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# NUESTRA CASA NOTICIAS

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**Dignity. Comfort. Hope. Opportunity.**

For 17 years, Nuestra Casa has been dreaming of an East Palo Alto where every resident has the dignity and comfort of a place to call home, a living wage, and the same opportunities for success we see across Highway 101. Where neighbors unite around shared values. And where new immigrants to our country can unlock the opportunities they came here for. We want the American Dream. Your donation helped support this dream for over 7,000 people last year.

Sometimes this dream seems out of reach. It's hard to hold onto when we drive past the trailers that line Bay Road and know whole families are living there, barely scraping by. Or when we hear that about one in four school children in the Ravenswood school district are homeless.

Because of your support, we can keep working towards our goals.

Our community is full of smart, creative, and hard working people. We love our community hard. We exist to uplift Latino families in East Palo Alto and the mid-peninsula. We do everything we can to address their immediate crises. And with your continued support, we will fight for long term opportunities—quality education, jobs with living wages and upward mobility, clean drinking water and quality air to breathe, and stable housing.

We're thankful to our individual, corporate, and philanthropic donors for seeing our community through our lens. East Palo Alto and its surrounding communities are vibrant neighborhoods full of caring people who deserve an equitable set of opportunities. This Noticia highlights some of our newer and emerging projects.







"We are part of a groundbreaking effort to fix discriminatory policies that put our community at risk."

-Julio Garcia,  
Program Director

based organizations. BCDC asked for our staff to take part because of our strong reputation in the community. The Team's core function is to address and fix historic discriminatory policies. These policies exclude our community from decision-making. They also make our community sick.

Another example of our environmental justice work falls under the Prop 1-funded Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program. San Francisco Estuary Partnership (which serves on behalf of the IRWM), contracts with us to do what we do best—rapid response community education and engagement.

For this project, we are

teaching our Spanish-speaking community how to get involved with water and climate policies.

Finally, our food recovery program is a growing part of our environmental justice work. Did you know that in June 2019, Nuestra Casa delivered fresh fruit and vegetables to 2,200 people in East Palo Alto? Served families in 15 apartment buildings? In this pilot program area, we're recovering healthy, high quality food from distributors around the Bay Area. Perfectly good food that would otherwise get thrown into a landfill is now delivered to our families' tables. We plan to expand to other communities we serve soon.

What's next for Nuestra Casa in this space? Always true to our mission, we speak through our community. We plan to build more local environmental justice leaders by adding the topic to our popular Parent Academy courses. Our community is living with the effects of climate change every day—and our voices matter.

## WE ARE MAKING HISTORY: GIVING EAST PALO ALTO A VOICE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Climate change is on everyone's minds these days. With daily headlines about plastic in the ocean, lead in our drinking water, poor air quality—it's impossible to avoid the subject. Scary right? But you know what's really scary? That climate change hits vulnerable communities the hardest. East Palo Alto is no stranger to this problem.

That's why we're proud to be part of several community-led environmental justice efforts. One example is our involvement in the groundbreaking Environmental Justice (EJ) Review Team. In 2017, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) made history by voting to amend the SF Bay Plan to address environmental justice. This new priority established the EJ Review Team, which includes four other community-





## BUILDING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ENTREPRENEURS OF EAST PALO ALTO

**T**he immense wealth of Silicon Valley surrounds East Palo Alto, Fair Oaks, and Belle Haven. But, very little of that abundant prosperity and opportunity reaches our communities. Many Latino families can't afford to pay for the Internet and must make sacrifices to feed, house, and protect their families.

What if our community had equal access to business opportunities in Silicon Valley? What if the entrepreneurial women with whom we work everyday—our promotoras—had equal access to capital, business coaching, and administrative support? We started to ask ourselves these questions as we grapple with the extreme housing crisis. Yes, we need policy solutions. Yes, we need

more affordable housing options. But our families also need the opportunity to build wealth to help close the housing gap.

One approach to asset building is through a business incubator program. We are exploring ideas to start a program for entrepreneurs in our community. We're confident we can start a strong program customized for our community. Stay tuned for more as this program develops—we'll need your help.

### DONOR VOICES: WHY I GIVE

"Nuestra Casa is a vital nonprofit in the Latino community of East Palo Alto."

"Why do I give? It's simple—Nuestra Casa was started by, and led by, people who live in the community... The staff their keep their finger on the pulse of the community—and they can address emerging needs and crises in real time."





MEET OUR NEW  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

## MIRIAM YUPANQUI

*"I grew up in East Palo Alto. I love the idea that I can 'pay it forward' by bringing my talents and insights back home."*

**P**resident Obama once said, "In the richest nation on earth, nobody who works full-time should have to live in poverty." But many people in our local community work 60+ hours and live in poverty. This issue keeps Miriam Yupanqui awake at night.

Born in Mexico and raised in East Palo Alto from the age of 4, Miriam grew up in a lively house full of family on Pulgas Street. During her first years in the US, her family rented a room from her aunt. Finances were tight and her parents wanted to save to buy their own home. She remembers them working two or three jobs. But within 5 years of moving to the US, her parents were able to buy their own house on the same street. "Back then, you could have a minimum wage job—well, a few of these jobs—working in janitorial or restaurants, and still save enough to buy a house in a few years. That's not possible today."

To Miriam, this inequity underscores the importance of organizations like Nuestra Casa. Miriam fell in love with Nuestra Casa's mission and vision when she learned about us 9 years ago. Those values are what attracted her to become a volunteer Board Member in 2010. To her, the opportunity to lead Nuestra Casa is a dream come true. She loves the idea that she's able to "pay it forward" by bringing her talent and insights back to her beloved community.

Nuestra Casa's future looks bright under Miriam's leadership.