El Sol Shines
“working together for a better community”

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El Sol Receives Grant for Health Literacy Program

There is a growing recognition among health care providers and adult educators around the country that limited English language and literacy skills can have a significant impact on one’s health. Health Literacy is defined as the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

According to the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy’s (NAAL) report on the health literacy of America’s adults, 14% of adults have below basic health literacy skills. Low health literacy is especially prevalent among adults who did not complete high school and Hispanic adults, who have lower health literacy than any other ethnic/racial group. In addition, low health literacy costs between $106 and $236 billion a year in the form of longer hospital stays, emergency room visits, increased doctor visits, and increased medication, according to a recent report from the University of Connecticut.

El Sol wants to thank Vickie Granatti and Ale Hoffmann as coordinators of daytime and nighttime ESL classes, along with Gayle Flaherty and all our valued volunteer teachers who had made our ESL classes possible and exceeded expectations.

The award was presented during the 30th Annual Florida Literacy Conference May 7th – 9th, in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Left to right: Kerri Masley, Florida Blue Representative; Dora Valdivia, El Sol’s Associate Director; Greg Smith, Executive Director Florida Literacy Coalition

For a third consecutive year, El Sol has been awarded a one-year $5,000 grant for the continuation of its health literacy program to benefit its adult ESL students.

This grant, awarded by Florida Blue and the Florida Literacy Coalition, will integrate health and nutrition into El Sol’s ESOL curriculum. The focus is to help students acquire information and resources that will help them navigate the medical system and make informed health decisions.

Great Give Update

On May 6th, El Sol raised $15,826.19 in just one day. The event, Great Give, was cosponsored by the United Way of Palm Beach County and Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin County on behalf of El Sol. The fund raiser was a 24-hour, online “give-a-thon.” Every gift made on May 6 was multiplied with bonus dollars raised by the Community Foundation.

AmeriCorps VISTA member Aubry León along with Guatemalan artist Lenin Cochoy headed to Center for Philanthropy on the day of the event to promote El Sol as well as to sell some artwork. Lenin generously donated half his proceeds to El Sol.

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Support El Sol Each Time You Shop at Amazon.com

Amazon’s “Smile” Program: What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support El Sol every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

To shop at AmazonSmile, simply type into your browser smile.amazon.com. Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on their product detail pages. Recurring Subscribe-and-Save purchases and subscription renewals are not currently eligible.

You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

How to select El Sol as your charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile:

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. To choose El Sol as your charity, type “El Sol” in the box below the title, “Or pick your own charitable organization,” and click on “search.” You’ll actually see three options, as there are two El Sols in California (unrelated to us). Choose “El Sol Jupiter’s Neighborhood Resource Center, Inc.” Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make on AmazonSmile will result in a donation.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes, or service charges. From time to time, Amazon may offer special, limited time promotions that increase the donation amount on one or more products or services or provide for additional donations to charitable organizations.

El Sol Launches Social Media Campaign

In June, El Sol started a social media campaign using the #ILoveElSol hashtag. Participants write a personal message about El Sol on a piece of paper, take a photo, and share the photo on their social media accounts. David Urieta, the Outreach Coordinator, is spearheading the project. Urieta was inspired from previous viral hashtag campaigns like #BringBackOurGirls, which was in response to the several hundred schoolgirls who were abducted in Nigeria.

“I believe the most powerful aspect of these hashtag campaigns is seeing an array of faces that share the same passion for a cause and are compelled to share their messages,” said Urieta. At the moment, El Sol has received over 20 #ILoveElSol photos with messages like, “El Sol is compassion. El Sol is community. El Sol is family,” and “El Sol is courageous. El Sol is kindness. El Sol is significant.”

Urieta encourages all volunteers and community members to share their messages with El Sol. Photos can be sent to El Sol’s twitter at @elsoljupiter or e-mailed to david@friendsofelsol.org. “It’s heartwarming to see so much support from the community. One of the first photos I took was of a worker who heard of the campaign and urged me to take his photo,” said Urieta.
Gina Mejia, El Sol’s Featured Volunteer

Gina Mejia has been happily volunteering at El Sol ever since it opened. Originally from Honduras, Gina came to the states at the tender age of nineteen. Having some family in America, and wanting to make a better future for herself and her family, she settled in Florida to raise a family. She has found steady work as a housekeeper, an occupation that keeps her busy when she’s not volunteering at El Sol.

Betzy Rega, is the Health Coordinator at El Sol who nominated Gina for the featured volunteer this month. Says Betzy “Gina has been with El Sol since the beginning and assisted in the kitchen when we did not have a working stove. I was a volunteer as well so we found creative ways for cooking meals for over 100 workers.” It must take some pretty imaginative creativity to figure out how to feed more than one hundred hungry workers with a bare-bones kitchen, but Gina and Betzy, an obviously inspired and determined team, figured it out.

