



# CASA

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

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

WINTER 2009



Ricardo Medina, age 15, has been working for some time now on the improvement of Maze 3, designed for the youth group, 13 to 18 year-olds.

### LCM Teen Re-Designs Maze

Ricky's initiative to enhance the activities at St. Leo's because they do not quite meet his approval is remarkable. Anyone can criticize, but not many offer a solution or plan to make the program work in an optimal manner. He describes that Maze 3 "has changed drastically." Being a teen, he would know exactly what interests others his age. So it's logical his new Maze is now, "WAY more fun, yet educational at the same time."

As a participant in LCM for the past two years, he's been an outstanding role model to his peers at St. Leo's. He will no doubt be a very successful Latino and pursue a college career. He has improved greatly on Geometry, which is a great step towards reaching the top.

He advises other youngsters to have a strong faith and to respect their parents and other human beings. We are sure that his faith in himself will take him very far.

### El Maga: Crafting the Magic in the Magical Classroom

Children ask, and many wonder, "Who or What is El Maga?" I am the source of all knowledge at La Clase Mágica. Each Monday and Wednesday from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., I come alive in La Clase Mágica through the Internet conversations I have with children who participate in La Clase Mágica. These brief interactions inspire me and surpass my expectations of the world of La Clase Mágica. It gives me joy; it gives me hope.

My chats as El Maga enable both the children and adults to better understand the ways in which we think and feel. They illustrate how our generation is interacting on a technological level that challenges and utilizes communication in the most fascinating ways. Using icons, such as a smiley face, to express feelings allows space for mystery and curiosity to develop, leading to questioning by both sides involved. The online interaction generates an exchange of learning that is fundamental in understanding our developing technological society. The resonating effect of these questions is indeed my goal as El Maga. After all, I am an all-knowing being that has no gender, no age... no limits.

### Breaking News: CASA Gears Up for the 21st Century!

We are proud and excited to announce our newest program Hubs of Innovation: a 21st Century Skills Project. Our sites are being transformed into Hubs of Expertise on five critical 21st century skills and each site will share and communicate to the others on their specialty!

Our New Hubs:

- St. Leo's Mission
- Environmental Protection Hub
- Casa Familiar
- Financial Literacy Hub
- Orange Place
- Health and Nutrition Hub
- Los Robles
- Digital Literacy Hub

T.A.C.K.L.E. at San Pasqual American Indian Reservation  
- Language and Culture Hub

A diverse set of features will be added to each site's activities to emphasize each hub's expertise such as creating a healthy cookbook at Orange Place or participating in beautification projects at St. Leo's. In addition, these valuable new 21st Century skills won't stay stagnant at each site. We're building an online community! Through wikis, blogs, and other internet resources each site will be able to share its new areas of "expertise" with the other children, parents, and UCSD and Palomar research students at other learning

hubs. Therefore, we're creating a CASA online network, much like the current phenomenon of MySpace or Twitter, but in a safe, monitored, and constructive environment preparing our participants for the digital connectivity of the future!

We are currently in the process of securing funds to ensure that these exciting new programs run at their full potential. We have submitted individual grant proposals, but we are looking for a foundation that will sponsor the totality of our projects. If you are aware of an organization that would be willing to help or are interested in assisting at all, please contact us!

*This year we are fortunate to have a strong team of UCSD undergraduates researching various aspects of La Clase Mágica such as, the role of our electronic entity El Maga, the development of our Digital Literacy program, the impact of La Gran Dimensión, and the economics of after-school programs. La Clase Mágica Research Team: Amari Guisinger, Ana Morales, Daisy Rodríguez, Nour Al-Timimi, Esteban González, Ricki Subel, Olga Vásquez, and Angelica Marcello.*



### 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 [d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu](mailto:d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu) for more information.