

# NEWS

*from*

Spring 2001

Volume 8, Number 2



Employees from Home Depot # 3504 on Coors assist with a new patio for Casa Esperanza. Materials were donated by Pavestone Co. of Colorado, and project director Ben Hilliard (white shirt) trained the willing workers to set the pavestones. The result is a terrific new patio with accompanying planters, providing our families with a tranquil area - the perfect place to view the setting sun.



Casa Board member Bill Morton assists Mike Gallegos in constructing a new workbench in the workshop. Bill is also chair of the Facilities Committee, and Mike, who just celebrated his fifth anniversary at Casa Esperanza, is Facility Supervisor for the house.

**April 22nd begins National Volunteer Recognition week**, and we are proud to once again dedicate our Spring newsletter to our excellent volunteers. During last year alone, we logged more than 1000 volunteer hours, and we know there are many more that went unreported. By all indications, this year promises an even higher yield in terms of the precious time our volunteers give to Casa Esperanza. Beside the fact that this house could not function very well without them, our volunteers bring many immeasurable gifts to our families, especially the gift of themselves. Thank you, everyone!



Nick Williams is assisted by friends as he began construction for a cover over the fountain courtyard. Nick created, planned, organized, sought donations for and directed the project which will serve to fulfill his requirements for his Eagle Scout status. The new cover will allow our families to enjoy this lovely area even on the hottest days.

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### Our Mission

*Casa Esperanza provides affordable housing for families facing cancer.*

### Reach us at:

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# Director's Page

by Eileen Cook

## ALBUQUERQUE CANCER COALITION

Representatives from twenty-one area cancer support agencies, hospital cancer treatment centers, hospices and government agencies meet once each month as the informal Albuquerque Cancer Coalition. The Coalition serves as a source of information and support for cancer patients and their families, to raise awareness and to educate the public on cancer, risk reduction and treatment options, to advocate for increased support for cancer research, and to support one another in these endeavors. The Coalition is pleased to announce that PNM Foundation has granted \$10,000 to the Coalition to cover printing costs for a bi-lingual brochure to be distributed to hospitals and oncologists' offices statewide. The publication is designed for the newly diagnosed cancer patient and their families, the majority of whom will travel to Albuquerque for treatment, to make them aware of available treatment and support services. All too often these patients and families are too overwhelmed and bewildered to know where to begin their search for information - or even to know what questions to ask. The brochure will provide a convenient and comprehensive source of information necessary to enable patients to make informed decisions regarding their treatment and care. We are very grateful to PNM for their endorsement of this important project and to their commitment to New Mexico's cancer community.

## PUTTING A NEW FACE ON THINGS

This has been quite a year for this old house! We spent lots of volunteer time and hard-earned money updating and replacing - after all, more than 12,000 families have stayed with us during the past nine years, and you can imagine what that would do to your house! We replaced countertops and wallpaper, installed new phone lines (complete with

voice mail) for each guest room, a new patio, a new courtyard cover, and we painted. And painted. We received funds from Honeywell Defense Avionics Systems, the Cosmopolitan Woman's Club of Albuquerque, and Qwest to assist with these projects. But mainly, we had volunteers. Lots and lots of them. Employees from Honeywell, Intel, State Farm Insurance, Home Depot, Pavestone Co., InnPoints Worldwide, NM Department of Energy, and Allegiance Healthcare Corp. And members of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and Pi Kappa Alpha came more than once. Individual volunteers also lent their support - caring folks like Laura Gustin, Stella Curley, Notah Begay, Lee Beckley, Michael and Jane Pierpoint, Arvis and Nick Williams. Your love and commitment to this house and to the folks who stay here - well, it certainly shows. Just like it would in your own homes. Your care is evident in every corner you look. You are all so special to us. Thanks so much for all you do for our home and for our families.

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Every family has a story. Someone fought so hard. Sometimes, cancer was kept at bay. Sometimes, it was not. Cancer plays no favorites, knows no age nor class nor race. Cancer is something everyone fears, and few plan for. When the diagnosis comes, so does panic. Casa Esperanza is here to help, to provide solace and care away from the clinical treatment centers or impersonal hotel rooms. We provide a home - a home away from home. And you can help. It might even be help for someone you know - perhaps a friend. You can be a caring friend to all those families who depend on us by returning the enclosed envelope today with your gift for our home.

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MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITAL HOSPITALITY HOUSES  
and the ALBUQUERQUE CANCER COALITION

*from the notebook of Patricia Virgen*

Walter (Wally) and Marie Vollbrecht live in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico and have been married for 54 years. Marie, a beautiful 74, is a retired secretary. Wally, a youthful 76, a retired roofer and construction worker, is a proud member of the 17th Airborne Division Association.

