



Grail Family Services

Empowering San José families

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November 2010

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www.gfsfamilyservices.org

GFS launches **Yes We Can...Read!** Children's Initiative

A program from Grail Family Services

GFS, in partnership with the Alum Rock Union School District, the Office of Councilmember Nora Campos, the San Jose Public Library, United Way Silicon Valley, and others, is serving kindergarten children and their parents from East San Jose. The new initiative was developed to address the low literacy levels of children attending local elementary schools. After an extensive literature review and with input from more than one hundred parents in focus groups, GFS designed the program using two main strategies to promote children's literacy development: parent engagement and volunteer mentors. United Way Silicon Valley recruits volunteers from the corporate sector and GFS trains them, providing valuable methods for effective read-aloud techniques, as well as teaching specific early literacy skills. Once volunteers complete the training, they make a commitment to provide weekly mentoring sessions for two students.

The Parent Engagement Component in the form of workshops is provided at the schools and enriches home literacy practices and information. Each parent is informed about and involved in their children's learning experiences through practice in the workshops and in joint parent-child learning opportunities. Workshops include a parent-teacher section to open lines of commu-

nication between families and teachers and to compliment literacy efforts in the classroom.

This initiative will be evaluated by Applied Survey Research (ASR), a local firm with a wealth of knowledge and experience evaluating school readiness and early education initiatives. Evaluation results will help us and the community identify the best strategies to meet this challenge. We plan to expand the program to other schools in the next year.



Mike Potter Office of Assembly Member Joe Coto, Noe Orozco Office of Councilmember Nora Campos, Connie Ledna, Community Projects VP, Junior League of San Jose, Gregg Margossian, GFS Board member read to children during GFS' Annual Family Literacy event

Celebrating Ten Years Serving East San José

Grail Family Services celebrated its 10th Anniversary of services to the East San Jose community with a luncheon held at The Sainte Claire Hotel in downtown San Jose. The theme of the celebration was "Past, Present and Siempre".

In addition to celebrating the GFS Anniversary, four plaques of appreciation were presented for outstanding service. Honorees included: Duanne Welsch, GFS Board Member and member of the Grail; Nora Campos, Council Member for the City of San Jose District Five; the United Way Silicon Valley, accepted by Carole Leigh Hutton and Andrea Valdovinos, an East San Jose community resident and dedicated GFS volunteer.

The celebration also provided an opportunity to present eighteen certificates of recognition and gratitude to special friends, who have supported the GFS mission of service in many ways throughout the years.

Grail Family Services fosters learning and the empowerment of low-income families in San José's multicultural neighborhoods through the delivery of programs that educate, develop leadership skills, and build a sense of community.

Special Thanks to Our Partners and Supporters

Over the past year our many partners and supporters make it possible to provide quality services for families in East San José. Special thanks to the following organizations.

Alum Rock Union Elementary School District
 Castellano Family Foundation
 Cisco Foundation
 City of San Jose: Healthy Neighborhoods Venture Fund, Safe Summer Initiative, Office of Councilmember Nora Campos
 Comerica Bank
 County of Santa Clara- Child Abuse Prevention
 David & Lucile Packard Family Foundation
 Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation
 Immanuel Lutheran Church
 Junior League of San Jose
 Kiwanis Club of San Jose
 Manufactures Bank
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 RoseRyan Inc.
 Rotary Club of San Jose
 Santa Clara University
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 Severns Family Foundation
 Silicon Valley Community Foundation
 Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits
 Sobrato Family Foundation
 Target
 United Way Silicon Valley
 Youth Science Institute (YSI)



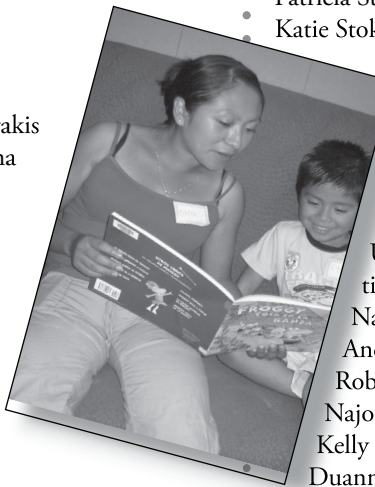
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To donate online go to gfsfamilyservices.org/donate.html

We make every effort to ensure that our list is accurate; however, if we have misspelled or omitted your name, please contact us at (408) 347-7892.

From the Executive Director

Dear GFS Friends:

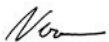
This is certainly an important year for GFS. Ten years ago when we opened our doors to the residents of East San Jose, our vision was: “to become an incubator of high quality, result-oriented programs that can be replicated on a broader scale and that respond to community-identified needs.” This vision has driven our work and, after serving more than 10,000 residents, we continue to be driven by this vision.

