Holiday Happiness

The Christmas holiday parties spanned four days at El Sol with a new-for-2013 “Christmas for Kids” hosting 193 children on Dec. 21, and the traditional Christmas Day celebration serving dinner and festivities on Dec. 25th to 230 adults, 30 children and 40 volunteers.

Also, on Thanksgiving, a traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings was enjoyed by about 90 persons, including families with children. Several dozen dedicated volunteers gave up part of their holiday to help make the event a success.

Christmas for Kids was a jolly occasion with appearances from Santa Claus and Christmas Clowns, cookies and lots of toys! Thanks to the generosity of the Metropolitan Community Church of the Palm Beaches and volunteers, each child received a special toy, gift or bicycle.

A special Christmas feast was planned for Christmas Day by organizer Diane Williams and kitchen volunteer extraordinaire Alex Fuentes. Helped by a grant from Walmart and other individual donors, El Sol served up traditional turkey alongside tamales, rice, plantains and salad to workers and others from the community. Several gift certificates were raffled off, and thanks to an unexpected donation just before Christmas, large stuffed animals were given to the children. Donated shopping bags and backpacks were filled with food, socks and t-shirts and also distributed. A good time was had by all!
Featured Volunteer: Miguel Santiago

Miguel Santiago, a dedicated volunteer since El Sol’s inception, is being honored as Featured Volunteer for December-January. El Sol staff chose Santiago, a previous honoree, for his dedication to El Sol’s Saturday registration program. His outstanding work in coordinating the registration of workers “made him a standout in the midst of all the other valued volunteers at the Center,” the staff said.

In addition to his work with the registration program, Santiago has been a long-time volunteer in the kitchen at least one day a week organizing and preparing lunch with other volunteers. On numerous other occasions he has stepped up to help out at various special events and programs.

Jocelyn Skolnik, El Sol Executive Director, praised Santiago for his steadfast loyalty and dedication from El Sol’s beginning, noting that he is always willing to help and that his commitment is highly valued. “We couldn’t do what we do without you,” she said in congratulating Santiago who is Environmental Manager at Florida Power & Light Co.

He is married to Yvonne who formerly served on El Sol’s Board of Directors and volunteered at El Sol. They have two children, David and Camille, both in their 20’s.

Congratulations to Miguel Santiago for his well-deserved honor as Featured Volunteer for December-January.

Featured Worker: Simion Sontay-Vicente

El Sol’s Featured Worker for December-January is Simion Sontay-Vicente who can be found most mornings serving coffee and snacks and helping with other tasks in the kitchen because he likes volunteering.

Sontay, 55, came to the United States from Guatemala ten years ago to get work to help support his wife and ten children who remained in Guatemala. He has been coming to El Sol since it opened in September, 2006 and regularly sends money home to his family. He has worked mostly at landscaping and has also taken vocational training to improve his skills.

In addition to volunteering, Sontay has attended English classes and said learning the language has been hard for him but after a decade in the U.S. he’s still attending classes.

He also likes the computer training he said. El Sol Labor Coordinator Wilberto Luna praised Sontay as an excellent worker and role model for others. “He’s also one of the newest members of the Workers Council, having been elected a couple of months ago,”

Congratulations to Simion Sontay-Vicente on his well-deserved honor as El Sol Featured Worker.

Mark your calendars now!

Two volunteer events are on the El Sol calendar in the new year: Sunday, February 23, 2014 ~ Volunteer Recognition Ceremony. A fun and festive event to honor our volunteer family. The next Quarterly Volunteer meeting will be ....

Tuesday, March 25 at 6pm

featuring the kitchen volunteers and El Sol’s new community garden.
Meet the Authors program, Against the Tide

El Sol was the beneficiary of a Meet the Authors program December 4th featuring Tim Steigenga and Sandra Lazo de la Vega, authors of Against the Tide.

The authors spoke about what they learned while researching and writing the book that describes how Jupiter took a different path from many states and cities that passed restrictive legislation against immigrants during the rancorous national debate on immigration. They also autographed books for purchasers and donated the proceeds to El Sol.

Lazo and Steigenga said fears of some that immigrants would be a burden to government, wouldn’t learn English and cause an increase in crime were completely unfounded. They noted that English classes at El Sol are overflowing and there has not been an increase in crime in Jupiter. Moreover, El Sol and the many services and programs it offers, has helped build relationships with immigrants that has helped them integrate into the community.

Many thanks to Sandra and Tim for an excellent book, and for their generosity.

17th Annual Interfaith Service

El Sol’s ability to provide free breakfast treats and lunches daily received a boost in the form of a $7,450 donation representing contributions by worshipers at the 17th Annual Thanksgiving Interfaith Service on November 27. More than 1,300 persons from congregations of Temple Beth Am, JupiterFIRST Church and St. Peter Catholic Church attended the service at Temple Beth Am. El Sol was the beneficiary of donations from the passing of the collection basket.

El Sol Executive Director Jocelyn Skolnik expressed gratitude for the generosity of the members of the three congregations saying, “The funds will enable El Sol to serve more than 16,000 meals in the coming year to workers and others who come to the El Sol Center to obtain jobs through the Center’s day labor service.”

