



To Our Supporters:

This was again a year of growth at Hope Community Center. Living our mission of empowerment with the local immigrant and working poor communities and stretching toward the vision of a more just world continues!

The words of the recently beatified Bishop and martyr of El Salvador, Oscar Romero, have urged us to what we call ‘transcendence.’ A full understanding of transcendence, he urges, “is not going to heaven and forgetting the problems of the earth.” Rather, we must think of “**transcendence from the human heart.**” It is entering into the reality of a child, of the poor, or those wearing rags, of the sick, of the hovel, or the shack. It is going to share with them. And from the very heart of misery . . . to transcend it, to elevate it, to promote it and to say to them: ‘You are not trash! You are not marginalized!’ But rather, to affirm: ‘You are valuable!’ ‘You are a Child of God!’ Those words have called us all to revitalize our work in this community.

This spring staff, Board, and community members participated in six days of strategic planning. A team from **Popular Education Consultants, Inc.**, led us through a series of highly creative exercises reflecting on our history, community, and programs, and setting organizational goals for the next five years. A key outcome of this process is a renewed commitment to Hope’s long term vision of a more equitable and just world.

Our programs continued to evolve and expand as we engage in our long-range look into the future. One example of this expansion came related to immigration. With the support of a grant from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, this past fall we were able to expand and strengthen our Citizenship Education program. Currently, there are over 150 participants in the program, learning to be informed and engaged citizens and preparing to take their citizenship exams. In the last nine months, 31 participants have met all the requirements and become citizens. We recently celebrated with Maria Isabel Ramirez, a long term member of Hope’s circle of friends who at the age of 65 shed tears of joy and pride in announcing that she had become a U.S. citizen.

We are grateful for you, our many partners. Through your generosity and support, you are a part of this work of transcendence from the human heart!

We continue to be inspired by the words and actions of **Pope Francis** as he calls all peoples to address the most pressing issues of our times and to remember that we are all God’s people and as so are responsible for each other and all of creation. Let us all move forward into the new year with great courage and hope.

Gratefully, The Leadership Team



Mary Carroll

David Crump

Laura Firtel

Sr. Gail Grimes

Nilka Melendez

Teresa Young

Hope Community Center is a service learning community dedicated to the empowerment of Central Florida’s immigrant and working poor communities through education, advocacy and spiritual growth.



Strong Leadership is in Place to Carry the Spiritual Mission and Values of HCC Into the Future

Board of Directors 2014-2015

Michael Almeida, Human Resources,
Disney Cruise Line
Jean Bauman, Business Owner
Mary Carroll, LMHC
Linda Landman Gonzalez, VP Orlando Magic
Linda Ley-Siemer, Education Consultant
Robert McIntosh, Retired Attorney
Giorgina Pinedo-Rolón, GIO Communications
Roxanne Rose, Property Management
Susan Stacy, Judge, Seminole County
Betsy Swart, Professor, U. of Southern California
Flor Tovar, FLOR Foundation
Maggie Woods, Retired School Principal
Maria Turk, Financial Planner
Felipe Gaona, Youth Board Representative

Hope Staff 2014-2015

Michael Cantillo	Nilka Melendez
Ely Castillo	Elizabeth Riebel
Minerva Colon	Anabel Romero
Abel Cortez	Marlene Rodriguez
David Crump	Danny Summerlin
Mariela Delgado	Lorena Tovar
Lynn Devanie	Sr. Maureen White
Laura Firtel	Teresa Young
Eli Garcia	
Sr. Gail Grimes	Our 32 AmeriCorps
Sr. Ann Kendrick	(NDA) members also
Sandy Lipten	extended their hearts
Lauren McClellan	and hands to our
Roxana Martel	community. Six served
	as HCC staff.

Hope's Community Advisory Committee & Sin Fronteras Youth Group

The purpose of the *Community Advisory Committee* is to assist the board and staff at HCC. In essence, they let us know how well Hope is living up to its mission. This is a group of 27 dedicated leaders and hard workers. They first came to HCC as participants and now are giving back to the community and sharing their transformative experiences with others.

Sin Fronteras (Without Borders) is a group of 80+ teens who help plan and carry out yearly events at Hope such as the Kermes (community festival), Yard Sales, Toy Sale, Kids Camp, and religious celebrations.

Both groups clearly live the mission which stresses service learning, community and empowerment.



Changing Lives Through Service and Advocacy

Stories from our community



Fiorella Amaya, Apopka, FL
Kids Camp Counselor

The one word that described Fiorella’s experience at camp was *unforgettable*. “I loved it because when you go to Kids Camp everyone makes you feel like family. We’re all together. No one is left out. Everybody is unique. And it is so great when one of your kids loves you so much. We made so many memories here with the counselors and kids. I had a lot of fun!

