volunteer project.

Eleven El Sol workers spent almost five hours painting the exterior of a house in The Heights neighborhood, part of a community service project in partnership with Rebuilding Together of the Palm Beaches.

The homeowners both suffer from multiple health problems; they use a wheelchair and a walker and are not able to keep their home maintained the way they would like.

The couple was very grateful for the help and were impressed with the quality of the work.

"The homeowners and family were with us all day and could not believe the job they did," said Joanna Aiken, president of Rebuilding Together of the Palm Beaches. "They are going to hire (El Sol workers) to do some interior painting in the future."

El Sol workers do a community service project at least once a month, part of an effort to give back to the community and to provide regular training in various skills.

"We have many workers who don't know how to paint and by doing community service, they are taught by other workers, and are ready to get on the field," said Dora Valdivia, associate director of El Sol.



Report shows highest mid-year hiring rate in 3 years

El Sol's day labor service experienced a spike in hiring in the first half of 2011 that saw 4,166 jobs filled, the highest mid-year job placement in three years.

The increased hiring was attributed to an ongoing Hire-a-Worker campaign to raise awareness of El Sol's free day-labor service, as well as repeat employers who use the service again when they need help, said Jocelyn Skolnik, El Sol center director. The most common jobs filled are for landscaping, painting, moving, storm shutter installation, housekeeping, general labor and more.

"We are grateful for all of the employers, who include a large number of homeowners, for using our service and providing jobs for Jupiter workers," Skolnik said. The labor service operates daily from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 7 a.m. to 12 noon Sundays.

There were 4,757 employers and 2,241 workers registered at El Sol as of June 30.

The employment data for the first half of 2011 is included in a 2nd Quarter Report that was submitted to the Town of Jupiter. Other highlights of the report include \$220,161 as the value of services El Sol provided to the community during the quarter.

The English as a Second Language program had 97 students who advanced to English proficiency.

Another 54 successfully completed computer classes. A total of 4,461 lunches were served to workers and 534 individuals were assisted by the Food Pantry.

For more information call (561) 745-9860 or go to www.friendsofelsesol.org.

WORKER OF THE MONTH



Teacher finds her niche in ESL classroom

Susan Mitchell, 7 years with El Sol, is named June/July Volunteer of the Month

Congratulations to ESL teacher **Susan Mitchell**, El Sol's Volunteer of the Month for June/July 2011.

After graduating from USF, Susan began her teaching career and she's been teaching ever since ~ first in Pinellas County and now in Palm Beach County.

Susan says, "It seems I've never left the classroom!"

When Susan first moved to Jupiter seven years ago, she had read about plans for a worker resource center and then she met Lee McCarthy, El Sol's first volunteer coordinator.

Susan's first volunteer job at El Sol was at the employer desk. She then started volunteering in the kitchen, and finally found her niche in one of the classrooms, teaching English.

One of Susan's students, Marie from Haiti, says that Susan "is a good teacher; she's very nice." And the best part, Marie says: "She speaks some French."

El Sol Associate Director Dora Valdivia says that Susan is an excellent teacher, and she understands how important it is for El Sol's population to learn the English language. She has a deep sense of volunteerism and giving back to her community, Valdivia said.

Susan says her volunteer work at El Sol is rewarding to her.

"The most rewarding thing is seeing a student gain self-confidence in speaking, writing and comprehending a new language," she said.

In the photo above, Susan is shown, on the left, with officials from Bank of America during a financial literacy workshop she helped to organize for her ESL students.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH



Workers recognized for community service

Efrain Morales Diaz and Nicolas Sebastian named Workers of the Month

Since coming to El Sol, **Efrain Morales Diaz** and **Nicolas Sebastian** have dedicated themselves to learning English and giving back to the community by participating in community service projects whenever they can.

Their efforts earned Diaz (shown on left) Worker of the Month honors for June and Sebastian (shown on right) Worker of the Month for July.

Diaz, 29, formerly of Guatemala, said he attended one year of preparatory school and dreamed of attending college. But the lack of jobs and money caused him to come to the United States.

"Here there are more opportunities," he said.

When he is not at El Sol or working, Diaz said he enjoys helping with community service projects and working out at a gym.

