The mission of El Centro Hispano is to assist, support, and strengthen the Hispanic community; to help them become self-sufficient; and to ease their transition into their new culture while maintaining and enriching their own.

El Centro Hispano has accomplished this from 1974 - 2016 by offering a variety of programs and by presenting bilingual and cross-cultural activities throughout the year.

Celebrating 42 years of supporting and strengthening the Hispanic community
HISTORY OF EL CENTRO HISPANO

Supporting and strengthening the Hispanic community for over 42 years

Since its inception in 1974, the guiding light behind El Centro Hispano has been Isabel Villar.

When asked to join members of the Community Action Program in founding an organization designed to assist newly arrived Hispanic immigrants, there was no way Isabel could refuse. Only eight years before, she and her mother and sister had come to the U.S. as political refugees seeking the freedom and opportunities denied them in their native Cuba. As Isabel loves to say, she arrived “with the clothes on her back and a suitcase full of dreams.”

Forced to leave behind her father and brother, Isabel’s early years in this country were not easy. Lonely, disoriented, and with limited English, she felt lost in a big American high school. Convinced, however, that education was the key to her future, she worked hard and eventually won a full scholarship to Manhattanville College. There she blossomed and upon graduation was offered a job as a bilingual teacher in Norwalk, CT. After earning two graduate degrees, Isabel spent many years as a guidance counselor in the Norwalk Public Schools inspiring young people to reach beyond their limits.

Filled with gratitude for all she had been able to achieve in her new life in the U.S., Isabel was eager to help others who found themselves in similar circumstances and so she created El Centro Hispano. Working evenings and weekends, she had to start from scratch. Her youth, inexperience and even her gender presented obstacles she had to overcome.

But, overcome them she did. Starting small with ESL classes and a Girl Scout troop, Isabel learned the importance of developing partnerships with other organizations and institutions, and El Centro Hispano began to offer more and more programs to serve the community.

The addition of Judith Aúcar, a fellow Cuban-American with a very similar background, as Deputy Director in 1978 was a major milestone in El Centro’s early history. Enthusiastic and deeply committed, Judith’s gifts and expertise both complemented and reinforced those of Isabel. Together they accomplished so much more than either could have done alone, and in 2001 El Centro Hispano became an independent non-profit organization with its own Board of Directors.

El Centro Hispano is what it is today because two young Hispanic women wanted to give back to the community that had welcomed and nourished them. Their undying commitment has turned their dream and the dream of thousands who they service into a reality.
About Us

1974 - 2016

In 1973 a number of concerned and compassionate members of the White Plains community met to discuss the growing Hispanic population in White Plains and their urgent need for a variety of social services. After many conversations and numerous meetings, the group, which included the current Executive Director, Isabel E. Villar, formed a charitable organization - El Centro Hispano - dedicated to offering the much-needed services.

Born out of a concerned response to a very real need, El Centro Hispano was established in January 1974 under the auspices of the White Plains Community Action Program in the Chapel Hall at St. Bernard’s Roman Catholic Church. It remained part of the Community Action Program until 2000 when it became a separate entity with its own self-governing Board of Directors. El Centro Hispano is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization.

The area's Hispanic population has grown exponentially since 1974 and so has the need to provide a wider range of programs and services. Over the years El Centro Hispano has continually adapted to meet the ever expanding needs of its clients and every year since its founding, more and more individuals have received direct services at El Centro Hispano.

The 25 programs currently offered by El Centro Hispano are changing the lives of our clients through ... Education, Technology, Support Services, Cultural Events, Outreach, Counseling and Empowerment, and through Special Activities. They include English as a Second Language, High School Equivalency Prep, and computer classes; tutorial and mentoring programs; scholarships to graduating high school seniors; literacy support for our youngest clients; Girl and Boy Scouts troops; educational and informational workshops; bi-monthly food distribution; free legal assistance and a Westchester County Affordable Care Program; sponsorship of cultural events; as well as translation services and assistance in finding housing and looking for a job.
Hispanic Come Full Circle as we celebrate our 42nd anniversary.

