



OUR

MISSION:

We build housing, hope and futures for the well-being of working families.

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Bienestar Resident Has Art Show

Mariachi music provided the background for the opening of a show of the paintings of Bienestar resident Isaac Alonzo at the Walters Cultural Arts Center in Hillsboro. Alonzo lives in Reedville Apartments and is in his second year as a Bienestar Promotor. He is a farmworker, working by day at a local nursery, but painting long hours into the night.



Pictured above: Isaac Alonzo with one of his paintings at the opening of his show at the Glenn & Viola Cultural Arts Center, Hillsboro.



Isaac's talent as an artist was recognized by Bienestar's director after Isaac volunteered to provide paintings as backdrops for resident holiday parties where staff members would take photos of children with Santa. The paintings of Santa were beautiful and, when pressed, reserved and shy Isaac admitted that there were more at home. Following a home visit where Karen Shawcross and Gracie Garcia were amazed at the quantity

and quality of Isaac's work, they were determined to find a place for him to show his remarkable work. Board Treasurer John McMeekan arranged an introduction to Walters Art Center director Sean Morgan. Portland artist Greg Danielson photographed Isaac's work and made a CD to present to the center. Shawcross then presented Isaac's work to WCAC curator Carl Annala, who immediately agreed to schedule a show for Isaac.

Curator Annala describes Isaac's work: "... Steeped in traditions, several traditions in fact. His work is mostly narrative, focusing on themes of everyday life

in Mexico and the U.S. His paintings have the character of Mexican mural art like the work of Diego Rivera. On the other hand, some of his paintings are symbolic or surreal akin to the art of Rene Magritte and the Mexican surrealists of the 1930's. Alonzo grew up and became an artist in Mexico but moved to Oregon a decade ago. Raised in an orphanage, Isaac credits an artist mentor who taught him when he was a teenager for helping launch his career as an artist.

Isaac has had a number of shows in Mexico and won awards there for his work.

We believe in the resilience and capacity of all human beings to help, change, adapt and lead in their own lives, their families, neighborhoods and communities.

Bienestar

Volunteer Spotlight: Ada Costanzo

In March of 2008, when Program Services Manager Gracie Garcia and Youth Program Coordinator Alex Chester were making plans for a new pilot program, offering Homework Club to children in grades 1-6 at Montebello Apartments, Gracie sent out an email to Hillsboro School teachers asking for volunteers. Special education teacher Ada Costanzo responded immediately and has been a faithful volunteer at this Homework Club in Hillsboro ever since.

It was also thanks to Ada that Bienestar was able to offer the Summer Reading Safari for the children of Montebello Apts. As the school year drew to a close, we began to worry about the kids in Homework Club experiencing that typical loss of learning progress through the summer. Ada went back to her school and recruited Christie Ranslow, the reading specialist at Peter Boscow School. Christie designed and led our very successful Summer Reading Safari program. Ada volunteered during the summer as well, and recruited two other teachers, Judy Cross and Sandie Spotts. We think Ada is simply amazing—after working at school all day in special education, she



Bienestar Volunteer Ada Costanzo at Montebello Homework Club.

she still has energy, enthusiasm and dedication to share with our kids at Homework Club. As 4th grader Roman Bucio puts it: "I'm glad to see Mrs. C. because she is so nice and she helps me with my reading."

Bienestar Youth Program Coordinator Alex Chester adds: "Ada's help has been invaluable in running an effective program. In addition to assisting with homework, she takes time to read with most every student. Her presence helps provide the individual attention these kids need. I am truly grateful to have a professional educator by my side at Homework Club."

Holiday Parties at Bienestar Properties

Once again this year Bienestar hosted holiday parties for all our residents. This year, thanks to generous donations from Toys for Tots organized by the United States Marine Corps, and News Channel KGW 8, every child received a brand new toy from Bienestar's Santa! The unexpected snowstorms meant that a couple of the parties were held after the holidays, but it seems that parties and gifts are welcome anytime.

We are grateful to our Youth Program Coordinator, Alex Chester for arranging the toy donations for the first time ever. And we thank Board member Reagan Anderson who braved the snow and ice to turn his truck into Santa's sleigh on the toy pick-up day at Channel 8's studios.

Last year staff member Juan Carlos Aguilera held approximately 600 children from newborns to teens on his lap in his role as Bienestar's Santa. This year, we had rotating Santas—thank you staff member Jorge Tello, Board member Santiago Arcos, and our veteran Santa Juan Carlos Aguilera!



Pictured above: Bienestar residents at Jose Echevarria Apartments enjoy a visit from Santa Claus.



Pictured above: Bienestar Board member Reagan Anderson's car turns into Santa's sleigh carrying toys donated to KGW News Channel 8's Toy Drive through the snow to Bienestar children.

Bienestar Receives United Way Grant

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has awarded Bienestar a grant of \$10,000 that enables us to offer an Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign this winter. Staff members Gracie Garcia and Maria Moreno, Promotores Luisa Manriquez, Javier Camacho, and Maria's husband Ezequiel Hidalgo took 40 hours of training in December and became certified volunteer income tax preparers. From January until April 15, these folks plus board member Janice Morgan are helping residents and others in the community with income tax preparation on Thursday evenings at Jose Arciga Apts. in Forest Grove and Saturdays at Sunset Gardens in Hillsboro. Thank you, United Way!

Visit our website at
www.bienestar-or.org.

Volunteer Opportunities at Bienestar:

Adult Programs:

- English Classes
- Computer Classes
- Financial Literacy Classes
- EITC Tax Preparation

Contact Gracie Garcia at
503.693.2937, Ext. 101
ggarcia@hdcnwo.org

Youth Programs:

- Homework Club
- Science Club
- Basketball Club
- Art Classes

Contact Alex Chester at
503.693.2937, Ext. 100
achester@hdcnwo.org



Grant from City of Hillsboro

Bienestar recently received a grant of \$2,500 from the City of Hillsboro's Community Grant Program. The grant, awarded by the Hillsboro City Council, is intended to support the expansion of the Promotores program to Sunset Gardens and Sierra West Apartments in Hillsboro. This grant supplements the major donor support we receive from the United Way for the Promotores program, also supported by a grant from the Northwest Health Foundation.

We recently added four new Promotores at these properties, bringing the total to 15 at all our properties. Promotores are residents selected for leadership potential who receive special training and then each make 40 home visits annually to their neighbors, helping to connect them with Bienestar and community resources.



Bienestar

Building housing, hope and futures

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