El Sol is getting ready for hurricane season a little bit differently than the average homeowner: It’s training and preparing workers to do storm preparation work.

Already some workers are trained for putting up hurricane shutters, and a training session is planned for this month to train many more.

“The last thing people need to worry about in the days before a hurricane hits is getting good, reliable help,” said Jocelyn Sabbagh, director of El Sol. “If you want last-minute help putting up shutters and stowing outdoor items, you can get day laborers at El Sol in about 5 minutes.”

Many homeowners worry about finding reliable, experienced help to put up hurricane shutters, stow outdoor furniture and other items, and other storm preparations, especially on short notice.

The Federal Emergency Management Association recommends that homeowners do the following to prepare their homes before a hurricane:

- Cover all of your home’s windows with hurricane shutters.
- Be sure downspouts, gutters and other exterior attachments are secured properly.
- Plan to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans and anything else that is not tied down.
- Keep all trees and shrubs well trimmed so they are more wind resistant.
- Remove weak and dead tree limbs well ahead of a storm, to avoid having piles of branches lying outside.

El Sol supporters are encouraged to tell their friends and neighbors that storm prep help is readily available just by stopping in at El Sol.

Printed fliers are available, upon request, by calling El Sol at (561) 745-9860.

Ready for hurricane season? We are!

Status update: El Sol is on Facebook & Twitter

El Sol is stepping up its presence on Facebook and Twitter, to keep up with the fast-growing social networking trend. Regular updates on El Sol happenings can come directly to your Facebook news feed and Twitter accounts.

On Facebook, look for “El Sol, Jupiter’s Neighborhood Resource Center” and click on the “Like” button. As a friend and follower of El Sol’s Facebook page, you can post photographs of El Sol events, post to the El Sol page’s wall, suggest the page to your friends, and comment on photos and posts.

On Twitter, find “ElSoJupiter” and click on “Follow.”

Also on Facebook, follow Sunshine Artworks artists’ events by becoming a fan of “Sunshine Artworks Inc.”
From the director’s desk

What’s so special about El Sol? Where do I start?

Someone recently asked me, “What makes El Sol so special?” I thought to myself, there are so many good answers to that question that I wouldn’t know where to start. But, for me, one of the keys to El Sol’s special nature starts with you. It is thanks to you that we have been able to achieve so much in our four years (Yes, this September 6th we are turning 4 years old!)

So far this year, supporters like you have made all of this happen:

- 15,644 meals have been served to the neediest in our community
- 3,619 jobs have been found through our labor center
- 98 students have advanced a level of English proficiency in our nighttime program
- 32 adults have learned how to read and write in our Adult Basic Education program
- 15 students have learned computer skills in our evening classes
- 30 students, on average, have received daily English classes offered by the School District
- 293 families have received assistance with medical, school and social service applications

Without your time, treasure and talent, this would not be possible.

But, what do these numbers really mean? It means that Romeo is able to read and write in English. Before joining El Sol, Romeo had never attended any formal schooling. He was illiterate and did not speak English. It means that Center Street is no longer an open-air market. It means that on an average day, 150 Jupiter workers have a safe and organized place to seek work. It means that a family that did not know how to access Florida Kid Care now can. So as I was saying, there are so many good answers to that question that I wouldn’t know where to start. And once I start, it’s hard to stop.

In the end, El Sol is special because it is having a real and tangible impact on so many lives.

Why do you find El Sol so special? I would love to hear your answers; moreover, I would love for you to share your thoughts with your friends and invite them to tour El Sol! Our board of directors and our staff have created a new program where you can invite your friends and family to learn more about our center. To get more information on how to schedule a tour of El Sol please contact our associate director, Dora Valdivia, at doraelsol@yahoo.com.

We have achieved a lot . . . With your continued support we can do so much more!

Jocelyn Sabbagh

Looking for a few good volunteers

El Sol has several volunteer shifts that need to be filled immediately. No experience is necessary and training is provided.

An Employer Desk greeter is needed **7-9 a.m. Mondays and 7-9 a.m. Fridays.** The greeter registers new employers and inputs job requests into the computer database.

Kitchen help is needed on the early-bird shift, **6-8 a.m. Thursdays.** The early-bird kitchen volunteer makes coffee, prepares bread and pastries for serving, and greets El Sol workers as they arrive at the center, looking forward to their first cup of coffee for the day.

Drivers are needed for occasional volunteer work, to transport and pick up a group of El Sol workers to and from the nearby Habitat for Humanity work site, and also to transport a worker to the train station, the Miami consulate, or the Miami airport.