In the forty-two years that El Centro Hispano has been serving the Hispanic community of White Plains and Westchester County, thousands and thousands of clients have passed through our doors in one capacity or another. Sometimes we meet an immediate need—help find housing, translate a document, or connect them with someone who can provide legal assistance. However, much of our most important work involves longer-range goals. It is part of our mission to provide the education and support that recently arrived immigrants need to help them adjust to their new life in the United States and to go on to become productive, caring members of society.

As is the case with social service agencies in general, we cannot always know what impact we have made in the lives of particular individuals over the long term. But here at El Centro Hispano we are extremely blessed that many of those whose lives we have touched have continued to stay in contact through the years. It is particularly gratifying to see how many of them have “come full circle”, choosing to give back to the Hispanic community, to reach out to others as someone once reached out to them. Here are a few of their stories.

Aguedo Camacho:
- Now: Owner of a Coca Cola Distribution Company, real estate investor, currently helps with the bi-monthly food distribution and daughter teaches in Early Literacy Program.
- Then: El Centro Hispano’s first student volunteer

Cesar Castro:
- Now: College Junior at Pace University, Computer Instructor, El Centro Hispano
- Then: Began volunteering at El Centro Hispano the very first summer he arrived in the US, tutor for Mi Hermano Mayor, scholarship recipient

Ingrid Ordonez-Street
- Now: Child Life Specialist,
- Then: Girl Scout, scholarship recipient
Keyla Garcia
- **Now:** M.A. in Student Affairs Administration, Director of Marketing/Branding and Adult Educational Programs at El Centro Hispano and Academic Counselor at Westchester Community College.
- **Then:** Office volunteer, outreach worker, teaching assistant for computer classes, scholarship recipient

Laura Florez
- **Now:** B.S in Phycology, Director of Educational Programs, El Centro Hispano and M.S in School Phycology Applicant.
- **Then:** Summer intern from the White Plains Youth Bureau, part-time employment during high school and college, scholarship recipient

Lourdes Lopez- Valle
- **Now:** Vice President of Marketing, Helen of Troy’s Global Beauty and current Board member
- **Then:** Girl Scout, office volunteer, scholarship recipient.

Luis Saiz, Jr.
- **Now:** Senior Architect, City of White Plains Department of Buildings
- **Then:** Scholarship recipient, architect for El Centro Hispano Technology Center

Maria Alfonso
- **Now:** Spanish teacher, Highlands Middle School, White Plains, New York
- **Then:** Scholarship recipient

Rodolfo Ramirez Garcia
- **Now:** Engineer, Account Manager & Outside Sales Representative, SABIC Polymershapes
- **Then:** Recipient of summer camp scholarship, graduate of Culture through Technology course, community service volunteer, instructor for Technology Classes for Adults

Silvana Mazureck
- **Now:** Coordinator, Saturday Academy, El Centro Hispano
- **Then:** Mentor for Mi Hermana Mayor and a mentee in its earlier version, Club Amigas
Changing Lives Through... Education

Scholarship Program

Since 1980, El Centro has awarded $406,650 in scholarship money to 496 deserving high school seniors. In 2016, 8 students benefited from the Scholarship Program. We are extremely proud of our unique program which helps recipients with their post-secondary education. Students who are considered for scholarships must have both a Grade Point Average of 3.0 or higher and involvement in El Centro Hispano. They must complete an application form and write an essay. The essay and the student’s involvement at El Centro play an important role in determining how much money the Scholarship Committee allocates to each recipient.

In addition to the above scholarships, El Centro Hispano has also awarded scholarships to the 14 college students who volunteer in the Lanza My Older Sister/My Older Brother (Mi Hermana Mayor/Mi Hermano Mayor) Mentoring Tutorial Program and Saturday Academy during the 2015-2016 school year. This is the 6th year that the college mentors/tutors have benefitted from these scholarships. El Centro has awarded $179,000 in scholarship money to 115 mentors/tutors.

Previous scholarship recipients have “paid back” their scholarship to El Centro Hispano in many ways - by successfully completing their post-secondary education, by contributing to El Centro Hispano when they begin work after college, and by serving on our Board of Directors (two of our current Board members are former recipients).