Gina continues to volunteer but due to her work schedule she only helps out now for events. For the past two years, she has been a key assistant with the soccer tournament. This year she cooked the food for the event and brought in her talented crew—her kids—to assist. The team worked from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. getting it all ready for the two-day event.

“The challenging part of the soccer tournament was that it was a two-day event, so most of the work was done quickly with all of the shopping for prep and the fact that besides three of my four children volunteering, it was just myself and Betzy doing all the work,” says Gina.

Gina has been married for over seventeen years and has four children, three boys, ages 23, 18, 17, and an “almost 16 year old” daughter. She chose El Sol because she was looking for a volunteer opportunity with an organization with a mission in which she strongly believed. El Sol is fortunate that Gina chose us as the recipient of her time, talents and abilities.

Workers’ Council

The Workers’ Council of El Sol is an elected group of members who meet once a month to discuss topics to improve the center. In doing so, the Workers’ Council facilitates communication between workers and administrators of El Sol.

The elections were held on Saturday June 28th, as workers voted for new officers for the worker’s council. A total of 139 workers voted. The new president is Marta Bravo, who is the first female to be elected president. Other elected members include: Pascual Cisneros as Treasurer, Genaro Mateo as Secretary, Rosa Ortega, Raul Morales, and Angel Areiza as Vocals.

El Sol Receives Wells Fargo Community Connections Grant

El Sol received the Wells Fargo 2014 Community Connections Grant of $1,000 to support our programs! Every year, Wells Fargo branches in our region select a local school or non-profit organization as a community partner. For a second year in a row the Wells Fargo Jupiter-Creek branch has selected El Sol as its community partner! We are very grateful for our partnership!
FEATURED GARDENER

Julia Díaz, a native of Guatemala, has been living in Jupiter, Florida for over twelve years. Díaz first learned of El Sol in 2006 from Jill Hanson, El Sol’s legal aid volunteer. Díaz credits her exposure to a community’s motivation for change as encouragement to become the former President of Corn Maya, Inc. and a volunteer with the “Promotores de Salud” program (Health Promoters).

When Díaz first learned about the Sunshine Organic Community Garden, she states, “I begged Alyssa for a plot. I wanted it from the bottom of my heart and this is the truth. When she called to give me the news that I have been selected for a plot; I was surprised, I couldn’t believe it!” Since then, Díaz has become an active gardener and has shared her new life passion with her family.

Díaz and her two daughters have experienced great joy from the garden. Díaz has seen a change in her oldest daughter’s emotions. “My daughter suffers from a thyroid condition and since the garden’s opening, I have seen her change for the better. After I come back from work, she runs up to me and says excitingly, ‘Mami, let’s go see how the plants are doing!’” said Díaz.

Díaz credits the Sunshine Organic Community Garden for lifting up the spirits of her daughters and herself. “Before the garden, I found myself growing sad and spending most of my free time at home,” said Díaz. Seeing her plants grow has been a calming and exciting experience for Díaz, because it brings back childhood memories of her father seeding and harvesting the land.

Most importantly, she is grateful for a secure access to organic produce. “It’s rewarding to grow my own food. I no longer feel disconnected from nature. I know what I am putting into my body and that makes me happy,” said Díaz. Díaz’s story is one of many from the garden, but her story has been chosen to be featured in an upcoming video for Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation.
Our ESL Volunteer Teachers Rock!

El Sol's sewing program welcomes Miluska Franco as the program coordinator. Miluska assumed this title in January 2014.

Since Miluska joined the program she has provided much structure and guidance to both Intermediate and basic level classes in close coordination with Myrtelina Cyntron, our Basic level teacher. Originally from Lima, Peru she studied Systems Engineering and worked in the banking system of her native country. In 2005 she moved to the US and has two children ages 14 and 12. In addition to her job as teacher and sewing coordinator for El Sol, Miluska is also a Lactation Consultant for the Health Department, and conducts her alterations business from her home.

Since Miluska was very young she had a fascination with both sewing and teaching. Upon her arrival in the U.S., she worked with an interior designer in Sarasota who helped Miluska to develop her skills in sewing challenging interior decoration projects. She later moved to Palm Beach Gardens where she worked at Macy’s Alterations department for two years.

With the development of this wonderful job, I have the opportunity to deal with lots of Latin-American women, mostly immigrants, who many times are alone but eager to develop themselves and succeed in life,” says Mrs. Franco. She cannot hide her emotions when talking about how much this has made a difference in her life.

