



VOTING EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ISSUE

Spring / Summer 2006

30th Year Celebration Draws Close to One Thousand Supporters

Salsa Legend Larry Harlow and the Legends of Fania delivered a spectacular performance at the Hartford Civic Center this past May, commemorating 30 years of service to the Latino community of Connecticut for CAUSA, Inc. The Hartford Civic Center was transformed into a picture of elegance as guests participated in one of the largest social networking events of the season. A dynamic and powerful line-up of speakers including Edwin Vargas, Reverend Richard Ramos, Sanford Cloud, Jr., Marilda Gándara, Mayor Eddie Perez, CAUSA Board President, Magali Kupfer and CAUSA Executive Director, Carmen Sierra who all acknowledged the many accomplishments the organization has made over the past three decades. Proceeds from the gala will be used to fund programmatic and operational initiatives for the sixteen member agencies across the state of Connecticut.

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Message from the Executive Director

Our mission to improve the quality of life for Latinos in Connecticut has taken us on a journey of increased visibility and empowerment during this past year. Our 30th anniversary event provided us with great insights as to the importance of a strong voice that is ready to respond to the needs of our community. The turnout at the gala of close to 1,000 people is a testament of the collaboration and support we have obtained in the past three decades. A special thank you to all of our sponsors, those who attended and volunteers.

It is now time to set the course for the coming years as we call upon our past experience to guide us. To this end, we have enhanced our advocacy activities, technical assistance, support for member and partner agencies and are now operating from a position of strength.

As we enter upon an election period, CAUSA and its member agencies have embarked on a voter education initiative which encourages Latinos to exercise their fundamental rights. Participating in state and government policy and decision making is a responsibility that each and every one of us must consider in order to strengthen our community. As such, we are pleased to kick-off a campaign called **AHORA ES NUESTRO MOMENTO – PARTICIPE!** Our efforts will include a series of workshops to be held at churches and agencies that help voters understand the election process and how to use the new voting machines. In addition, we are engaged in a media campaign, tracking of candidate platforms and presenting community forums that focus on issues facing Latinos such as racial and ethnic health disparities and access to affordable health care. We hope that the information in this newsletter will inspire you to become involved in your local community. It is imperative that we help to increase participation in the voting process....our future depends on it.

Carmen Sierra
Executive Director
CAUSA, Inc.

CAUSA Voter Registration Campaign Launched

CAUSA is going beyond the usual voter registration efforts to ensure that after voters are registered they know what to do and do it!

The **"AHORA ES NUESTRO MOMENTO – PARTICIPE!"** campaign launched by CAUSA will run through the November 7th election and is designed to make sure significant numbers of Latinos get to the voting booths on election day. Magali Kupfer, President of the Board of Directors of CAUSA, Inc. said,

"The Latino vote can have a significant impact on local and state elections in Connecticut, we are building the foundation for this exciting opportunity for our community."

"AHORA ES NUESTRO MOMENTO – PARTICIPE!" (*It is Our Moment – Participate!*) will include not only statewide registration efforts through community based agencies, but will also offer a series of workshops to teach new voters how to use the voting machines, a media campaign to energize this voting block, develop church based initiatives, hold community education forums on important issues, provide information on voter registration deadlines, absentee voting and how to get transportation to the voting booths.

"A candidate score card on issues of interest and concern to Latinos will also be prepared for

dissemination," said Magali Kupfer. "We want our community well educated on the candidates' views and voting records."

One example of this took place on August 24th where Representative Nancy Pelosi included CAUSA leadership in a lunch that took place in Hartford. Other visits by Congressional leadership are expected to take place over the next few months as well.

"The Latino vote can have significant impact on local and state elections in Connecticut..."

CAUSA is working in collaboration with other organizations throughout the state such as the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA) who will conduct several Spanish-language workshops during the month of September.

"CAUSA's efforts are timely and in sync with what we have



From Left to Right: Norma Reyes Rodriguez, La Voz, Blanca Santana, Executive Director, Spanish Community of Wallingford, Representative Nancy Pelosi, Carmen Sierra, Executive Director CAUSA, and Adelaide Rodriguez, Assistant Director of CAUSA.

seen nationwide," stated Mari Carmen Aponte, a Washington D.C. based attorney and national community activist, referencing the new wave of national Latino voting initiatives. "Effective grassroots voter registration drives are taking hold in major cities throughout the entire country, this is an important time for Latinos," she continued.

