

# ANNUAL REPORT

2013



CASA  
GUADALUPE  
CENTER

Changing the Lehigh Valley One Person At A Time

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WIC SERVICES



SOCIAL SERVICES



EDUCATION SERVICES



SENIOR SERVICES



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## From the Desk of the

# Executive Director

## Luz E. DeLabar

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to include Casa's 2012-2013 Annual Report and to assert that Casa had a very successful year. There were plenty of challenges, however, none that we could not overcome. We transitioned from an organization that was struggling into an organization that is strong in all aspects.

While the 2011 fiscal year-end brought much success, including settling into our new building, it also left us with many challenges including deep financial stress.

"What a difference a year makes!" With the dedication of the staff, volunteers and the help of our partners and our donors, I am proud to report that Casa is thriving.

There is plenty of reason for our constituents to celebrate. You provided the means for Casa to increase the number of students in the Pa'Lante afterschool program; opportunity for advanced programs and provided the means for students to visit places that most had never visited before.

Casa had over 120 students (1st-12th grade) in the afterschool program and 60 in our summer program. This was a record number for us. Our staff tied enhanced studies in STEM to classroom projects and trips that students will not easily forget. We also offered a great entrepreneurship program and the core-study programs traditionally offered at Casa.

Following are a few of the studies the students enjoyed:

- "Fantasy baseball math program" combined with a trip to see an Iron Pig's game. Most of these children had never seen a live game.
- PPL volunteers joined forces with our education staff to plant a garden and paint a mural on the wall of the garden. Students received lessons on caring for the environment and healthy eating. They sowed, harvested, prepared dips and enjoyed vegetables from their garden. Then students visited Longwood Gardens. They were in awe of the beautiful plants and flowers.
- The entrepreneurship program was focused on the Entertainment Arts Industry and students formed a Production Company. They created on-line cartoons and games as "products". They sold tickets, to parents, for attendance to the showcase, where the designers displayed their "products". We also partnered with the Arden Theater in Philadelphia and learned improvisation and public speaking.

- Students learned about the human body and visited the human body exhibit at Da’Vinci Science Center. Other STEM lessons included brains and veins, chemical interactions, scene of the crime, rocketry and engineering, architecture, alternative energy.
- For the core subjects, students from local colleges such as Muhlenberg College and others helped students with one-on-one tutoring. We received feedback from the Allentown schools as to how much our students had improved.

These are children that only know life from what they see in their impoverished homes and gang-infested neighborhoods. Our aim is to show them that they can aspire to a better life.

Our Jesus Ramos Senior Center also had a great year. The number of seniors grew to over 40 on a regular basis (over 75 are enrolled). We served over 7000 meals and breakfasts to these low-income elderly clients. They participated in the Puerto Rican parade, were taken to the Farmer’s market shopping, enjoyed picnics at the parks, attended the Senior Fest at the fairgrounds just to name a few. We had speakers come-in to discuss issues of importance to them such as; breast cancer, fall prevention, Medicare, and a pharmacist that discussed the safe use of medication, to mention a few.

The WIC staff serves over 3000 women, infants and children a month. Casa provides the mothers with information on nutrition, breastfeeding, and overall health of the infants and children. This year, the “Judith Reading Room” donated books for the preschool children and we partnered with Head Start to help the families assure that the infants of today are prepared for school tomorrow.

Our Social Services department helped over 1000 families with Energy Assistance dollars thanks to the “Operation Help” funds from PPL. Casa also provided consulting and referrals to many more impoverished families.

There is so much more going on at Casa and we invite you to come and see for yourself. We were able to eliminated the deficit and become financially stable. The new fiscal year (2013-2014) started with all accounts up-to-date and solidly in the “black”. Casa was able to do all of these things thanks to your financial support.

One more bit of good news. We were working with the State of PA to obtain funding through a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP). The funds will be used to build a Senior Center at our new building, add classrooms in the lower level and finish construction of the front entrance of the building.

After a long and arduous process, I am happy to report that we received over \$450,000 from the state. This amount does not totally cover the cost of the renovations (estimated at about \$900K), however, it is a start. We are very excited to start the next phase of construction in the near future.

Again, thanks for helping us help this community. Your dollars are well invested. Our partners, our donors, our staff and volunteers are a valuable of part of this mission.

## Casa Guadalupe's

# Mission

Casa Guadalupe Center offers services for Children, Youth and the Elderly residents in areas of Health, Education and Social Services. Casa works in partnership with other organization to promote Economic Empowerment, Social Mobility and Civic Participation of all Lehigh Valley residents.

