



CASA de AMIGOS

"The House of Friends"

CASA CALLER

682-9701

1101 E. Garden Lane

Executive Director: Lael Cordes-Pitts

Winter 1989 - 1990

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FOCUS ON EDUCATION MENTOR PROGRAM PARENT RETREAT A SUCCESS

On October 21, the Promote Another Student Success Mentoring Program (PASS) of Casa de Amigos along with the Midland ISD Migrant Program, co-sponsored a Parent Retreat for low-income and minority parents. This was the first program of its kind to be held in Midland. The purpose of the retreat was to help the parents of "at-risk" students learn life management skills that are essential in dealing with everyday situations that confront them.

Fifty parents were led through a series of exercises that emphasized listening skills, communication, assertiveness, problem-solving, decision-making, following rules, laws, and self-marketing.

The retreat brought out many expressions of joy and tears and the participation of each parent was outstanding. The success of this

retreat has prompted scheduling of another retreat targeted at the Black parent population in February 1990, which is American Negro History Month.

Facilitators for the October Parent Retreat were Robert Alfaro, an elementary school principal from Fort Stockton, Les Vela, with the Bilingual and Migrant program of Ector County ISD, Urbano Rios, co-ordinator from Region 18 Educational Resource Service Center and Virginia Conner, PASS program co-ordinator. Mr. Rios and Mr. Vela currently serve as mentors in the Casa Mentoring program. Below are some comments from the parent retreat participants:

"I am very thankful for your support and efforts you exhibit in the Hispanic community. Thank you for everything. I was able to learn better communication skills for my kids and myself."

Continued on page 3

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AT RISK STUDENTS: A PROFILE

- Has a family history who have not completed high-school or in some cases grade school.
- Household may not speak English as primary language.
- Often hold jobs.
- Frequently are over-age for grade and failing one subject.
- Traditional school system has not met their needs for building self esteem.

The drop-out cycle can be broken. The story that follows about Jesus Gomez is an excellent example of how appropriate assistance helped one young man break out of his at-risk cycle.

Jesus Gomez: * A Success Story

In 1987, the Summer Children's Cultural Enrichment Program at Casa de Amigos was off to a flying start with more than 85 children enrolled in the afternoon program of sports, crafts, special trips, speakers, and experiential learning. To better serve the youngsters, four summer youth workers placed by the Job Training Partnership Act were added to the staff.

One of these youth workers was Jesus Gomez, a shy young man with an earnest desire to better himself and help the younger students. He was also in summer school in the mornings, working to improve his academic skills. Jesus was regular in work attendance, cheerful, and learned quickly the skills that a children's small group leader needed to keep his kids interested in learning and to help them build self-esteem.

Jesus also volunteered to help with English as a Second Language classes, returning in the evening to help adults master their adopted language. Clearly Jesus was a young man with motivation and tremendous potential.

When the summer ended, Jesus did not return to Casa de Amigos for awhile. It was learned he had dropped out of school. Since Jesus' older brothers had also dropped out of school and neither of his parents spoke English well or had much formal education, Casa staff became concerned for Jesus. They sent word through one of his family's friends that Jesus and his brothers were eligible to try for their GED and to take advantage of the High School Equivalency Migrant program at the University of Texas at El Paso.

The HEP-Migrant Program is designed to help youth from farmworker backgrounds obtain GEDs and go on to vocational training or post-secondary education. HEP provides GED classes, living space in college dormitories, medical care, vocational and academic assessment and placement services.

Casa's interest and ability . . . was just the encouragement needed to make a change in his life.

Jesus decided to give the program a try. Casa's interest and ability to connect him with the appropriate helping program through the Promote Another Student Success Program (PASS) of the Education Department was just the encouragement needed to make a change in his life.

From the outset, it was evident that Jesus had made the right choice. He scored very well on the GED, subsequently enrolling at UTEP as a freshman in the college of engineering.

This fall Jesus has continued to do well in school, posting a mid-term grade point average of 3.0, which any freshman can be proud of.

Jesus Gomez is well on the way to fulfilling his dream of being the first member of his family to obtain a solid formal education and a four year college degree.

*Name has been changed to protect privacy of client.

