

## Continuing Our Thanks...

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**Fundraiser - Save The Date!**  
**THERE'S NO PLACE  
Like Home.**



**FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2011**  
**SILENT AUCTION & PREVIEW 6:00**  
**APU - WILDEN HALL**  
**DINNER & LIVE AUCTION 7:00**  
**901 E ALOSTA AVE. AZUSA, CA 91702**



Our Neighborhood  
**Homework House**  
Serving the children of Azusa since 1997

January, 2011

## It's in the Giving...

### *Soroptimists Embrace Student and Family*

Last year the Soroptimists agreed to sponsor a child and to follow her through school. This fall they have showered the lucky first grader, Guadalupe, with a new backpack, socks, and school supplies. At Thanksgiving they blessed her entire family with bags full of food and a large basket filled with everything needed for a Thanksgiving meal. Guadalupe shyly met Nita Ulloa, the Soroptimist, who brought the items and all she would do was giggle and smile nervously as we took pictures. After Nita left and Guadalupe's tutoring session ended, the program director was watching for Guadalupe's father so that she could explain to this dad of 7 children (all students at Homework House) the gift that had been provided. Yet, Guadalupe heard his truck and charged past her yelling, Dejame decirle! She wanted to tell her dad herself. This same shy girl that could only muster a smile and nervous giggle to receive the donation was now screaming in joy about her gifts.

Hay comida no mas para nosotros! she exclaimed. Food just for us!



### *Parents Show their Appreciation*

Our Parent Committee planned and executed their first event of 2010-2011. We want to show our appreciation to the tutors, they explained and decided there was no better time than during Thanksgiving week. The committee organized all the parents to prepare a dish for their children and the tutor to share and only asked staff to make sure that our students could provide handmade cards to accompany their gift of food for their tutors. When the week arrived, without fail, students and families arrived to sessions happy and proud with their dishes - both store bought and home made. Our tutors, many of whom are college students, are often starved for home-cooked meals and expressed such gratitude for the gesture shown by the Homework House families.



### *Blankets Get a New Home*

**Kathy Knecht** just wanted kids to be warm. She makes blankets for North Korean orphanages at Christmas, but this year the political climate kept them from being delivered. Misdirected effort? Not a chance. Kathy jumped for joy when she heard that Homework House could provide a "home" for these beautiful hand-crafted creations...Some lucky families were recipients at Las Posadas (read about it inside).



### *Food Good Food*

Gracias a Dios (Thanks be to God) stated one of the mothers who came to pick up a bag of non-perishable items along with a turkey and grocery store coupons. These families were grateful beneficiaries of a food drive orchestrated by **Senator Dr. Ed Hernandez**. Homework House families also were recipients of prepared meals from **One World Restaurant**.

**NEWS**

## In This Issue

It's in the Giving

...And in the Gifting

Letter from the E.D

Meet Staff!

Continuing Our Thanks

Save the Date



## ...And in the Gifting

### Community Giving

A special thank you to the many community members who helped make Christmas special for our students and families. Students were able to request a gift, and a special Christmas Angel from the community made the purchases. Students received the gifts at the parties, which were made extra special by the donations and setup of **Sue Phelps**.



Others in the community also wanted to give, such as the **APU's IT department** who paid a family's overdue electric bill and the **Paloutzians** who provided for an entire family.

All our Angels exemplified the spirit of giving this Christmas. We are grateful to them all.



### Party Time!

"Ho, ho, ho," a small voice murmured. One would not imagine that this was the same teen that you could hear from outside before you saw her! But she was just one of the more than 20 tweens who showed up for the Christmas Party and had to respond with a HO, HO, HO as their line of the traditional poem, "The Night Before Christmas" was read. The teens also had a time of singing, games and, of course, hearing the Christmas Story.

For K-5, the warmth in the room could be attributed to the Christmas lights and hot chocolate; or it could have been the hundred warm bodies that filled our Teen Center location for Round One of Christmas parties and eighty people for Round Two. Then our students enjoyed the nativity skit with traditional costumes and lovely Christmas solos to accompany the dramatization performed by the Youth Group of **Calvary Temple in Fontana**. Our students watched intently at this new way of retelling Jesus' birth as they munched on Christmas cookies donated by **Vineyard Church, Azusa Rotary, Northrop Grumman, and Sue Phelps** and sipped warm hot chocolate. Gifts were then distributed at the peak of their excitement.



Thank you! Thank you! were heard from every corner. As everyone left words of wishes for a happy holiday were heard in both English and Spanish.

**Swoosh!** Thanks to a donation from the Clippers, 49 children and their families headed to the Staples Center. For many, it was their first time conquering public transportation and seeing an NBA basketball game. We arrived excited and watched the Clippers triumph over the Hornets 99-95. We left exhausted from a night of clapping, feet-stomping, eating too many nachos, waiting in long bathroom lines, and piling into Metro trains. Thank you so much, one mother expressed, who had brought all four of her sons and her husband.



