

2 0 1 1 A N N U A L E D I T I O N

day worker center of mountain view



RELIABLE WORKERS ✕ READY TO SERVE

15th Year Anniversary Party

To celebrate 15 years of serving the community, the Day Worker Center staff and workers threw a memorable, two-day party November 12–13. On Saturday night, attendees learned more about the workers at the film **Borderless Dreams**, then everyone came out on Sunday to play together at an enormous *fiesta* at Saint Joseph's School. See below and inside for details and photos.

✖ Flying High ✎

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

Delicate and fragile-looking yet vigorous and enterprising, the monarch butterfly travels between Canada, the US, and Mexico several times during its lifetime, flying where it must to find food and shelter. Like monarch butterflies, day laborers are not limited by borders. Desperate for work, leaving with only dreams of loved ones left behind, they follow their hopes for jobs across borders. These are the faces of the people you see at the Day Worker Center.

This year, as we mark 15 years of service to Mountain View and the surrounding communities, our dreams were unlimited and we've had an abundance of events to celebrate. Best of all, we fulfilled our long-held hope of a home of our own.

Since 1996, we've connected workers with employers in a safe and supportive environment. Thanks to you, our friends and supporters, we've come a long way since our humble beginnings in 1996. Read on to find out how we've shed our cocoon and spread our wings.

— Maria Marroquin, Executive Director



Imagine Yourself as a Day Worker A TYPICAL DAY

YOU'RE #37

After a half-hour bus ride, you arrive at 7 a.m. at the bright, welcoming new Day Worker Center building. You put your name on the list for work. *Number 37? Dam!* Not much chance of work today. You know there are usually less than 25 jobs on an average day, and work has been scarce. You wish you could work today, but the job may or may not walk through the door. You fret about how you will feed yourself and your family. But at least you're not standing out in the rain and cold, jockeying for jobs with other men outside of Home Depot or on the corner of El Camino Real and San Antonio. And you know that when that job *does* come, you won't have to run the risk that the employer will "stiff" you: the Day Worker Center will make sure you

get paid. Your stomach is growling, but the hot coffee and bite of bread that you had when you arrived at the Center staves off the worst of the hunger pangs until lunch in a few hours.

A FEW HOURS' WORK

Luck is with you today! An employer takes you to her home for 4 hours of yard work. This entire week, you've earned \$48 to buy milk for the kids and to put toward your astronomical rent. It's just a tiny chip toward what you need to provide for your family, and you think to yourself, "*Is this why I left behind everything I know and love? My mom, my dad, all my friends, my home town – even my*

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"MOVING FORWARD" AT OUR 15-YEAR FIESTA

A crowd of the Day Worker Center's friends and supporters came out to play at our memorable Sunday *fiesta* at Saint Joseph's Catholic School on November 13. Adults and children danced to live music, children had their faces painted and played games, while everyone stuffed themselves full of mouthwatering foods from various cultures. Beautiful worker-made arts and crafts were on sale, and we even hosted an old-fashioned cake walk.



Soccer teams from the Hayward, Redwood City and San Mateo day worker centers, along with a team from our own Center, played in the "Moving Forward" tournament. An enormous *gracias* to all of our friends who spent the weekend celebrating our 15 years of serving the community.





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education and career?"

Tomorrow, you're back at the Center. But now, since you worked, your name is at the bottom of the list – #69 – slim chance of any work at all.

Then you look around and see some of the other hopeful, sad expressions and remember that there are many others at the Center who also really need work.

LEARNING CENTER

So you spend the day waiting at the Day Worker Center. You take a class to improve your English so that maybe you can understand and talk a little better with the person who hires you, and fit in here in this strange new land.



Maybe you also get some help writing your resumé, or take first aid, job site safety, or information technology training from some of

We simply could not have a successful Los Altos Fall Festival without the support of helpers from the Day Worker Center. They have been working with us for over 10 years and are always reliable, efficient, hard-working and amiable. We know we can count on them for the excellent service they routinely provide.

– Julie Rose
President, Los Altos Chamber of Commerce

the many generous volunteers who each donate an average of 10 hours a month to help the Day Worker Center. You might also try your hand at sewing or arts and crafts that you might build into your own business and supplement your income.



COMMUNITY CENTER

Each day at noon, you fill your tummy with a toothsome, healthy lunch cooked for you by other workers, with some of the food grown in the Center's own organic vegetable garden. It may be the only hot meal you eat today. And you'll find a little comfort sharing your story with other people who speak the same language and who have experienced a similar life-path.

