



# El Sol Shines

"Working Together for a Better Community"



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Volume 2, Issue 1

## Jupiter, El Sol featured in major documentary

A new documentary film on immigration that features El Sol as a centerpiece of the story, showing why people leave their homes for the United States and the suffering they go through, premieres Friday, Jan. 15, at 7 p.m. at the El Sol Center. The film is free and open to the public.

The documentary is *Brother Towns (Pueblos Hermanos)*, which was filmed in Jupiter and in Jacaltenango, Guatemala, Jupiter's sister city. It was produced and directed by Charles D. Thompson, Jr., Ph.D., education director for the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University in Durham, NC. Michael Davey, an artist and editor also of Durham, was co-producer and editor. *Brother Towns* is Thompson's third feature-length documentary film. He also is the author/editor of four books, including *Maya Identities*.

*Brother Towns* addresses head-on issues of U.S. immigration policy and what local communities can do about the new immigrant laborers in their midst, Thompson said. Supporters and detractors alike appear in the story. Filming in Jupiter included interviews with migrant workers and families, Town of Jupiter officials, El Sol representatives and others, many of whom are expected to attend the premiere. Filming in Guatemala included interviews with families of immigrants and how their lives have been affected by the absence of their loved ones.

El Sol President Jill Hanson said the organization is pleased to sponsor the inaugural screening of *Brother Towns* at the non-profit center that serves as a day labor and resource center for Jupiter residents.

"Many communities around the country greeted new immigrants with hostility, and often hate crimes were the sad result," she said. "*Pueblos Hermanos* not only shows the how and why immigrants come here, but also how Jupiter chose to welcome the immigrant. The movie shows how a town, turning its back on hate, can become a better community for all of its residents," Ms. Hanson said. For more information call (561) 745-9860.

Join us for a viewing of *Brother Towns*

**Brother Towns**  
Pueblos Hermanos



Jan. 15, 7 p.m. at

**El Sol Resource Center, 106 Military Trail, Jupiter**

*Brother Towns* is a story of two towns linked by immigration, family, and work: Jacaltenango, a highland Maya town in Guatemala; and Jupiter, a coastal Florida town where many Jacaltecos have settled.

*Brother Towns* chronicles a story of how and why people migrate across borders, how people make and remake their communities thousands of miles from home, and how people maintain families despite their travel. Because we are all immigrants, this is a universal human story, and a quintessential American one. All of us understand family.

*Brother Towns* is also a story of local and international significance. Filmed in Jupiter and Jacaltenango, the story includes voices of those opposed to undocumented immigrants and voices of advocates helping migrants who seek hope and work.

*Brother Towns* was produced by Charles D. Thompson, Jr., Ph.D. Education Director for the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University.

**Free admission. For information, call 561-745-9860.**

**Additional screenings on Jan. 14 at FAU Jupiter and on Jan. 17 at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Jupiter.**

## President's message

# A very special holiday season

I hope you will all come to see *Pueblos Hermanos/Brother Towns* at El Sol on January 15. I think this will be a very special film, a learning experience for all of us.

The holiday season was very wonderful at El Sol. We had a great Christmas party, feeding and giving gifts to about 300, including many men without families here, who otherwise might have spent a lonely day, as well as families and beautiful children. From Thanksgiving through Christmas, many generous donors came forth, to help supplement our regular budget, to give gifts that could be given to those who otherwise would not have much at Christmas, to bring food for our festivities and for our every day.

I was amazed by the numbers of volunteers who gave up their holidays to help out at El Sol. I wish I could name them all by name, but I want to single out the two "holiday coordinators," Alex Fuentes for Thanksgiving, and Denise Schumann, for Christmas -- both incredible organizers and

movers of people and resources. We were lucky, through the intervention of one of our wonderful chefs, to secure a donation to buy a new stove; and also, Lost Tree Foundation came through with a generous grant to cover infrastructure needs. Another gift that deserves special mention came from a worker.

