



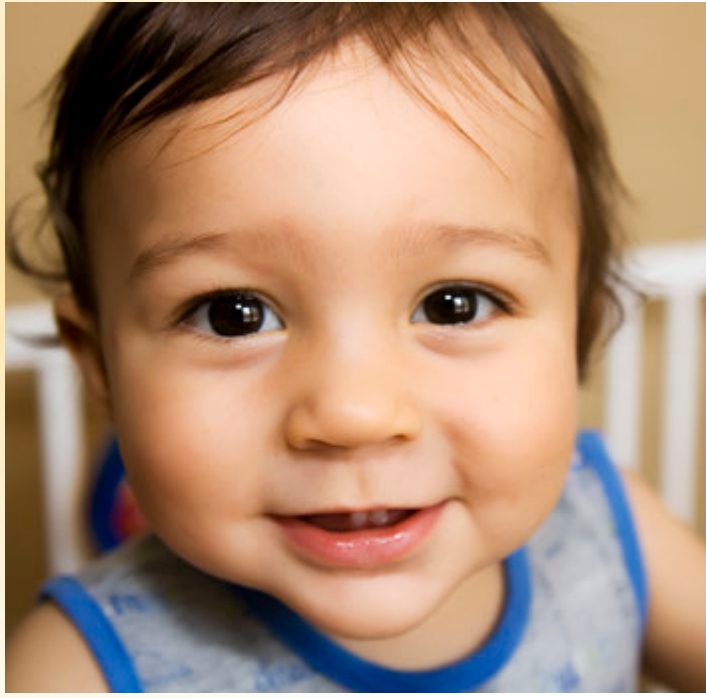
chronicle *of Hope*

FALL 2024

YOU
can make a
difference...

in Lia's life and so
many others like her.

To read her story,
see page 4.



Doing More: Your Gifts Prevent Abuse

Donors like you know that Casa has a history of doing what it takes to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. While we cannot serve every child and family in crisis in Houston, we always try to do more with your support.

In recent years there has been an increased focus on preventing the placement of children in foster care by doing more to meet the needs of families before a crisis occurs. Late last year, Casa began piloting a Prevention Services Program to intervene with families identified as at-risk for abuse and neglect and limiting their involvement with the child welfare system.

Casa's Prevention Services offers crisis intervention, case management services, trauma-informed parenting classes and coaching, and serves anywhere from 4-8 families at a time. Referrals come from other community-based organizations, partners, and from families who self-identify and reach out to us on their own, like Andrew.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

You have done so much good for the families of Casa de Esperanza already this year!

Your generosity gives struggling families the critical resources they need and HOPE for their future. Every gift, whether it is a box of diapers, a monetary donation, or an hour of volunteer service, all goes to keeping children safe and uplifting families in crisis.

In the following pages, we highlight the ways your generosity has allowed Casa de Esperanza to achieve its mission, including a successful Gala, amazing volunteer efforts, launching a Prevention Services Program, and more.

Thank you for believing in families and being there for the most vulnerable and precious young lives in our community. We are honored by your commitment to changing lives.

Sincerely,

Melissa Simon

Melissa Simon, MSW CFRE
Chief Executive Officer

YOU EMPOWERED ANDREW TO BE *the dad* HIS CHILDREN NEED

Casa de Esperanza's Prevention Services Program allows us to intervene with families at-risk for child abuse and neglect to prevent involvement or re-involvement with the child welfare system. Recently, we served Andrew, a father whose children had been removed from their mother's custody by DFPS, and would soon have his four children living with him. He needed assistance to navigate this drastic change. Casa provided him with school supplies, clothes, cleaning supplies, and referrals for furniture.

Our help allowed Andrew to focus on his CPS hearings, which led to receiving sole custody of his children. Casa's support empowered him to provide a safe and stable home for his children and helped him know that he was not alone. In a note Andrew shared,

"We've been unfortunate, my kids and I. Thank you all for your generosity. May God reward you all for your efforts and may you bring hope to many families."



