

# CASA DE LA ESPERANZA

LEARNING CENTER



## Annual Report 2010



**HUMAN**  
**HOUSING & SERVICES**  
*"Promoting safe, healthy and thriving communities."*

# CASA ESPERANZA

## LEARNING CENTER

Dear Amigos de Casa,

We are very pleased to inform you of a very prosperous year for the Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center. In particular, our Robotics Academy and Early Learning programs have experienced tremendous growth and success during this past year. We would like to thank all of our exceptional volunteers, donors, and partners in making the Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center successful in serving the families and students for over sixteen years now.

In December 2010, our community celebrated the graduation of Felipe Mosqueda from Metropolitan State University. He is the 10th student from Casa to achieve a university degree; two of which have also earned a masters degree. In May 2010, we graduated ten students from high school which was a 100% graduation rate for all students eligible to graduate in that cohort. We honor all the volunteers and community partners that in one way or another support the progress and development of the Casa de la Esperanza students and families. The volunteers' support is essential to prosperity of our learning center. They generously share of their skills, talents, time and effort to greatly impact our families. In 2010, a total of 262 volunteers provided 6,142 hours for an estimated value of \$122,840.00 of services and expertise. The successes of our community are to be celebrated by all those caring individuals, groups, and partners that are committed to the Casa community.

We'd also like to acknowledge the great collaborations from our partners and the generous donations from our supporters and funders. We thank you on behalf of all Casa families. Your sincere and loyal commitment ensures the ongoing progress of our community which promotes excellence and self-empowerment through education.

For the past 16 years, your continued contributions have been vital to the Casa de la Esperanza's prosperity. We greatly appreciate your generous support to help maintain a thriving, self-sustaining community now and in the future.

Sincerely,



Carlota Loya Hernandez  
Program Coordinator



The Casa de la Esperanza (House of Hope) is a 32-unit housing complex and home for seasonal farm worker families in Longmont. It is owned and operated by Boulder County Housing Authority (BCHA). The BCHA created the Boulder Community Housing Corporation (BCHC) which serves as the non-profit 501(c)(3) organization for all resident services. The BCHC is the umbrella agency for the Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center. This vibrant community of families boasts a busy Community Center which is the “Heart” of the community offering a year-long after school and summer program.

## History

In the fall of 1993, the Housing Authority collaborated with the Boulder County Commissioners and other community leaders to make Casa la Esperanza community a reality. For over 16 years, the Casa de la Esperanza has served and responded to the unique needs of dozens of hard-working families that live in the housing community. In 2000, Casa celebrated a new expansion of the academic center. It was upgraded with a new computer lab, small classrooms, additional storage and office space. The program has served hundreds of families and children over the years.

## Homeownership

The Casa de la Esperanza housing community offers residents affordable, quality three and four bedroom units that provide for economic stability in a safe, healthy community. Families reside in the Casa de la Esperanza community an average of five to ten years. As the children grow, they become wage-earning youth and young adults that contribute to the family income. Families have pooled resources to be able to afford homes in the local Longmont community. The recent economic downturn has slowed the previously steady rates of Casa home acquisition. Nonetheless, in the last fifteen years, over 50 families have purchased homes in the local area.



# Creating Community Leaders One Student at a Time

## Our Mission

Casa de la Esperanza's educational center is a state-of-the-art learning facility providing opportunities and resources toward excellence and self-empowerment through collaboration and programming that nurture each individual's potential.

## Our Vision

Our vision is one of a thriving self-sustaining community sharing wisdom to transform society through today and tomorrow's leaders, honoring those who came before us.

## Our Efforts and Impact

The program has served hundreds of families and children over the years. There are now **10** graduates from local universities as of December 2010. Two of our college graduates have also earned a master's degree. Another 30 students have gone on to college and currently over a dozen are completing degrees. Dozens of Casa students have graduated from their high school with an **average 90% graduation rate** surpassing the Colorado's 50-60% average for Latino youth. The community celebrated the largest Casa cohort with ten students that earned a high school diploma on May 29, 2010 representing a 100% graduation rate for all eligible Casa students. Many of them are now attending Metropolitan State College, Front Range Community College and Colorado State University.