On Tuesday, you don't feel too well, so you stop in for free medical care at the [Gardner Health Services](#) mobile van in the Center's parking lot. Nothing fancy, perhaps just enough to prevent a more serious health emergency. Also, you think about how a few

times a year you can get no-charge dental care and eye exams through the generosity of local providers.

Occasionally, your daughter might pop in after school for help with homework from Center volunteers. You might also take a turn working in the Center's organic garden to enhance your green thumb (and the number of skills you can list on your ever-growing resumé), or dance away your stress at an hour-long Zumba fitness



class.

GIVING BACK

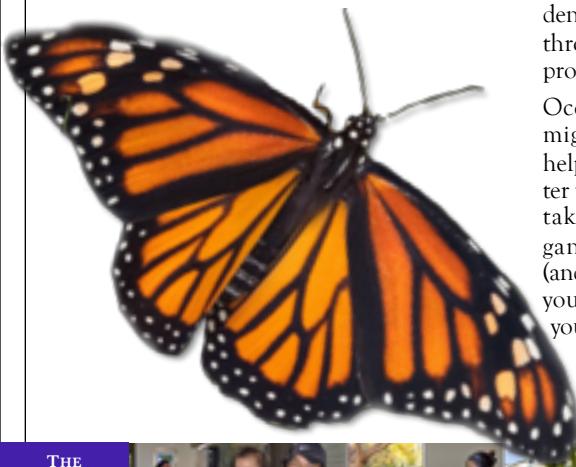
As much as you miss your home and family, you're grateful for the Day Worker Center and the opportunities that abound in your new community. You want to give something back. Although you desperately need the day's pay, now and then you give up a day's work to pick up trash on local streets, help senior citizens with community gardens, or participate in events sponsored by an organization such as the Rotary Club, Run for Zimbabwe, or the Mountain View Educational Foundation. Or you may give up some of the valuable time you could spend

learning in one of the Center's many classes to donate blood during the quarterly drive, or crochet handmade blankets for premature infants at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

Never far from your mind is how much you miss all your loved ones that you were forced to leave behind because of the lack of opportunities in your home country, and the worry about how you're going to support your family.

So tomorrow, you'll be back at

the Day Worker Center to wait for work. All over again.



Bridging the Distance

Bloop! That characteristic Skype ring-tone signals that you're connected. There on the screen in front of you, in living, vivid color, are the family you haven't seen for six years. Through your tears, you notice that your mom has sprouted a mass of gray hair and a gaggle of laugh lines around her eyes since you last saw her. Your little son has shot up from a cub into a strapping 10-year-old. And your beautiful daughter, an awkward 11-year-old when you had to leave, is almost a woman. You wouldn't have recognized her if you passed her on the street.

Skyping with family they might otherwise not see is becoming quite familiar for workers taking the Information Technology class at the Day Worker Center. They're learning to use many kinds of digital technology — Skype, email, and blogs — to reach out to family back home *and* to people in their new community.



One of the biggest challenges for a day laborer is coping with the distance between them and the family left behind in their countries of origin. It's a subject fraught with pain. "They still have fresh in their minds all their family ... the birthdays, the graduations, the weddings," says executive director Maria Marroquin. "All this time, a part of them is still in their country.... They want to hug them. It's definitely [a] ... homesick[ness]."

Worse, with immigration reform being hotly debated across the country, neighbors in the

workers' new community may only see a stereotyped immigrant — not a human being with family and problems just like themselves. It dehumanizes the face of immigration and intensifies the workers' isolation and loneliness. This is where the blogging aspect of the class comes in.

By posting their blogs online, workers share their thoughts with the world. The short blog entries range from memories of a home village to a memorable day in ESL class. Written in Spanish, the blogs are posted along with an English translation. By putting a human "face" to day workers, these posted thoughts foster a deeper under-

standing in the community about who the workers are.

The popular Information Technology class is offered several times a week and taught in conversational English by Bruce Christensen. It truly spans miles and borders.

Visit the *Day Workers' Journal* blog at dayworkers-journal.wordpress.com.



ONE WORKER'S BLOG

Check out this blog entry from Joselito, a member of the Day Worker Center's Information Technology Class.