YOU can be
TRIPLE
the hero to

Lia



Baby Lia's mother, in deep despair, tried to surrender her at a local fire station... courageously doing the only thing she could think of to give Lia a chance at a better life. Lia arrived at Casa at three months old, undernourished and diagnosed with failure to thrive. Thanks to our generous donors, Lia's story turned toward hope. At 12 months old, she still faces many challenges but we know she has a bright future. You are the lifeline to Lia and to so many other precious children. Now through December 31, every gift you make will be TRIPLED to help children like Lia.*

www.casahope.org/triple

triple
THE HOPE

YOUR YEAR-END GIFT HELPS VULNERABLE CHILDREN - *and you!*

As the end of the year approaches, you are likely considering how you can give back to your community. When you donate to Casa de Esperanza, not only do you help break the cycle of child abuse and neglect for Houston families, but you may be able to minimize your tax liability. **Matching funds will TRIPLE your year-end donation* until December 31, 2024!**

Plan ahead to ensure your donation is received by year-end to receive tax benefits this year. Many giving strategies, including Direct Cash Donations, Securities Transfers, IRA Charitable Distributions, and Donor Advised Funds should be initiated early to avoid any year-end delays. Some giving strategies may require you to provide Casa de Esperanza's Tax ID: 76-0105306.

- 1. Direct Cash Donations:** These contributions are typically tax-deductible if you itemize your deductions. Remember to keep receipts or acknowledgments from all charities for tax purposes. You can donate today at www.casahope.org/triple
- 2. Securities Transfers:** Donate appreciated stocks, bonds, or mutual funds directly to Casa. By transferring appreciated securities that you've held for more than one year, you may avoid capital gains taxes and still receive a charitable deduction for the fair market value of the securities at the time of donation.

- 3. IRA Charitable Distributions (Qualified Charitable Distributions - QCDs):** If you're 70½ years old or older and have a traditional IRA, you can make a QCD up to \$105,000 to Casa de Esperanza without being taxed on the distribution. A QCD can be used to meet your required minimum distribution. The QCD must be paid directly to Casa to receive the tax benefit. In cases in which IRA owners make a gift using "checkbook IRAs," those checks must clear by year-end.

“

Plan ahead! Ensure your donation is received by December 31 to receive tax benefits this year. Many giving strategies should be initiated early to avoid delays.

”

- 4. Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs):** Have a DAF? Recommend Casa de Esperanza when making a gift. Some DAFs have a cutoff date for recommendations to be made for year-end gifts to ensure they can be processed in time.

**Until matching funds are met.*



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR Awards



Herbalife distributors and the Herbalife Family Foundation have been generous supporters of Casa de Esperanza since 2011. In addition to annual grant funding from the foundation, local distributors have assisted in our work through donations of basic needs, gifts for the children, participation in fundraisers, and financial support.

The Herbalife Houston STS team has a special place in our hearts. Their motivation to help others is strong. For the last 13 years they have collected donations at the team's monthly meetings to shop for Casa. Every 4 weeks without fail, team lead Maria Zepeda reaches out to ask about the Foster Care Neighborhood's critical

needs, and often goes to more than one store to get everything needed such as fruits and vegetables, cereals, paper towels, diapers, wipes, and other items. Maria and her team's dedication, kindness, can-do attitude, and positivity brighten up Casa de Esperanza every time they visit.

"We always get excited to receive an Herbalife donation! Maria understands our needs and has never let us down, often exceeding our expectations with our requests," says Lori Hudalla, Associate Director of the Neighborhood Foster Care Program. Maria says, "Casa is so dear to me; I love to help both the children and the adults. I am committed to Casa and want to keep this mission going forever. That is why it's important to involve and inspire my team."

We greatly appreciate the profound impact that Herbalife has had on our organization throughout the years. We feel so fortunate to have Herbalife as a community partner and to be a beneficiary of the Herbalife Family Foundation!

Congratulations to Maria and Houston STS on their 2024 Group Volunteer of the Year Award from Casa de Esperanza!



In 2017, Marris Golberg was introduced to Casa de Esperanza by a close friend and long-time Casa volunteer, Katie. Marris quickly became a beloved volunteer in the Casa neighborhood, coming each week to help with the children. Marris is also a valued member of the Gala committee, soliciting auctions items that have raised thousands of dollars for Casa's mission.

About her time at Casa, Marris says "I marvel at how the AmeriCorps House Parents care for these children as their own. They develop bonds with each other and become a family unit. I am truly inspired by the comprehensive care and unconditional love given to each child along with the aftercare and follow-up provided to reunited families. This is why I remain a volunteer in the neighborhood and help raise money each year for the Gala.

One of my favorite memories is of celebrating a former House Parent's adoption of the girl she raised from birth. I feel blessed to remain a part of their lives."