## Casa Guadalupe's

# Programs



### WIC Services

Women, Infants and Children Services (WIC): Nutrition Program



### Social Services

Operation HELP, deposit waivers and income verification, referrals to agencies



### Education Services

Casa Guadalupe Education Program (Pa'Lante)



### Senior Services

Jesus Ramos Senior Center



## WIC Services

The WIC program provides wholesome foods, nutrition education as well as helpful tips and information to become partners for good health. The new Casa building allowed us to better serve the community and to enhance our programs. In the last year WIC Services helped over 3200 woman, infants and children per month.

Casa provides personalized nutritional counseling to families. Our staff believes in the importance of our community and families to receive the information on nutrition guided meals. We also offer iron testing to our clients. During the summer families were provided with Farmer Market Vouchers to purchase PA grown vegetables.

WIC offers women the breastfeeding program that help counsel and support mothers in the feeding decisions that are best for her and the children.

## Social Services

Social Services play an important role at Casa Guadalupe in serving our community. Our staff does a great job in guiding and helping the families and individuals that reach out for guidance on a variety of issues. One of the clear successes of this year was impacting about 2000 families and individuals who needed assistance with their energy bill. Our services in this area of energy include helping families with income verification and qualifying them for deposit waiver.

These are PPL programs for low-income families that we administer. Over 1600 families this year were helped with heating bills including financial assistance, for oil, electric and gas utilities. Additionally, we educate the clients to conserve energy and provide them with an informational “energy kit” that clients can take home.

Much of our social services includes listening to the needs of our families, guiding and helping them or referring them to other agencies that may be able to help them. These include Rental Assistance, Drug and Alcohol abuse help, The Red Cross, English/GED classes and many more.

Social Services at Casa Guadalupe helps people cope with the challenges they are facing in their lives. Many are individuals and families that are desperate and don't know where to turn.

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Our goal is to continue to educate and assist the community and provide the needed help that enhances the well being of the community at large.

A few weeks ago we had a women come to Casa in distress about having two days left before she was evicted from her apartment that she shared with four small children. She wanted to know if she could drop off the children at Casa Guadalupe Center while she packed a few of their belongings.

The mother of four did not want her young children to witness the landlord put their belongings on the street. “What should I do” is what she asked? Unfortunately, Casa does not have funds for these situations.

“I was thankful to have several contacts where I could send the woman and her children to ask for assistance”, said the Social Services Coordinator. “This vital area highlights the need for Casa to have funds that provide families, such as this one, a one-time emergency assistance to move forward; at least in the short run.”

Another story includes a woman that came in for a deposit waiver for her utilities. She did not have the proper documents or State ID that are required. We asked why she didn’t have the documents and she informed us that she was mugged while exiting the public transportation bus.

After giving her the information of where to go to get documents, her son arrived at Casa with his 3-year-old daughter. The woman explained that she did not have much to eat and was struggling to get by.

Our staff gave her a bag of canned goods and a list of pantries where she could go for food. Unfortunately, she did not have transportation to get to the food pantries. She explained that when the food stamps are gone they go hungry until she gets food stamps again.

There are countless families that walk through Casa Guadalupe Center doors in need every day. We try to address all matters with the programs we have or direct them to other organizations that may be able to help them. Our staff regularly reads and translates mail that our clients receive, such as shut off notices or eviction letters. Some people just want to be heard. They say that the places they call for help will not give them the time.

# Education Program

During the 2012-2013 year, Casa Guadalupe Center's Pa'Lante Education after-school and summer education programs partnered with Allentown School District, the Da'Vinci Science Center, the Wildlands Conservancy, the Alden Theater of Philadelphia, PPL, and many others, to provide educational assistance to students 1st thru 12th grade. These students come from one of the most impoverished areas in the state.

Casa offers high academic goals, performance measures, and a structured approach to teaching. The staff prides itself on using alternative teaching programs and techniques that enhance the students' learning experience. Our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) program is where the kids learn through exploration and problem solving. This past year students explored and improved on many basic math skills including addition, subtraction, multiplication, percentages and ratios, word problems, making and reading graphs and charts as using "Fantasy Baseball Math". This is an example of learning in a fun and exciting way.

Casa uses programs that promote exploration using a hands-on approach. We used Design Squad, which is a PBS curriculum in which the students are given materials, a problem to solve, and some guidance along the way, as they figure out the best ways to solve the problem using the Design Process. We used the Khan Academy, an online tutoring and practice site where the kids get the one-on-one tutoring and practice while our staff is working with other students.

The Da'Vinci Science Center provided us with 18 different STEM activities on 6 different topics taught by their experts. The topics include Architecture, Chemical Interactions, Alternative Energy, Brains and Veins, and others. These hands-on lessons were tied to field trips and activities and to specifics on jobs and careers for our students to think about.

Additionally, we partnered with the Wildlands Conservancy who provided activities on wildlife and nature preservation. They provided the opportunity for our students to visit their site for stream studies, nature walks, geocaching, river tubing, and other great experiences.