Sebastian, 24, left his native Guatemala also in search of a better future. He remembers the days before El Sol opened when he and scores of other workers competed for jobs along Center Street.

"El Sol is much better," he said with a smile.

He said learning English has been a priority because it improves his chances of being hired because many employers prefer English-speaking workers.

Congratulations to Efrain Morales Diaz and Nicolas Sebastian for their well-deserved Worker of the Month recognition and for their many contributions to El Sol and the community.



FEATURED DONOR



Admiral's Cove grant will aid training, ESL

El Sol receives \$15,000 from Admiral's Cove Cares Charitable Foundation

El Sol has received a \$15,000 grant from the Admiral's Cove Cares Charitable Foundation that will help fund a variety of education and vocational classes for the next two years.

El Sol was among 32 charities that were beneficiaries of nearly \$400,000 that was distributed by the Admirals Cove Foundation at a recent tea. El Sol President **Ed Ricci**, Center Director **Jocelyn Skolnik** and Associate Director **Dora Valdivia** were on hand to accept the donation.

Skolnik said the funds will have a significant positive impact on El Sol's efforts to integrate Jupiter's immigrants into the larger community by providing English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult literacy classes.

"The grant will also support our efforts to help individuals in need become self-sustainable by providing vocational training, workshops, financial and computer literacy classes," Skolnik said. During the first quarter of 2011 a total of 65 adults were enrolled in the three-level ESL program whose classes are held three nights a week for nine weeks.

A total of 1,495 attended daytime English classes. A sewing program that was begun in January had 19 participants. Another 37 adults attended nighttime classes in basic computer skills.

Shown in the above photo are, from left: **Beth Beson**, Admiral's Cove Cares Charitable Foundation board member; El Sol Associate Director **Dora Valdivia**; El Sol President **Ed Ricci**; El Sol Center Director **Jocelyn Skolnik**; and **Gale Abrahams**, Admiral's Cove Cares Charitable Foundation board member. Beson and Abrahams were co-chairs of the foundation's 2011 Weekend Fundraiser.

ESL graduation is a family affair

Aug. 2 was a particularly special day for the students at El Sol. It marked the end of the summer semester of the classes offered at night throughout the week.

The most popular class is English, since being able to speak English improves the workers' chances of finding work, as well as communicating with employers, doctors and others in the community.

The graduation ceremony was a true family affair, with a number of graduates bringing their children and spouses along.

One couple, Bartolo Silvestre and Josefina Saloj, both attended English classes, bringing along their young daughter and taking turns keeping her busy and doing classwork.

"For them, coming to class was a challenge," said Dawn Fae Adolfson, who taught the ESL class. "I felt very proud to give them their certificates, as all three came up on stage." Adolfson recently was named education coordinator, replacing Reca Fernandez, who filled the role for the past year.

Patricia Betancourt of Palm Beach State College spoke at the ceremony, as well as El Sol Director Jocelyn Skolnik.

Edy Herrera received an award for top grades and Joel Perez Cax received an award for perfect attendance. Both received Books-a-Million gift cards, made possible from the Eileen Harden Fund.



El Sol's Mission Statement

El Sol's vision is for a premier day-labor center providing skilled, dependable workers to employers. We are also committed to promoting strong economically and ethnically diverse communities in which all people can achieve their highest potential.

El Sol seeks to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Town of Jupiter through:

- * Organizing and supervising Jupiter's day-labor hiring in a controlled and sanitary atmosphere;
- * Educating Jupiter's day-laborers and contractors about their rights and responsibilities;
- * Assisting Jupiter's immigrant population to become an active and integrated part of the larger Jupiter community;
- * Building bridges and communication among the different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in Jupiter;
- * Providing occupational training, language and literacy instruction, counseling, health education, legal and other services to individuals in need.



El Sol Jupiter's Neighborhood Resource Center

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Find us on the Web at www.friendsofelsesol.org

Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ElSolJupiter> 

See us on Facebook at [El Sol, Jupiter's Neighborhood Resource Center](http://www.facebook.com/ElSolJupiter) 

El Sol's Hiring Hall is open

6 a.m. - 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday
7 a.m. - 12 noon Sunday

Donate online through Network for Good through our website www.friendsofelsesol.org

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