PASS Retreat Continued

"I enjoyed the retreat. I learned a great deal. The presenters helped us with our personal problems. They made us feel happy. May God bless them."

"We are grateful for having an opportunity to learn things to better our community, school, and home."

"I am sincerely grateful for the advice that was given to us during the retreat. I learned quite a bit. I would like to help recruit other parents for another retreat."

The Mentoring Program gives a heartfelt thank you to the various individuals, businesses, and organizations who donated resources to the Parent Retreat.

Thanks to the Northeast YMCA for use of their facility, Jumburrito for breakfast burritos, R.C. Cola Bottling Company and Refreshment Vending for beverages, LULAC Council #4386 for providing the dinner meal, Harold Howard, a Casa Board member who donated video equipment and several hours of service in recording the retreat, and to the MISD Migrant Program for all the ways they have supported the PASS Mentor Program's efforts.



WE STILL NEED TUTORS

The Homework Help program is very successful this year. More students than ever are taking advantage of this informal academic help program.

If you would like to give one or two hours a week to help children with their homework, please call 682-9701.

CASA YOUTH HONORED AT OPTIMIST BANQUET

Four young people associated with Casa de Amigos-sponsored groups were honored November 9th by the Optimist Club of Midland.

Fernando Aranda and Susanna Martinez: Drop-out Prevention Promote Another Student Success Program

Brian Gibon and Gabriel McClelland: Boy Scout Troop 612 co-sponsored by Casa de Amigos, St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church



Helping People Help Themselves

TUTORING UPDATE

The After School Tutoring and Homework Help program has been successful this year thanks to the continued efforts of the volunteers from ARCO, Midland College, and Midland High School.

Corporate volunteers are a tremendous asset to our volunteer program. This year ARCO has allowed its employees to participate in a work release program to tutor at Casa.

Thanks to these volunteers, we continue to be able to serve the growing number of students who need this program to succeed in school.

If your business or organization would like to participate in the tutoring program, call Casa de Amigos at 682-9701.

DIRECTIONS

SUSTAINING MEMBER CAMPAIGN

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Casa de Amigos held a ground-breaking ceremony on Thursday, October 5th at 5:30 p.m. for its planned building and renovation project. Mariachi music, refreshments, and balloons were all part of the festivities as almost one hundred fifty persons joined in the event.

The agency plans to add nearly 12,000 square feet of space to its current facility then renovate the existing 6600 square feet for space to house programs. When completed the building itself will be known as the Mabee Eastside Community Center. Construction is scheduled to begin in December and will be completed by fall 1990. Campbell Construction Company is the general contractor.

UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFUL

CASA DE AMIGOS STAFF PLEDGED OVER \$2792 TO UNITED WAY IN 1990, NEARLY A \$900 INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR.

Casa de Amigos annual sustaining membership campaign has raised \$3065 to date for support of agency programs and services. "The goal for this year is \$10,000," states Bill Mewhorter, Casa Board member and this year's fund-raising chairman. "Casa de Amigos is grateful to receive financial support from the Midland community, especially during this holiday season when individual needs are so acute in our minds."

During 1989, Casa de Amigos will serve over 4500 unduplicated persons, or nearly five percent of Midland's population through its programs in the areas of Senior Citizens Activities, Health/Dental and Social Services, and Education. All contributions to the Sustaining Membership Campaign are tax-deductible.



SOCIAL SERVICES

HELP A NEEDY FAMILY

The holiday season is right around the corner and the elves in the social service department are hard at work. We know of many needy families who will be needing groceries, toys, warm clothing, medicine, etc. during the Christmas season.

If your family or organization would like to provide something special for someone this Christmas let us know. We will be more than happy to match you with a child or family in need of extra help or we can distribute your donation where it is needed most.

For further information about this holiday donation program, call Martha Covarrubias at 682-9701 before December 17th.

BENEFIT BREAKFAST

Benefit Breakfast for Discretionary Fund to be held February 24th

The annual Benefit Breakfast to supplement the Social Services Discretionary Fund will be held on Saturday, February 24, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Casa de Amigos.

The Discretionary Fund provides monies for emergency help to needy individuals and families. Groceries, medical assistance, help with rent and utilities are all drawn from this fund. Make plans now to join us for a delicious meal and fun fellowship.