Another exciting enrichment program here at Casa is the Entrepreneurship Education Program. The program teaches students about the business world, budgeting, advertising, communication, producing goods/services and then marketing it. This past year we had a focus on the Entertainment Arts industry. The students worked on different projects including the creation of a movie productions company. We used Biz World and Biz Movie to guide the students in the creation of a production company and an animated movie to go with it. In complimenting that project, we brought in the Arden Theater to instruct our

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students on acting and improvisation. They compiled a hilarious routine and presented that routine, as well as their animated movie, to the parents and partners at the end of year showcase.

Most importantly for us is to have the students succeed in whatever they are doing/studying in school. Casa's staff meets with the school's staff to obtain updated information on lesson plans being taught on a daily basis and we work with the students to assure their success in school. These at-risk students receive the one-on-one tutoring they desperately need. Our volunteers from the local colleges provide the tutoring for the homework. The Casa teachers provide remedial education and the enrichment programs.

Parent involvement is another very important part of our education program. We bring the parents/families to Casa to discuss how their children are doing/learning here at Casa. This year we are increasing the frequency to monthly family events and include a variety of topics such as nutrition, life skills, parenting techniques and academic assistance. The partnership with the Adult Literacy Council and The Turning Point of Lehigh Valley will provide programs for our students and families. Our families also benefit from other programs that Casa offers including social services, the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program, and the Senior Center.

Casa Guadalupe is very proud of our Pa' Lante Education Program. The learning experiences we provide our students have long-term effects on students, families and the community as a whole. Casa has helped thousands of kids stay off the gang infested streets by having a safe place to go afterschool, stay healthy by providing nutrition, and stay in school with our education programs.

## Senior Services

This past year the Jesus Ramos Senior Center enjoyed a great year. There are 75 elderly clients that we serve and provide meals, recreation, information and socialization. We held numerous activities for our seniors to enjoy. Celebrating their birthdays was an exciting time for them. Each of them enjoys the individualized attention from the staff and fellow seniors.

In November we invited our seniors to enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner with the staff. In December the seniors received a surprise gift during our annual Christmas party.

Spring is very exciting for them. They have a community garden where they plant and grow vegetables. The garden is an incredible hit around the seniors. Many say it reminds them of their hometowns. In summer, they harvest the vegetables and share their "prized"

harvest with the staff and neighbors. During this time we take them to the park where they have cookouts and enjoy outdoor activities and games, such as water balloons, playing with a ball and music. Our seniors truly know how to have fun. Casa provided about 520 hours of recreational activities to people 60+ years of age that live in poverty.

On typical days our seniors play dominoes, exercise, and play bingo. We also provide activities such as movie days, days when they play music instruments (mostly with homemade instruments), and other times they watch music videos.

Upon arrival these elderly clients receive breakfast. Before leaving the center they receive a hot and healthy meal cooked by our staff. We strive to provide the best quality food, given that for many, this is the only full meal of the day.

Our goal at Casa Guadalupe is to create a family environment. The safety and health of our seniors is a top priority for us. We educate these clients to be informed, stay safe and stay healthy which allows them to remain independent.

This year the Seniors Center coordinator and a volunteer from the Health Department in Allentown joined forces to provide fall prevention classes. Forty-five seniors joined the 8-week classes. They learned how to prevent falls and what to do if they were in a situation where they had fallen and no one was around to help them. They were provided with many suggestions from a variety of speaker on the topic of fall prevention.

This past year was filled with successes; many areas of improvement and growth that lead to better serve this elderly population.



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## From the Desk of the

# Fiscal Officer

### **Bajen Njie**

I joined Casa about one year ago, and I feel fortunate to be part of such a great asset and fixture in the community dedicated solely to improving lives. Some of the main goals of the Fiscal Department are to reduce our costs whenever possible without sacrificing value, streamlining processes, and tightening controls. This way Casa can stretch each dollar to deliver the services that it's known for and reach more individuals.

This has meant shopping around for better values, asking for discounts from vendors, scrutinizing each invoice to ensure there are no errors or unnecessary charges, and especially making sure we are not being charged sales tax given our non-exempt status.

As an example, we recently identified a handful of vendors that had been charging us sales tax for the past few years. After some research on how to go about recovering the amount already paid, the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue provided us with the information. Hence, we have started gathering documentation to request a refund going as far back as three years. This could be a few thousand dollars that could go a long way for Casa.

Overall, it was a good year; once again, we received a clean audit plus ended the year in the black! Furthermore, we managed to increase our revenues and reduce our expenses while providing more and better programs to our clients.

