



# El Sol Shines

"Working Together for a Better Community"



June/July 2010

Volume 2, Issue 5



El Sol volunteer Tom Choate with the flag he donated

## Grand old flag graces El Sol

When the faded and frayed American flag that has flown outside El Sol needed replacing, Tom Choate, the center's volunteer information technology coordinator, came to the rescue by donating a bright-looking, new flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol.

Tom's gift was an example of the patriotism that runs deep in the Choate family. The flag had belonged to Tom's father, Rufus, who died in 1976 and who served as a combat intelligence officer in the Navy in World War II.

Finally, after being stored away for 34 years, the flag is flying proudly at El Sol.

"I am just glad that it could be displayed again and what better place than at El Sol," said Tom, who, like his father, has served his country. He is a retired Marine Corps colonel with 30 years of reserve and active duty service, including service in the Vietnam War.

Many thanks, Tom, for your wonderful gift.

## Employer encourages workers to 'learn English'

When John Smith, head of a company that operates two Florida yachting centers, addressed a gathering of El Sol workers recently, he had a single strong message for his audience: "Learn English."

Smith, general manager of River Forest Yachting Centers in Stuart and La Belle, urged workers to focus on improving their English skills so that when the opportunities come along, they are able to take advantage of them.

He told the audience of about 70 workers that he is extremely proud of all who participate in El Sol and advised workers "to hang in there" and work on improving their English skills.

"If you are sitting here, you can be sitting in an English class," said Smith, who is a member of El Sol's Employers Advisory Council.

In an interview following his talk, Smith said his company has hired four Jupiter area men, including two former El Sol workers. The first to be hired was Lusvin Hidalgo, who joined the company a week after El Sol opened in September 2006.

Smith said by continuing to improve his English language skills that Hidalgo has become a much more valuable employee who is able to converse with customers, service yachts, and run different types of equipment.

*"If you are sitting here, you can be sitting in an English class."*

"I wouldn't trade him for anything. He's a great young man and a hard worker," Smith said.

For information on hiring El Sol workers call (561) 745-9860.

## President's message

# Keep the miracles coming

El Sol, we have always said, is the place of miracles. I remember well the many anxiety-provoking meetings, held back in 2005 and 2006, as month after month we came together, and the Town told us that it was up to us to raise money for El Sol. We just looked at each other and scratched our heads, most of us never having had the experience of raising money before. Indeed, I often tell people I had trouble selling Girl Scout cookies.

Then Catholic Charities came along with a pledge to run El Sol's day labor programs for the first year or so of our existence. A miracle!

Then Catholic Charities told us they would have no more money by the end of 2007, and the anxiety began to set in again.

Then Ed Ricci came along (it's true, some of us found him and coaxed him, but it did not take too much coaxing), and brought with him Connie Frankino. When Mrs. Frankino finished her tour of El Sol, and made a pledge that would make it possible for us to continue, those of us present were near tears. A miracle!

But our benefactor told us she was providing "seed money" and that we needed to begin to diversify our sources of funds, and look to the day when she would no longer be there to write a big check.

And now that day is here. We are becoming a more mature organization. Our programs need funds in order for them to continue to grow and prosper. And we have so many ideas for so many other great programs, but even with all our dedicated volunteers and staff, just not enough resources to start, for example, our community garden, or our women's empowerment project, or an El Sol café, or ... well, there are just so many great things we can do, because we have so many great people at El Sol.

But we need money. So, in the next few months, we will be turning to those of you who know and love El Sol the most, to ask for your help, as we work on diversifying our financial base of support. I am sure you all know, these are hard times for not-for-profits; you also know how special El Sol is. We will be coming to you for your ideas, for your information, for your support. We hope you will help us to keep this "place of miracles."

Thank you.



*Jill Hanson*

## Want to help? Here are some immediate needs on our wish list

**For the workers:** Bottled water to guard against heat exhaustion and dehydration of workers outdoors in extreme summer heat; bicycles, bicycle helmets; computers; and tools for landscaping, painting and construction work.

