



Centro Latino de Chelsea

NOVEDADES

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Giving thanks and building community



A community Thanksgiving meal



Metro Credit CEO Robert Cashman & Centro Latino Board member Elaine Santiago

Centro Latino's 13th annual community Thanksgiving luncheon, held on November 26, 2008 at the cafeteria of the Williams School Building, was a singular success. Centro served a total of 870 meals to the public, including volunteers and staff of Centro Latino. This was about a 40% increase from last year's crowd.

Anticipating an increase in attendance in the face of the nation's worst situation for working families since the Great Depression, Centro Latino joined hands with the **Chelsea Public Schools, Stop & Shop, and Kayem Foods** to offer the largest free Thanksgiving luncheon in Centro's history. "Though we were prepared for a bigger turnout, we were overwhelmed with the numbers," Juan R. Vega, Centro Latino's Executive Director said. "This event was indeed a touchstone of community building – community, civic, and business leaders, corporate executives and government officials working side by side with Centro staff and volunteers to serve the people who came to share a meal. This can-do spirit is that what makes Chelsea so special."

We give thanks and receive thanks – sometimes at the same time. Thanks a million to everyone who made this a truly meaningful Thanksgiving celebration.



Eastern Bank EVP Joseph Riley, Chelsea Eastern Bank team & State Senator Anthony Galluccio



870 meals were served to the public



Chelsea's community leaders

Raising community awareness about HIV/AIDS



To commemorate the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day, 100 people participated in Centro Latino's candlelight vigil and marched in silence down Broadway Street in Chelsea. The goals of the event were to draw attention to the global AIDS epidemic and raise awareness of the critical role that HIV testing, prevention, and education play in stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS.

For this event, Centro Latino's *Douglas Hernandez* coordinated and executed a new handmade quilt with stories of those whose lives have been touched by HIV/AIDS

SAVE THE DATE

Centro Latino's
Next Big Event

20th Anniversary
Gala & Auction

May 15, 2009
6:00 to midnight

Anthony's of Malden
Music by *Jesus Andujar & Grupo Sazon*

Celebrating 20 years of
service to the community

Centro Latino's Impact Statement

Centro Latino helps Latinos and immigrants in Chelsea and Eastern Massachusetts to build skills, knowledge, and capacity so they can:

- *learn about community resources and advocate for themselves,*
- *overcome barriers to sustainable employment,*
- *integrate into and contribute to their community.*



Staff Profile: Nestor Uribe

Nestor Uribe, Centro Latino's technology guru, is Centro's longest serving staff member who is living the American Dream. A year after Centro was established in 1989, 15-year old Nestor volunteered regularly to clean Centro's offices when Centro consisted of just a couple of desks. Alone in the United States, with his parents still in Colombia, Nestor lived with his aunt and cousins in Revere. In high school he worked part-time as Centro's maintenance custodian. After graduating with an AA degree in engineering (with honors) from Bunker Hill Community College where he was a basketball player, Nestor won a scholarship to

Northeastern University. In college, Nestor volunteered to tutor Centro's Adult Basic Education (ABE) students. After a year, he saw the opportunity of integrating technology to

ABE classes. Responding to the resulting huge demand, Centro Latino started offering two levels of computer classes on a fee-basis. In the meantime, Nestor worked many part-time jobs including being an insurance agent. In 2000, he was absorbed by Centro Latino as a full time computer teacher. He also took charge of maintaining and updating Centro's technology systems. Nestor restructured and developed the computer curriculum, quickly expanding it to 15 computer courses (from entry level to advanced), and marketing his computer programs. Nestor's didactic technique includes teaching the concepts and fundamentals in Spanish and teaching the terminologies and exam questions in English. "I teach them in many different ways again and again, until they get it," Nestor said. "I get great satisfaction from my student's success stories. In America, everything is possible. I like the challenge of transforming lives." Not a tall order for a 6'4" man. Today, Centro Latino is a bustling computer center with people from all walks of life - young and old, men and women, working and middle class, disabled, etc - all aspiring to contribute to the technology revolution. Nestor is married to his college sweetheart. They have 2 children.

Five E's: Education, English, Excellence, Enterprise, Employability

Bridging the Technology Divide

New immigrants, especially Latinos, with help from Centro Latino, can plug into the technology community with its many new careers and opportunities. One of the reasons we do not see many Latino entrepreneurs in the infrastructure side of technology is that getting started can be a cost-prohibitive act. Centro Latino provides the connection to the technology economy and access to information, education, certification, and high paying jobs as network administrators, help desk, computer assembly through its A+ Certification for computer repair. This computer course is in huge demand because of its accessible cost of \$300 per course as compared to the \$10,000 cost of the average commercial course. Centro's technology core competencies of effective bilingual (Spanish and English) teaching techniques and intensive one-on-one tutoring attract many student transfers. Enterprising students see the advantage of trading-off state of the art computer labs and smart classrooms equipped with high tech electronic boards, against Centro's dedicated, flexible, and practical technology team who offer hands-on experience and teach in an informal and familial atmosphere, allowing students to learn at their pace. Paramount to students' success are the tutors who volunteer their time and expertise.



One such tutor is 24 year-old *Elio de la Cruz*. (left photo). A Chelsea resident, Elio left Guatemala in 2003 to pursue his dream to be an engineer. He works for UNICCO as a food server for Fidelity Investments and spends his evenings and weekends volunteering at Centro's computer literacy programs. Passing his GED after taking Centro's ABE courses, Elio is taking pre-college courses at Bunker Hill Community College. *For more information, contact Computer Program Director Nestor Uribe*

at 617-884-3238 x 219 or nuribe@centrolatino.org.

English @ Work

In response to the needs expressed by Centro's students in focus groups, Centro Latino will be offering courses aimed at improving English communication skills for work. The English Communication for Work program (ECW) provides the opportunity to learn social language skills and cultural meanings. It will help build confidence, optimize student's own talents and resources, overcome difficulties and avoid misunderstandings through effective communication. First impressions go a long way. ECW students will learn communicating with customers, co-workers, and supervisors in the American workplace. In addition, they will learn effective written communication skills (letters and email) and understanding idioms. ECW aims to develop critical thinking in a supportive and culturally-sensitive learning atmosphere. Beginning January 2009, Centro Latino is offering an English class geared especially for people working in the food service industry. Open to all levels of English proficiency, this class will orient students to vocabularies specific to the food industry. *For more information, contact Program Director Brooke David at 617-884-3238 x 211 or bdavid@centrolatino.org.*

We appreciate your comments, suggestions, and stories. Please send to: Betty King at bking@centrolatino.org Or mail to:

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