“Support of the three congregations over the years, not just with donations, but by the many dedicated volunteers who serve at El Sol, has been an integral part of our success and without their extraordinary help, El Sol could not fulfill its mission,” Skolnik said.

The Thanksgiving eve service coincided with the start of Hanukkah and included lighting of the Menorah by clergy from Temple Beth Am, JupiterFIRST Church and St. Peter Catholic Church who participated in the interfaith service.
Old Jobs with New People and New Jobs with “Old” People...

Alyssa Wood ~ Kitchen and Garden Coordinator, former VISTA volunteer, Alyssa has joined the El Sol staff as Kitchen Coordinator and coordinator of El Sol’s community garden. As kitchen coordinator, Alyssa has assumed Andi Cleveland’s responsibilities: go-to kitchen person in charge of ordering and budgeting, coordinating Feeding South FL food shoppers, and doing her best to keep things organized. Alyssa is taking an on-line Kitchen Manager course accredited by the FL Department of Health. As Garden Coordinator, Alyssa is working hard to get the garden up and running by early spring. She will be working closely with daily kitchen crews regarding what fruits and vegetables will be harvested and ready to serve. Anyone interested in signing up for a garden plot may submit an application to Alyssa. Email alyssa@friendsofelsol.org

Melissa Beadle ~ AmeriCorps VISTA Vocational Training Coordinator is originally from the Black Hills of South Dakota. She graduated from South Dakota State University with a B.A. in Spanish and Global Studies in May of 2012. She studied in Guadalajara, Mexico in 2009 and taught English in Chiapas, Mexico, last winter. She volunteered in her local rural community teaching English to Latin American immigrants, and is very interested in building cultural bridges through education. As a bilingual educator, Melissa is excited to further develop the Vocational Training Program here at El Sol. Melissa enjoys cooking, reading, traveling, and going to the beach as often as she can.

A note from Melissa Beadle, VISTA Vocational Training Coordinator.

I am working to provide job training workshops here at El Sol at no cost to Jupiter residents. In order to provide these workshops, I am reaching out for your support. A workers survey revealed the need to teach painting and tiling/flooring workshops. We are looking for trained professionals who are available to teach our workers these skills that will open up new job opportunities.

I am also reaching out in search of tools that we may use in our workshops. The tools that are most critical are: WeedWackers, hedge trimmers, paint supplies, and tiling supplies.

If you or someone you know has access to any of the aforementioned items that we could use for a training, it would be incredibly helpful. If you or someone you know is skilled in the area of painting or tiling and is available to teach a few hours a week, please let me know. We are offering up to $20 per hour for our instructors. If you want to get involved, or if you just have some words of wisdom to share as we launch this program again this year, please email me at melissa@friendsofelsol.org, or you can reach me at my office at (561)-745-9860 ext. 4104.

I am overwhelmed with gratitude to be here at El Sol to join you in the good work that we do in the Jupiter Community. I thank you in advance for your big hearts and kind generosity. You are the ones that make El Sol function so well and I know that the staff here cannot thank you enough.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Ale Hoffman ~ Night ESOL coordinator. Ale (pronounced Ali) is in charge of El Sol’s ESOL Nighttime program.

Melinda Waters ~ “Gal Friday”

Melinda comes to El Sol through AARP and will be working 18 hours a week for six months. Her main responsibility is to assist Jocelyn in whatever areas her skills are most needed.

*Whoa - wait a second - What’s a “Gal Friday?”* This is an expression that first appeared in Daniel Defoe’s 1719 novel Robinson Crusoe - only the original character was “Man Friday.” Girl Friday, or Gal Friday characters began to appear in movies around 1940. She was the “can do” assistant who solved every problem that arose in the office.
Old Jobs with New People and New Jobs with “Old” People (continued)

Aubry Leon ~ AmeriCorps VISTA Community Resource Developer. Aubry hails from San Jose, California, and graduated from Whittier College in 2013. Aubry majored in Psychology and minored in Spanish. Tying the two together, her senior Literature Review was “The Psychological Aspects of Immigration.” Aubry continued her studies abroad. She studied Spanish in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2012. She came to El Sol because she was interested in working with immigrant populations.

Annual Worker’s Survey is Underway

Starting January 16, workers and other clients of El Sol, including students from day and night time English classes, sewing classes and other programs, will be asked to participate in El Sol’s Annual Worker’s Survey. The project will be spearheaded once again by volunteer Ana Rodrigues. In addition, Aubry Leon, one of our new VISTA workers, is the inside point person for the survey process. Ana and Aubrey are joined by new volunteer, Akemi Inamoto.

The survey is not anonymous, but it is confidential. The survey produces many types of information that is used for program improvements, facility improvements, and grant writing. Our goal is to reach 100 or more completed surveys by February 17. The surveys will be administered in either Spanish or English according to the participant’s preference, and all who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing for one of four $25 Publix gift cards.