A current AmeriCorps House Parent shared, "Marris is great with the kids and knows how to engage with them at their level. She is always super encouraging and positive around them. She is in-tune with our needs, identifying where she can help as a volunteer especially when it is chaotic, and makes efforts to play an active role during her time at our house. We love her and our kids love her!"

Congratulations Marris on receiving the 2024 Volunteer of the Year Award from Casa de Esperanza!



Pictured left: **The Junior League of Houston** has been a part of the Casa community for almost 40 years. Their volunteers help us in various capacities, always going above and beyond for the children and families we serve. We are definitely going to miss our 2023-24 JLH volunteers but are excited for the 2024-25 volunteers to begin this fall!

Pictured below: **The Chevron SOMOS Group** came out to visit our kids in the neighborhood and help us sort supplies and stuff backpacks to help us get ready for our Back-to-School Event.



Volunteer Highlights



Pictured above: Our friends from the **Adelante Group at SCI/Dignity Memorial** came by to drop off supplies and take a walk through the neighborhood. They even found their company plank on our boardwalk! Thank you for visiting us and being a part of the Casa family!



Pictured above: We are so grateful for all our group volunteers who visit our kids in the neighborhood! Thank you to **Family Life Church** for bringing arts and crafts and creating a fun-filled day for our kids!

BUILDING HOPE

FOR CHILDREN GALA

SUPPORTING CASA'S *Mission*

The 2024 Building Hope for Children Gala, chaired by Katie and Jay Register and Laura and David Neal, was held on Sunday, May 5, 2024 at The Revaire.

Over 450 guests came together for a grand fiesta to support the Casa mission. The gala honored Betty and Jim Key with the Spirit of Hope Award and former House Parent Allison Gagne received the Kathy Foster Spirit of Service Award.

Jim and Betty Key first learned of Casa de Esperanza in 1987 and since then have been supporting our mission as volunteers, donors, and Advisory Board members, and have always stepped up to help in any capacity needed. We honored them with the Spirit of Hope Award for the impact they have made, the hearts and lives they have changed forever, and the incredibly generous gifts and talents they have shared with Casa de Esperanza.

Allison Gagne came on a service trip to Casa during her freshman year in college. She fell in love with Casa during that week, and the rest is history! Allison served as a licensed foster parent at Casa from 2005-2008, caring for over 40 children. After leaving Casa de Esperanza, Allison earned her master's degree in Higher Education Administration and continues to serve her community in tremendous ways while also using her sphere of influence to raise awareness about the foster care system.

We are grateful to our fantastic Gala Committee, underwriters, table sponsors, attendees, auction donors, and the many volunteers who all made the event a wonderful success. In all, the Building Hope for Children Gala raised over \$700,000!

Your commitment to our mission keeps children safe from abuse and neglect. Thanks to you, families in Houston can stabilize and reunify.



Gala Chairs Katie and Jay Register and Laura and David Neal with Honorees Allison Gagne and Betty & Jim Key.



Guests in the final rounds of our Heads or Tails game competing to win a diamond necklace from Diamonds Direct.



The Gentle family with a special furry guest.

THANK YOU: *Committee & Sponsors*

GALA CHAIRS

Laura and David Neal
Katie and Jay Register

PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

Do you love snuggling a baby
or having a toddler on your hip?
Can you feed a baby a bottle?

There are children in Houston
who need your help.



CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT MAKES FOSTERING AT CASA DIFFERENT.

We provide an individualized foster experience, walking alongside you every step of the way. Typically, children placed with you have lived in the Casa neighborhood and will be better prepared to come live in your home. Often, we know their history, have established medical care, and the child has acclimated to a home routine.*

Casa de Esperanza will take your hand and guide you through this journey.

*Please note every child is unique and situations will vary.



scan this QR code for
the FAQ on our website

CASSIE PARKIN

Coordinator of Foster Home Development
cparkin@casahope.org
713-529-0639

**START YOUR FOSTER
CARE JOURNEY WITH
CASA DE ESPERANZA!**



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Ed Smith
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*No member of the Governing Board receives a salary for their work on the Board. 100% of our Governing Board are involved in and contribute financially to the work of Casa de Esperanza.

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Join Casa de Esperanza as we bring the Houston community together for tasty chili, friendly competition, and red-hot fun all in support of **providing hope and a home for children in crisis.**

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\$350 team entry, includes up to 6 members

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