Classes in English as Second Language & High School Equivalency Prep

El Centro has offered English classes for adults every Friday evening for 42 years. Presently, thanks to a partnership with BOCES, we offer at the El Centro Hispano Technology Center a daytime BOCES class for adults from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon; two combined evening classes every Thursday and Saturday evening from 6:00-10:00 p.m., and a morning class on Sundays from 8:00 a.m.-12 p.m.

This year, thanks to the generosity of the White Plains Educational Center, we are offering an Advanced Class at their premises Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

We also offer an HSE (High School Equivalency) class in Spanish, Monday - Thursday from 12:00 p.m. to 3 p.m. during the school year. Last year a total of 371 students were enrolled in the day and evening English and HSE classes.

Manhattanville College/El Centro Hispano Tutorial Program

Last year Hispanic students at White Plains High School received academic support during the school year through this tutorial program which was inaugurated in 1989. The program, which helps students successfully complete their studies at the high school, is in place this year also. The students are provided with tutoring; information on career opportunities; and with direct assistance regarding post-secondary educational options, college choices, application procedures, and financial aid. From January through June we had an enrollment of 125 students. From September through December and continuing this year, 96 students are currently enrolled. That
number will increase as the school year progresses. In 2016 the program was funded by the White Plains Public Schools, Manhattanville College and the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

The Lanza My Older Sister - Mi Hermana Mayor Mentoring/Tutorial Program

This mentoring/tutorial program, which was inaugurated in the fall of 2010, pairs 20 sixth grade female Hispanic students at the White Plains Middle School - Eastview Campus with Hispanic “sisters” attending Manhattanville, Lehman, Mercy College, Iona, Manhattan College, Brooklyn College, City College and Westchester Community College as well as White Plains and Scarsdale High Schools. These young women and volunteers encourage the academic success of their “sisters” and support their college aspirations as they tutor them in Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, English Language Arts, French and Spanish. Program participants have community/corporate role models. The program was designed around an environment that values the students’ Latino heritage, culture, and language and demands full parent participation and commitment. It operates three times a week (Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays) from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. during the school year.

It is a collaborative program between El Centro Hispano and the White Plains Public Schools. In 2016 it was funded by HSBC Bank USA, N.A., the Lanza Family Foundation, the Patrina Foundation, Hitchcock Presbyterian Church, County Executive Robert P. Astorino and the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

The Lanza My Older Brother - Mi Hermano Mayor Tutorial Program

Because of the success of The Lanza My Older Sister Program, a similar program was designed to support Hispanic sixth grade boys attending the White Plains Middle School. The program was inaugurated in September 2013 at the Middle School’s Eastview Campus. The program is offered three times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) during the school year from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. It is a collaborative program between El Centro, Archbishop Stepinac High School and the White Plains Public Schools. In 2016 it was funded by HSBC Bank USA, N.A., the Lanza Family Foundation, County Executive Robert P. Astorino and the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

The program pairs 15 sixth grade male Hispanic students with tutors from surrounding colleges, Stepinac High School and White Plains High School. The older tutors encourage the success of their “brothers” and tutor them in Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, English Language Arts, French and Spanish.

The Lanza My Older Sister/Brother – Mi Hermana(o) Mayor Saturday Academy

The Academy, inaugurated in 2012 and redesigned in 2013, is an intensive Saturday tutorial program for middle and high school students from the White Plains Public Schools. It includes focused one-on-one tutoring in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Spanish, and French. Thanks to the generosity of Archbishop Stepinac High School, the Academy was held in their state-of-the-art Computer Room every Saturday from 12 noon to 4:30 p.m. from its inception to June of 2016 when the program was moved to Eastview Middle School.

In 2016, 50 Hispanic seventh through twelfth grade students participated in the tutorial program from January - June. A total of 50 students were enrolled in the program from September - December.
In 2016 the program was funded by HSBC Bank USA, N.A. the Lanza Family Foundation, the Patrina Foundation and Westchester County Executive Robert P. Astorino.

