



El Sol Shines

"Working Together for a Better Community"



August 2009

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El Sol workers heed call to service

El Sol workers have enthusiastically responded to President Barack Obama's call for Americans to participate in our nation's recovery and renewal by serving their communities.

They have volunteered by the dozens to help with painting and landscaping at several Jupiter homes this summer and are continuing to assist with construction of affordable homes by Habitat for Humanity.

Their efforts as part of the President's "United We Serve" initiative brought commendations from the Solid Waste Authority and Habitat for Humanity, the local sponsors of the community service projects for which El Sol workers volunteered.

This summer dozens of El Sol workers have pitched in to help paint and do landscaping improvements at three Jupiter homes. They joined other volunteers from the Solid Waste Authority and several other non-profit organizations.

Since the first of the year about 120 workers have participated in the various community service projects with the SWA and Habitat for Humanity. By volunteering the workers pass up a chance of obtaining a paying job through El Sol's day labor program, but that has not been a hindrance in getting volunteers, according to Dora Valdivia, El Sol associate director.

"They are eager to give back to the community in which they live and are already asking about their next

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Left - El Sol Associate Director Dora Valdivia with the Habitat for Humanity commendation

Right - Workers and other volunteers who painted and helped landscape a home on Second Avenue. In blue is Joanna Aiken, Community Service coordinator for the Solid Waste Authority.



From the director's desk

Just three years ago during the month of August our community was frantically preparing to open El Sol, Jupiter's Neighborhood Resource Center. As with most new ventures, there were many concerns and technical details to be worked out prior to our opening.

But when El Sol opened its doors on September 6th, 2006, we were thrilled to witness a rapid and orderly transition from the open-air day labor market on Center Street to the safe and coordinated system of the Center. Although we held high hopes for El Sol, few of us anticipated the outpouring of support that would make El Sol into the sort of full-service integration center we operate today.



The impact of El Sol has been tremendous in our community. El Sol hosts 19 programs that include: a day-labor center, English as a Second Language classes, vocational training, legal counseling, Spanish literacy, computer classes, family literacy, daily food program, health programs and more. More than 3,700 community members (day laborers, employers and families) benefit from our services.

As we arrive at our three-year anniversary celebration, I have taken the time to reflect with some of our clients on "How has El Sol made a difference in your life?" The conversations and responses reveal the true importance of our organization.

"Although we held high hopes for El Sol, few of us anticipated the outpouring of support that would make El Sol into the sort of full-service integration center we operate today."

Fernando, who has been in Jupiter for eight years and started coming to El Sol early last year said he had benefited a lot from the help he has received at El Sol. He expressed that "Everyone that volunteers and works here are very good people, I have learned English during the day and night. Also, I have received treatment on a bad cavity. Getting my teeth fixed has been a big help for me; the dentist said I had a molar that was almost dead. I would not be able to afford the treatment otherwise."

Edmundo, vice-president of the Workers Council and Spanish Literacy volunteer teacher had a lot to say about what El Sol meant to him. He said, "I've been able to find jobs through El Sol. I've been learning English. The more I go to classes, the more I can communicate. El Sol has invited me to participate in workshops like Know Your Rights and Landscaping Skills." Edmundo, a teacher in Guatemala, also expressed that through the opportunity to volunteer as a Spanish Literacy Teacher El Sol has also given him the space to practice his profession and help his community. Edmundo said, "I've learned leadership skills that have also helped me lead a group and have had positive teamwork experiences."

Finally, I would like to share an event that happened this past holiday season; it truly tells it all. A worker entered my office, as the Center was about to close for the day. When I asked how I could help him, he looked down and reached out his hand with \$40 and said, "When I lost my job I came to the Center and I was able to improve my English and find steady work . . . I know it is not much, but I wanted to give something back to El Sol."

It is clear that these past three years have been very productive and successful. I have no doubt that if we continue working together, we will continue to see further growth in the three years that await and will continue to share experiences that make an impact in our lives.