Miluska arrived at El Sol willing to volunteer but as soon as Dora Valdivia, El Sol’s Associate Director, interviewed her, she knew Miluska was the perfect fit for El Sol. “She has been able to assemble the curricula to provide the required structure while simultaneously keeping students highly motivated. Her skills, professional experience, and attributes are making the program grow.”

Diane Lennert, a retired professional ESL teacher is one of those volunteers. She currently has 12 students present for a multi-level table talk class. The Staying Healthy curriculum she developed helps students improve their diets through discussing food categories such as proteins, carbs, and fats, among others. Using bilingual flyers from newspapers and magazines, students learn English vocabulary and phrases associated with a healthy diet.

Dora Valdivia, El Sol’s Associate Director, believes that Table Talk is one component that has prepared approximately 150 students to advance their English skill level. “We still have much to learn about how to best address language barriers, but we are seeking to coordinate efforts to apply best practices to transform the lives of the population El Sol serves.”
GARDEN WORKSHOPS!! Some Dates to Remember...

Summer is heating up for the garden’s workshop series. All of our gardening and healthy eating workshops are free and open to the public. The schedule is as follows:

July 9th from Noon-1p.m.: “Summer Seminole Pumpkin 2 ways”. Learn some Florida history and culture while we explore the Seminole pumpkin- the staple crop of Native Americans in our area since 1565. This pumpkin grows all summer long and can be prepared in a variety of ways. Participants will make one savory and one sweet recipe together.

July 12th from 10 a.m.-11a.m.: “Tomato Problem Solving and Success”. Learn how to identify and cure tomato diseases, pests, and nutrient deficiencies. We will also cover the tomato’s history as a crop and tips on how to keep your tomatoes pruned and happy. This workshop is followed by a garden-wide potluck from 11-1PM. Come learn about tomatoes and share some salsa!

July 23rd from Noon-1p.m.: “Grow your own salad”. Learn how to make nutrient dense and flavorful salads with things that you can grow in your own backyard.

July 26th from 10a.m.-11p.m.: “Homemade Garden Sprays”. Ever notice when you eat a lot of onions and garlic that people never get too close? Bugs feel the same way! Learn how to make spicy garlic sprays to protect your garden as well as other homemade recipes to keep your garden looking great.

August 6th from Noon-1p.m.: “Using herbs in everyday cooking”. Did you know that herbs have special properties that can improve your health as well as the flavor of your dinner? Learn about the benefits of herbs and some delicious combinations while we cook and taste our way through our herb spiral.

August 9th from 10 a.m.-11 a.m.: “Principles in Organic Agriculture”. Learn about what makes “organic” organic.

August 20th from Noon-1p.m.: “Garden Grown Stir Fry”. Learn how to prepare Asian stir fries with garden grown produce. Stir fries are a great and easy way to increase your consumption of fresh vegetables.

August 23rd from 10 a.m.-11a.m.: “Planning and Planting your Fall Garden”. As Fall approaches its time to start a new garden! Learn about crops that love the fall and which summer crops you can keep growing. We will also cover companion gardening, or planting certain crops next to others to increase yields, flavor, and protection from pests. This workshop is not to be missed!

A quick note: El Sol’s kitchen has been our tastiest program for many years now. Thanks to our partnership with the community garden we’re transitioning into a new mindset in the kitchen. The philosophy was, “make everyone full and keep everyone full.” We’ve expanded this to, “keep everyone full, and make everyone healthy.” We are taking great strides to make sure there is at least one vegetable serving on each plate of food served. We have begun partnering with the Palm Beach County Food Bank on our off weeks from Feeding South Florida and have been able to serve a lot of healthier food than we have in the past thanks to this new partnership.
El Sol Helps the Community Through Education and Health Services

Women’s Health Project

Promotores de Salud (Promoters of Health)

Workshop and Health Check

Nurse Appreciation

Last month was Nurses appreciation. We would like to highlight Nicollete Christy of the VNA and Carlos for all the great service they give to our Community. The VNA bus is at El Sol the first Wednesday of every month.
Worker Training Continues

Antonio Velasquez, Esau Macario, Pascual Cisneros, Arcadio Lopez and Fabio Hernandez participated in moving six desks to be used for the Vistas, Executive Director and Garden Coordinator.

All did a great job using the skills from the training class and putting them in practice. Excellent Team effort. Thank you Karen Clark for organizing the training.

New VISTAs! Say Hello to David and Esabelle

David Urieta is a 20-year-old Florida native from West Palm Beach, Florida. David served as ArtFest Coordinator as part of his internship requirement at FAU’s Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College in Jupiter. David’s Honors Thesis “A Call for Reform: The Disparate Impact of Reproductive Technologies on the Gestational Surrogate in India” analyzes the exploitative effects of commercial surrogacy on poor, illiterate women in India. David’s academic background in gender, race, and class has motivated him to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector in hopes of making a difference in his community.