**For our offices:** Copy paper, funding for re-design of the El Sol web site.

**For our students:** Scholarships, Spanish-English dictionaries and pictionaries, notebooks, pens and pencils.

**Sponsorship opportunities:** Artfest, Health Fair, graduation ceremonies, volunteer recognition luncheon.

## 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.

# Food drive is a godsend to recipients

This past May 8 El Sol again served as a distribution center for food collected in the annual food drive by the National Association of Letter Carriers and delivered to El Sol by the St. Vincent de Paul organization.

El Sol workers and volunteers unpacked and sorted 210 boxes of canned and packaged foods that were then stacked on tables for easy picking by area residents when the center doors were opened at 7 p.m.

A large number of families and individuals showed up for the event. They had a wide variety of canned goods such as meat, fish, vegetables and soups from which to choose, plus packaged foods such as rice, beans and pasta.

All who went away with bags of food expressed their gratitude to volunteers overseeing the distribution. Among them was Robert Bolton, who had been laid off from his grounds maintenance job in January and was living in his van. He was accompanied by a friend who said she was disabled and unable to work.

"This is a godsend for us," Bolton said of the food the couple had packed into two bags.

This year's food drive marked the third consecutive year that El Sol has served as a community distribution center.

Brian Debee, vice president of Branch 1690 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, who visited El Sol to see firsthand how the food giveaway was going, commended El Sol for its role in distributing the food to the public.



A woman (above) selects a can of food from a large variety available at El Sol May 8 when food from the annual National Association of Letter Carriers annual food drive was distributed at El Sol. Below, volunteers sort donations.



## New board member brings international experience



Suzanne Cordero

The appointment of Suzanne Cordero as the newest member of El Sol's Board of Directors as been announced by President Jill Hanson.

"Suzanne's varied work experience coupled with her many years of volunteer service with

several community organizations make her an outstanding addition to the El Sol Board and we are very fortunate to have her," Jill said.

Suzanne came to know Jupiter's immigrant community through her work with the Saint Vincent de Paul Society of St. Peter Catholic Church and is a member of the Society's Board of Directors.

She was born in the United States and raised in Guatemala where she received a degree in Clinical Psychology from the Universidad Francisco Marroquin in Guatemala City. While in Guatemala, she coordinated a study focusing on reducing infant mortality in a marginal area around Guatemala City.

Suzanne and her husband, Rafael, a dentist, came to the United States when Rafael enrolled in advanced studies at the University of Kentucky. Suzanne was a research assistant at the University of Kentucky for a group of clinicians and scientists studying different aspects of stroke patients.

After moving to Jupiter, she helped her husband start his dental practice and managed his office for more than 10 years.

Suzanne and her husband are parents of four children. Her other volunteer work includes extensive volunteer service at her her children's school and as a member of the board of the Parent Teacher Organization at Limestone Creek Elementary School.

# El Sol workers log hours for Habitat for Humanity project

Work on two new affordable homes being built by Habitat for Humanity in West Jupiter received helping hands June 25 from 11 El Sol workers who volunteered to lay sod and plant shrubs as a community service.

As work progressed, several large stacks of sod soon disappeared as workers transferred the turf to a wheelbarrow and spread the sod over the front and side yards.

At an adjacent home, workers planted shrubs and did other



Workers load sod into a wheelbarrow with sod that will soon cover front and side yards of a new home being built by Habitat for Humanity.

landscaping work.

Roland Boucher, site supervisor for Habitat for Humanity, had the workers doing landscaping work to give them a break from the roofing and painting work that they often do when volunteering at the construction site. A total of 27 affordable homes are being built at the development just north of Jupiter Gardens Boulevard in West Jupiter.

"They are excellent workers," Boucher said, noting that Habitat for Humanity is grateful for all that the workers do. The arrangement is a win-win for Habitat for Humanity and for El Sol workers said Dora Valdivia, El Sol associate director. Habitat benefits from the dedicated efforts of the El Sol workers who in turn receive on-the-job training in construction skills.

Also, under international agreements with Habitat for Humanity organizations in Guatemala and Mexico, El Sol workers who are eligible can earn sweat equity credits toward purchase of a home in their native countries through their work at the Jupiter Habitat for Humanity project.