Jocelyn Sabbagh

Three Habitat homes in Guatemala almost finished via El Sol partnership

Three Guatemalan families will move into new homes later this month, thanks to a partnership between El Sol and Habitat for Humanity.

Just five months after El Sol Associate Director Dora Valdivia initiated a collaborative program between El Sol workers and Habitat for Humanity agencies in Palm Beach County and Guatemala and Mexico, the first new homes in Tzibaj are almost ready. Habitat for Humanity will host a dedication for the homes at the end of this month, Valdivia said.



Work is progressing on the first three homes.

Meanwhile, about 130 more El Sol families are awaiting word that they, too, might benefit from the program, in which El Sol workers here volunteer on Habitat home construction in Jupiter and in return get credit toward a Habitat built house in their home countries.



The Nicolas Quişonez family with building materials in their current home

Valdivia is working with Habitat for Humanity of Guatemala and Mexico to screen the applicants and their families, and determine if they are eligible for the program. Here in Jupiter, the family member who is a worker at El Sol puts in the volunteer hours and attends classes on mortgage management and home finance.

The first homes in Guatemala are progressing smoothly, Valdivia said. The applications for homes in Mexico are slower to start, because of differences in government regulations.

The dream of owning a nice home has El Sol workers putting in hours of volunteer work, which is a win-win for everyone.

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service project which will be with Habitat for Humanity on Aug. 21," Ms. Valdivia said.

The Habitat for Humanity commendation was presented to El Sol in recognition of the assistance workers provided in construction of affordable homes in West Jupiter.

"Thanks to your group, four families were able to move into their first home this summer making their dream of home ownership come true," the citation said.

The Solid Waste Authority presented a framed commendation certificate to El Sol in recognition of El Sol's "invaluable contribution to the SWA's volunteer program."



Dora Valdivia with the Solid Waste Authority award.

"El Sol workers are bringing skills to this volunteer work," Valdivia said. "And we are providing hope."



The Manuela Jimenez family outside their current home.

Volunteer of the Month for July

The volunteer application for Patricia Wecht mentions, almost as an afterthought, that she has a husband, Bernie, who is also fully qualified to be a volunteer at El Sol. Wow! That's an understatement. We did not know what we were getting with this "two-fer" couple.



The application also said that Bernie's background was in retail. Little did we know how important that would become to us.

Bernie started out as a kitchen volunteer, in his case, working as part of the Sunday team, one of seven daily crews that make lunch for anywhere from 50 to almost 200 workers seven days a week.

Then he came to a kitchen meeting, and volunteered to organize the kitchen shelves. He couldn't stand it when canned fruits were mixed in with pasta or instant mashed potatoes. Since Bernie's work, you can easily find the pasta, the soups and the canned fruits. There's a place for everything and everything has its place.

From there, it was only a short step to his present status as kitchen czar. Next, Bernie volunteered to look at our procedures for ordering supplies. His goals:

Bernie Wecht

reduce costs and ensure supplies. The latter is an elusive goal, when week-to-week, you don't know if you'll be feeding 50 or 150.

Bernie found that we were sometimes paying a shipping charge – a fairly large one – to have some products delivered which we could get more cheaply at Costco. He found that even if that supplier had a lower cost, the shipping charge made it more expensive for us. He volunteered to do Costco runs as needed, and now, we almost always have plenty of supplies on hand.

His next project was kitchen shelves. We had a cabinet that was filled with things that no one ever used, because no one knew what was in those mysterious drawers. Bernie thought a better use of the space would be open shelving, so we could see what we have, and also, organize it. With the help of Andre, one of El Sol's workers, Bernie got that done, too. He is a man of action.

When the Sunday kitchen crew sees Bernie coming, they line up for hugs, they are so grateful that he has gotten the kitchen on the way to being organized. For all his help, we salute Bernie Wecht as volunteer of the month for August 2009. Thanks, Bernie!