A total of **33** families benefitted from diverse educational services and resources of the Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center. The total impact included 86 children aged 3-18 years of age and 79 parents for a total of **165** individuals.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	Number of Students
ROBOTICS (VEX, JR LEGO, LEGO Robotics)	27
Computer class (Google Sketchup, Microsoft Office, keyboarding)	23 (grades 2-7)
Early Learning Program (children 3-8 years old)	25
Tae Kwon Do Class	10
Youth Leadership Class (middle and high school students)	15
Math Class (students in grades 2-7)	18
Computer Class- Adults	21
Special classes (photography & French)	14
English Class- Adults (Level 1 & 2)	19
Community Food Share weekly distribution (number of families)	26
Art Class at the Old Firehouse Art Center	13

## High School Graduates

On Saturday, May 29, 2010, our community celebrated the high school graduation of 10 youth from the Casa de la Esperanza community. This is an exceptional 100% graduation rate for all students from the Casa de la Esperanza community eligible to graduate in that group. Hundreds of children and adults including the Casa families, program volunteers, relatives and friends of the graduates greatly enjoyed the celebration dinner and dance. The majority of these students are the first in their family to earn a high school diploma. Their parents typically only achieved a sixth grade education, or less.

Everyone from the Casa community attended to honor and celebrate the well-deserved graduates and to commemorate them for achieving an important milestone in their lives. This will move them towards new challenges in the near future such as continuing on to a university education and as role models for the children and youth of the Casa de la Esperanza community.

Graduation gifts donated by Case Logic – a Thule Company

Music provided by:

Veronica & Humberto Rodriguez and Joe Gomez

**“SI SE PUEDE!”**

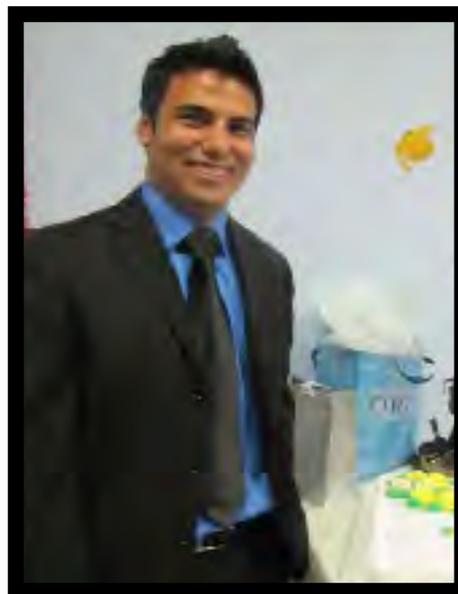


# COLLEGE GRADUATES



Marisol Lozano Román celebrated one of the greatest accomplishments of her life when she achieved her goal of graduating from the University of Colorado at Boulder on May 7, 2010. While earning a degree in Electrical and Systems Engineering, Marisol has been an active participant in the Casa program volunteering for the holiday gift drive and assisting with the computer lab maintenance and other technical support. She was an active MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) Program student while in high school at Skyline. Marisol is currently pursuing a master's degree in engineering at the University of Colorado in Boulder. With her studies, she hopes to be able to give back to her community. She is already giving back by assisting our community and others along the way.

On Saturday, December 11, the Casa community celebrated the graduation of our tenth student to earn a college degree. Felipe Mosqueda and his family were one of the original families to move into our new community in 1993. He was only 8 years old when he family moved in to the Casa housing site. As our program has grown and developed, Felipe too has flourished over the years. He completed a degree in Marketing from Metropolitan State College in Denver. He also studied International Business abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico. Throughout his career, he sought internship and has worked with companies such as Comcast, CO Housing and Finance Authority, and Kaiser Permanente. He has traveled to Spain, Japan, Canada and all over Mexico. He is currently teaching in South Korea. He worked for almost two years as a program assistant with the Casa program. He has already given much to his community. We are sure that he will continue to make a positive impact on society, wherever he is at!



# Casa de la Esperanza in the News!

Carlota Loya Hernández, Program Coordinator for the Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center, received the Community Service Award on May 3, 2010 at El Centro Su Teatro in Denver.

The Community Service Awards are presented by the Critical Educators for Social Justice, A Special Interest group of the American Educational Research Association and Co-sponsored by the University of Colorado in Denver, School of Education & Human Development.

*Right: Carlota Loya Hernandez is the keynote speaker at the Metropolitan State College of Denver on March 31st, 2010 at an event to celebrate the legacy of life of Cesar Chavez, civil rights leader.*



*Left: Ramona Acosta, Property Manager of Casa de la Esperanza, at a state housing the conference representing Housing and Human Services..*

On April 21, at the Colorado Council for Affordable and Rural Housing Conference, our residential site Casa de la Esperanza received the "Farm Labor Housing Special Recognition." The award is based on community outreach, high occupancy and good site appeal. The community was described as a "vibrant, thriving community."