Two paintings on display at the Boynton Beach Library through Sept. 16.

## Sunshine Artworks artists get ready for Artfest 2010

Plans are under way for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Artfest, featuring the art of Pedro Chavajay and Lenin Cochoy.

Artfest 2010 will also feature a table of drawings and ceramics made in conjunction with the Lighthouse Center for the Arts. Also for sale will be jewelry made from El Sol patrons as well as artisans from the local Northern Palm Beach area.

Sunshine Artworks is working with local schools on a poster contest.

El Sol & Sunshine Artworks present

**Artfest 2010**

"Connecting Lives through Art"

Sun., Nov. 7, 2010

12 noon – 4 p.m.

Anyone interested in helping to make this year's event a success may call El Sol at (561) 745-9860.

Meanwhile, El Sol artists Chavajay and Cochoy have works displayed at the Hispanic Heritage exhibit at the Boynton Beach Main Library.

The Boynton Beach exhibit runs through Sept. 16.



## El Sol is well represented at conference

El Sol Board member Aileen Josephs (right) and Associate Director Dora Valdivia (left) were key speakers at a sociology conference at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, which explored topics concerning work in South Florida. Aileen presented on immigration issues and Dora made an outstanding presentation on the reasons why the economy drives immigrants north, and the practical solution as presented by El Sol. The conference was sponsored by FAU's sociology department and Sociology Club. Shown in the center is Lisa Wilson of the Lake Worth Resource Center.

## Volunteer of the Month for April/May

# Irwin Bromley

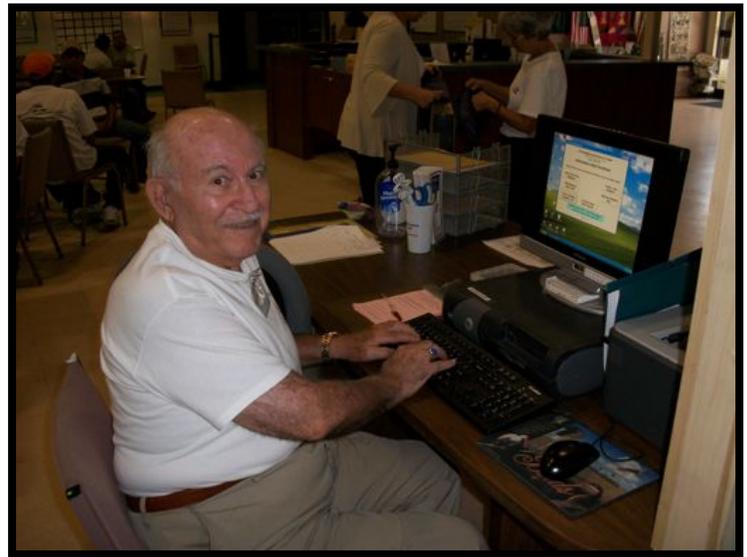
Irwin Bromley is well and justifiably known as a "super volunteer." A few years ago, he was recognized as Volunteer of the Year in our area.

Irwin has been an El Sol volunteer since the early days, back in 2006-07, when he began to work at the employer desk. He can be counted on to be there every Monday, but we also see him on Tuesdays, when he comes for our Spanish 101 class.

Irwin volunteers at El Sol in order to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Town of Jupiter, especially the poorest and underprivileged among us. He says that when he helps a day-laborer to obtain employment, it assists the worker to support himself as well as to improve the life of his family back home. It also fills a need of our community to obtain workers needed by homeowners and businesses to perform tasks that are either too short in nature or considered too menial by the general population of the area.

He says that we must not forget the pro bono work performed by our day-laborers at Habitat for Humanity as well as in community clean-up drives. El Sol workers give back to the community.

Irwin also volunteers every week at the Jupiter Police Department Records Office, patrols our businesses and neighborhoods with the Community Emergency Response Team, participates in the Jupiter Police Department CERT ham radio drills, volunteers at the Jupiter Medical Center's Infection Control office, and has for the past 17 years volunteered with the Assistant State Attorney at the criminal arraignments in the North County Courthouse. He



previously prepared and taught for many years in the IRS's VITA and TCE volunteer income tax programs.