Please contact Sally Isham, volunteer coordinator, at sallyelsol@yahoo.com if you are interested in any of these jobs.

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.
When it comes to helping others, El Sol workers never hesitate to pitch in and that was the case Friday, July 30, when 15 workers volunteered to help paint the home of an 82-year-old woman in Pine Gardens South.

”I’m here because I get jobs at El Sol and I want to give something back.”

~ Genaro Mateo

The El Sol workers didn’t seem to mind that by volunteering for the community service project they were giving up a possible chance to obtain a paying job through El Sol’s day labor service. The response of Genaro Mateo, 27, when asked why he volunteered, was typical of the group.

“I’m here because I get jobs at El Sol and I want to give something back,” said Mateo, a native of Guatemala who has resided in Jupiter the past five years. Margaret Hutchinson, who has lived in her home the past 30 years and uses a wheel chair, expressed her gratitude for the work on her home by the volunteers.

“I think it’s wonderful. I’m just sorry I’m in a position where I have to accept it. I would normally be one of those who would volunteer for something like this,” she said.

Hutchinson’s niece, Pamela Hutchinson, and Judy Sexton also were part of the painting crew. Other sponsors of the house painting in addition to the Solid Waste Authority were Rebuilding Together of the Palm Beaches and The Town of Jupiter.

Joanna Aiken, Community Services coordinator for the SWA, said that since the agency began partnering with El Sol two years ago it has been able to double the number of people that it is able to help.

Sunshine Artworks artists look ahead to the holidays

Sunshine Artworks will host an art contest for a Christmas card design. The winning design will be used on the cover of the first El Sol Christmas card, on sale in time for Artfest 2010.

All EL Sol workers are eligible to participate in the Christmas card design contest. Entries are due by Sept. 10.

Sunshine Artworks recently welcomed back artist Jose Antonio Chavajay. Jose has created new works, which are available in the office. Three of his paintings will be used on a second set of note cards, which will be for sale at El Sol. A first set of note cards featured paintings by Pedro Chavajay. Both sets of note card designs, as well as sets of Christmas cards, will be sold at Artfest.

Profits from the note cards go to the artists and a small portion helps sustain Sunshine Artworks.

Arftest 2010: “Connecting Lives Through Art” will be from 12 noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 7.

The paintings of Pedro Chavajay and Lenin Cochoy are on display at the Boyton Beach Library. There will be a reception at the library to highlight the artists on Sept. 16 from 6 to 8 p.m. Anyone wishing to go to the reception may contact Andi Cleveland.

Sunshine Artworks artists also will participate in an art show at Florida Atlantic University in celebration of Hispanic Heritage month. The show begins Sept 15.

Keep up with Sunshine Artworks happenings by following “Sunshine Artworks Inc.” on Facebook.
Awards & Honors

Graduation
Graduates of El Sol’s summer classes proudly display their certificates. Students in language and literacy classes were recognized in a ceremony July 26.

Go Build
El Sol has received a $10,000 grant from Nonprofits First, an organization that supports non-profit groups in the county. Above left, El Sol Director Jocelyn Sabbagh guides Pedro del Sol, president and CEO of Nonprofits First, on a tour through the center. Nonprofits First’s GoBuild HHS Compassion Grant Project awarded grants to 21 county organizations. The award helps El Sol enhance its capacity to raise funds and ensure long-term sustainability. Through this grant El Sol has been able to work with consultant Ellen Bristol of Bristol Strategy Group to implement a fund development initiative.

Census award
El Sol’s efforts to encourage participation in the 2010 Census have been recognized with an award by the U.S. Census Bureau. In the months leading up to the launch of the census, El Sol sponsored informational meetings and workshops on the importance of the census and the questions on the census forms. El Sol also served as a test for Census Bureau jobs, and a Census rep was stationed at the center. Shown at left with the award are (left to right) Sally Isham, volunteer coordinator; Jocelyn Sabbagh, director; and Wilberto Luna, labor coordinator.

Recaredo Fernandez, Ph.D., has been appointed El Sol education coordinator, succeeding Kathryn Klaas, who has accepted a job in Guatemala.

Fernandez is responsible for the nighttime ESL program as well as Spanish literacy, computer classes and Youth Leadership programs.

Fernandez, 43, is a native of El Salvador but lived and worked many years in Honduras in various social development programs and taught human and civil rights in rural areas.

After obtaining a law degree from the National University of Honduras he worked as a lawyer and government special prosecutor of human rights abuse cases for the National General Attorney’s Office in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

In 1997 Fernandez and his wife, Isabel, moved to Spain where they obtained their Ph.D. degrees in Adult Education in 2001 from the University of Oviedo in Asturias, Spain.