### No Room in the Inn

A few dangling Christmas lights, neon glow sticks, Spanish Christmas Songs, piñata, tamales, sweet bread (pan dulce), hot chocolate or, for the adventurous ones, chocolate oatmeal, is really all you need for a successful Posada. Close to 100 people gathered to celebrate Las Posadas, the journey of Joseph and Maria from inn to inn asking for lodging. Our Superstar Parent Committee organized 30 families to bring delicious foods to share and decorated the outdoor garage so that we could spend time with our neighbors. Three fathers managed to hoist a heavily-weighted monkey piñata, broken in less than five minutes, to the enjoyment of the children. The evening ended with families huddling together to take family pictures to document these precious memories. Fue un éxito! said a parent committee member; it was indeed a successful evening.



### Let it Snow!

It was Line 187 again as 11 Homework House students, five parents, and Crystal, 9th St Program Director, took the bus to the snow. While the snow was just a city away in Glendora, the children and their families were able to pet pigs, chase chickens, and dance to the music of Radio Disney. The festivities were made possible by **America's Christian Credit Union's** Snow Day, along with free bus passes provided by **Foothill Transit**. As the families returned to Azusa on bus number 187, one of the students turned to Crystal and exclaimed, This is a day I will remember for the rest of my life... I got to eat In-N-Out with you and pet a baby pig! As Crystal states, Who could ask for anything more?



## From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we closed our first semester of the year we had a record number of students being served! Our K-5 in-neighborhood sites served a minimum of 50 students each and our Teen site boasted of 83 students! Your generosity and constant support allows us to offer **free** services to our students and their families.

Our families are obtaining new tools and we saw a 150% increase in parent seminar attendance last fall. Our parents desire to be the best they can be for their children and this desire fits with our value of them being their child's first teacher. So again, we thank you.



I want to continue to introduce you to another K-5 Director, Crystal Marquez. Along with Crystal are highlighted a couple of other extended staff members: Josh and Karina. While they too are students at Azusa Pacific, we have tutors from Cal Poly, Citrus, Mt. SAC, and others. It takes all of them to help us make a positive impact on the lives of our students and their families.

So again, read and enjoy hearing of their journeys.....

Barbara

### Meet Josh, APU Theology Major

I love my experience at the Homework House, it has really been a huge blessing. Over the summer I was job searching on APU's career networking site and noticed the 9th st. assistant job posting. It immediately caught my attention as I really wanted to work in a place where I could utilize my Spanish speaking skills. This job position has helped me see what we do with the children as more of a ministry rather than an occupation. Since working at the Homework House I have learned so much from Crystal and the children and look forward to continue working in this remarkable ministry.



### Meet Karina, 6th St Program Assistant

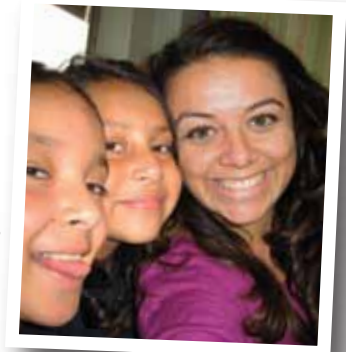
Working as an assistant gives me the opportunity to start working in the type of field I want to work in. I have a passion for helping families, especially the children who may be affected more than anyone else in their family. Being at the Homework House has given me an opportunity to grow and to learn more of myself.



Karina is an APU Social Work Major

## Meet Crystal!

Never could I have imagined working with children would change my life forever! Growing up I knew I would one day graduate from college to then actualize my mother's dream of achieving a better life for myself. Being the eldest of four daughters of a hard-working, single mother, I knew I had to set an example for my younger sisters. Upon graduation in 2008 with my Bachelor's Degree in Human Services, I was approached by former Homework House Board Member, Pastor Samuel Martinez, regarding a job opening at the Homework House. Since I had no prior background in Education or experience working with children, I was initially reluctant. Yet I accepted the position as Administrative Coordinator with an open mind. Six months later I was offered a full time position as the Program Director. I had never before envisioned my profession as teaching children or leading an entire program. The task seemed daunting! After some consideration, I became a full-time staff member at Our Neighborhood Homework House. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made!



At the Homework House, I have learned countless professional tools and life lessons that I would not have received working anywhere else! Not only have I grown professionally but I have also gained a large support network comprised of my colleagues, the Homework House families, as well as committed volunteers who serve by tutoring and mentoring. I am constantly inspired by the stories of those involved in the Homework House. I am also extremely humbled by the struggles that our children and their families face every day. My employment at Homework House been more than just a professional and personal blessing, it has undeniably been a life changing experience.

Although I did not ever picture my future working with children, leading a program, supervising interns, mentoring volunteers, and changing lives, I must say I love my job! I am part of a handful of people who enjoy going to work every single day! I am looking forward to what the future holds for me, my husband, and our family. I am eternally grateful for all the volunteers, staff, board members, donors, and foundations who support Homework House. Your dedication to Our Neighborhood Homework House has not gone unnoticed. Thank you!



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