**Summer Literacy Academy**

El Centro Hispano inaugurated a Summer Literacy Academy for Hispanic children in July of 2010. The program offers reading comprehension support and enrichment activities to second and third graders four days a week for two months during the summer. The Academy is divided into two sessions of two hours each: one session for 25 second graders Mondays and Wednesdays and another session for 25 third graders Tuesdays and Thursdays. Since 2014 this program has been housed at Post Road Elementary School, thanks to the generosity of the Post Road staff and the White Plains School System.

The children in the program were selected because their performance in school and on standardized tests demonstrated a need for support in reading. They came from families where the parents were not able to help them because of their own unfamiliarity with English, because they were working several jobs and did not have time to help their children, or because of lapses in their own education. In 2016 the Academy was funded by the Westchester County Youth Bureau and St. Faith’s House Foundation.

**El Centro Hispano Early Literacy Program**

This afterschool program began in January 2013 thanks to the generosity of Sr. St. John Delany, Associate Professor at Pace University’s School of Education and Director of the Center for Literacy Enrichment. It serves 10 kindergarteners and 15 first grade Hispanic students from January through May. The program offers pre-literacy and literacy support two days a week during the school year from 4:30-5:30 p.m. to kindergarten children and two days a week to first graders at Post Road Elementary School.

Several volunteers from El Centro Hispano help with the tutoring. In 2016 it was funded by St. Faith’s Foundation.

**Bilingual Girl Scouts Troop**

This troop, founded in 1974, is one of the oldest continually running programs of El Centro Hispano. In 2016, our Girl Scouts troop was composed of 14 Daisies, 34 Brownies, 27 Juniors, 19 Cadettes, and 7 Seniors for a total of 101 girls. The girls met for two hours every Monday and Tuesday. The Girl Scouts participate in scouting activities and perform countless hours of community service while learning to become better citizens.

**Bilingual Boy Scouts Troop**

In 2016, this troop, which was established in 2005, included 4 Lions, 4 Tigers, 6 Wolves, 6 Webelos, 4 Bears, and 7 Boy Scouts for a total of 31 boys. They meet every Friday for two hours and the children participate in scouting activities, cultural events, and educational programs. Like the Girl Scouts troop, they also perform countless hours of community service while learning to become better citizens.

**Educational Workshops**

Since the early 80’s, educational workshops have been offered to parents of children in the White Plains Public Schools. Planned together with staff from the White Plains Public Schools, the workshops were held on weekday evenings at the Chapel Hall at St. Bernard’s Church. This year parents attended sessions on how to prepare their child for Regents’ exams, the importance of
the exams, college planning, how to apply for financial aid, and post-secondary school options. The workshops were led by school district staff.

In addition to these workshops, parents of all students in all our educational programs are required to attend an orientation training meeting during the year on what steps to take to ensure their children’s academic success.

**Workshops on Other Issues**

Since the 1980’s, El Centro has offered workshops on nutrition, major illnesses affecting Hispanics, domestic violence, rights of immigrants, abused women, the stock market, housing trends, safe communities, investments, and safe banking practices. These workshops have drawn hundreds of community members’ eager to learn.

Representatives of the White Plains Department of Public Safety frequently visit El Centro Hispano’s Computer Classes or come to our bi-monthly food distribution to explain the different services and programs available in Westchester for the victims of domestic violence. Also, representatives from the Food Bank for Westchester, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Center for Vein Restoration, Fidelis Care, and Formé Medical Center and Urgent Care made presentations about their services to the food recipients.

**Internship Program for High School and College Students**

The Internship Program, which began in 1985, has included college students majoring in Spanish from Pace University, Purchase College, Manhattanville College, and Berkeley College. High school students from White Plains High School and Scarsdale High School have also been involved. The program exposes interns to the Spanish language and culture of our clients while working in our social services-oriented environment. Students complete over 100 hours of volunteer service at El Centro and keep a detailed journal of their experience. In 2016 we had 1 intern from Scarsdale Alternative High School.