We are in the business of having a positive impact on lives and we take our work very seriously. We continue to challenge ourselves to bring this community successful and innovative approaches in response to needs without losing sight of the fact that we can only be successful if we have a true partnership with the families we serve. With the support of key strategic partners, we are finally implementing the Yes We Can...READ™ Children’s Initiative, which aims to address a critical issue affecting our children, low literacy levels. This is a very complex issue and we believe that creating the needed social change requires the support of the community as a whole. The Initiative seeks to mobilize the entire community, not just East San Jose, but the broader Silicon Valley. We are all challenged to take responsibility for an issue that affects us all.

While the challenges are many, so are the opportunities. I thank you all for supporting GFS over the years. I look forward to partnering with you all to continue our work to empower families with young children.

Sincerely,

Veronica P. Goei, Executive Director



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GFS Welcomes New Board Members and Staff
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Gregg Margossian, board member, taught at San Antonio School in the Alum Rock School District until his retirement in 2005. He now serves as a mentor to new teachers.

Christina Mauro is currently an employee of Lockheed Martin Space Systems. As a member of the Junior League of San Jose, she became involved with GFS as a volunteer before joining the Board.

Kristen Anderson, our Family Literacy Associate, worked for four years in Guatemala promoting literacy in rural villages. She gave workshops to teachers and librarians, teaching them techniques to make reading more fun, while improving comprehension and critical thinking skills. She has a Masters of Science in Education with a focus on Literacy K-6 .

Alma Ruiz is our Infant Teacher Associate working in the Child Enrichment Program. She completed her Early Childhood Education Units at Center for Employment (CET). She is originally from Jalisco Mexico and enjoys working with the infants.

Summer is for Learning at GFS

More than 30 children from 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades participated in the GFS Summer Literacy and Enrichment Program. The five day per week program ran from June 21st through August 13th, from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. The children had a chance to develop reading habits and a love for books as well as engage in art activities and field trips.

Maria, a mother of four young children, registered her oldest daughter Kimberly in the program. Maria saw great improvement in Kimberly’s reading skills and noted that her daughter was very excited to participate. She enjoyed the literacy activities as well as the arts & crafts. As a parent, Maria sees the value of the Program, which gave Kimberly the opportunity to be involved in a positive program instead of staying home and watching TV all summer.

Maria also enjoyed the Literacy and Enrichment Program because it gave her the opportunity to volunteer for the program. She came 2 or 3 days each week to help staff with the program and she was able to see what her children were doing during the day. Kimberly liked seeing her Mom helping with the activities.

Maria is extremely thankful for the opportunity the program offered for her and her daughter. Maria and her family now actively participate in other programs offered at Grail Family Services.

Volunteer Corner



IBM employees label books for the Roberts L. Seaverns Children's Library

To volunteer for GFS,
contact Dwaimy Rosas-Romero
(408) 347-7892 ext. 301
drosasromero@gfsfamilyservices.
org.

See our Facebook page
(Search for Grail Family Services)

To receive future newsletters by
email, please contact us at
newsletter@gfsfamilyservices.org

The GFS volunteer program has expanded tremendously in the last year. Volunteers have provided more than 3,000 hours of work, allowing the agency to increase program delivery by more than 25% without a budget increase. Some of the exciting things our volunteers are doing include: facilitation of our After School Literacy program by volunteers from Santa Clara University; facilitation of adult computer classes by volunteers from Evergreen Community College; design of a volunteer database done by volunteers from San Jose State University; assistance in our Child Enrichment Program and administrative support by volunteers from the Santa Clara County Works Program; and staffing of the Children's Library by sixteen moms attending GFS programs.

This fall children at Dorsa Elementary School will have a mentor reading to them once a week. GFS recently trained volunteers from Cisco Systems, San Jose State University, Lockheed Martin, Goodwill Industries, Junior League of San Jose, United Way Silicon Valley and Opportunity Fund. This spring we plan to double the number of children served through the Yes We Can...READ™ Children's Initiative.

"I went through the training program and had my first session last Monday with the two children I will mentor. This is going to be a great experience hopefully as much for the children as myself. Everyone who went through the training with me came from different backgrounds, experiences and age groups. They all seem very committed to the project. I have also shared information with two friends who are looking to participate in the program as well. San Jose Grail Family Services seems like a very special organization. The GFS Staff who led the training program are very passionate individuals who care deeply about making the program a success. Their passion is contagious!"

—Phyllis Kizer, Cisco Employee, Yes we can...Read!™ Reading Mentor



San Jose Grail Family Services
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