# S.T.E.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)



The STEM program provides youth enrichment opportunities to increase students' interest in the diverse academic areas of science, technology and engineering. The STEM program promotes science education & inquiry based learning as well as post-secondary education.

## Robotics Academy



The Casa Robotics Academy includes the following programs:

- ▲ JR. LEGO Robotics- for children 6-9 years old
- ▲ LEGO Robotics-9-12 years old
- ▲ VEX Robotics- middle school youth
- ▲ FIRST TECH Challenge- high school youth

Students participate in regional competitions held at universities such as: Denver University, University of Colorado at Denver, and Regis University.

## CasaMESA FRC Team Semifinalists

FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) combines the enthusiasm of a sport with the rigors of science and technology to allow high school students a sneak peak of “engineering in the real world.” Professional volunteers serve as mentors and donate their valuable time to guide the team during the build season in preparation for the regional robotics competition. From January to March, robotics mentors volunteered a total of 1519 hours. For the fourth consecutive year, our CasaMESA team participated in the 3-day Colorado Regional Robotics Competition at the University of Denver held in March. The CasaMESA team made it to the semifinals.



*Left: Longmont Mayor Baum recognized the **Casa Mesa Robotics Team** with a Mayor's Community Positive Impact Award..*

## Casa Mesa FTC Robotics Team

The CasaMESA Robotics Team #3709 participated in the Colorado Championship FIRST Tech Tournament. The competition was held at Arapahoe Community College in Littleton on Saturday, March 13, 2010. Our team placed 8th out of 19 teams and was awarded the “2009-2010 Motivate Award.” This award is significant because it awards our dedication and passion for robotics at Casa de la Esperanza.

Special thanks to our fabulous mentors:

Ken, Jessica, Dottie & Craig.

Congratulations to our students:

Santiago, Esteban, Nishtha, Tania, Prerit, and Pedro

**They make our community proud!**

# Academic Support and Enrichment

This program provides overall academic support with a focus on enhancing language and literacy competency, computer literacy, and college preparation. Academic support and enrichment activities are provided with the valuable assistance of volunteers from local universities. Over time, as volunteers work with their assigned student or student group, they develop a close mentor relationship with the children.



## Early Learning Program

An early learning teacher was hired in August 2010 to work specifically with children ages 3-8 years old. This new focus will entail 60-90 minute instructional sessions, three times a week to develop literacy, numeracy and basic computer skills. The teacher regularly evaluates student progress on grade level skills and meets with parents to discuss how the family can also support their children's learning.



## Adult Program



Parents are critical to the academic success of their children. As such, the program provides services tailored specifically to the various needs of parents and adults 18 and older in the community. Regularly scheduled services that include: computer literacy, GED workshop, financial literacy, citizenship and English classes.

Rocky Mountain Service, Employment, Redevelopment (SER) provides a relevant job training program to the residents.

This collaboration has prospered for over a dozen years and has been vital to providing work experience to the parents as they assist in the Casa program activities. Local agencies partner with Casa to provide referral services and workshops on issues such as: Love & Logic Parenting training, health, safety, immigration issues, and other relevant topics

## Computer & Internet Workshop “eWeek IBM”



With much success, the IBM Hispanic Diversity Network Group sponsored its seventh computer & internet technology workshop titled, “eWeek 2010.” The workshop took place in the computer lab of the Casa de la Esperanza community center from October 25-29 and topics included: Introduction to computers, software applications, Internet use and safety.

## School supplies & backpacks for the Casa Kids



The children and youth of the Casa de la Esperanza community received school supplies in preparation for the start of another new school year. The students' faces shone with happiness upon receiving the school supplies. They were well equipped with the tools they needed to be successful at school. It was also of great assistance to their family's budget.

This donation was possible thanks to the partnership with the *Case Logic – a Thule Company* which donated dozens high-quality backpacks and accessories. Additionally, we greatly appreciate the donors that contributed to the purchase of the school supplies: including Sandy Lawson, Joe Gomez, and several Case Logic em-

## Holiday Party

On December 18, Santa made a special visit to Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center on our annual Holiday Party. He brought many gifts that were distributed to more than 50 Children living at Casa. Special thanks to our generous donors that made the event possible and so special for our children. They include: King Soopers (Hover Road), Seagate Corporation, Zoll Data, Case Logic- a Thule Company, Boulder Community Montessori. Private donors also provided the families with gift cards for a holiday dinner.



