

## Celebrating New Life in El Buen Huerto



Spring has sprung, and it certainly has generated quite a buzz at El Buen Pastor's teaching garden, "El Buen Huerto". As bluebirds return and bees begin busily pollinating the all of the new flowers, nearly fifty elementary school students are eagerly working to plant, water, and maintain all of the new crops that we will harvest during the summer.

El Buen Huerto allows students to become more connected to the foods they eat, and helps to foster a collaborative relationship with peers. But this kind of synthesis and cooperation doesn't happen overnight, and it certainly hasn't occurred without a little bit of help.

The success of this year's garden would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff garden leader, Ana Gonzalez, and a very special group of volunteers from the Forsyth County Cooperative Extension. Master Gardeners Stewart Ellis and Mary Audrey Apple have worked with our students and other volunteers multiple times per week to ensure that our garden and young gardeners are equipped with all the resources necessary for optimal growth. Under their direction, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders have truly taken ownership of the garden project.

In addition to teaching students in the garden, the Master Gardeners have been instrumental in securing donations of resources for the garden. One of the most visible and most precious of these was the addition of a Washington Hawthorne Tree, graciously donated by the Colonel Joseph Winston chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. LCS staff, volunteers, and students, as well as DAR representatives gathered around the tree for its Arbor Day dedication, while DAR Regent Ann Zuhr delivered the oration for the ceremony. Every student in the Buen Huerto team had a task for the event, leading younger students, setting up for the event, taking pictures, or interpreting the dedication speech into Spanish. Mary Audrey Apple says that important events such as this dedication are crucial for students to learn to take pride in their work.

Zuhr educated us on the benefits of trees, the Washington Hawthorne and its namesake, George Washington, but perhaps the most poignant part of the speech was her parting words, "We dedicate this Arbor Day tree to El Buen Huerto and to all the amazing students who are making the garden grow and who will protect and care for this tree." We here at LCS are so proud of our students' dedication to the growth of our garden. We are also thankful to all of you who are committed to the growth of these students as well.

For more information about our garden partners and donors, please visit [elbuenpastorlcs.org](http://elbuenpastorlcs.org).

## Dia de la Mujer

Earlier in March, we had the great honor of celebrating International Women's Day with the members of our Canastos Llenos entrepreneurship project, as well as representatives from the Women's Fund of Winston-Salem. This celebration was another opportunity for budding entrepreneurs at LCS to interact and share with local businesswomen, and it was apparent that both groups had a lot to offer to the conversation.

The evening started off with a delicious meal catered by Canastos Llenos participants, and after a short presentation by the Wake Forest advisor to the group, Dr. Angela Kocze, each attendee was given a "Tree of Life" diagram. Everyone started filling in their tree with everything that made them who they are. Among the roots, they listed everything that shaped their early life and molded them into who they are today. The trunk was filled with how they spend the majority of their time and energy. The limbs were tipped with both fruits and buds, and participants used those spaces to represent what they had already accomplished and what they hoped to see come to fruition.

After everyone had finished, individuals came together into larger groups to list commonalities and differences. Some had listed experiences that were unique to them, such as adversity faced as a young child, and some were applicable to some members of the group but not others, such as the experience of being an immigrant in the U.S. or dreaming of starting their own business. However, these differences seemed insignificant when compared to the things that everyone had in common. "It's incredible to see all that we have in common," one participant said. "We may not be from the same place, but we all love our families, and all want to help provide a better life for others. We all want to be happy." That truly is the secret of the Canastos Llenos project. These women are able to empower and uplift each other by recognizing differences, but more so embracing commonalities and working toward their dreams as a group. We are so excited to see what they can accomplish!

## P-E-R-S-E-V-E-R-A-N-C-E

"Magnanimous. M-A-G-N-A-N-I-M-O-U-S. Magnanimous." By the last few letters, the intonation had changed, almost as if it were a question. "That's correct!" her tutor exclaimed. The young speller was clearly surprised, and couldn't help but applaud herself.

