

## CARECEN Talks Urge 42% to Polls

This Fall, CARECEN's Get Out the Vote (GOtV) program targeted 3,000 new and low propensity voters in Pico Union.

Pollwatching revealed that 1250 of these voters went to the polls on election day. Final counts will include an estimated 150 voters who mailed their ballots. This voter turnout comes after an intensive campaign involving 20 community canvassers selected through a competitive training program. Canvassers were trained to provide non-partisan information at a voter forum held November 1st, which not only informed the 100 participants about the propositions, but gave them the opportunity to use a sample polling place to learn how the InkAVote system works. ■

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## From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

This holiday season it is, perhaps, a bit of a stretch to see everything as rosy and wonderful. There is no question that the severe economic downturn has created tidal wave-sized ripples throughout the immigrant community. Day laborers, garment workers, retail sales people all are facing extreme economic

insecurity.

At CARECEN, we have taken stock of our assets and found strategies that will assure our health and vitality throughout the coming difficulties. We will continue our programs and expand them through partnerships and collaborations. We will work together with the community and with you to make sure that strength comes out of adversity.

And it is tough. We see job placements dropping to 4-5 a day from

the 50 a day of a year ago. Yet, we still see up to 50 men coming to the Center for work, to sign in to help cook a hot lunch for each other, to take the Beginning ESL class and get their health checked by volunteer Clinics who come to assist those in need.

While we see the LAUSD having to cut after school programs due to huge local and state deficits, we are opening our ground floor Tec/Rec Center where a youth council will help schedule arts and technology programs for up to 100 youth per day – that's on top of the 50 2nd-8th graders who are enrolled in the after school tutoring program.

Once again, CARECEN's Get Out the Vote canvassers reached 3,000 new and low-propensity voters in Pico Union and documented that over half voted in the November election.

While we gird for a difficult year, we are thankful for all of you who continue to support the community and who look forward, as we do, to a new administration that values the people of this country. We have taken note that President-elect Obama is the first president of the United States who has a relative facing deportation. Hopefully, this unhappy reality will help to humanize the immigration struggle. I wish you a happy holiday season and look forward to working in solidarity to face what lies ahead.

Sincerely,

Marvin Andrade



Day Laborer Center Director Jeronimo Salguero (far left back row) joins City Councilman Bernard Parks for a press conference celebrating vote on Big Box ordinance.

## Day Laborers Win Big at City Hall

In August, the 14 members of the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously for an ordinance that requires there to be plans in place for a day laborer shelter for any construction of home improvement stores greater than 100,000 sqft. The shelters must include drinking water, bathrooms, tables, seating, garbage cans, and must be close to the store location.

The City decided that Big Box stores attract day laborers and there

should be a plan in effect to address the issues that come with large numbers of day laborers attracted to these large stores.

The day of the decision, day laborers from CARECEN's Day Labor Center on Union and Wilshire were accompanied by Program Director Jeronimo Salguero to hear the results of the meeting. Jubilation was the theme of the day! ■

## NEW WEBSITE!

## COMING SOON!

One of the new features will be the option to volunteer to share your time and talents with our community. You will also be able to donate online.



# CARECEN

Central American Resource Center

# NOTES

25th Anniversary Edition

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## Dia de los Muertos: Calacas, Cuentos & Cultura at CARECEN

On October 30th, a candlelit procession of 40 children and parents circled the 2800 block of Pico Union's 7th street in celebration of *El Dia de Los Muertos*, or the Day of the Dead. The children were students from CARECEN's academic after school program Wings, Roots and Hope.

The Day of the Dead is traditionally celebrated on November 1st and 2nd, and is a time to remember family and friends who have passed away.

The celebration included the creation of an altar, artwork, and the sharing of food and stories by parents and community members. It was "part of a cultural action project that looks to rescue the deep customs and traditions of the Latin American communities that



*Traditional altar set up by students, parents, and CARECEN staff.*

live in Los Angeles" explains Raul Borbon, Education Coordinator.

Wings, Roots, and Hope is a new program created to provide academic support and original socially conscious curriculum employing popular education methods. Through this methodology, the program seeks to promote social change and provide Pico Union's youth with knowledge that

is significant and relevant to the community. The parental involvement in the celebration reflects the program's commitment to promote the integration of family and school.

Parents are required to attend workshops and meetings every other week and are invited to participate in many of the program's activities. ■

## Collaborative Efforts for Youth Hedge Against Hard Times

CARECEN is collaborating with other organizations in the Pico Union area to ensure that our youth of Pico Union have the services that they need to succeed. The economy may slow down, but the need for youth services in the Pico Union area continues to grow as schools face budget cuts and youth move from year-round calendars to traditional calendars.

As the economic slow-down reaches all sectors of the economy non-profits are finding themselves faced with significant challenges in obtaining funding. Many organizations will be forced to shut-down, but many will form collaboratives that will allow them to survive.

CARECEN has begun to offer other non-profits in the area space in the newly renovated Technology and Recreation center on the ground floor of our four story building.

Talks are currently under way with Justice by Uniting in Creative Energy (J.U.I.C.E), a non-profit hip hop arts program that seeks to develop youth leadership, technical skills, and creative expression through the artistic elements of hip hop which include breakdancing, urban art, deejaying, emceeing/spoken word and music recording. CARECEN is also working with IDEPSCA to house their kindergarten through third grade program, Aprendamos. Their academic enrichment program is held in the morning and provides off-track students with academic support. ■

## U Visa Offers Abused Women a Way Out

The National Institute of Justice reports that there are 4.8 million incidents of domestic violence in the United States every year. In California alone, over 3,000 women a day seek services to help them escape from abusive relationships (National Network to End Domestic Violence).

An Arizona State University analysis of data from the Department of Justice concluded that two of the three most important factors in reducing rates of domestic violence are access to legal services and economic empowerment.

CARECEN provides immigration legal services for victims of domestic violence in the form of relief under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the U Visa for victims of crime. Through these services, CARECEN assists victims of domestic violence to obtain legal immigration status and qualify for a work permit. Legalizing their immigration status means that CARECEN's clients can report abuse to the police without fear of being deported. They can also obtain better jobs, giving them the economic freedom to leave their abusive relationships. These empowered women are able to leave violent relationships and provide more stable lives for their children.

In 2008, CARECEN submitted immigration petitions for more than 100 victims of domestic violence. CARECEN Staff Attorney, Alisa Daubenspeck, supervises these cases and receives help from students from

the UCLA School of Law through the VAWA Clinic of the UCLA Immigration Law Society. Alisa began the Clinic when she was a Law Student Intern at CARECEN in 2006. She now trains and supervises 20 UCLA VAWA Clinic interns every semester as they prepare the paperwork for clients applying for domestic violence immigration relief. The program is very popular with the students, who get valuable educational experience and the chance to use their legal skills to assist CARECEN's clients. Our clients, in turn, inspire the students with their strength and determination to achieve what seems impossible in order to provide better lives for their families. ■