ArtFest Weekend Attracts Over 1,000 Visitors

ArtFest 2015 was a huge success! The 4-hour celebration attracted over 1,000 visitors and featured musical acts, cultural dances, and delicious food from food trucks, the El Sol Workers’ Council, and smoothies from the Sunshine Organic Community Garden. This year’s theme, “COMMUNITY/COMUNIDAD,” exemplified that we are all one community in this global world. As such, there were many artists and artisans from the local communities exhibiting their work. El Sol artisans Pedro Chavajay and Lenin Cochoy were at the event selling their stunning pieces of Guatemalan art, alongside 37 other vendors selling original paintings, homemade jewelry, crafts, clothing, and much more.

“This is our eighth annual ArtFest. We are always excited to see the special connections that are made on that day between El Sol artisans and longtime residents of Jupiter. It brings us closer as a community,” said Communications Coordinator David Urieta, chair of this year’s event.

ArtFest is a venue to promote Jupiter’s multicultural heritage, especially that of indigenous Guatemala. “It always surprises people that the people who do your landscaping or housecleaning, are the same people who create these beautiful pieces of Mayan art and jewelry, which is very unique to the South Florida area,” added Urieta. ArtFest provides day laborers an opportunity to earn extra cash on the side for their talents and for longtime Jupiter residents to learn more about their cultural neighbors and other local artists.
Featured Board Member Suzanne Cordero

Suzanne was born in North Carolina and raised in Guatemala before moving back to the states with her husband to set up a dentistry practice. At first, the Corderos lived in Kentucky, but the Jupiter beaches and warm breezes beckoned.

Suzanne serves as the Secretary of the Board of Directors of El Sol, but that is not her only connection to her Guatemalan roots. She also is the Executive Director for The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund or in the Q’eqchi native language – AK’Tenamit (a new village) – a non-profit organization whose mission is to enable the indigenous people of Guatemala to become self-sustaining by supporting projects that: improve health care, reduce illiteracy, promote environmentally sound agriculture, enterprise development to raise income levels, and increase awareness and participation in civic affairs.

Suzanne’s biggest support goes to Rio Dulce (Sweet River), a boarding school for Mayan children. “We are especially concerned for the Mayan girls,” says Suzanne, “Some of whom are married off at 12-years-old. Education can help change their lives.”

Suzanne loves being involved with El Sol. “I am able to target the problem at both ends. In Guatemala, we are helping the indigenous people stay and succeed in their lives. In Jupiter, we are helping those who have made the decision to come to the United States.”

When Suzanne is not volunteering her time to help others, she likes to read, play tennis, go to the beach and spend time with her dog, Cocoa (a rescued mixed breed). “I don’t really have much time for these activities, but I also like kayaking and biking with my husband.” Suzanne was instrumental in the One Jupiter initiative, and continues to support One Jupiter through Jupiter High School’s One Jupiter Club.

Suzanne has a busy life, so El Sol is honored and proud she chose this organization. We thank her for her service to the community both in Jupiter and in Guatemala.

El Sol Hires Communications Coordinator

El Sol is proud to announce the hiring of David Urieta as our Communications Coordinator! David, 21, attended the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College and started as a volunteer in our daytime ESL Program and Health Program in 2012. He later interned in 2013 as the ArtFest Coordinator. “I believe this was a pivotal moment in my development. I was a 19-year-old kid being thrown into the complicated, inner-workings of a nonprofit. I remember Jocelyn telling me to grow some ‘thick skin’ and I sure did.” ArtFest has since become one of El Sol’s largest outreach events with a fundraiser the night before.

David returned as an Americorps VISTA Outreach Coordinator to assist in marketing, social media, the newsletter, and event planning. “My year of service was a rewarding and challenging experience. Making poverty-level wages meant being in a constant state of insecurity, but it was worth it.” On August 1, David was hired as the Communications Coordinator. David’s responsibilities have expanded to include: developing marketing plans, budgeting, fostering positive media relations, on-air interviews, and other tasks.

David’s experience with the organization, strong communication skills, and passion for its mission will be among our most valuable assets! Welcome to the team...again!

