



Good Samaritan

WELCOMING AND SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS SINCE 1894

THOUGHTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Good Samaritans,

I learned early in my career that the first step along the path to leadership is to recognize that leadership is a product of character, not just skills and techniques of style. Over the years, I have also learned that leadership is impact. In other words, leaders focus on creating change so that individual and organizational purpose can be fulfilled.

Just as the character and competence of the leader determines the quality of the individual in the role, so also the organization. Organizations are a reflection of their people. If they lack the character of excellence, so will the organization. When I joined Good Samaritan last year, I was impressed by its "character of excellence", reflected in its dedicated and passionate staff, and committed and determined board of directors.

As we look to the future, we are resolute to address the increasing challenges facing our immigrant community, and we will continue to assist the more than 2,500 families that seek Good Sam for support. Most important, we will continue to strive to make an impact and lead by example.

I hope that you will enjoy our first newsletter issue and we look forward to sharing the stories that inspires us each day.

In community spirit,

Mario Paz
Executive Director



Good Samaritan Helps Children Get Ready for School

Good Samaritan has been awarded a \$75,000 grant by First 5 San Francisco to promote the state-wide School Readiness Initiative, which aims to engage families, community members, and educators in the important work of preparing children, birth to age five for elementary school. Research has shown that children who enter school not yet ready to learn, because of academic or social and emotional deficits, continue to have difficulties later in life. For example, children who score poorly on tests of cognitive skills during their preschool years are likely to do less well in elementary and high school than their higher-performing preschool peers and are more likely to become teen parents, engage in criminal activities, and suffer from depression. Ultimately, these children attain less education and are more likely to be unemployed in adulthood.

Using Family Support strategies, our family programs have provided a school readiness curriculum for several years and worked to strengthen families with young children. This new funding will allow us to expand and enhance many of these services and assure that every Good Samaritan parent

has the tools and information to prepare their child for school. We will continue to provide parent workshops, early childhood literacy activities, as well as physical and mental health screenings for all children ages 0-5. We will also offer hearing, vision, and dental screenings in collaboration with the Department of Public Health.

Our goals for this program include that parents are informed and empowered, that children are healthy, and are supported in their social and cognitive development. In addition, we will work with our schools to support them as they prepare to receive our children and their families. This funding will also provide us with a full-time School Readiness Coordinator who will be working closely with Good Samaritan families and the community to achieve these goals. (See New Staff section for our SR Coordinator's bio on page 3).

For more information about the School Readiness Initiative visit:
www.cfc.ca.gov or contact us at
Good Samaritan: (415) 401-4253,
auraaparicio@goodsamfrc.org and/or
mcastillo@goodsamfrc.org.

Supporting Difficult Journeys Since 1894

by Mario Paz, Executive Director

Since 1894, Good Samaritan has listened to many stories of the sacrifices endured by families who immigrated to the United States seeking a life of opportunity and hope. They leave behind family, friends, homes, communities, their hearts. I often get asked about the difference between the immigrants served today and those served more than 100 years ago. People are often surprised to learn that little has changed. Yes, their language and culture may be different, but their desperate journeys reveal similar circumstances. In the 1850's immigrants used their life savings to purchase one-way tickets to a destination they had only heard about. Selling their few worldly possessions, they boarded a steamship with little more than the clothes on their backs and dreams in their heads. An immigrant said, "If America didn't exist, we would have to invent it for the sake of our survival."*

In 2005, Pulitzer Prize winner Sonia Nazario gives a gripping account of a boy's search for his mother in the U.S. in her novel "Enrique's Journey". The story describes Enrique's mother, Lourdes, who left him in Honduras when he was five

"...recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) policies have spread fear and intimidation in our communities."

years old because she could barely afford to feed him and his sister, much less send them to school. Her only hope was to come to the United States for a few years, work hard, send and save money, then move back to Honduras to be with her children. But 12 years later, she was still living in the U.S. and wiring money home. Enrique, now seventeen, is desperate to be near his mother and decides to make the treacherous journey to the U.S., confronting a perilous voyage above freight trains,

and witnessing rapes, beatings, robberies, hunger and despair.

When we compare our history with today, we know that the percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign-born now stands at 11.5%; in the early 20th century it was approximately 15%. Similar to accusations about today's immigrants, those of 100 years ago initially often settled in mono-

"In the 1850's immigrants used their life savings to purchase one-way tickets to a destination they had only heard about."

ethnic neighborhoods, spoke their native languages, and built up newspapers and businesses that catered to their fellow émigrés. They also experienced the same types of discrimination and hardship that today's immigrant's face, and integrated within American culture at a similar rate.