**Changing Lives Through… Technology**

**Technology Center**

Our state-of-the-art Technology Center has been in constant demand since the first class began there in May, 2009. It advances the workforce training goals of the County Executive Robert P. Astorino and we thank him for his steadfast support.

The Technology Center is open for instruction seven days a week and serves adults, seniors and school-age children. It is equipped with:

- Seventeen computer stations
- One laptop
- One teacher work station
- Interactive whiteboard
- High speed internet access
- Connectivity to the White Plains Public Schools
Computer Classes for Adults and Seniors

Last year El Centro offered 12 computer classes: 2 Beginner, 2 Beginner/Intermediate, 2 Advanced/Intermediate, 2 Access/Beginner, 1 Beginner/Advanced, 1 Advanced Computer Skills class, 1 Accounting, 1 Quickbooks. The 180 students who completed the classes received a certificate at the end of each 64-hour long class that they took and were honored at a special “graduation” ceremony.

Culture through Technology Program

The Culture through Technology Program which began in 2001 met last year on Saturdays at the Technology Center and 20 fourth and fifth graders participated in the program from January - June. 20 students were enrolled in the program from September - December.

Half of the class time is devoted to developing students’ reading ability and to tutoring them and thus strengthening their academic skills. During the rest of the class time, students discuss topics such as: the importance of nutrition, responsibility, bullying, school environment, relationship with parents, manners and etiquette, and global warming. After each discussion, the students talk about how these differ across cultures. Every student develops a project as a culmination of their time in the program. The project demonstrates the students’ technological, academic, and cultural knowledge as a result of taking the class.

In September 2014, to continue helping the students who had participated in the program as 4th graders and were no longer eligible for the program, we added a new component with the purpose of improving their study skills. The 17 5th grade students meet every Saturday from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. at El Centro Hispano’s Technology Center throughout the school year. In this program, students are taught different study strategies and techniques that they can use to improve their academic progress. Some of the topics that are discussed include: how to be organized, the importance of setting short-term and long-term goals, how to improve reading comprehension, test-taking strategies, and many others. In 2016 the program was funded by the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

Changing Lives through... Services

Community Service Program

Every year since 2001, White Plains High School students give back to their community and earn community service hours through the Community Service Program at El Centro. They serve as tutors and translators, distribute flyers for special events, help distribute food, recruit other students and parents to attend events at El Centro, and set up and organize various other activities throughout the year. 80 students registered to perform community service in 2016.

Weekly Bulletin

Since 1974 El Centro Hispano has published a bilingual page in St. Bernard Church’s weekly bulletin to inform the 700 to 850 Hispanic parishioners who attend Mass each Sunday about all the
programs, events, and matters of concern relating to El Centro and the Hispanic community in general.

**Affordable Care Program Assistance**

Since October 2014, a bilingual representative of the Westchester County Department of Health has been on site at El Centro one full day a week to offer our clients free assistance in completing the application paperwork for the Affordable Care Program. **262 clients** were assisted from January to December 2016. Some were referred by El Centro Hispano and others by the Westchester County Department of Health. The representative answered clients’ questions, helped them to complete application forms, and screened them under the New York State Department of Health Marketplace.

**Legal Assistance**

A representative from the Hudson Valley Justice Center comes to our premises every Friday to offer legal advice and representation with legal issues such as house repairs, rent overcharges, harassment and general lease questions. They also provide legal advice and representation to immigrants seeking legal status in the United States and educate and inform immigrants how to exercise their rights without fear or intimidation when dealing with wage theft and worker's rights. In 2016, **323 clients** were assisted.

**Food Distribution**

Last year El Centro distributed **2,100** pounds of bread and bakery products to its clients every Thursday afternoon. This program has been offered since 2011 thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor.

Since 2013, twice a month, El Centro has also been distributing fresh bread, fruits, dairy products, meat, frozen foods, and vegetables to an average of **120 families** each time (averaging **429 individuals**). Through a grant from the Giving Circle of Lower Westchester El Centro purchases food from the Food Bank for Westchester for our clients. Last year the Food Bank truck delivered a total of **94,273 lbs.** of food.