## Recycling

In January, Eco-Cycle conducted a recycling project at Casa de la Esperanza with the intent to celebrate Martin Luther King Day. The project began early in the morning with a general cleaning of the area in the Casa de la Esperanza community. Following this, the kids had an orientation about recycling and also decorated recycling bins with the help of volunteers. Finally, the parents of the Casa de la Esperanza families had an orientation concerning proper recycling habits. The main purpose of this workshop was to educate the residents of the importance of recycling and encourage recycling habits at home. The Daily Times Call newspaper of Longmont featured this event on their front page.



## “Computer for Youth”

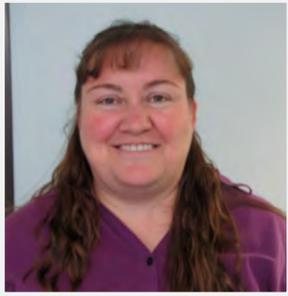
### Innovative CU Program Seeks to Bridge Digital Divide

On Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the MESA students Santiago Arredondo, Juan Leon, Alvaro Cintora, and Tania Gonzalez participated in the “Computer for Youth” program at CU Boulder. "Computers for Youth" is a program to help minimize computer waste while helping high school students in Colorado access computing and communications technology. Surplus computer equipment was gathered, tested, and refurbished to original specifications and loaded with the latest software to assist students' academic achievement with the assistance of a college student.



# CURRENT PROGRAM STAFF

## **Carlota Loya Hernández, program coordinator,**



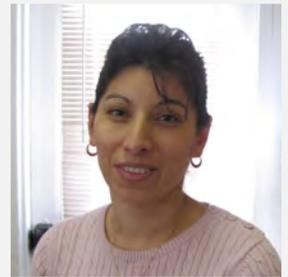
Is native of México and has worked in this community for over sixteen years, since the inception of the program. The coordinator is bilingual and bicultural and also worked as a seasonal farm worker for eight years of her youth growing up in the San Luis District Valley of Colorado. She is currently also a math teacher with the Boulder Valley School District and holds a Masters degree in Education with a specialization in Instruction, Curriculum, content and Assessment from the University of Colorado in Boulder. Additionally, she completed coursework for certification in Linguistically & Culturally Diverse Education and Gifted & Talented Specialist. She has over twenty years experience working with immigrant populations and in the education of English Language Learners.

## **Reina Retana Ramirez, Early Learning Teacher & GED instructor**



Is a native of Mexico and was a teenager when she moved to Colorado with her siblings to join their mom. Her family was one of the original families to move into the newly built migrant and farm worker housing community of Casa de la Esperanza, Fall of 1993. She was in the first cohort to graduate from Niwot High School from Casa. She went on to get her BA in Spanish and Psychology from UNC, Greeley. She has a Master of Education Sciences, University of San Diego, and Masters in Nonprofit Leadership and Management with a teaching Credential in K-7. She works with over 30 children aged 3-8 years of age. She will be teaching GED & citizenship classes in English & Spanish.

## **Veronica Cintora, Program Assistant**



Is a native of México and previously lived at Casa de la Esperanza. Her family bought a home nearby, but has regularly participated in the program. She is an excellent parent volunteer. She has recently joined the staff and her role is essential in organizing and supervising program activities.

## **Santiago Arredondo, Program Assistant**



He lived at Casa de la Esperanza for a number of years until his family was able to purchase a home. He recently graduated from Niwot High School in May 2010. He was born in Mexico but arrived in Longmont, Colorado as a young child. He has greatly benefited from the Casa Robotics Academy for four years earning a number of trophies, and worked two summers at internships with scientists at UCAR. He studies at Front Range Community College. He is the Robotics Lead for the middle and high school teams.

## **Daniela Salinas, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Teacher**



Born in southern Colorado, she worked the lettuce fields during the summers as a child growing up in the San Luis Valley. She received BA in Spanish and Cultural Anthropology from Metropolitan State University in Denver, and her Master's in Education from Denver University as a Boettcher Fellow. She also earned certifications in Linguistically & Culturally Diverse Education and Bilingual Education. She also teaches first grade with the Mapleton School District in Denver. She is the Robotics Coach for the elementary students in first to sixth grade; JR LEGO and LEGO Robotics.

## IN APPRECIATION OF OUR FAITHFUL PROGRAM STAFF

The Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center has benefited from a loyal staff that had dedicated years of their professional and personal lives to the program's goals. The following staff has moved on to new endeavors & we wish to thank them for their generosity, compassion and dedication to the prosperity of this community.