The campaign targets the following towns and cities - Hartford, East Hartford, Danbury, New Britain, Meriden, New London, Windham,

Norwich, Wallingford, Naugatuck, West Haven, lower Fairfield, Middletown, Waterbury, New Haven, South Norwalk, Bridgeport and Stamford.

About CAUSA, Inc.



The Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action, Inc. (CAUSA) was formed in 1975 by Governor Ella Grasso to respond to social services needs of Latinos in Connecticut and to better assist and support social service Latino agencies. In the last five years, CAUSA and its member organizations have served more than 200,000 Latino/Hispanic residents in Connecticut.

CAUSA is the largest association of Latino-serving community agencies throughout the state. With a special emphasis on advocacy, research and technical assistance, through and with its member agencies, they have been successful in meeting their objectives.

Anniversary Gala Unites Community Despite Unions Behavior

The Latino community of Connecticut demonstrated their increasing unity by supporting CAUSA's 30th Anniversary gala in the wake of a disappointing cancellation by its keynote speaker, Senator Hillary Clinton. Close to one thousand guests enjoyed an evening of reflection, camaraderie and social networking at the Civic Center this past spring despite an attempt to sabotage the event by New Britain union leader Charles LaConche.

The union, who was in a labor dispute with ING, one of the gala's major sponsors, reneged on an agreement with CAUSA to withdraw the scheduled protest outside of the event if the sponsor withdrew their participation. ING withdrew, but the CAUSA gala was still used as a media stage and pawn by the union who exercised unethical behavior by creating the appearance of a three party dispute.



After making numerous statements regarding CAUSA being a small player, the union conducted a boycott at the event resulting in the cancellation of Senator Clinton's appearance. CAUSA is investigating their rights and pursuing steps to make certain that no other non-profit organization is put in this situation in the future.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Community Health Forums

October 26, 2006, 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain – Central Connecticut State University

November 1, 2006, 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury – 87 West Street, Danbury

For More Information: Adelaida, 860-424-0077

Hispanic Center of Danbury, Open House

Thursday, September 21, 2006, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., Hispanic Center, 87 West Street, Danbury, CT 06810

For More Information: Sheila Gutierrez, 203-798-2855, R.S.V.P. by Monday, September 18, 2006

Junta for Progressive Action, Celebrates 37th Year

Saturday, Sept. 30th, 2006 7:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m., Whitney Arts Center (591 Whitney Ave) New Haven, CT

For More Information: Shalini.uppu@juntainc.org or call 203-787-0191

ASPIRA of Connecticut, Honors Excellence In Law

October 26, 2006 6:00 p.m., Sheraton Stamford Hotel, 2701 Summer Street, Stamford, CT

For More Information: Diana Torres, 203-336-5762

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Spanish Community of Wallingford, Inc.

Embracing Heritage and Building for Tomorrow

The Spanish Community of Wallingford was founded in 1972 by a group of concerned citizens who wanted to provide services to Spanish Speaking residents of low and moderate income in the greater Wallingford area.

For the past four years, the Spanish Community of Wallingford has spent a significant amount of time cultivating relationships in the community by investing in Latino youth through a series of initiatives. "We have area high school students who participate in community service and have become role models," described Blanca Santana, Executive Director of the Spanish Community of Wallingford. "So not only are they performing community service but they are teaching younger kids the importance of giving back to their community."

This past summer, high school students volunteered at the center's summer reading camp program for children ages 4 – 12 and focused on demonstrating how much fun reading can be. One of the more popular activities was *The Big Birthday Bash*, where they celebrated everyone's birthday in one day. The teams of children and their high school volunteer leaders came up with different books, stories and presentations on how to celebrate birthdays. "It was a huge success," stated Santana.

Another successful youth initiative is the Mexican Folk Dance classes taught by a local choreographer and some of the volunteer parents. The classes are open to children and youth between the ages of 5 – 18 years and run once a week with performances scheduled throughout the year. While they are taught in two separate groups, they all perform together. Recently they were invited to the Peabody Museum and the *Celebrate Wallingford* festival to share their culture and heritage. The students also bring their performance to senior centers and extended living facilities where they are well received. The Mexican Folk Dance Group has been a tremendous success toward instilling a sense of pride and cultural identity for the Latino youth in their community.