Wally and Marie followed a very familiar path to Casa Esperanza. During December 1999, they spent lots of time on the road, traveling between TorC and Albuquerque so Wally could visit his doctors. Then in January, Wally was diagnosed with prostate cancer. After Dr. Anthony at St. Joseph's Hospital explained treatment options, Wally opted for simple radiation, as fortunately the cancer had remained localized. So, Wally would need to be in Albuquerque for eight weeks of treatment with the hope that this would be enough to clear the cancer from his body.

Before Wally's treatments began, the couple visited Casa Esperanza and were very impressed with what the house has to offer. Casa would certainly meet their needs - it is convenient to St. Joseph's, it has fully-equipped kitchens and a clean, well-functioning laundry room. A kitchen was very important, as their restricted diets made it very difficult to eat out. While they have a son who lives in Albuquerque, space is limited and they decided that Casa provided the best lodging alternative during Wally's treatment.

Wally and Marie stayed at Casa Monday through Friday, each week for eight weeks. They would travel home to TorC for the weekends,

checking on their home, mail, friends, etc. But the friends they made during their eight weeks at Casa helped ease the homesickness and made being away a bit more bearable. We also put them both to work! Wally helped with repairs, including closet doors (always a problem) and roof leaks (likewise).

Wally and Marie received very good news last October: cancer clear! So, we don't see them very much any more, just when they're in town for check-ups. They are relishing their good health and have made lots of plans. They recently celebrated the birth of their great grandson, Kevin, and



*Wally and Marie Vollbrecht show off their new great-grandson, Kevin Bryce Mount, born February 21, 2001. Wally and Marie are former residents at Casa Esperanza and return each year for annual check-ups.*

Marie helped with various chores around the house, but she was especially helpful in the kitchen - making sure that everything was in good order, cooking turkeys for resident potluck dinners, among other things. Wally and Marie were always thinking of others in the house, being nurturing and supportive, not just focusing on their own plight. They found great satisfaction in helping and providing for their fellow guests.

of course they love spending time getting acquainted with him. Future plans call for travel to California for an annual reunion with the members of the West Coast Chapter of the 17th Airborne Division, as well as to daily celebrate the life that they have both fought so valiantly for. Although we miss Wally and Marie, we hope to see less of them at Casa Esperanza as time passes.

## 4th Annual Mike Moore Memorial Golf Classic

### *Mark your Calendars!*

Believe it or not, it's that time again, and we are eagerly planning this year's events. We will again hold our banquet extravaganza at the Albuquerque Marriott on Friday, June 1st, and will feature live entertainment and a special master of ceremonies. We will conduct a reverse drawing resulting in a \$10,000 grand prize winner (or \$2500 if the remaining four tickets drawn are each marked "split"). This year's drawing will occur in the Marriott's alcohol-free Library Room prior to the dinner. You may check the boards during the evening to see if you're a winner. Even if you don't win the big prize, you have a good chance to win something, since every 10th ticket drawn is at least a \$100 winner. Tickets, available for \$100 each, will enter you in the drawing AND admit two for dinner. All tickets must be pre-sold, so don't delay.

We will again feature a fabulous silent auction during the banquet, and several items will be auctioned "live" as well. We will offer fine jewelry, fine art, stained glass, vacation packages and much more to tempt you and to coax your money from your pocket.

Those golfers who joined us last year - all 208 of you - will remember what a terrific time we had at Isleta Eagle Golf Course. We will return to Isleta on Saturday, June 2nd, to host a full contingency for a shotgun start, and the "flighted" team

slots are filling fast. We expect a celebrity or two to participate, and you can tune in to KNML 610 Radio - "the Sports Animal" - for details about how you might win a chance to play with one of them. We encourage you to reserve your teams now - the \$85 golf registration fee includes lunch and all the usual goodies. Mulligans are only \$3 each or two for \$5. Of course, we realize that there's none among you who actually need a mulligan!

For information on any of these events, please call Eileen or Maryle at the office, 277-9880, or the Golf Committee Chair, Fred Moore, 864-3651.

Please show your appreciation to our major event sponsors by taking your business to them. They include: WB19-TV and New Mexico's 50 UPN, KNML 610 Radio, Isleta Casino & Resort, Albuquerque Marriott, Valencia County News Bulletin, NM Travertine & Rocky Mountain Stone, Walmart Distribution Center 6084, Bank of Albuquerque, Intel Corporation, Aventis Oncology, First State Bank in Belen. We will publish a complete list of all participating sponsors in Casa's Summer newsletter. Meanwhile, our heartfelt thanks to each and everyone of you who do so much to make the *Mike Moore Memorial Golf Classic & Banquet Extravaganza* such an overwhelming success.