When I joined Good Sam, I was reminded of the parable that teaches us that compassion should be for all people and its theme of nondiscrimination and interracial harmony is a lesson for us all. Never has this lesson been so salient as our families and friends face the increasing immigrant xenophobia and recent Immigration and

Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) policies that have spread fear and intimidation in our communities. In addition, anti-immigrant legislation is spreading across the country as the Department of Homeland Security is giving ICE new enforcement tools such as increased employer sanctions and arrest procedures.

The desperate journeys we learn about inspire us to achieve our mission and help our clients live with dignity and respect. Good Samaritan is much more than a sanctuary or a clearinghouse for social services sought by hundreds of immigrants each year; it is a place filled with love and respect for our families and friends. Good Sam's work is simple, natural. Children come to play and learn, the young to speak and lead, families to succeed and thrive. If we view history objectively, we remember that every new wave of immigrants has been met with suspicion and doubt and yet, ultimately, every past wave of immigrants has been vindicated and saluted. The parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to reflect—do we help when it is convenient, or are we willing to stand with courage and go out of our way to show compassion?

** Excerpt from "An Immigrant's Journey through Ellis Island", Liberty, by Leslie Allen*



Good Sam Families



Good Sam Soccer Youth

Child Development Center prepares kids for life

Good Samaritan's Child Development Center offers high quality Spanish bilingual, multicultural child care for up to 36 children aged 2½ years to 5 years old, with a low teacher to child ratio (7 children per teacher).

Thanks to the ongoing support and guidance of the Miriam and Peter Haas Fund "Model Centers Initiative", Good Samaritan is able to collaborate with several local organizations and resources that support our children and families to assure that they receive the best quality care possible. This support includes asthma, dental, hearing, and vision screenings, in addition to enrichment programs such as dance, art, and community involvement activities. Current collaborators/supporters include: Jumpstart, Young Performers Theater, Children's Council of San Francisco, Department of Public Health, Head Start, Raising a Reader, Tree Frog Treks and Preschool for All.

The child development center also encourages parental involvement in the center's daily activities, community events and through parent support groups, field trips, and parent/teacher conferences. Parents of children who have graduated from our program and are entering kindergarten continue to share positive survey responses. More than 80% of parents have indicated that based on feedback received from the SF Unified School District, Good Sam children are testing high on their kindergarten entrance exams.

Good Samaritan is especially committed to its Latino immigrant and low-income families where research shows that literacy rates are low and linked to higher probabilities of underemployment, unemployment, poverty and crime. Good Samaritan addresses these issues by offering a curriculum that incorporates school readiness, environmental hazards, health, as well as supporting behavioral and cognitive development.

For information on enrollment please contact the Child Development Center Director, Teresa Carias at (415) 401-4245 teresacarias@goodsamfrc.org

* (Taken from reports from U.S. Dept of Education and the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans)



Teresa Carias, Director of the Child Development Center and Graduates

New staff join Good Samaritan

We are excited to be joined by three new members to the Good Samaritan family. Each brings experience, credentials and passion to move forward our mission to help our children, youth and families succeed.



Evelyn Mejia has worked for several non-profits holding positions that range from office manager to case manager. Most recently she worked for The Riley

Center as a bilingual women's case manager for Rosalie House and assisted women survivors of domestic violence and was inspired by the women she met. She has a passion for working with the Latino community because as an immigrant she knows the challenges that come with being a newcomer. Evelyn was born in Guatemala City and came to the U.S. when she nine years old. She majored in Psychology from San Francisco State University and will be working to obtain her Masters in Social Work.



Jose Carrasco is a dedicated community worker, educator and performing artist. He has worked in youth programs throughout the

Mission District of San Francisco for 15 years in the areas of recreation, culture and healthy personal development. He is a founder of the Mission based youth performing arts program Loco Bloco, which has received numerous awards and recognition for its work with youth. Jose, together with his wife, Karla Castillo are dedicated and loving parents of two children, Mayela and Jose Ahkin.



Melissa Castillo is our new School Readiness Coordinator and earned her double Bachelor degree in Child & Adolescent Development and Raza Studies at San

Francisco State University. She has work extensively with youth and families in the Mission District as an educator, educational reform activist, organizer, soccer coach and young female mentor to ameliorate neighborhood conditions for children and their families. Melissa has also worked at various elementary schools supporting the initiative of multicultural learning, the arts, bilingual literacy, and Spanish immersion curriculums. She hopes to continue working to improve the health and educational conditions for all our children and families.

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN MISSION

Good Samaritan was founded in 1894 by the Episcopal Diocese in San Francisco to assist newly arrived immigrants in pursuing their dreams. As the second oldest settlement house in the country, Good Samaritan is an independent, tax-exempt

organization that serves the needs of low-income immigrant families in San Francisco with a mission to help them access needed services, develop self-sufficiency, and participate fully as members of the community.



GOOD SAMARITAN
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER, INC.

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*Welcoming newly-arrived
immigrants since 1894*

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