David has decided to take a temporary hiatus from his studies to serve as VISTA Outreach Coordinator at El Sol. David is responsible for marketing El Sol’s programs and reaching out to community members at promotional events, public speaking engagements, and on social media. David hopes that his skills in event management, volunteer mobilization, and extensive activist organizing will lend a unique perspective during his time at El Sol. In his spare time, David enjoys supporting local artists at Northwood’s Art & Wine Promenade, visiting family members in Southern Mexico, and binge watching TV shows on Netflix.

Esabelle Herrera is originally from a small rural town in Ohio named Berlin, which is known for its very large Amish population. She lived there until she graduated Hiland High School in 2009. From there, she decided to move to sunny South Florida to attend Palm Beach Atlantic University. She graduated in May of 2013 with a B.A. in Political Science and a minor in Spanish.

Esabelle has had dreams, since she was young, of working to better the lives of the many hard working immigrants. She has a very strong passion for social justice and to help those in need. This became apparent to her through the courageous stories shared by her father Antonio, who is a native of Mexico. She hopes to successfully build capacity here at El Sol through earned income business strategies.

Esabelle loves to travel as much as she can. She enjoys cooking all types of food, but her favorite food to prepare is Mexican. She also loves to go to the gym, to sew, attend lots of music festivals and try new foods with her boyfriend Tyler.
El Sol Communications Chairman Steps Down

Mike Richmond, long-term supporter and volunteer at El Sol, stepped down as the Head of Communications this June. Richmond has been involved with El Sol since its inception. As the elected Chairman of “Friends of El Sol” in 2005, the group of Jupiter residents were interested in offering a solution to the open air labor market on Center Street.

Richmond’s success as the Chairman of “Friends of El Sol” and passion for a centralized location for transient laborers, made Richmond the best candidate to serve as President of the Board of Directors and as the Communications Committee Chair at El Sol. Richmond recalls his visit to two labor centers in Fort Worth, Texas and Plano, Texas, as one of his fondest memories at El Sol. “I will always be an unofficial ambassador, this will never change” said Richmond.

Richmond explains the change he has witnessed in El Sol. “El Sol has evolved from an organization ‘earning’ credibility to becoming an established part of the Jupiter community,” said Richmond. His decision to step down as the Head of Communications was to open a new chapter in El Sol’s communication.

Bob Cadogan of Burson-Martseller, a global public relations and communication firm, accepted Richmond’s former role as the Communications Committee Chair. “Mike has been a tireless supporter of El Sol and truly inspired me to participate in such a worthwhile cause,” said Bob. “Mike’s legacy is palpable within our committee, and I look forward to continuing his great work with all of the people he’s touched.” Cadogan added, he was honored to have Richmond’s confidence to take on his new role, and looks forward to further contributing to El Sol’s success.

Garden Promo Items

Thanks to a generous donation, El Sol’s Community Garden received funding to produce promotional items. These items will be sold to help offset the garden’s start-up and maintenance expenses.

With artwork provided by our graphic designer, Wendy Meehan, we’ve created fun promotional items that embody the spirit of the Community Garden. This design appears on all the Community Garden’s promotional items.

And happy news- all the garden merchandise items are now on sale! Visit El Sol to purchase hats, ladies v-neck tees, men’s tees, and toddler tees. All the tees are organic cotton. Besides clothing items, we also have handsome canvas bags that can be used for anything from groceries to travel.

All funds raised from the promotional items will go toward garden expenses.
El Sol’s “Wish List “

Kitchen
- Fresh fruits and vegetables, canned veggies and fruit
- Publix’s cards for emergency food
- Aluminum pans
- Large bags of rice, beans, pasta, pasta sauce
- Dishwasher & money to maintain the monthly service contract
- Cleaning supplies i.e., brooms, mops, rags, paper towels, scrubbing sponge etc.

Education
- Pencils, pens, crayons, dry erase markers
- Blank notebooks/composition books
- Bounding spirals of 3/4 inch
- Copy, loose leaf, & construction paper, colored card stock
- Coloring books, arts/crafts
- Dictionaries (S-E), picture dictionaries

Labor Program
- Bottled water to prevent dehydration and heat stroke
- Sunscreen, hats

Outreach and Client Communications
- Flatscreen 50-inch TV for presentations
- Mount
- Extension cords
- Laptop for presentations

Community Garden:
- Tool sharpening equipment
- Cordless drill with drill bits
- Native vining plants
- Very small curtains for our shed’s windows
- Pallets
- Funding for horticultural workshops

Childcare
We need volunteers to lead childcare activities during our nighttime classes while parents are in class. Shifts are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday from 7-9 p.m.

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.

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