Lately, though, our daily census has been creeping up again, with as many as 206 checking in on December 30. This strains our pantry and our chefs a bit. But we do believe in miracles, and in the goodness of the people and we know that somehow, we will continue to feed people.

*Jill Hansen*



## Mission Statement of El Sol

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.

## Computer donations bridge the digital divide

In 2009, El Sol helped four educational programs in Guatemala by sending a donation of 26 used computers. El Sol's workers informed us that computers are inaccessible in their hometowns. They explained that even educational institutions often do not have computers for teachers and students. This gave workers and staff the idea of meeting the need by donating a portion of the donated computers El Sol receives to schools in which many of the workers' children attend.

Many of the workers that come from the recipient communities have expressed deep appreciation. They explain that students would not have the opportunity of learning and accessing computers otherwise. The principal from one of the schools told us that when he arrived to school with his truck full of computers, every student jumped up from their classrooms and ran out to greet him with huge smiles and excitement.

The other donated computers El Sol receives are used for educational purposes in our programs or raffled off among our beneficiaries who do not own computers. We gratefully accept donations of computers. El Sol thanks the Consulate of Guatemala, Food for the Poor, Roberto Monjaras, Transportes Zuleta and Orden de Malta for their support in ensuring the safe arrival of computers in Guatemala.



*Recipients in Guatemala gratefully accepted 26 donated computers from El Sol.*



# Christmas at El Sol



## Celebration brings out the holiday spirit

An overflow crowd of nearly 300 people celebrated Christmas at El Sol, featuring a delicious dinner, entertainment and something special for each of the guests: a wrapped individual present.

Volunteers from several area churches and the community served a tasty meal of rice and turkey, pork, beans, vegetables and coleslaw, plus desserts and beverages to the crowd, including scores of El Sol workers and families from the community. A highlight of the celebration was a Nativity pageant presented by the Hispanic Ministry at St. Peter Catholic Church.

"Everyone present received a gift," said El Sol President Jill Hanson. There was also a raffle of assorted prizes such as bicycles, turkeys and other items. The Christmas celebration was the best ever in terms of attendance and the number of donors and volunteers who helped make it a success, Ms. Hanson said.

"Their generosity was extraordinary," Hanson said, citing as an example 70 gift boxes containing toiletries and other items that were donated by a group of women from St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Boynton Beach. Some of the women also volunteered to help with the dinner.

A special thanks to all those who gave up a large part of their day to help create a Merry Christmas for so many others. They include Tom Walsh, Denise Schumann, Sister Marta Tobon, John and Winifred Perkins, Inez Perez and her husband, Nancy Mendoza and Manuel Alvarado and many others who are also deserving of praise for their hard work.

On Nov. 26 El Sol and Corn Maya, Inc. also hosted a festive community Thanksgiving dinner complete with turkey and all the trimmings that was also made possible by generous donations and efforts of volunteers who prepared and served the dinner.

## Wish List

El Sol's Wish List presents an opportunity for making gifts to the center that have an immediate impact. Some of the more pressing needs are:

- \* A case of copy paper (10 reams), \$35
- \* A new copier, capable of making 10,000 copies per month, color and black & white
- \* Printing of color El Sol outreach brochure, \$1,000
- \* A new combination printer/copier/scanner, \$750
- \* A week's supply of coffee, \$34.45 for 5 cans
- \* A week's supply of Styrofoam coffee cups, \$30 for 2,000.
- \* 2-week supply of napkins, \$27.75 for 7,500
- \* 2-week supply of Cremora, \$18.98
- \* 2-week supply of sugar, \$38.07 for a 75 lb. bag

If you wish to donate any of these items contact El Sol Center Director Jocelyn Sabbagh at 745-9860.

# Surfing the 'Net can bring dollars to El Sol

What if El Sol earned a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half of its advertising revenue - about a penny per search - to the charities its users designate.