One of Wallingford's young participants, Adriana Rodriguez, started with the volunteer initiative when she was just fourteen years old and has shown a consistent effort over three years, participating in both the community service initiative and Mexican Folk Dance Classes.

For young Latinos, such as Adriana, the Spanish Community of Wallingford has created the opportunity to embrace their Latino heritage, connect with their community and ultimately build for a brighter tomorrow.

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT

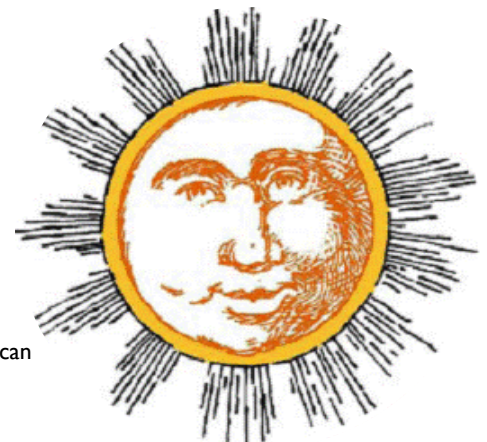
Spanish Community of Wallingford, Inc. assists the Hispanic community in adapting to mainstream American Culture in the form of community development and involvement.

MEMBER SERVICES

- Interpreters
- Clerical Services
- Community Participation
- Computer Classes
- Employment
- Tutoring
- Legal
- English as a Second Language



Pictured: Adriana Rodriguez (Left) and Mayra Reyes (Right), Mexican Folk Dancers.



Why Vote?

Voting and the Voice of our Latino Community

Excerpts from 2004 Article on Voting
 This November, as seats at the local and state level are voted upon, we must ensure that the voices of Latinos in Connecticut are heard.

In 2004 a summit held on Latino Voting offered CAUSA members and community leaders an opportunity to identify the reasons why voting may seem a “daunting task” for Latinos, citing that they may not understand the registration or voting process; there may be language barriers that keep them from trying to register; they may distrust politicians and hold the cynical belief that no one cares about their needs; or are simply too overwhelmed by personal concerns to consider voting a priority.

“We’ve got to move, mobilize and get our people to vote... get our people elected...with each ballot cast, our voices become louder.”

During the 2004 summit Mari Carmen Aponte, former Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration in Washington, D.C., brought to light that among the Latinos in Connecticut only about 40% voted in the previous year’s election, compared to 86 % in Puerto Rico who cast their votes in that same year. Since many of the Latinos who live in Connecticut are Puerto Rican, the disparity is disturbing, she said.

Maria Cinta Lowe Executive Director of a CAUSA member agency, The Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury, added that opportunities to teach and help Latinos should be ongoing and not just when election comes along. “Why aren’t things done before the elections come? It’s important to get together and help each other.”

WHEN IS ELECTION DAY?

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25th
Last Day to Register to Vote by Mail

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7th
Last Day to Register in Person

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8th
ELECTION DAY

WHERE CAN I VOTE?

Where Can I vote?
Call you local Registrars of Voters and Find out!

Bridgeport.....	(203) 576-7281
Danbury.....	(203) 797-4550
East Hartford.....	(860) 291-7280
Hartford.....	(860) 543-8585
Lower Fairfield.....	(203) 256-3115
Meriden.....	(203) 630-4075
Naugatuck.....	(203) 720-7047
New Britain.....	(860) 826-3310
New Haven.....	(203) 946-8035
New London.....	(860) 447.5206
Norwich.....	(860) 823-3754
Middletown (Democrat).....	(860) 344-3518
Middletown (Republican).....	(860) 344-3517
South Norwalk.....	(203) 854-7996
Stamford.....	(203) 977-4010
Wallingford.....	(203) 294-2125
Waterbury.....	(203) 574-6751
West Haven.....	(203) 937-3540
Windham.....	(860) 465-3016

* SOURCE: *Hartford Courant* 2004 , 9/18/04

CAUSA Experience opens doors for Young Latina



Pictured: Stacey Gonzalez

In August of 2006 CAUSA received a letter from a young woman who had interned in their office over 14 months, Ms. Stacey Gonzalez. The teen was thanking CAUSA and its Executive Director Carmen Sierra for giving her the first job experience of her career. Ms. Gonzalez described how CAUSA had given her the opportunity to gain administrative skills, build confidence, and obtain knowledge about what a non-profit organization does.