**Dissemination Services**

Because of its closeness to and knowledge of the Hispanic community, El Centro Hispano has been called upon since its inception in 1974 by many agencies and organizations in the City of White Plains, including the local school system, the White Plains Public Library, White Plains Hospital and all the Spanish language newspapers to communicate and disseminate important information or publications to the local Hispanic population.

**Cancer Support**

Since 2008, El Centro has supported **46 White Plains residents** diagnosed with cancer with a range of services including referrals to cancer specialists, assistance in communicating with doctors and hospitals, and/or with modest monetary help. In 2016, **4 individuals** were helped.
Changing Lives through...
Cultural Events

El Centro Hispano’s mission statement specifically calls for our agency to help our families to maintain and enrich their own culture. This is accomplished every year through events that bring families together around food, typical music and dresses from their countries. The events help keep alive our families' ties to their heritage. We participated in the following events that celebrated our clients’ Hispanic heritage: the Westchester County Hispanic Heritage Day event at the Kensico Dam; the Hispanic Day Festival in White Plains, the Three Wise Men celebration and El Día del Niño at St. Bernard’s Church.

Changing Lives Through...
Outreach, Counseling and Empowerment

Thousands of individuals and families come to the center each year seeking assistance in finding housing, looking for a job, completing applications, composing letters, notarizing documents, or having a document translated. We are very grateful for the support we have received from White Plains Mayor Thomas M. Roach, the White Plains Common Council and the White Plains Planning Department for El Centro Hispano’s Core Programs.

In 2016:

- **2,548** new clients came to El Centro Hispano seeking some type of assistance. *
- **5,696** unduplicated clients were served. *
- **5,366** job referrals were made for jobs in White Plains and nearby communities. **1,145** to new clients and **4,221** to repeat clients. *
- **6,652** housing referrals were made for available rooms, apartments, and studios in Westchester. **1,264** to new clients and **5,388** to repeat clients. *
- **607** additional services were provided by our staff. Staff translated or notarized documents; filled out job/school applications; composed letters; and made phone calls on behalf of our clients to doctors, clinics, lawyers, schools, hospitals, employers, landlords, and social service agencies. *
In 2016, El Centro Hispano provided a total of 16,307 services. **

*These numbers were calculated by counting individual client intake records which were completed by staff each time a service was provided. They include some clients who sought El Centro’s assistance on more than one occasion.

**This number was calculated by adding the individual clients for whom client intake records were completed and the clients served at special activities at which individual client intake records were not completed.

Changing Lives through...

Special Activities

January

42\textsuperscript{nd} Celebration of the Three Wise Men. During this celebration, which took place on January 5, the Three Wise Men, represented by Jose Torres, Boy Scout Troop Leader at El Centro Hispano, Federico Guzman, donor and volunteer of El Centro Hispano and Peter Pozo, representative from Food Bank for Westchester, distributed 520 toys donated by Cablevision, Rye Presbyterian Church, White Plains High School Spanish Club, the Archbishop Stepinac High School Football Team, Scarsdale High School Spanish Club, NBC- Telemundo, The Salvation Army White Plains Corps, Toys for Tots, Westchester County Board of Legislators, Fidelis Care, Westchester Futsal, 100 Hispanic Women of Westchester and the Westchester Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

February

Computer Class Graduation. 67 adult students who attended computer classes at the Technology Center from September 2015 – January 2016 received diplomas from elected officials and guest dignitaries on February 3 and were congratulated for completing their course work. The ceremony was followed by a delicious international dinner.

Informative Meeting for Parents of Children in The Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor, Mi Hermano Mayor and Saturday Academy Mentoring/ Tutorial Programs. The purpose of the meeting, which took place on February 7, was to discuss individually with each of the parents in attendance, the academic progress of their child.

March

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of the White Plains Education and Training Center. El Centro Hispano, one of the twelve partners of the White Plains Education and Training Center, participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony on March 10, 2016.

St. Patrick’s Day Parade in White Plains. On March 12, El Centro Hispano’s Boy and Girl Scout troops participated in the parade. Accompanied by their leaders and parents, the boys and girls, dressed in beautiful and colorful uniforms, marched through the streets of White Plains.

