



CASA

Center for Academic and Social Advancement
Liberating and Empowering Communities of Learners



Se ha dicho . . . It's been said . . .

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Celebrating 20 years of Innovation

CASA's 2nd Annual A Taste of Art Gala held in October at the Balboa Park Recital Hall was certainly special as we celebrated La Clase Mágica's 20th Anniversary! The event, emceed by Alejandra Sotelo-Solís the Vice Mayor of National City, brought CASA friends together to congratulate Olga for her admirable work throughout two decades of dedicated service to the community.



The affair included food and wine tasting, a silent auction, and a performance by classical guitarist Greg Shirer. Letters of support were read from The City of San Diego Council President Ben Hueso, The Cities of Vista and Solana Beach, and the San Diego Board of Education. A touching moment included Sasha Duran, now 20 years old and a LCM coordinator, sharing her life-long experience with the La Clase Mágica program since she herself was a baby.

CASA thanks all of the many guests, volunteers, organizations, and corporate sponsors that made this evening a success!

Kids Play for Science

This fall, CASA's La Clase Mágica research team began a year-long pilot study on the cognitive benefits of imaginative play with Rokenbok Toys, an educational building-based and radio-controlled construction system. Funded through a joint venture between The Rokenbok and The San Diego Foundations, the study focuses on the cognitive, social, and communicative skills of elementary school age children attending La Clase Mágica at St. Leo's Mission in Solana Beach as they engage with toys that do not normally belong to their play routines. The broader objective of the project is to design a longitudinal study tracking the educational benefits of such play in promoting the math and scientific skills needed to advance minority and low-income boys and girls into the science, engineering, and math fields in which they are currently underrepresented.

Words of Appreciation by Sasha Durán

La Clase Mágica is the program where I found a community, the program where I found respect, the program where I found understanding and knowledge, the program that has led me to a future. La Clase Mágica has impacted my life, as a child through an adult; I have found my identity and that purpose to life, to be a leader and guidance for other children and families.

See I wasn't just any ordinary child, I was perfectly different. My journey started exactly twenty years ago at the age of two months. I had no choice but to be a participant in la Clase Mágica due to my mother Lourdes Durán, who coordinated La Clase Mágica for 16 years; I was dragged to meetings, trainings, and session. Watching the undergrads from UCSD I remember always standing up on them and giving them a hard time, still up to this day I don't understand the patience and love that surrounded me and other children. I am here representing not only myself but the children from past, present and future to thank La Clase Mágica's hard work and dedication because with out you I don't know where my life or others would be standing.

La Gran Dimensión: Parents Learn New Skills

As you walk into the Orange Place learning center at 6pm on a Tuesday, instead of seeing children participating in La Clase Mágica activities you will find a group of Latino adults learning how to use the computer to expand their knowledge. They are a part of La Gran Dimensión (LGD), an educative program for adults whose main objective is to coach fundamental typing skills, software, and internet proficiency to further the participants' success in the job market. As the adult component of the LCM project, LGD shares its principles and values. LGD provides a space where the participants can bring their background experiences and knowledge to a class

centered on computer skills. Beatriz Macias, a visiting scholar from Spain helped design the curriculum for LGD, adding the importance of personal narratives to its activities. This quarter is the first to implement the goals of health and nutrition, which is the Hub of Innovation designated to Orange Place, where the basics of a healthy lifestyle are promoted. LGD partnered with the Champions for Change program, which provides an interactive curriculum to help Latino adults learn how to reduce their risk for serious health problems like obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease among others. Currently the learning center has a full house of adults eager to learn.



Ways you can help:

- Be a part of a community advisory board
- Be a part of our CASA board
- Volunteer at one of our sites
- Make a monetary donation
- Facilitate a workshop

Please contact Daisy Rodriguez
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for more information