Editor’s note: For some time now, David has been an integral part of the El Sol Shines newsletter team. This newsletter is assembled out of state, so David runs around and gathers stories for each issue, often writing most of the articles himself. He’s fun and enthusiastic, and we’re glad he has chosen to remain with El Sol.
El Sol Shines Oct/Nov 2015

El Sol’s Community Service Program

Being part of a community; taking pride in the neighborhoods in and around where you live; and feeling all the joy of having completed a job well done are not just American ideals. Everyone wants to be part of a community, and when that neighborhood is Jupiter, who can blame them?

Once a month, El Sol workers give back with voluntary labor for a lucky organization that needs it. Workers have built raised garden beds for Edna W. Runner Tutorial Center, built homes for Habitat for Humanity, picked litter for national clean-up campaigns, and much more. “El Sol workers give up the chance for a paying job to help others in need in our community,” says Executive Director Jocelyn Skolnik.

The program is always welcoming new community service projects. Organizations must be a non-profit agency, school, church, or government entity. To schedule your project, contact Jocelyn@friendsofelsol.org

Farewell Aubry and Michelle

Aubry León relocated from San Jose, California to Jupiter, Florida in Nov. 2013 to serve as the Community Resource Developer at El Sol. As the CRD, Aubry worked on grants to build the capacity of the organization and worked on fundraising projects like the Great Give and ArtFest Preview Night. Aubry continued her service as the AmeriCorps VISTA Leader, where she acted as the supervisor for other AmeriCorps VISTAs and spearheaded the expansion of the VISTA project for El Sol, Edna W. Runner Tutorial Center, Healthier Jupiter, FAU Honors College, and Healthier Delray. Aubry will be relocating to Denver, CO.

Michelle Rivera is a non-fiction writer and a past volunteer at El Sol. She has been a Jupiter resident for 41 years, having been born and raised in New York. As former Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle helped keep El Sol running mostly on volunteer power, organized the volunteer recognition ceremony, and planned community service projects. Michelle plans to focus on her writing and spend more time with her family.

El Sol would like to bid farewell to Aubry León and Michelle Rivera. We wish you the best in your endeavors!
Featured Volunteer
Marta Llorens

Marta Llorens has only been in Florida for a little over a year, but she’s made a big impact on the community around her. Born and raised in Barcelona, Spain, Marta moved to London to finish her studies in Fine Arts and Modern History. When her husband Victor, a scientist, moved to Jupiter, Marta learned she was about to be even more immersed in English than she was in London. “I love that there are so many opportunities to learn English here,” says Marta. “In London, you have to pay to learn English, but here, and especially at El Sol, I can learn English and practice it every day.”

The fact that El Sol is “willing to help everyone who wants a better life” is what keeps Marta coming back to lend her services as a graphic designer for the ArtFest Committee.

“Marta was an integral part on the ArtFest Committee. She was always able to think outside the box and create beautiful flyers and other promotional materials. She really saved the day!” says David Urieta, Communications Coordinator and Chair of this year’s ArtFest Committee.

Marta practices an extreme form of artistry called “contour painting.” It’s a timed painting challenge where the artist has only a few moments to capture the true essence of the subject. “I love it,” says Marta, “It helps me warm up for my abstract painting.”

Marta and Victor have only been married about a year. But together, with Marta’s contributions to the art community and Victor’s job as a brain cancer researcher; they are making a difference.

Featured Worker
Irineo Rojas Gonzales

Irineo Rojas Gonzales is truly a family man. He has been in the United States for twenty years—all because he wants his family to have a better life back in his hometown of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

“I came to improve my life and support my family,” he says, his brown eyes serious and thoughtful; “I wanted them to have a better life financially, and so I came here to find work.” He calls his beautiful wife, Angelina, at least three times a week and despite the fact that she sends him many photos of their children, they are growing up without him. He has returned to Mexico only once, back in 2005 and stayed for five years before heading back to Jupiter.

Leaving a wife behind is bad enough, but Irineo has five beautiful children depending on him back home: Romaria, Anna, Jorge, Sergio and Allen.

Irineo has a brother in Miami who first helped Irineo get settled in Florida. But he found Miami to be too competitive, and there weren’t enough jobs for everyone. A friend suggested Jupiter, and he’s happy he followed his friend’s advice.