It had only been a few days since Edith had won the spelling bee for her whole elementary school, and she was tenaciously preparing for the county-wide bee. Even though she still seemed shocked each time she heard "Correct!" after a difficult word, no one else was surprised. Each day during tutoring hour at LCS, she paired up with tutors from Wake Forest (former bee winners themselves) to review all of the frequent, difficult words she may encounter. Soon, the day of the Forsyth County Spelling Bee arrived.

Her parents were anxious as they took their seats in the viewing room. Edith was one of the only 4<sup>th</sup> grade contestants in a sea of 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. She held on for multiple rounds, as many other contestants were eliminated, but eventually, she met her match (macramé is a tough word for anyone born after 1979!). Edith seemed disappointed as her parents met her in the Board of Education lobby, but her parents reassured her. "Don't be sad! You did your best." Soon, her usual smile returned as she said, "I can try again next year!" We may not always come out ahead every time we challenge ourselves, but it's important to remember that we should always keep trying. Way to go Edith, we're so proud of your perseverance and hard work!



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## Spring 2016 Newsletter

### ¡Mucho Gusto y Gracias!

In only two months, many things have become perfectly clear to me at El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services. I'd like to share a few of the most important ones with you:



1. Our work matters. The single most poignant and telling experience I've had since starting my work here in January was seeing the face of one of our elementary school students as she told me that she had won the spelling bee for her entire school. The pride, the sense of accomplishment, the satisfaction of hard work, and the determination to do more all beamed from her face at the same time. Our goal is to help families thrive in the new culture they've chosen to live. When you see that happen, you can't help but be inspired.

2. We're off to a great start – and we face some significant challenges. I can't offer enough praise for Mary Bolton's leadership as the founding Executive Director. Everywhere I turn I see evidence of her leadership and affection for this place and the people it serves. Our first decade(+) has brought us to a wonderful place. However, any time an organization transitions from the era of the founder to its next phase of life, there are natural and predictable challenges. Many of those challenges relate to funding as folks wait to see what new directions an organization will take. I'm pleased to say our Board of Directors has provided steady leadership during this transition and has navigate the temporary absence of executive leadership very well! We are now making progress every day. That progress includes continuing to be the best version possible of who we've always been. We are also creating new relationships and new partnerships which will allow us to thrive in our next era of growth.

3. This is an amazing community. I know. All of you already knew that. I just have to ask for your indulgence for a moment while I state the obvious. Every person I've met here – whether a child, parent, co-worker, volunteer, or board member – has welcomed me enthusiastically and made me feel like family. ¡Much Gusto! – It's nice to meet you. And, gracias, thank you for the opportunity to work among such fine people.

-Don Durham, *Interim Executive Director*

### Vision Statement

We envision a society enriched by the cultural diversity of its members, where all are valued for their contributions and have the opportunity to build their dreams.

### Mission Statement

Con la esperanza de alcanzar un futuro mejor, El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services colabora con las familias apoyando a niños y adultos en el logro de sus metas educacionales y el desarrollo de su potencial económico.

El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services partners with Latino families to equip children and adults to fulfill their educational and economic potential, with hope for a positive and healthy future.

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Incorporated in 2006, El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services is a 501(c)(3) organization and a member of the N.C. Center for Nonprofits

### Calling all Summer Tutors!

Schools across North Carolina are entering their final quarter, and our afterschool programs for elementary, middle, and high school students are winding down into their final few weeks, but that does not mean that we are taking a break for the whole summer! LCS is gearing up for its summer tutoring and enrichment program. We are looking for dedicated tutors to help our elementary school students make the most out of their summer. The summer program is 5 weeks long, starting June 27<sup>th</sup> and going until July 29<sup>th</sup>. We ask that tutors commit to tutoring a student either Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:45 to 5:00. Please let us know if you are interested in:

- Helping students avoid learning loss that can occur when students spend all summer outside of a learning environment,
- Helping students learn to develop personal and professional relationships through frequent interactions with an adult mentor,
- Working with an elementary school student on reading comprehension, math, and more,
- Assisting students in finding subjects that they are passionate about, so that they can kindle a lifelong love of learning outside of the classroom.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to join us for our summer program in 2016. If you are interested in becoming a summer tutor, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Nick Bennett, by phone (336) 924-0401 or by email (nick@elbuenpastorlcs.org).