Use it just as you would

any search engine (like Google), get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up.

It's very easy: Just go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and look for the search field titled "Who do you GoodSearch for?" Type in "El Sol" and hit "enter." To start earning money for El Sol, simply start any Web search. The more you use GoodSearch, the more money goes to El Sol. Bookmark GoodSearch on your browser for easy access.

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall that donates up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause. Hundreds of stores, including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, EBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble, have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

This is such an easy way to raise funds. El Sol director Jocelyn Sabbagh did it for a year and raised \$60 without changing much of her daily routine. You can do it too!



## Landscaping skills taught at hands-on training workshop

El Sol Neighborhood Resource Center partnered with Jupiter Lawn Care recently to offer an intensive, two-day landscaping training for workers.

The workshop was designed to train well-rounded workers who have basic knowledge of the technical and non-technical skills required in landscaping. The participants received professional training from Jupiter Lawn Care instructors on how to properly and safely use various landscaping equipment, how to fix common equipment problems, and techniques to improve the quality of their work.

They also learned English landscaping vocabulary so that they can communicate more clearly with their employer and better understand

instructions. The instructors also emphasized the importance of personal and workplace safety, how to prevent sun-related illnesses, as well as the value of strengthening non-technical skills such as punctuality, honesty, efficiency, and dependability.

The hands-on, interactive workshop gave each worker an opportunity to practice using the equipment, troubleshoot engine problems, and individually practice English vocabulary with the instructor. To demonstrate that they had mastered these skills, each participant also had to pass a comprehensive exam.

For more information about the training or how to hire these workers please contact El Sol at (561) 745-9860.

## Volunteering a big part of 2009 for workers

In what is becoming a regular occurrence, 19 El Sol workers pitched in one November morning to paint a house in the Pine Gardens South neighborhood in record time and then helped clear and landscape the backyard of an adjacent home.

The Community Service endeavor with the non-profit Rebuilding Together of the Palm Beaches organization, was another in a series of such projects that workers accomplished in 2009. By volunteering, the El Sol workers gave up a chance of obtaining a paying job through El Sol's day labor program.

"The workers want to give back to the community," said El Sol Associate Director Dora Valdivia. "It has also led them to better understand the needs of the community in which they live and work," she said.

The dedication of El Sol workers in volunteering for numerous service projects has been lauded by Jupiter Mayor Karen Golonka and members of the Town Council.

At a Sept. 22 council meeting Mayor Golonka and several council members commended the workers for volunteering and for being a part of the community. The accolades came during a ceremony in which the Rebuilding Together organization presented a plaque to the town in appreciation of its support for the numerous improvement projects undertaken by El Sol and Rebuilding Together.



## Worker of the Month for December

## Omar Herrera

For Omar Herrera, December brought a double dose of happiness; He earned Worker of the Month honors and became the first graduate of El Sol's secondary education program known as Plazas Comunitarias.

A native of Chiapas, Mexico, Herrera earned Worker of the Month for accumulating the most points of El Sol workers for participating in English classes, workshops and volunteering for community service projects such as Habitat for Humanity.

"He's a very dedicated worker and has pursued English classes and other training at every opportunity," said El Sol Associate Director Dora Valdivia.

Herrera, 26, said his desire to obtain a permanent job helped motivate him to study English and complete



requirements for the secondary education certificate under the Plazas Comunitarias program that El Sol offers in conjunction with the Mexican Institute of Education. He had partially completed requirements for the certificate in Mexico.

After receiving additional instruction at El Sol and completing a test, he was presented with his official Secondary Education Certificate Dec. 21 by Kathryn Klaas, El Sol education coordinator.

When not taking classes or working, Herrera said he loves to play soccer and listen to music. Since coming to the United States 5 years ago he's worked mostly in roofing and landscaping jobs. His parents and a brother and two sisters reside in Mexico. As Worker of the Month, Herrera received preference for jobs three consecutive days.