Worker of the Month for July

Miguel Vasquez

Miguel Vasquez, 25, has won the honors as Worker of the Month for July.

Miguel, formerly of Elchahuite, Guatemala, came to Jupiter four years ago. He attends El Sol regularly where his participation in English classes and community service projects earned him the Worker of the Month. The honor entitles him to first preference for jobs for three days.

The quiet spoken Miguel, speaks very good English. When not working or participating in some El Sol program he said he likes to go to the park and play soccer.

"I also like watching TV," he said. He has three sisters and four brothers who are in Guatemala.

Labor Coordinator Wilberto Luna said Miguel is a good worker and that the Worker of the Month recognition is well deserved.



Hands-on job training

Fourteen workers from El Sol got hands-on experience and training on carpet cleaning recently from Olga and Mario's Carpet Cleaning. The training, which was followed up by a pressure cleaning class, is part of El Sol's continued effort to provide training and skills to workers. Participants will form a new Carpet and Pressure Cleaning committee, one of a number of committees being formed under the Workers' Council. The committees aim to recognize skilled workers market available workers to employers.

Summer graduates are recognized at ceremony

Forty-nine adult students who successfully completed the Summer 2009 English as a Second Language class, computer courses and Spanish literacy classes at El Sol were honored at a graduation ceremony Monday, August 3.

El Sol Vice President Ed Ricci greeted the graduates in Spanish and English and handed them their graduation certificates. As the graduates crossed the stage to accept their certificates, there was lots of applause and congratulations from fellow students, their friends, and family members in the audience. Eleven ESL volunteer teachers also were honored for their dedication during the nine-week summer session.

The men and women ESL graduates, all of them immigrants, were commended by keynote speaker Virginia Savietto for their accomplishments. She said that learning English is the key to a better life. The most important action they could have done to help achieve their goals was to come to El Sol to learn English, said Ms. Savietto, president of the Palm Beach County chapter of the Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida.

Ms. Savietto urged graduates to have a dream and goals and to stick with them regardless of the challenges. "It is not about being smart, it is about being persistent," she said. She also said they should not be afraid to ask for help.

The importance of learning English was also stressed by



Brothers Ricardo and Efrain Osario, formerly of Guatemala, received certificates at graduation.

Angel Ramirez, a Guatemalan immigrant and graduate of the ESL program, who came to the United States three years ago. He said he often "came to ESL class late, tired and hungry" after getting off work. He noted that the classes are free and that learning English is something all immigrants should take advantage of even if they someday plan to return to their former homeland, because it could also open doors to better job opportunities.

Ramirez' commitment to learning English was evident in his smooth and accurate delivery. He repeated the remarks in Spanish and then in the Maya-Anjobal language.

Jorge Herrera, vice-consul of Guatemala in Miami, also congratulated the graduates at the conclusion of the ceremony. A trio of members of the Corn Maya Marimba Band provided musical entertainment and refreshments were enjoyed by all.

What's happening at El Sol?

Fiesta set for Aug. 29

INCEDES, an international group will sponsor a "fiesta" from 6 to 10 p.m. Aug. 29 for the El Sol community. The event is open to the public.

INCEDES is an international group of academics studying migration. The group will meet that weekend at El Sol.

First-aid class for staff, volunteers

A first aid training class for El Sol staff and volunteers will be held at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday,

Aug. 25. All volunteers are encouraged to attend. First-aid will be presented by the Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue Department. Please RSVP to Jocelyn Sabbagh at 745-9860.

El Sol turns 3!

El Sol will celebrate its third anniversary celebration on Sept. 6. Special presentations will be made. Mark your calendars!

Upcoming Events

Aug. 20 – Fire rescue presentation

Aug. 21 – Habitat for Humanity event

Aug. 25 – First-aid training class for staff and volunteers

Aug. 27 – Spanish Literacy registration

Aug. 29 – INCEDES Fiesta, 6-10 p.m.