When you ask, how did he end up doing all this, well, he says, it just kind of happened.

Irwin lives in Jupiter with Adele, his wife of 61 years. They have three married sons and seven grandchildren. Irwin is a retired CFO as well as a retired naval officer who served 20 years in the military. Irwin and Adele are frequent attendees at El Sol's Friday Night at the Movies

Irwin also notes that many fellow El Sol volunteers do a wonderful job in teaching the day-laborers the English language, Spanish literacy, computer and other occupational skills. Let us not forget the art classes as well. Still, other volunteers prepare breakfast and lunch to fortify the workers for the day. It's a team effort and he says that's in an honor to be a small part of it.

### This won't hurt a bit . . .



*Nurse Siobhan Mcrostie Gross of Jupiter Medical Center, takes a blood sample for a diabetes test at El Sol's Community Health Fair June 25. Fourteen health providers participated in the event, providing free health screenings, vaccinations and information about disease symptoms, prevention and treatment.*

## Workers of the Month for April, May

# Julio Cristal & Mateo Diaz-Perez

El Sol worker Julio Cristal earned Worker of the Month honors for April and Mateo Diaz-Perez, who was honored in March, was also cited for May.

Julio and Mateo were recognized for their participation in English classes, community service work and assisting in the kitchen. As Worker of the Month they each received preference for jobs for three days. Julio, 19, and Mateo, 55, are both natives of Guatemala.

"They are outstanding workers and excellent representatives of El Sol," said Wilberto Luna, El Sol labor coordinator.

Congratulations to Julio and Mateo for their well-deserved honors.



## El Sol

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Resource Center

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Phone (561) 745-9860

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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

*El Sol Shines* is being printed by a generous donation from

**Andi and John Cleveland**

If you would like to sponsor a future newsletter printing, please contact El Sol at (561) 745-9860 or email [diane.fitzpatrick@mac.com](mailto:diane.fitzpatrick@mac.com).

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## Save the date

# Hispanic Heritage Night July 23

July is "Baseball Month" at El Sol, building up to Hispanic Heritage Night, Friday, July 23, a fundraising effort to benefit El Sol.

Hispanic Heritage Night will be during the Florida State League game between the Palm Beach Cardinals and The Tampa Yankees at Roger Dean Stadium. The night's festivities include traditional music, free Salsa dance classes, cuisine, cultural demonstrations and more.

Game time is 7:05 p.m. Tickets are \$7 each or two tickets for \$12. El Sol supporters can help introduce baseball to the workers at El Sol by buying two tickets and donating one to a worker.



More information on Hispanic Heritage Night is available by calling Roger Dean Stadium at (561) 630-1839.

Prior to the event, members of the Palm Beach Cardinals will be talking baseball to El Sol members on Thursday, July 8.

The Friday movie night film on Friday, July 9, is *Sugar*, a film about Dominicans training for American baseball.

For more information about Hispanic Heritage Night and other July baseball events, contact El Sol at (561) 745-9860.

## El Sol is now 'on tour'

In a step to better familiarize the public about El Sol's services and programs interested persons can schedule a tour of the El Sol Center Monday through Friday.

The tours are by appointment and conducted by El Sol volunteers. Visitors will get a firsthand look at El Sol's operations, including how to hire workers, volunteer opportunities and on becoming a donor.

To schedule a tour call (561) 745-9860.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

June 28 – Award ceremony for Go Build Capacity, 10:30 a.m.

July 2 – Town of Jupiter presentation

July 8 – A visit from the Cardinals baseball team, 11 a.m.

July 9 – Movie night, 7 p.m. "Sugar."

July 10 – Corn Maya High School Program, 2 p.m. (and every Saturday)

July 16 – Ceramics art class, 9:30 a.m.

July 23 – Hispanic Heritage Night at Roger Dean Stadium

July 26 – Graduation ceremony, time TBA

Aug. 13 – Movie night, 7 p.m., TBA