Ms. Gonzalez is now working for Community Renewal Team (CRT) in the Behavioral Health Department at the Mount Sinai Campus. "I owe this to CAUSA, Inc.," she concluded, "for believing in me and giving me a chance to become knowledgeable in the administrative field." CAUSA would like to congratulate Ms. Gonzalez on her new position and wish her luck on her future success.

Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain Connects the Community to the Internet

Over the past year, hundreds of people from all walks of life visited the Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain (SSC) to get connected...to the internet that is. While the ability to post resumes and seek jobs online was the main attraction, many students utilized the free service to complete homework projects, families came to look for housing online and some have even taken and completed online classes.

Made possible by a grant from AT&T to LULAC in partnership with CAUSA, the center has brought much needed services to an underserved community. Collaborations with the Board of Education, Tunxis Community College and even the IRS have demonstrated the importance of sharing resources. "For example, Tunxis instructors came four times a week to teach classes on Excel, PowerPoint and Word while the IRS helped more than 150 clients prepare their taxes online and at least 8 students used tutorials to complete their GED with the support of the Board of Education. I call this teamwork," said Mary Sanders, Executive Director of the Center. The relationship and opportunity to upgrade computers at the center was facilitated by CAUSA, Inc.



Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health is One of the Top Issues on the Latino Agenda

Creating an education and awareness campaign that focuses on health disparities in the Latino community is one of the key components to helping public officials and the general community understand the impact on the daily lives of people. A recent grant awarded to CAUSA Inc., from the Connecticut Health Foundation provides an opportunity for grassroots and community based organizations to do just this. The fall campaign will include a series of community forums, advocacy skills workshops and a Spanish-language media blitz to promote the importance of civic participation and involvement in policy making activities.

The general public is invited to attend the following Community Health Forums in the upcoming months:

Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain – October 26, 2006, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Central Connecticut State University

Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury – November 1, 2006, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
87 West Street, Danbury

For more information please contact Adelaida at: 860-424-0077.

A Special Thank You to Our 30th Anniversary Gala Sponsors



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Gala Photo Gallery



MEMBER AGENCIES and PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

www.CAUSAINC.org

Casa Boricua	Magali Kupfer	203-235-1082	204 Colony St., Meriden, CT 06451
Casa Otoñal	Patricia McCann	203-773-1847	135 Sylvan Ave., New Haven, CT 06519
Centro de la Comunidad– New London	Miriam Thornburn	860-442-4463	109 Blinman St., New London, CT 06320
Centro de la Comunidad– Norwich	Miriam Thornburn	860-886-0001	225 Central Ave., Norwich, CT 06360
Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum, Inc.	Calixto Torres	860-247-3227	95 Park St., 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06106
Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury	Maria Cinta Lowe	203-798-2855	87 West St., Danbury, CT 06810
Iglesia Bautista	Rev. Jose Luis Carrion	860-560-0420	981 Park St., Hartford, CT 06106
Junta Progressive Action, Inc.	Kica Matos	203-787-0191	169 Grand Ave., New Haven, CT 06153
New Life Corporation	Ariel Martinez	203-777-0313	P.O. Box 7036, New Haven, CT 06519
San Juan Center, Inc.	Aura Rivera	860-522-2205	1297 Main St., Hartford, CT 06103
San Juan Sports Center	Andrea Montero	860-525-0360	180 Pleasant St., Hartford, CT 06103
Spanish American Development Association	Ramon Larracuente	203-333-9332	1057 East Main St., Bridgeport, CT 06605
Spanish Action Council	Miriam Echevaria	203-755-5532	81 West Main St., Waterbury, CT 06702
Spanish Community of Wallingford	Blanca Santana	203-265-5866	284 Washington St., Wallingford, CT 06492
Spanish Speaking Center	Mary L. Sanders	860-224-2651	29 Cedar St., New Britain, CT 06051
South Norwalk Community Center	Daniel Maldonado	203-899-2488	98 South Main St., South Norwalk, CT 06854

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