Recaredo and his wife, who is deputy director of the Florida Immigration Rights Coalition, are owners of Popular Education Consultants, Inc., which works with nonprofit organizations on strategic planning and other subjects.

They reside in West Palm Beach.

Recycle & donate!
Donate to El Sol and recycle at the same time!

Donate used ink/toner cartridges and El Sol can earn rewards from Staples.

Bring in caps from water bottles, milk cartons, and other bottles. El Sol collects them and gives them to Aveda for re-use.

Drop off your old cell phones and El Sol earns rewards and keeps toxic metals out of landfills.
Worker of the Month for June/July: Marcos Gaspar Manuel

Marcos Gaspar Manuel’s commitment to learning English has earned him Worker of the Month honors for June and July.

Marcos, 30, a native of Soloma, Huehuetenango, Guatemala, successfully completed an English as a Second Language program at Jupiter High School, and has continued to improve his proficiency by attending daily ESL classes at El Sol.

Wilberto Luna, El Sol labor coordinator, praised Marcos as a good worker and one “who speaks pretty good English.”

“When I’m not working I’m here learning new vocabulary and how to speak better,” Marcos said.

He also remembers well the days before El Sol opened when he and other workers had no shelter from the rain or heat as they stood, sometimes for hours each day, along streets hoping motorists would stop and offer them a job.

“Here you are safe and don’t get wet,” he said while seated with other workers in El Sol’s assembly hall.

Since coming to Jupiter eight years ago, Marcos said he has worked mainly in landscaping and lawn maintenance and tree trimming.

As Worker of the Month, Marcos receives priority for jobs for three days.

Congratulations for a well-deserved honor.

Volunteer of the Month for June/July

Jacque Blair is a passionate and committed El Sol volunteer. She co-owns “The Good Stuff” consignment store in Tequesta and lives in Chasewood with her cat, Tux E. Do.

She says while she doesn’t have kids, the El Sol workers have come to be like her family. At times, she has had workers’ families over to her house to celebrate their kids’ birthdays and sponsored families for Christmas. She says her favorite part about working at the center is when workers recognize her outside of the El Sol center and say “Hi.”

Jacque got involved with El Sol after moving to Jupiter from Maryland. She’d worked in a soup kitchen there and was interested in starting something similar in South Florida. She and her sister went to the Jupiter Police Department to look into it and the JPD set her up with the newly created El Sol where Jacque quickly began putting her skills to work.

It started with using her experience in the kitchen to plan and serve meals for the workers. Soon, she was drawing on her experience as a hairstylist to provide free haircuts. On any given Sunday she would feed as many as 100 people and cut anywhere from 4 to 15 people’s hair. After each haircut, she compliments the customer’s new ‘do – in Spanish if necessary.

“I always make sure to tell them they’re ‘muy guapo’ or ‘very handsome,’” she tells them. For some people, Jacque’s haircut is the first they’ve had in over a year.

Jacque began using her skills as a painter to set up an art program that allowed workers waiting for job assignments to hone their artistic skills. What started as a way to keep waiting El Sol workers from being bored has enabled some workers to create marketable crafts.

Jacque’s motivation to serve stems from a desire to address the needs that exist in her community. She says she is constantly impressed by the work ethic and gratitude of the people she meets at El Sol.

Jacque’s passion for El Sol is contagious. Her sister volunteers as an English teacher when she can and Jacque’s ex-husband helps in the kitchen on Sundays with her.

Since her biggest regret is not being able to help with English classes at El Sol, she is planning a three-week trip to Guatemala next summer where she will study Spanish and volunteer.

Jacque is also bursting with ideas and improvement programs. She hopes to one day be able to use her consignments shop as a tool for encouraging more community donations to El Sol and to help El Sol workers learn basic business skills.
Let’s go out to the ballgame

Hispanic Heritage Night hits it out of the park

El Sol workers and supporters enjoyed a night out at the ball field, for Hispanic Heritage Night at Roger Dean Stadium. July 23rd was the Florida State League game between the Palm Beach Cardinals and the Tampa Yankees. In addition to great baseball, the night’s festivities included traditional Hispanic music, Salsa dance classes, ethnic cuisine and cultural demonstrations.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Aug 26 – HIV testing
Aug 27 – Ceramics art class 9:30-11 a.m.
Aug 28 – Hurricane shutters workshop 10-11 a.m.
Sept 6 – Labor Day (shorter holiday hours – 7-11 a.m.)
Sept 17 – Community service day
Oct 2 – Hispanic Heritage event 6-9 p.m.