SENIORS PREPARE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Casa's Senior Citizens got an early start on the holiday season with a covered dish dinner celebration at Casa de Amigos. Turkeys for the event were donated by Mr. and Mrs. Cesario Hernandez and the Ranchhouse. In addition, the seniors were guests at Thanksgiving dinners held by Fairmont Park Lanes on November 17 and Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church on November 20th. On November 21, a traditional Thanksgiving dinner at the center was provided by Community and Senior Services.

As part of their annual Christmas celebration, Casa seniors will tour Midland's beautiful Christmas lights, present a Christmas play and hold a holiday celebration.

SENIORS HIGHLIGHTS

Casa's Seniors visited the Courtyard Care Center and brought fruit and candy for the residents there. They will return during the holiday season to present a song program.

Austin was the destination for 15 excited senior participants and 3 staff members September 19 - 22. In addition to sight seeing and shopping, Casa's seniors visited the Conley Guerrero Senior Citizen Center for a delightful evening program. The participants from that Center prepared a delicious dinner and presented lively entertainment complete with a mariachi band.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Thanks to Southwest Airlines "Home for the Holidays" program participants will be with their families and loved ones for Christmas. Frances Martinez and Tom Frison will each receive a complimentary airline ticket to the Southwest Airlines destination of their choice. Mrs. Martinez and Mr. Frison will join family and friends in Los Angeles and San Francisco respectively.

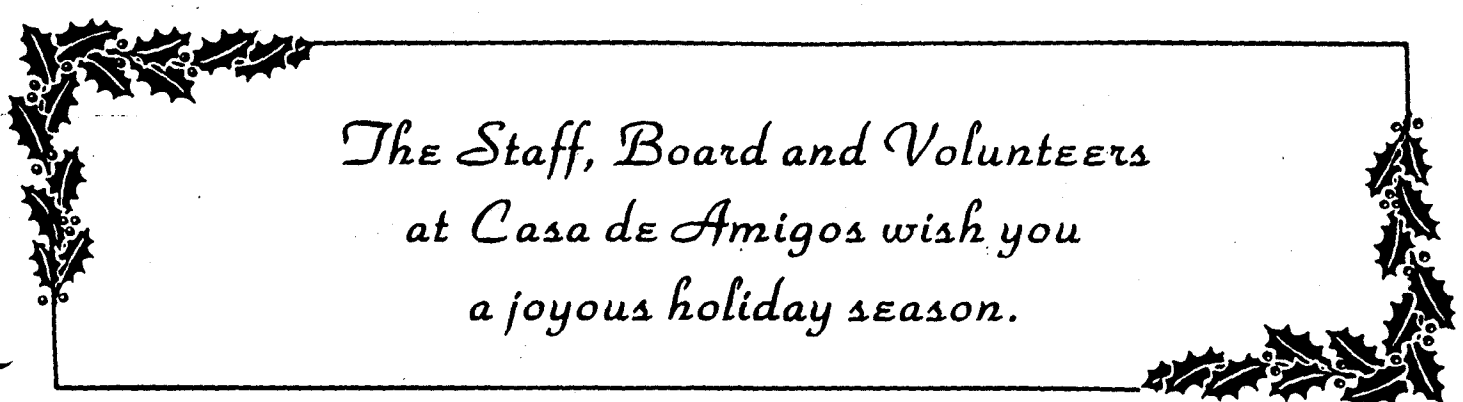
On December 1st a presentation ceremony by Southwest Airlines was held in conjunction with Midland's annual Christmas tree lighting event

SENIOR PROGRAM RECEIVES GRANT

On October 27, Casa de Amigos received a grant of \$10,000 from Burlington Resources Foundation for operating support of Casa's senior citizens program. The foundation represents the El Paso Natural Gas Company and Meridian Oil Inc.

This is the first time the Senior Program has been underwritten by an outside donation with the exception of funding from the United Way of Midland.

This grant will be used to support the senior citizens broad program which includes daily, social, recreational, health and educational services. Casa de Amigos also provides transportation to and from the program for all seniors who need this service.



*The Staff, Board and Volunteers
at Casa de Amigos wish you
a joyous holiday season.*

Enrique Farias, Jr.
Enrolled Agent

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