

# Esperanza

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A NEWSLETTER OF ESPERANZA USA

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## Encouraging Community Partnership for Common Good

By Rosa C. Prieto



Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Staff: From left to right Samuel Perez, Diana Rodriguez, Ada Rivera, Rev David Rivera, Elisabeth Rios, Jenny Soto, Kalena Hernandez.

Reynaldo Mercado runs the Elohim Barber Shop in Tampa, Florida. He learned about the Esperanza Trabajando workforce development program through La Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal's personal outreach and leaflets on the

Esperanza Trabajando program.

Reynaldo shared what moved him as a business owner in the community to support Esperanza USA's "program of care and compassion."

"At my barbershop I see and hear people who vent their pains from the barber chair," Reynaldo commented.

"Most barbershop clients openly share with their barbers their concerns and difficult circumstances in which they find themselves. This is undoubtedly true of our barbershop where clients feel a Christian environment the

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## News from the President

Saludos,

As we begin a new year, many people reflect on the year that was and make resolutions for the year to come. While personal resolutions come and go, one resolution that is always on my list is that of obligation.



For Esperanza USA, obligation means commitment to serve our Hispanic community and to respond to its needs by establishing appropriate and timely programs.

This year, Esperanza USA will begin new national initiatives to support the Hispanic community. We will work to strengthen Hispanic marriages in three states across the nation, support Hispanic faith-based service organizations in Florida, and respond to the needs of troubled Hispanic youth in Philadelphia.

By this time next year, we will ask ourselves again—what more can we do for our community? I hope that each one of you will join me in the annual tradition of not only making a resolution for yourself but also one for your community. Identify what your community's needs are and commit to becoming actively involved in meeting them.

What better way to fulfill our obligation and move our communities toward stronger foundations.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year,

The Rev. Luis Cortés, Jr.  
President,  
Esperanza USA

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moment they walk in, hearing and watching inspirational music and videos. It allows them to express freely any problems they may have," he said of his barbershop clients.

Reynaldo and the other barbers have several clients who have shared their poor financial situations and lack of employment with them. Many could not find jobs because of past mistakes and a criminal record.

After learning about Esperanza Trabajando, Reynaldo started referring barbershop clients with employment needs to La Iglesia de Dios.

In turn, the staff from Esperanza Trabajando at La Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal did not delay in sharing with him and the others at Elohim Barber Shop the success stories of their client referrals.

Reynaldo has referred over fifteen clients to La Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal,

all of whom are working and have otherwise been assisted, and he plans to continue this partnership.

**He is encouraged to continue this partnership because of the positive impact this program has on the lives of so many of his clients**

"As a businessperson, member and friend of this community, I thank Esperanza USA from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful work they are doing through this program which brings 'esperanza' (hope) to the City of Tampa," Reynaldo said with an emotion-filled voice.

He is encouraged to continue his partnership with Esperanza Trabajando through La Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal because of the testimonies he hears and by witnessing with his own eyes the positive impact this program has on the lives of so many of his clients.

*Rosa C. Prieto is Esperanza USA's regional representative in the Central Florida Region.*



Reynaldo Mercado assists a client at the Elohim Barber Shop in Tampa, Florida

## “Tú eres la respuesta” Campaign Receives National Recognition

The day globally recognized as World AIDS Day, December 1, 2006, was an eventful moment for Esperanza USA’s “Tú eres la respuesta” (You Are the Answer) HIV/AIDS awareness campaign.

On this day, the Rev. Luis Cortés Jr. accepted the Red Ribbon Leadership Award for Communications for Esperanza USA’s initiative. The National HIV/AIDS Partnership (NHAP) presented the award to Rev. Cortés during a ceremony held in Washington, DC along with several other honorees who have also worked for AIDS awareness.