“Here, at El Sol, I find jobs in construction, framing, and carpentry. I also work in landscaping and gardening, but I like construction the best,” Irineo says. “I have been able to make friends here, learn English and get good jobs. El Sol is a beautiful place, they have a good system here.”

Labor Coordinator Wilberto Luna nominated Irineo for the honor of being this quarter’s featured worker. “He has done a lot of community service events, and he always steps up when we need a volunteer for all the little things that come up around the center. He’s a really nice guy.”

We agree. He’s a really nice guy and we hope he continues to come to El Sol and be a model worker for the others.

El Sol Receives a Visit From a Mayan Princess

The Rabín Ajaw (Mayan Princess), Marisela Maquín Cucul, 17, visited the El Sol Center. Marisela is the winner of a “beauty” contest, which focuses on spiritual beauty, oratory and cultural knowledge. Additional criteria include grace, charm, sincerity, intelligence and knowledge of history. She wears a sacred silver crown adorned with jade and quetzal feathers. As part of her award, she visits the United States to meet the Mayan Diaspora. It was a great honor to have her at El Sol.
Garden Market Continues to Flourish!

The newest addition to El Sol’s Sunshine Community Garden, the Garden Market, officially opened to the Jupiter community on September 18th and 19th. The Garden Market is held in the Garden at El Sol and offers vegetable plants, hanging baskets and flowers. Visitors came on opening day to browse the Market’s offerings and tour the Garden, with many signing a waiting list to start their own garden plot. On Saturday, October 3rd, the Garden Market hit the road and set up shop at the Harvest Fest at Riverwalk in Jupiter.

“It was a great opportunity for outreach,” said Alexa Turner, Community Resource Developer, “and it was great to see families come to the Market. Parents let their kids pick out a plant and then they asked a lot of questions!” The addition of the Market has added yet another way for the Sunshine Organic Community Garden to fulfill its mission to educate and empower all people in Jupiter to grow their own healthy foods using sustainable and organic methods. Since its first harvest in 2014, the garden has harvested over 1,700 pounds of food and has become a viable earned income strategy for El Sol. Alexa and Garden coordinator Cliff Ross are now busy planting cooler weather crops like arugula, beets, kale, eggplant and varieties of fall colored sunflowers.

The Garden Market will continue on Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm, through December 19th, closing on Halloween and Thanksgiving weekend, November 28th. So spread the word and come on out! For more information, or to volunteer or purchase garden gear (totes and T-shirts made of organic cotton), contact Alexa Turner at alexa@friendsofelsol.org.

Palm Beach County School Superintendent Visits El Sol

The morning of October 15th was abuzz with excitement at El Sol as community members gathered to meet Palm Beach County School District Superintendent, Dr. Robert Avossa. The visit was part of Dr. Avossa’s continuing mission to obtain valued input from local communities in the strategic planning for the betterment of Palm Beach District Schools.

“We are very grateful, Dr. Avossa….this is the first time in our history that we’ve ever had a superintendent come to our community to share with us and to hear the voices of our community,” said Executive Director Jocelyn Skolnik. Dr. Avossa introduced himself to the El Sol community with a story about the legacy of his own family, who immigrated to this country from Italy in 1975, explaining that although his parents had very little education themselves, “they knew the importance of a good education and the importance of working together as a community.”

Dr. Avossa discussed important topics, not only for this community, but for the whole school district. He announced that the District aims to create a positive school culture that will be welcoming and eliminate issues such as bullying. He stressed the importance of attracting more Latino and Latina teachers, to provide positive role models and cultural identity for students. Addressing the young students in the audience, he added, “I want all these kids to all go to college and become teachers!”

Dr. Avossa then opened the floor for comments and questions from the community. People came forward with their concerns, including the expansion of opportunities for bilingual education, English language immersion, bilingual staff in the front office in schools, addressing widening cultural gap that is growing between the parent and child, and much more.