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### **Michael Lozano, computer technician & instructor:**

Is native of Peru and came to the United States over ten years ago. He was fundamental to the maintenance and enhancement of the computer lab. The community has access to excellent computer technology due to Mike's multiple talents, skills and ingenuity. He provided bilingual computer instruction to children and adults. He was also critical as our first MESA advisor and coordinated the first robotics and science programs for students in 1st to 12th grade. He has been a key contributor's to the program's expansion and success during his almost eight year tenure at Casa de la Esperanza. His gentle kindness, extraordinary intellect, creativity and innovation are greatly missed.



### **Rosa Mosqueda, Program Assistant:**

Is native of México and came to live at Casa de la Esperanza over six years ago. She was a highly engaged parent volunteer before joining the staff. Her role was essential in organizing and supervising the student and parental involvement. Her presence in the community was the program's guide as to the daily needs of the families in the program. Rosa was highly reliable and dependable in every way. She was the backbone of the program. She generously dedicated extra hours and effort to complete pending projects, and assist families and children.



### **Felipe Mosqueda, Program Assistant:**

He was only seven years old when his family moved as one of the first tenants in the newly constructed Casa de la Esperanza community over sixteen years ago. He graduated from Metropolitan State University completing a BA in Marketing. He has moved on to new projects and a career aligned with his degree and business focus. Felipe was an exceptional role-model and inspiration for the youth of the program.



### **Diana Silva, MESA Advisor:**

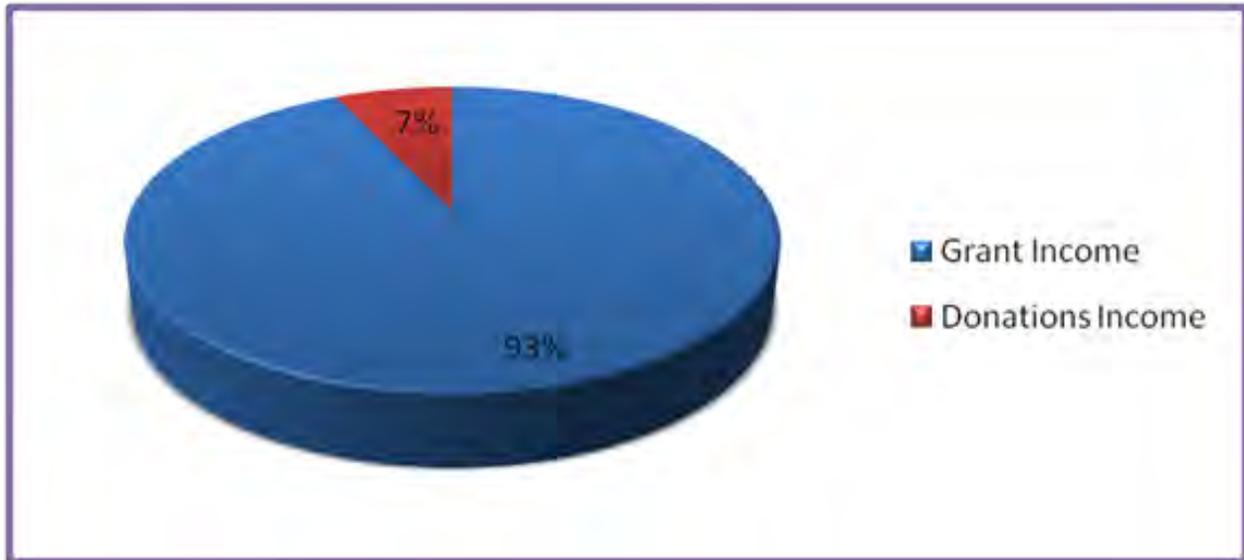
She was recruited by the St. Vrain MESA program to coordinate the robotics programming and CU Science League activities. She earned an engineering degree from CU Boulder. She is pursuing a graduate degree. Her leadership led our teams to compete at the local and state LEGO competitions. She was a great role model for our youth and promoted students' potential and talents. She highly encouraged them to complete their high school degree and attend college.

**GRACIAS! We wish you luck in your new adventures.  
We are grateful for your passion in serving our community.**

Boulder Community Housing Corporation  
Casa de la Esperanza Learning Center

Financial Activities for the year-ended December 31, 2010

**TOTAL REVENUE: \$85,417**



**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$61,600**