Esperanza USA premiered the educational short film “No te rindas” (Don’t Give Up) in its hometown of Philadelphia on World AIDS Day 2006. Screenings with groups of Hispanic pastors were held in Tucson, Chicago,



(Left) Rev. Luis Cortés, Jr. accepted an award for the **Tú eres la respuesta** (You Are the Answer) campaign on World AIDS Day in Washington, D.C. (Right) Earlier in the week, Rev. Cortés conducted the only Spanish presentation on HIV/AIDS at Saddleback Church’s 2006 Global Summit on AIDS and the Church.”

Washington, DC, bringing the total of Hispanic pastors who have seen the film to over 1,000.

“We are pleased with the positive reaction from the many Hispanic church leaders who have seen the short film and we look forward to promoting its message of compassion and understanding on HIV/AIDS through our grass-

roots network of churches in the next year,” Rev. Cortés said.

Continuing to raise HIV/AIDS awareness didn’t stop with the short film premieres. Rev. Luis Cortés, Jr. participated in Saddleback Church’s Global Summit on AIDS and the Church with Pastor Rick Warren and Kay Warren just days before World AIDS Day.

## Esperanza Announces New Programs

Continuing its dedication to strengthening the Hispanic community, Nueva Esperanza and its national subsidiary Esperanza USA announced new program initiatives beginning in 2007.

**Matrimonios de Esperanza (Marriages of Hope):** Uses a unique healthy marriage instructional curriculum to work through Latino congregations in New York City and Southern California to equip congregational couples to be healthy marriage trainers and mentors for low-income married couples.

**Florida State Hispanic Capacity Project:** A training and technical assistance program targeting 40 faith-based and community-based organizations in Florida to help them improve their organizational capacity.

**The Communities United to Empower Youth Project:** A three year program that will provide training and technical assistance to 9 organizations in Philadelphia to increase these organizations’ capacity in order to serve at-risk youth involved in youth violence, as well as assist with gang activity prevention, and work against child abuse and neglect.

**The Devoción Program:** A cooperative three-year healthy marriage training program with Philadelphia’s Salvation Army to educate 100 unwed expectant Latino parents or new parents on the benefits of a healthy marriage to the well being of their child, providing outreach coordination and training each year.

## Nueva Esperanza celebrated its 20 years of service

Amongst an audience of over 700 friends and family, Nueva Esperanza, the parent company of Esperanza USA in Philadelphia, celebrated its anniversary with several of the leading Hispanic recording artists on October 30, 2006.



Internationally renowned artists Ricardo Montaner, Marcos Witt and Samuel Hernández performed in downtown Philadelphia as part of the Nueva Esperanza Noche de Celebración, presented in commemoration of its 20 years

of community development work for the North Philadelphia Hispanic community.

Rev. Cortés awarded the Nueva Esperanza Ministry Award to Rev. Raul LeDuc of Iglesia Sión for his partnership with Nueva Esperanza and the Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia. The evening also included a surprise guest appearance from Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, who presented Nueva Esperanza with a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Samuel Hernández, who arrived just hours before the event from a concert in Venezuela, kicked off the evening with his vibrant personality and songs of praise. Marcos Witt, who also received the Esperanza Spirit Award for Exemplary Ministerial Service, gave a moving bilingual solo performance on the piano that brought the crowd to its feet in prayer.



Headlining performer Ricardo Montaner delighted the audience with his impeccable stage presence and heartfelt songs, inviting the audience to sing along with some of his best-known singles.

**Clockwise from top left:** Marcos Witt and Samuel Hernández joined Rev. Luis Cortés, Jr. to celebrate Nueva Esperanza's 20th anniversary. Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell presented a grant to Nueva Esperanza. Ricardo Montaner delighted the audience with a solo performance with piano accompaniment. Rev. Cortés presented the Esperanza Ministry Award to Marcos Witt for his dedication to music ministry and years of partnership with Esperanza USA.