Throughout the discussion, a representative from the school district recorded all of the concerns that were brought to the meeting. Dr. Avossa concluded by thanking everyone for attending the meeting and for their contributions to the discussion as he added, “I am confident that we will find a way to work together, because the only way to create a better future for our children in this country is to have a high quality education, and not just finish high school, but to go to the university.”
Abner Pedraza: Worker Development Coordinator

Abner Pedraza is El Sol’s full-time Worker Development Coordinator. Abner, a native of Cuba, obtained his Bachelor’s degree from Liberty University in Religion and Psychology. He has over 10 years experience working in social and community-based programs. He has worked as a life coach for young adults coming out of the foster care system. In his position, he was able to successfully partner up many participants with suitable educational and employment programs. He has also had the opportunity of serving as a social worker in which he assessed family needs and offered direct services accordingly. Besides his experience in social work, he has also been heavily involved in the field of marketing and has been featured in publications showcasing his work as a photographer and videographer.

As the Worker Development Coordinator, Abner aims to increase day laborers’ financial stability by developing their employability skills through hands-on training and skills development.

More ArtFest Photos
El Sol has created a new program called “Escuela para Padres” or “School for Parents.” The overall goal is to promote healthy family dynamics by strengthening parenting skills, fostering communication in the household, and fostering communication in the community. Class topics include: skills that enable parents to better manage difficult situations; increase awareness of the developmental characteristics and needs of children as they grow; work together to detect problems as soon as possible, and much more.

The “Escuela para Padres” will be structured in three semesters with its first semester coming to an end on Nov. 17th. The program has had 48 participants to date. Registration for spring semester will start on January 30, 2016. Please contact Betzy Rega at betzy@friendsofelsol.org for more information.

Breast Cancer

El Sol’s Health Program has given presentations on breast cancer to Hispanic women in the Jupiter community. This has been made possible through a collaboration with the Susan G. Komen Foundation. El Sol has educated 130 women and we expect to reach 200 women by the end of the year.

Hypertension

On Sunday, Sept. 13, Nurses Katie and Kim Kuretski came to El Sol to do a presentation on hypertension. A Jupiter High School teacher interpreted for Spanish-speaking day laborers. All participants were screened and given a card to monitor their blood pressure. Katie, Kim, and Nora returned once again on September 27 to follow up with 45 participants and many of them received gift cards for their partaking in the hypertension presentation.

Jupiter Elementary School

Diane Williams of MyClinic and Health Coordinator Betzy Rega attended the English as a Second Language (ESL) Parent Meeting at Jupiter Elementary. School Counselor Inez Díaz Peña invited MyClinic, El Sol, and other partner agencies to speak to parents and to inform them of services available in the community.
Promotores de Salud

El Sol’s Promotores de Salud (health promoters) team informs the community about health care, prevention, and accessing care. The goal of the Promotores de Salud Program is to increase access to health care for Spanish-speaking, low-income, uninsured, and under-insured residents of the Jupiter area. The Program trains 8-10 Promoters in collaboration with the Rural Women’s Health Project on topics such as diabetes, nutrition, cancer, and HIV. The promoters then disperse this critical health information to 10 community members each, greatly multiplying our reach. The Program hopes to reach well over a 1,000 people over a two year period.

For the past 2 months, the Promotores have educated the community on the importance of early detection and prevention. For the month of November and December, topics will focus on pedestrian and bike safety.

The Promotores Program seeks Spanish-speaking or bilingual volunteers to sign up as a Health Promoter. “It’s a great resume builder for high school and college students,” says Betzy Rega, Health Coordinator. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please contact Betzy at betzy@friendsofelsol.org or call 561-827-9079.

El Sol’s Trained Housekeepers

If you are looking for a trained and experienced housekeeper to tackle those cleaning chores around your home or workplace, then El Sol has just what you need! El Sol’s Vocational Training program offered classes in September for workers to advance their skills in the cleaning business. The classes included education in health and safety, provided by El Sol’s Betzy Rega, Health Coordinator. Topics included English vocabulary related to housekeeping, reading labels for proper use of cleaning products, using safety gear, and “soft skills” in working with employers. They also covered steps a worker needs to take if they feel that their own safety may be compromised while on the job.