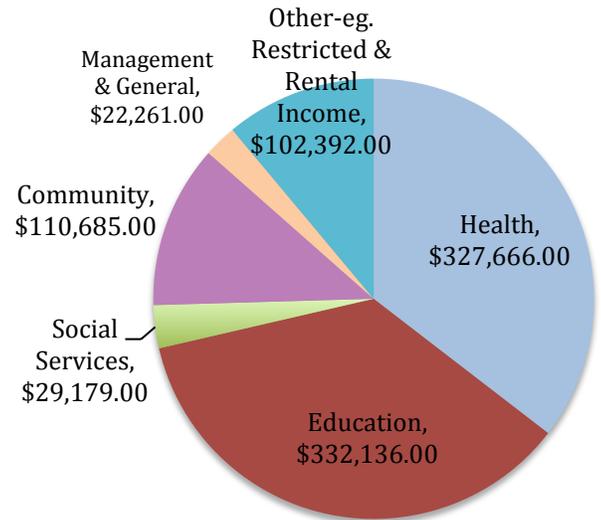
The value of the generous contributions of our donors, partners, dedicated volunteers, and staff is simply immeasurable. "Thank you" is never enough, but know that we are deeply grateful to you as you do play a crucial role in helping us fulfill our mission of helping to change lives every day.

# Audited Figures

## FY 2013

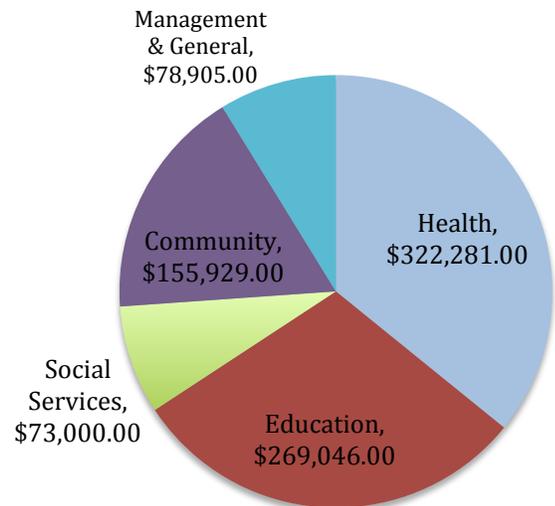
### Revenue

Program	Amount
Health	\$ 327,666
Education	\$ 332,136
Social Services	\$ 29,179
Community	\$ 110,685
Management & General	\$ 22,261
Other-e.g. Restricted & Rental Income	\$ 102,392
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 924,319</b>



### Expenses

Health	\$ 322,281
Education	\$ 269,046
Social Services	\$ 73,000
Community	\$ 155,929
Management & General	\$ 78,905
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 899,161</b>



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## Casa Guadalupe's

# Volunteers

Casa's volunteers are a staple in our operations. They are honored and respected by our staff and students for their hard work and dedication. Without their strength as much would not have been achieved. We are fortunate enough to have volunteers from many places in the community.

Our largest commitment comes from Muhlenberg College, led by Eveily Freeman and Beth Halpern. In any given school year there are between 17 and 30 college students that dedicate their time to the students of Casa Guadalupe. The volunteers come to tutor and support the students. The interactions and the relationships built are most gratifying for both students at Casa and the volunteers. They have a sincere dedication to Casa and they continue to come back every year they attend Muhlenberg.

Casa benefits from many volunteers from other community organizations and businesses. Every summer we have volunteers from De Sales University's "Bridging the Gap" program. These volunteers assist and teach students about healthy living.

We also have volunteers from PPL. They plant a garden with the students and teach the students about planting and harvesting vegetables and preparing different foods. Students also learn about healthy eating and taking care of the environment. PPL staff also provided Thanksgiving dinner baskets for many of our most needy families and Christmas gifts for our students.

Casa has volunteers working in other areas of the organization. Some volunteers provide assistance in our WIC program helping with file management. Other volunteers assist at the Senior Center with anything from kitchen help to administrative work and with our maintenance and housekeeping tasks.

We would truly like to thank everyone who has and continues to help us. Because of them, we continue to "Change the Lehigh Valley, One Person at a Time..."



*PPL volunteers painting the mural at the garden*

## Casa Guadalupe's

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# Partnerships

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Allentown Police Department  
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Cedar Crest College  
Center for Safe Schools  
City of Allentown  
Da Vinci Science Center  
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Girl Scouts  
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Judith's Reading Room  
Just Born, Inc.  
Kutztown University  
Lafayette Ambassador Bank  
Lehigh County Area on Aging/ Adult Service  
Lehigh Valley Health Network  
Maternal Family Health Services

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Muhlenberg College  
National Penn Bank  
Neighborhood Health Centers of the Lehigh Valley  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
PPL Corporation  
Second Harvest Food Bank  
The Spanish Center  
The Turning Point of Lehigh Valley  
United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley  
Wildlands Conservancy

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PPL Corporation  
Susquehanna Bank  
United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley  
UPMC  
Value Place Bethlehem





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