PHOTOS BY OBED ARANGO

## New Starts and Careers for Job Training Clients

On October 26, 2006, Nueva Esperanza, Inc. conducted its annual career and resource fair. Nueva Esperanza hosted over thirty employers that sought potential employees, many of whom are students with Nueva Esperanza's Betances Job Training Program, including Bank of America, American Red Cross, Sprint and Holy Redeemer.

The multiple employer representatives set up tables in Esperanza College's recently completed education facility and expressed their satisfaction regarding the number and quality of applicants.

Nueva Esperanza reached out to neighboring community based organizations and invited them to attend the event. As a result, over three hundred job seekers ranging in ages 18 through 70 attended and took advantage of the numerous job openings available.

## Freshmen Prepared for Experiences in the Real World



This year, The Nueva Esperanza Academy Charter High School (NEA) began a new and exciting program for all incoming freshmen called Freshmen Seminar. The main focus of this course is to encourage students to think about their careers and how a college education will help them succeed in life.

In the fall 2006 semester, NEA started a Lifestyle Math component of the course that has students researching the general costs of life. Through this course activity, students found a home, calculated their monthly mortgage payment, financed a car, created a clothing budget, and created a food budget all using our brand new mobile computer lab.

By the end of the project, students have a good idea of how much money they need per month to support a lifestyle of their choice and realize the importance of having a good paying career!

### What students are saying about Freshmen Seminar:

“You get to talk about what you want to be in the future. It is helping me prepare for a good life.” - Brittany Colón

“This class helps me think about my career and how to set up my life so I can be successful.” - Alex González

“Lately, with Lifestyle Math, we have been researching how much things cost, from planning vacations, to buying a house, to owning a car. Now we know how much money is going to be needed and the importance of a good paying job.” - Wilfredo Santos

“Freshmen Seminar prepares us to be successful in our future. It also helps us research good occupations so we can start off with a good salary.” - Joshua Vargas

Esperanza USA would like to welcome two new members of our team and recognize two members with new responsibilities:

#### New York City Region

Reverend Raúl Ruiz  
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## Save the Date!

Esperanza USA is pleased to announce the dates for the 2007 National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast and Conference.

**June 13-15, 2007**  
**J.W. Marriott**  
**Washington, D.C.**

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information on event registration and invited speakers. Check our website for updates: [www.esperanza.us](http://www.esperanza.us)

# Women's Leadership Role in the Church and Community

By Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier



Women's leadership is the cornerstone of many different institutions. Both men and women were created in the same image of God, creating an equal partnership between men and women in the home, the church and the community.

Given the present needs of our Hispanic communities, we need a strong unity between men and women that takes into account the fullness of the gifts of the body of Christ.

Networking is an important part of our ministry as well because it brings together people with different gifts necessary for establishing a holistic ministry by creating alliances and coalitions. Mujeres de Esperanza can help women keep their ministerial leadership fresh and relevant through prayer, spiritual discernment and theological reflection. As individuals oriented toward

ministry, we often overlook the importance of theological reflection. However, this dimension of our leadership is much needed in order that we might leave a legacy for the next generation including not only stories of what we did but the spiritual and biblical framework for why we did it.

Mujeres de Esperanza are co-creators with God's renewing, redeeming, and exercising the ministry of reconciliation in the midst of their families, communities and churches! For more information visit [www.esperanza.us/mujeres](http://www.esperanza.us/mujeres).

*Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier is the associate professor of religious education at the Claremont School of Theology in California. An ordained American Baptist minister, Dr. Conde-Frazier recently participated in the Mujeres de Esperanza Women's Leadership Training in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas in September 2006.*



## Activating the Faith of Women through Intercession and Service



Understanding the community in which it is located, the new Rite Aid in North Philadelphia features specific products for the Hispanic community as well as bilingual staff and store information. **Rev. Danny Cortés**, senior vice president of Nueva Esperanza, **Rev. Bonnie Camarda** of the Salvation Army and **Rev. Raúl LeDuc** of Iglesia Sión were pleasantly surprised to see Vitarroz Spanish food products line the walls of the foodmart section in Rite Aid.