After the health and safety class, the workers set off for on-the-job, practical training at the home of volunteer Lynn Hayes, who led the students through effective ways to complete various cleaning tasks around her home. Workers who completed the training earned a certificate that gave them a few weeks with first priority in the Labor Center for housecleaning jobs. They also received t-shirts, cleaning gloves and an easy-carry lunch cooler for their success. “We are working to get the word out to the community”, said Katerina Pecora, AmeriCorps VISTA Vocational Training Coordinator, so be on the lookout for flyers in local businesses and community buildings. Also, be sure to tell your friends and neighbors who are looking for help around the house or office to come to El Sol, Monday through Saturday from 6 am to 2 pm, and Sundays 7am to 12 pm, or just call 561-745-9860 for more information.
On September 18th, nearly 400 people packed the town’s community center for a Guatemalan-themed art exhibit, greeted by a poster of a smiling Onesimo Marcelino Lopez-Ramos.

The poster was a reminder that this gathering was about far more than the paintings, the homemade hot chocolate and the beats of a marimba band: It was about appreciating cultural diversity and finding common ground after what police are calling a hate crime left a community stunned.

In response to Lopez-Ramos’ death, people from all walks of life — including volunteers from nonprofits, the art community and staff from Jupiter High — formed the One Jupiter Coalition, a group that spreads its message of unity at events like the one presented in September at the Jupiter Community Center.

Cynthia Trone, education director for Lighthouse ArtCenter, a nonprofit in Tequesta, calls it “just the beginning.” “It’s a matter of trying to create awareness, respect and sharing Mayan-Guatemalan culture that’s so connected to our community,” she said. “Our hope is that we can create compassion and understanding toward people who are different from us.”

“After the killing, it became apparent that we had to invest our time and resources in educating the community and showcasing Guatemalan culture, to keep something like this from happening again,” said David Urieta, Communications Coordinator.

The event featured Guatemalan art, exhibit panels with Guatemalan history, marimba, Latin food, and a documentary showing of “Brother Towns.” The One Jupiter Coalition plans to move the exhibit to other institutions and to assist the multicultural club at Jupiter High.

El Sol hosts an annual Thanksgiving meal for our day laborers and their families, and anyone in the community who is in need of a warm meal. This event provides workers, many of them of Mexican and Guatemalan descent to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal and learn of its important history in North America.

El Sol hosts an annual Christmas celebration for day laborers and their families in the Jupiter area. These celebrations give an opportunity for community members to share in the holiday spirit through gift donations, gift wrapping, or volunteering on the day of the event. El Sol is in need of the following for our upcoming community Christmas programs: monetary donations to underwrite food, decorations and gifts; and volunteers to wrap gifts, decorate, transport food and assist with the Children’s Christmas Party on the afternoon of December 12, and Christmas for workers and their families on Christmas Day. All donations will go toward El Sol’s community Christmas programs. Please contact Denise Mariani at dmariani@marianimarketing.com.
ArtFest Preview Night: Tea Lights and Magic

El Sol hosted its second annual ArtFest Preview Night, presented by Healthier Jupiter and Palm Healthcare Foundation. ArtFest Preview Night took place on Saturday, November 7th from 6 pm to 8 pm in El Sol’s Sunshine Organic Community Garden and honored Ed Ricci with El Sol’s Legacy Award. With an attendance of 150 VIP guests, hors d’oeuvres by Hampton Forks Kitchen & Table, live painting demos by local artists, and a wide variety of auction and chance drawings, ArtFest Preview Night was one of hottest tickets in Jupiter. “Preview Night is so different from your standard fundraiser. It’s our mission and aura that sets us apart. There is something magical about walking through the garden while it is lit up by string lights and tea lights, and seeing the crowds of people laugh and enjoy themselves,” said Steven Ospina, AmeriCorps Community Resource Developer.

“The outpouring of support was moving,” said Executive Director Jocelyn Skolnik. ArtFest Preview Night and ArtFest 2015 raised a net income of $12,700 dollars, far exceeding our goal of $10,000 dollars. All funds raised will benefit El Sol’s 22 programs.

Mark your calendars for next year’s ArtFest and ArtFest Preview Night event in November! ArtFest is a perfect way to get an early start on holiday shopping.