El Sol’s routine FIRE!! (drill) - was a success

El Sol conducted a fire drill on Friday, January 10th. It was coordinated with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue. It took us 1 min 50 seconds to evacuate the building. Great job by all who attended!!

Top photo: Bob Smallacomb; middle photo: fire trucks arrived as evacuation began; bottom photo: workers and staff await the “all clear” signal.
El Sol Shines December/January 2014

Official Opening of New Health Facility Scheduled for January 25th

The official opening of a new health facility, MyClinic, in west Jupiter that will provide free primary medical care and emergency dental care to low-income and uninsured persons and families will be marked by a ribbon cutting January 25.

The event is at 10:30 a.m. at the clinic, a new, modular building at 6405-B W. Indiantown Road. The facility includes two medical and two dental examination rooms and office space. The clinic is the second phase of a project that El Sol has been involved with since 2009 that led to opening of a pilot clinic in January 2012 at the Indiantown site. That facility was a result of collaboration among El Sol, Jupiter Medical Center and the Palm Beach County Health Department.

A new nonprofit agency, Jupiter Community Health Services, Inc. was created to operate MyClinic. It is staffed by volunteer doctors and dentists and other health professionals. Funding has been provided by the Allegany Franciscan Foundation, Quantum Foundation and Palm Health Care Foundation.

“MyClinic Coordinator Diane Williams, said, “It is a great resource for the community and the people who have no health insurance.” Services will be by appointment only, according to Williams who was also coordinator at the original clinic. El Sol board member Suzanne Cordero serves on the clinic’s board of directors.

Clinic hours are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. the second Thursday of the month, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. the fourth Thursday, and most Saturdays, Williams said.

For more information, or to make an appointment, call (561) 506-6487.

First OSHA Workshop for 2014

On January 10th Betzy Rega and Alyssa Wood held a Juicing and Smoothies workshop. 51 participating workers got to sample 5 different vegetable based drinks. This workshop was done to spark worker’s interest in eating fresh fruits and vegetables. Before the workshop only 33% of workers said they ate vegetables, and after the workshop 100% said that they would begin to incorporate fruits and vegetables into their diet! The majority of the participating workers stated that not knowing how to cook vegetables is their main reason for not eating them. It’s a good thing we’re planning cooking workshops throughout the year for our workers. Stay tuned for more good news on the nutrition front of El Sol!

El Sol Workers Learn the Benefits of Juicing

El Sol held its first OSHA class for 2014 entitled, “Safety, Security and Basic Electric on the Job.” There were 14 students in attendance, learning the basic rules of safety and team work. As an added bonus, the students learned the scientific principles behind how a potato can be changed into a battery and run a clock.
A food drive to benefit programs that serve the needy and a lecture about the life and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are among two events planned by El Sol to honor the legacy of the late civil rights leader January 20-24. The week-long food drive was organized by AmeriCorps VISTA staff, Melissa Beadle and Aubry Leon as a community service to promote the National Day of Service that is held in conjunction with the Martin Luther King federal holiday January 20. Starbucks stores at 2770 Military Trail and 5500 Indiantown Road are drop off sites for food donations. Proceeds of the drive will benefit El Sol’s meal program and C.R.O.S. Ministries emergency food pantry at El Sol.

Foods such as beans, rice, vegetables, and other canned goods, and fresh produce are among items sought by the two nonprofit organizations. Last year the food pantry served 3,500 individuals who are permitted to obtain assistance once a month. El Sol provided 15,921 hot meals to day laborers who come to El Sol to obtain jobs.

El Sol Executive Director Jocelyn Skolnik said, “We are very grateful for the support for these food programs that serve people in need and are thankful for Starbucks helping as collection sites for the food donations.” El Sol will be open on Monday’s Martin Luther King Jr. holiday when Christopher Strain, Ph.D., an American History and American Studies professor at Florida Atlantic University’s Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, will speak about the life and accomplishments of Martin Luther King Jr.

The program is set for 9 a.m. and is open to the public. For information call (561) 745-9860.
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.

Staff
- Jocelyn Skolnik, director
- Dora Valdivia, associate director
- Wilberto Luna, labor coordinator
- Betzy Rega, health coordinator
- Karen Clark, administrative assistant
- Alyssa Wood, Kitchen and Community Garden Coordinator
- Vickie Granati, daytime ESOL coordinator
- Ale Hoffman, nighttime ESOL coordinator
- Melissa Beadle, AmeriCorps VISTA Vocational Training Coordinator
- Aubry Leon, AmeriCorps VISTA Resource Developer

El Sol Shines is published six times a year
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- Mike Richmond, Communications Committee Chairman

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Find us on the Web at www.friendsofelsol.org

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at El Sol, Jupiter’s Neighborhood Resource Center

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

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

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
- Flat screen 50-inch TV for presentations
- Mount
- Extension cords
- Laptop for presentations

Community Garden:
- 5 Sable Palms

Childcare
We need volunteers to do childcare activities during our night-time classes while parents are in class. Shifts are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday from 7-9pm

El Sol’s Neighborhood Resource Center
106 Military Trail
Jupiter FL 33458
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EL SOL Shines December/January 2014