I was so impacted by what I saw at one of the nearby communities where we offered a week of summer camp. I saw how people go through so much and how privileged I am to have food, water and a roof over my head. The kids didn’t have what I have which made me feel bad. The kids always seemed hungry which also made me feel so bad. They don’t have a Kids Camp in their home. They don’t have privileges to get the food they want and have all the fun that we provided for them. They don’t have time to have a relaxing day in their pajamas, to enjoy popcorn and a movie, or to have a water day in the pool with their friends. I think we really changed their lives giving them a good summer. I want to go again! “



Declan Walden, Service Learning
LaSalle Academy Rhode Island

“It amazes me that some of the bonds I made with the Sin Fronteras kids, after just a week, felt stronger than some friendships that I have had for years. On the Friday night before we left, seeing one of the youth crying, asking us to bring him back home with us, was the point where I really couldn’t believe the power of the bond formed. As I fight the idea that I may never see this group of kids again, I keep in mind my ignorant, uneducated prejudice that I had beforehand. I still can’t believe that I was against these people before our trip. After just one week, I left willing to fight for and with them. This is a revision of views that I will never forget and something that I will always keep in mind when approaching new situations. This trip singlehandedly is the best decision I ever made in my life.”

journal entry



Christina Rodriguez, Apopka, FL
Kids Camp Counselor

Cristina describes her Kids Camp experience as *happiness*. “Camp is happiness because it brings not only happiness to the kids but also to ourselves. Seeing the kids happy made me happy.

What impacted me most was seeing that not only adults go through struggles but kids do as well. Some kids can be happy doing things but there are also other ones that go through struggles.

Kids Camp was a good experience. They learned different things and also got out of their houses and had fun. These kids touched my life. They actually taught me a lesson. They taught me that you should never give up but to keep fighting. I learned that kids’ minds are like ours. It is shocking how these kids’ minds are like ours even though they are so young. These kids go through a lot of what we youth do. They understand how hard life is.

Now I know even more how much I want to be a nurse. Knowing that people need my help makes me want to help even more.”



Changing Lives Through Service & Advocacy

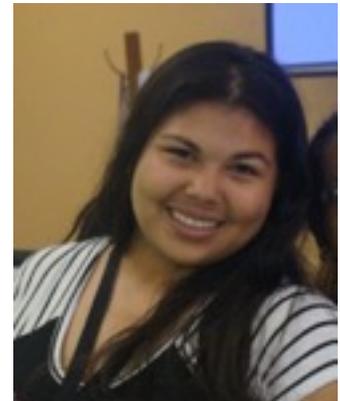
Stories from our community



Josie Torres, Zellwood, FL
Community Advisory Committee



Yasmira Marquez, New Citizen
Caracas, Venezuela



Astrid Rodriguez, Apopka, FL
Rollins College Junior

“I first came to the Center by attending the Nurturing Parenting program. I started attending classes with my whole family. It was a pleasant learning experience. After finishing class I became interested in learning more about how to be a volunteer. I felt a call to service in the form of appreciation. I started helping in the care of children while their parents studied. I also helped in the kitchen and other small tasks.

All of this has been a valuable experience for me and my family because they have become involved in many activities that are carried out at Hope. My husband and children help in many ways by participating in the Sin Fronteras Youth program and as members of the community advisory committee.

The volunteer experience helps and invites us to serve others in our community who often have the same situations or problems we have. Volunteering at Hope inspires us to be better human beings and leads us to realize that in the world we live, we must be in solidarity with others. Changes occur when we change. I am convinced that HCC is a place where change occurs.”

“I am so happy today. Now I can vote! I would like to take these lines to thank Hope Community Center for the help offered to me in order to achieve such an important life goal for me, that of becoming an American citizen.

The experience that I shared as part of the community with you all left me with new learning in all areas of my life, especially in my personal life. Sharing with such marvelous people, willing to help and serve in every identifiable need, is invaluable for me. I am left being able to only say thanks and commend you all to continue with such laudable work.

My thanks goes out to everyone on this marvelous team, with all my heart's humility, especially to Lorena Tovar, Linda Woods, John Parrell, Angela Emerson, Elizabeth Garcia, Andrew Doyle, Elizabeth Riebel, Christopher Furino and the entire volunteer team and students of this community. Continue fighting for your dreams. America is big. God bless you and the Virgin of Guadalupe, may you continue guiding me in this beautiful journey, called Life.”

“My relationship with HCC started 9 years ago when I joined Voices of Youth, a girls only group designed to teach us about leadership and ourselves. I later joined the Sin Fronteras Youth Group, where I was able to connect with Hope in a deeper way, made long lasting friendships, and broadened my network. Together we fought for immigrant rights, the Dream Act, In-state Tuition, and rallied in Washington D.C twice.

During the past 7 summers I was a camp counselor in Kids Camp. This summer I was director. This is one of my favorite times of the year because it's a true life changing experience. I love the fact that it is extremely easy to connect with the kids, bring joy to them with the simple tasks you do, have fun and learn from them as they are learning from you.