The El Sol Center is grateful to the community for the tremendous support of ArtFest 2015. Sponsors include: Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties, Healthier Jupiter, Palm Healthcare Foundation, Jupiter Medical Center, estrellaTV West Palm Beach, ESPN Deportes, The Jupiter Courier, Hampton Forks Kitchen & Table, The Gonzalez Cartwright Law Firm, and Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum.
El Sol is recruiting! Do you have a passion for fighting poverty? Are you interested in building capacity at a local nonprofit?

El Sol is in search of three qualified candidates to serve as AmeriCorps VISTAs in the areas of family wellness, outreach, and vocational training. As the Family Programs Developer, members will assist in developing El Sol’s School for Parents, Summer Camp, and other family health education programs. As the Outreach Coordinator, members will use their communications skills to help market our programs and reach out to community members.

As the Vocational Training Coordinator, members will organize vocational training workshops and be an integral part of the Worker Development Project. Applicants must be bilingual. Positions start in late February. Apply at https://my.americorps.gov/. For more information, please contact Katerina Pecora at Katerina@friendsofelsol.org.

Christmas is right around the corner, and we need volunteers!!

El Sol is hosting an annual Christmas celebration for our day laborers and their families. These events give an opportunity for our low-income clients to enjoy Christmas and for volunteers and community members to share in the holiday spirit through gift donations, gift wrapping, or volunteering during both events. Volunteers are needed in the following areas:

**Children’s Christmas:**
**Gift wrapping** - Thursday, December 10th - 1pm-4pm, (15 people)
Saturday, December 12th
  • **Set Up & Decorate, Bring gifts to Auditorium** - 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm (8 people)
  • **Set Up Beverage Station and Pour Beverages** - 2:30pm to 5:30pm (2 people)
  • **Greet Guests/Clear Tables/Help Pass Out Gifts** - 2:30pm to 5:30pm (6 people)

**Worker’s Christmas:**
**Set Up & Decorate** - Thursday, December 24 -1:30pm to 3:30pm, (4 people)
Friday, December 25th
  • **Set Up Beverage Station and Pour Beverages**  
    1:30 pm to 5pm (2 people)
  • **Greet Guests/Clear Tables/Help Pass Out Gifts**  
    1:30pm to 5:30pm (6 people)

Call to find out more
EL SOL SHINES

Mission Statement

El Sol is a 501(c)3 nonprofit whose mission is to improve the quality of life of all residents of the Town of Jupiter by providing services to those in need, especially day laborers and their families.

Vision

El Sol promotes a harmonious integrated community in which all people can achieve their highest potential. We seek to be the model for other communities dealing with day laborers.

EL SOL’s “Wish List”

Kitchen
- **WE NEED MEAT!** Ground Beef, Hot dogs, and Sausages.
- 20 lbs of ground beef or 80 hot dogs/sausages will cover a day here at El Sol (approx 40 meals).

Health and Safety
- Unused, new infant car seats, toddler seats, and booster seats
- Unused, reusable water bottles, sunscreen, bandanas, and hats

Whenever you see a kitchen volunteer or staff member, be sure to give them a hug. In the photo above, members of the Workers’ Council served food and refreshments during the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony.

El Sol

Jupiter’s Neighborhood Resource Center
106 Military Trail
Jupiter FL 33458
Phone (561) 745-9860
Fax (561) 745-9834

Find us on the Web at www.friendsofelsol.org

“Like” us on Facebook at El Sol, Jupiter’s Neighborhood Resource Center
Twitter: @ELSolJupiter
Instragram: @ELSolJupiter

El Sol’s Hiring Hall is open
- 6am - 2pm Monday through Saturday
- 7am - 12 noon Sunday

Donate online through Network for Good on our website: www.friendsofelsol.org

To join our email distribution list, send a request to elsolshines@gmail.com

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Wilberto Luna, labor coordinator
Betzy Rega, health coordinator
Karen Clark, office manager
David Urieta, Communications Coordinator
Vickie Granati, daytime ESOL coordinator
Abner Pedraza, Worker Development Coordinator
Steven Ospina, AmeriCorps VISTA Community Resource Developer
Alexa Turner, AmeriCorps VISTA Community Resource Developer
Katerina Pecora, AmeriCorps VISTA Vocational Training Coordinator
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