At the [Day Worker] Center we always have things to do, and it feels good to be there.... The past several days have been bad for many of the workers at the Center, since it has been raining a lot and employers don't come to hire us. You can see the worry on many of our faces as we wait to work, since [today] rent is due and many other things get closer. We hope that next week things will be better. But like they say, after a storm comes a calm. Something special about us Latinos is that although things get bad, we always have the view that they will get better. Our hope of going on doesn't end, happen what may happen, we see the future with good opportunities for improvement.

We come here as a necessity. Because if it was up to me, I wouldn't be here. I'd be in Mexico ... and stay with my kids. But we can't eat from just love.

— Flor
Day Worker

Why do people come to the US? What daily struggles do they face once they're here?

A new 20-minute film goes beyond the headlines to reveal the human faces under the controversial subject of immigration. *Borderless Dreams* features several laborers from the Day Worker Center who talk openly about their desperate search for jobs in the US and the heart-wrenching decision each made to leave their families behind.

Borderless Dreams, made by and about day laborers, premiered at the opening evening of our 15-year celebration weekend. (*Borderless Dreams* is now available to schools and organi-

zations throughout the peninsula. Call Maria at 650.903.4102 to schedule a showing.) After the screening, panelists and audience members engaged in a lively, compelling panel discussion with some of the film's subjects and creators.

A silent auction for items like a vacation-home stay, a scholarship to the Media Center, a hand-knitted scarf, and other goodies netted the center \$4,000. A huge *gracias* to all of our donors and guests who made the evening so successful!



Dreams Do Come True!

Our dream came true in 2010 when the Day Worker Center moved to a permanent home. To thank you, our friends, we held a Grand Opening party in November of 2010.



Supporters, workers and regional dignitaries turned out to celebrate with food and drinks, and were on hand to cut the ribbon. A silent auction netted funds to help furnish our new learning center. We thank you for your wonderful support that made this happen.



AT THE DAY WORKER CENTER,
WE PUT YOUR MONEY TO
GOOD
USE. HERE ARE JUST A FEW
EXAMPLES OF HOW WE
STRETCH YOUR DOLLARS.

\$20

buys meals
for 100 day workers
for one day!

\$60

buys materials for the
ESL volunteer teachers
for two weeks!

\$100

keeps our doors
open and lights on
for an entire week!

Homework Help

Children of day workers are often at a severe disadvantage in US schools, yet scholarly success is extremely important. For day laborers' kids who need a little extra help with those tricky English homonyms or who feel fractured by fractions, help is at hand. Tutors volunteer four days a week after school to help workers' kids with homework.



Do we
have your
Email address?

To save on mailing costs,
the Day Worker Center an-
nounces many of its events
through email. Please make
sure we have your most recent
email address by:

- Sending it to the above address.
- Calling us.
- Sending a note from your email address to one of the Center's email addresses.
- If you are sending us a donation, write your email address on the envelope.



Certifiably Green

Would you like your home cleaned the "green" way? Are you tired of the toxic chemicals found in many of the expensive home-cleaning products? Thanks to funding by the Los Altos Rotary Club and the volunteer services of Geri Spieler, a Certified Green Remodeler, the Center's workers are training to be certified in green cleaning. This means they will know how to use homemade non-toxic solutions such as white vinegar, baking soda, cornstarch, and toothpaste, which can be just as effective and are more environmentally friendly. With these concoctions, the workers will be able to achieve the same spic-and-span results as they would with expensive, store-bought cleaning products chock-full of unknown chemicals that are dangerous for both people and the environment. In Geri's class, workers learn the many different recipes that are used for different cleaning tasks, as well as the proper cleaning of different materials – natural wood, natural stone, tile, and laminate.

MAIL YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE
CHECK IN THE ENCLOSED
ENVELOPE, OR DONATE BY
PAYPAL AT OUR WEBSITE.



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Sewing, Jewelry & Crafts: Skills in Translation

One of the most powerful resources at the Center is connecting workers with each other. Using previous education and knowledge, laborers teach others valuable skills that can be parlayed into extra income or even a business. For example, Ricardo Palacios, teaches **sewing** twice a week. A sewing

machine repairman in El Salvador, Ricardo helps students create curtains, bedspreads, clothing, Halloween costumes, and lingerie.

Other popular classes offered are **jewelry making** by Alejandra Chaverri and **handicrafts** by Inez Alvizar. The Center is considering opening an online Etsy shop to sell the workers' creations. These classes are made possible by a grant from a generous foundation, religious organizations and private donors, like you.