## Volunteer of the Month for December

## Tom Walsh

It seems as if Tom Walsh has been an El Sol volunteer since it opened. Many may not know him or be aware of what he does at the center, but his work is essential. Tom is responsible for our "bread pantry."

He has organized a raft of volunteers, mostly through St. Jude's Church in Tequesta, who go each day to the Publix there, for the day-old bread and pastries. Then they bring the bread to El Sol, where it is used for breakfast and lunch. Two days a week, what we do not use here is taken out to Pahokee and Indiantown, where it is given to people who need it. Tom says the original plan was just to do bread and pastries on the weekends, but his co-worker, Maria Yu, would not hear of it, so they organized a seven-day-a-week brigade of bread gleaners.

Tom did first come here almost at the very beginning. Through St. Jude's, he ended up helping out on a Thanksgiving dinner here in 2006. Then he and Jim Plungis volunteered to do a Christmas dinner here, that same year. From then on, he was conscripted by Sister Marta to help out with Christmas dinner every year, just as he did this Christmas.

But wait, there's more: After doing the Christmas dinner in 2006, he and Maria Yu started doing lunch every Saturday. They cooked up delicious soups and stews. This was the start of our daily lunch program, as others came in to do what Maria and Tom were doing.

Tom now works as an insurance agent, but his original career was in food. He was a chef in Ireland, before coming to the United States as an immigrant in 1985. In Jupiter, he worked as a chef at the old Harpoon Louie's on the Jupiter Inlet.

Tom has three beautiful daughters, Nianh, Aoife, and Orla, all Gaelic names. Sometimes they come with him to help him serve meals.

Tom, who was born in County Mayo in Ireland, says that he learned from his parents that service was something you do, and he saw them do it, even though they had nine children.

Tom also works with another non-profit group, Hogar Maria, a home in Nicaragua for girls in transition. He says, about his volunteer work, "It's not work, it's a pleasure to do. I'm the one that gets the benefit out of it."





## El Sol

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Resource Center

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[www.friendsofelsesol.com](http://www.friendsofelsesol.com)

### 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

### Newsletter Print Sponsorship

The past 7 issues of *El Sol Shines* were printed by a generous donation from Lynn Hays of **HAYSMAR, Inc.**

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# Graduation day for 52 workers



Last fall, El Sol offered two programs that provided opportunities to learn English and continue basic education through ESL and Plazas Comunitarias programs. Students attended class six hours a week for 10 weeks, and on Nov. 16, El Sol held a graduation ceremony to recognize their dedication to their education. The ceremony honored 52 students who successfully completed the semester, 38 from our ESL program and 14 from Plazas Comunitarias, and the night was filled with inspirational moments. Prior to presenting the diplomas, Isabel Vinent, who is part of the Florida Immigration Coalition and an expert in popular education, spoke about the benefits of continuing one's education and learning English. Two students gave inspirational speeches, encouraging their peers to continue attending classes and offered their own perspective about the need to take advantage of the educational opportunities available. Throughout the ceremony we also enjoyed musical performances by Alan Ngyugen from the University of Miami's classical guitar program. Students, teachers and community members celebrated with refreshments and pastries generously donated by Tulipan Bakery. The graduation was a very proud night for El Sol and the Jupiter community, and we are looking forward to a great spring semester.

## Upcoming Events

**Jan. 15** – *Brother Towns* premieres at 7 p.m. at the El Sol Center

**Jan. 18** - Community service event

**Jan. 18-20** - ESL registration

**Jan. 21-23** - Plazas Comunitarias registration

**Feb. 12** -- Movie Night: *Gran Torino* starring Clint Eastwood as a U.S. autoworker whose way of life is changed when his neighborhood becomes a neighborhood of immigrants.

**Feb. 28** -- Volunteer Recognition Sunday, luncheon at 2 p.m.