Hope helped me grow as a person, express myself, fight for my rights, and connect with my community. It has also helped me educationally. Every year after I graduated from high school, I have been a recipient of HCC's and Seminole State College Scholarships. I am now attending Rollins College, where I was awarded a scholarship. I am thankful for Hope, the relationships I built, and the opportunities to grow and become the person I am today.”



Building Community. Enriching Lives.

A Year of Change, Growth, and Success!

Some Accomplishments from 2014–2015

250 students and parents

received academic counseling from our College and Career Access Program.

400 adults

attended GED, ESL classes and citizenship classes.

272 youth

attended Summer Kids Camp and Peace Camp

320 hours

of mental health counseling were provided to community members.

100 youth

participated in Sin Fronteras group learning leadership skills and performing service projects.

6250 people received services from HCC staff & our 968 volunteers

63,000 hours

of service to the community provided by AmeriCorps team, board members, youth and community advisory committee.

26 families

completed HCC's Nurturing Family Program.

25 families

formed a parent alumni group.

242 people

took part in Service Learning immersions, including participants from colleges, private corporations, HCC staff, board and volunteers.

455 legal consultations

HCC has served individuals from different countries since March 13, 2015 when HCC was recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals.

6 strategic planning workshops

42 Board members, staff, community partners and community advisory committee members attended 60 hours of training facilitated by Popular Education Consultants, Inc. www.populareducationconsultants.com.

230 teenagers and young adults

were assisted in applying or renewing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process(DACA).



Aligning Our Values and a Clear Direction for the Future of Hope CommUnity



Staff, Board, Community Partners and Community Members Attend Strategic Planning

Since April 2015, members of Hope's staff, Board of Directors, and folks representing the local community and community partners have gathered for three two-day strategic planning sessions. Based on an initial assessment of external and internal contexts, the resulting Strategic Plan identified priority work goals and strategies for Hope to implement in the next five years.

Leading us in this process were Isabel Vinent and Reca Fernandez of Popular Education Consultants, Inc., facilitators and experienced practitioners in popular education methodology and participatory action research, they specialize in empowering grassroots organizations like Hope to engage with their communities in ways that are critical and transformative. An important challenge and goal in the planning session was connecting Hope's services and advocacy efforts with our mission of empowerment and structural change. In July, facilitators Reca and Isabel reviewed with staff and board members the four primary goals Hope will work on for the next five years:

- Create a Critical Thinking/Consciousness formation framework and use it to develop leadership with a vision of community transformation
- Create a Communication Strategy for traditional and social media
- Create, Implement, and Evaluate an Organizing Strategy that allows for a deep evaluation of HCC and all its mission driven programs
- Create an Evaluation and systematization of HCC's organizing model which includes assessment of Leadership Team and the Board of Directors and the creation of a professional development plan (including orientation and training for new staff, NDA members, volunteers) and a fundraising plan (short term and long term with emphasis on the use of online marketing).

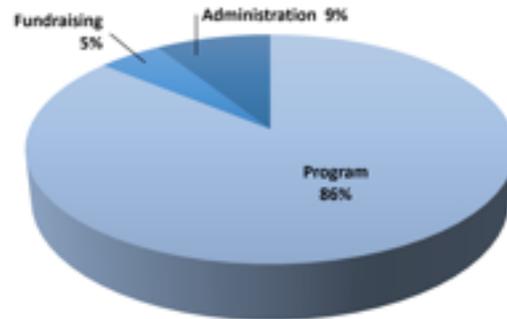
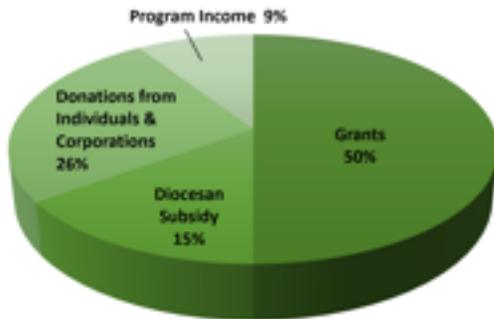
Staff was happy to see that one of the outcomes of our strategic plan resulted in closing the office for a week in July allowing staff to have uninterrupted time to work on their annual operating plans.



Strong Financials at Hope

For almost 45 years Hope Community Center has been building community and enriching lives. This happens in part because of its strong board, dedicated staff and community members. The success of Hope depends also on our dedicated donors, volunteers, community partners...and you. We want you to know that we are careful and conservative stewards of your money. We continue to build our long term capacity. We are grateful for your confidence and continued investment and partnership with Hope. A copy of our audit is available upon request. Current and previous annual reports are available on our website: www.hcc-offm.org

Revenue and Expenses for Fiscal Year 2014 – 2015



86

cents of every dollar received went to programs!

2014 – 15 Revenue \$1,072,592

◆ Grants	\$536,399
◆ Donations from Individuals & Corporations	\$277,855
◆ Diocesan Subsidy	\$160,000
◆ Program Income	\$ 98,338

2014 – 2015 Expenses \$1,008,215

◆ Program	\$867,065
◆ Administration	\$ 90,739
◆ Fundraising	\$ 50,411