Sept. 6 – El Sol Third Anniversary Events

It's almost time for Art Fest!

We can't believe that it is time to gear up again for Art Fest 2009. For those of you new to El Sol, this will be our second year with this event.

Last year's Art Fest was very successful. We were able to sell close to \$9,000 worth of paintings and arts and crafts. The artists kept 90% of the proceeds and El Sol profited 10%.

The event was great publicity for the center and encouraged several patrons to continue in their craft.

Due to the welcome arms we received from the community we gained the confidence to establish Sunshine Art-Works, a non-profit subsidiary of El Sol. We encourage artisans at El Sol and help them with marketing and selling their wares.

We would love to encourage all volunteers to become active in this event. You don't have to be an artist; there are many avenues to get involved.

Sunshine Artworks would love to welcome all creative minds to join us in this new venture. If you are interested please contact Andi Cleveland at andreacleveland@comcast.net or Betzy Rega at BMrega@aol.com.



Patrons at last year's ArtFest bought almost \$9,000 worth of art works.



El Sol workers work on art projects.

Art Fest at El Sol
Nov. 1, 2009
2-5 p.m.
Free and open to the public



Jose Antonio Gonzalez Chavajay with one of the paintings featured in last year's Art Fest.

New education coordinator appointed

Kathryn Klaas, a former intern and volunteer ESL teacher, has been appointed education coordinator for El Sol, with responsibility for all classes such as ESL, occupational training and Spanish literacy.

Ms. Klaas, 22, formerly of Orlando, is a 2009 graduate of the Florida Atlantic University's Harriett Wilkes Honors College in Jupiter. She received a bachelor of arts degree in International Relations with a minor in Spanish Literature. She is bilingual. While attending FAU, Kathryn was active in the campus Corn Maya club, including serving as vice president.

El Sol Center Director Jocelyn Sabbagh said Kathryn is an "excellent fit" for the position by virtue of her three years experience teaching English as a Second

Language at El Sol and her one year internship, in which she handled a variety of administrative tasks and special projects.

"She has a lot of firsthand experience teaching ESL and has proved through her internship that she is well-qualified for the position and we are very happy to have her," Ms. Sabbagh said.

Kathryn began work Monday, August 3.



Kathryn Klaas



El Sol

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El Sol's Hiring Hall is open

Monday – Saturday

6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Sunday

7:00 a.m. to 12 noon

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Notes from the Pantry



Right now, we still have mountains of blueberries and some big boxes of Bisquick, as well as some pounds of butter in the freezer (and some in the fridge too, check it out).

Here's a quick and easy recipe using those ingredients: Note, that it is for six people, so maybe 10 times the listed ingredients (except the butter) to make 60 servings.

It's really easy to make. Use only one stick (quarter pound) of butter, and it gets an incredibly rich flavor. Just melt the butter in one of the big aluminum pans at El Sol, mix the Bisquick and add it and blueberries on top of the melted butter.

The Kitchen Crew

Recipe of the Month

Evan's Favorite Fruit Cobbler

- | 1 STICK BUTTER
- | 1 cup BISQUICK
- | 1 cup MILK
- | 1 cup SUGAR
- | 2 cups of your favorite fruit (cherries, peaches, blueberries, etc.)

Melt butter in 13 x 9 x 2 inch pan. Mix together milk, sugar and Bisquick. Add mixture to pan of butter, pour fruit onto the mixture. Bake at 350-375 degrees for 45-60 minutes. Serves 6.

El Sol Figuratively Speaking...

Noteworthy items in the first Half of 2009 include:

\$596,303 in free services to the community, including \$178,945 in legal assistance

3,260 jobs filled

1,571 workers registered

2,843 employers registered

21,765 meals served

2,238 attended ESL classes

17 partnerships with health and medical providers.

119 received free vision screenings

52 women participated in a breast cancer seminar.

10 women received free mammograms

11 financial grants received