*PGA star and New Mexico native son Notah Begay helps Casa Esperanza guest Michelle Smith open her gift during Notah's visit in December. Notah brought holiday joy to about thirty children when he hosted a holiday story night, where he read stories and played Santa.*

## Cosmopolitan Woman's Club of Albuquerque

by Maryle Jackson Barber

When I joined the staff in 1998 I soon learned of an organization that had been providing financial and volunteer assistance to Casa Esperanza since the beginning. That organization is Cosmopolitan Woman's Club of Albuquerque. I learned that they donated money for different projects and volunteered on certain occasions, but they were not often in the house and I was not quite sure who they really were. A few months later we (Eileen and I) were invited to a member's home for tea and to receive a check of support. Then I met the real Cosmopolitan Women.

I met many women who volunteer in more than one organization and several who volunteer in more than one organization per week. I learned that the organization has only one goal, and that is to be a civic one. Each club is chartered by Congress and must report their donations and volunteer hours. Cosmopolitan Woman's Club was chartered in 1961 and is a member of the New Mexico Federation of Woman's Clubs. Shirley Kerns is the current president, and Jerry Hoffman will become the new president in May.

This particular club is highly diversified. Some of their primary involvement is with the University of New Mexico Hospital, where they provide knitted and crocheted caps, booties and blankets for new babies, volunteer in the Gift Shop and at the Information Desk. They also donate money to the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History for the "Magic Bus" that transports children to the museum. They volunteer at the Women's Housing Coalition; the Rio Grande Zoo and Albuquerque Biological Park as Zoo Parents; Keep New Mexico Beautiful; the Literacy Program at Longfellow Elementary School and, of course, Casa Esperanza.



*Members of the Cosmopolitan Woman's Club of Albuquerque participate in a Shanghai Rummy tournament to raise funds for the group's Civic Fund. The organization has supported Casa Esperanza each year since we opened our doors with money raised through this fund. Left to right: Minnie Shurick, Lila Roswurm, Eileen Bannick, Shirley Kern and Inge Mahl.*

Cosmopolitan Woman's Club has supported Casa Esperanza by donating funds for many projects including our new front desk software to assist residents in the check-in process; funds toward construction of our Memorial Wall, beautiful new backyard and playground; and this year, funds toward replacing worn counter tops in the kitchens, public baths and front office.

How do they raise their funds? Each of the 125 members pays annual dues, but they really get down to business of fund raising by playing bridge, gin rummy and conducting in-house raffles. Each member is also required to volunteer at least 25 hours every year.

After my initial meeting with members of the club, I have had the privilege of working directly with a few specific members.

A different member volunteers each year for the task of helping Casa Esperanza sell Entertainment Books (they sold 40 books this year). There are special women who come and host our Annual Bricklaying Event each May. Then there are the very special women I meet each year at the Annual Tea when they announce the recipients of their donations for that year. What a very nice way to be cared for by these gracious women. Casa Esperanza is very lucky to have such a wonderful relationship with such a terrific group of women. Each member brings her own personal support to Casa Esperanza. Thanks again to Cosmopolitan Woman's Club of Albuquerque. We are able to do what we need to do for our cancer patients and their families because of who you are.



*Members of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity assist in keeping our grounds in top form. The fraternity, whose members volunteer on an "as needed" basis, is one of several fraternities and sororities at UNM who fulfill their community service requirements by volunteering at Casa.*

## Su Casa Statewide Outreach Program

Casa Esperanza Board of Directors is working to expand Casa's reach into the communities we serve throughout the state by enlisting board members from and by joining Chambers of Commerce in those communities. Curry County has sent more than 400 families to stay with us during the past nine years, and we are pleased to announce that Tillie Shaw of Clovis has recently been elected to serve on our Board of Directors. In 1988, the Clovis Board of Realtors hosted the very first

fundraising event to benefit our house, and they have been supporting Casa since that time with annual golf tournaments and art auctions. And Realtor C. Ray Reed performs a one-man triathlon event every five years to celebrate a major birthday and to raise funds in support of the families who stay with us. We are happy to have Curry County as a Su Casa member and look forward to a long partnership with our friends in Clovis and other Curry County communities.

*To learn more about Casa Esperanza's Su Casa Program and how your community can participate, please contact Eileen Cook at 505-277-9880 or [www.casaesperanza.org](http://www.casaesperanza.org).*

*Casa Esperanza* makes every effort to keep our newsletter mailing list up to date. Even so, we are notified from time to time that recipients have moved or that businesses or individuals are receiving duplicate copies. Out-of-date information costs Casa Esperanza additional postage, so we certainly appreciate being notified of any changes in addresses or contact persons.

If, for any reason, you are receiving this newsletter in error, please call Casa Esperanza at (505) 277-9880, email us at [info@casaesperanza.org](mailto:info@casaesperanza.org), or mail the corrected information to:

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