College Planning Night. Hispanic parents and their children in eleventh grade participated in this special presentation by the White Plains High School Guidance Department on March 15 at El Centro Hispano. The Hispanic parents who attended the meeting learned about the opportunities available for their children to attend college or other post-secondary institutions.
**Presentation at Scarsdale’s Woman Club.** On March 30th, representatives from El Centro Hispano attended The Scarsdale Woman’s Club Annual meeting to explain El Centro’s services and programs. All 48 attendees received copies of our Annual Report.

**April**

**Special meeting with White Plains Highlands Middle School Staff and other representatives from the White Plains School District.** The staff from Highlands Middle School and other representatives from the school district met with 200 parents and students to explain the services and programs available at the school and the benefits of dual language in today’s society. The meeting took place on April 13th at El Centro.

**Informative Meeting for Parents of Children in The Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor, Mi Hermano Mayor and Saturday Academy Mentoring/ Tutorial Programs.** The purpose of the meeting, which took place on April 30, was to discuss individually with each of the parents in attendance the academic progress of their child.

**El Centro Hispano Early Literacy Program Graduation.** On April 29 all participating students and their parents attended this special celebration at which students were presented with Achievement Certificates. Parents were delighted with their child’s academic progress, and at the end of the presentation, everyone enjoyed a variety of appetizers provided by the families.

**First Annual Celebration of El Día del Niño.** This event, held on Saturday, April 30 was sponsored by El Centro Hispano and MVP Health Care with the collaboration of Danny’s Cycles, Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson. Boy Scouts of America Westchester - Putnam Council and the White Plains Department of Public Safety. The participating children enjoyed free bicycle raffles, a bicycle obstacle course, demonstrations from the White Plains Department of Public Safety, free food, beverages and many fun activities which included music and contests.

**May**

**El Centro Hispano’s 42nd Anniversary Gala.** The celebration of El Centro Hispano’s 42nd anniversary was a night to remember. This very special Gala was held at the famous Rockefeller Family Estate Playhouse in Pocantico Hills on May 14. Thanks to an invitation by the Rockefeller Family to use this venue, all who attended were able to enjoy a wonderful evening in a beautiful and historic setting overlooking the Hudson River.

In addition to commemorating their continued service to the Hispanic community of the White Plains/Westchester County area, El Centro Hispano chose to honor several individuals who have been enthusiastic supporters not only of El Centro Hispano but also of the community at large.

Rachel and George Gumina, two philanthropists and humanitarians and members of the Rockefeller family, were honored for their service which includes assisting the disadvantaged, improving community services, and protecting human rights and the environment. Rachel and George Gumina are not only generous donors to El Centro Hispano but have also assisted El Centro Hispano in finding sources of support for its many services.

The Lanza Family Foundation was the special honoree of the evening. Following the footsteps of their late mother Pat Lanza, the Lanza sons were one of the major sponsors of the Gala. For years, the Lanza Family Foundation has helped El Centro Hispano carry out its mission of serving the Hispanic community.

Another honored guest of the evening was Ann Rockefeller Roberts who has been active in helping fund many grassroots organizations focusing on the environment, human rights and social issues.
She is also the author of a book about the Rockefeller Family home at Kykuit which was given to all attendees as a token of appreciation.

State Senator George Latimer served as master of ceremonies for this amazing event which included a delicious meal catered by Two Carrot Catering. Music for the black tie affair was provided by the Mambo Blue International Band.

El Centro Hispano is extremely grateful to its Gala sponsors, especially to the Rockefeller family and the Lanza Family Foundation. The major sponsors of the Gala were: Platinum: Rachel and George Gumina; Diamond: The Lanza Family Foundation; Ruby: The Generoso Pope Foundation; Silver: Apple Bank for Savings; Cabanillas and Associates; Ronny and Jeffery Hersch; Ann Rockefeller Roberts; Isabel E. Villar and H. Judith Aucar; Brady and Goldberg; Evelyn and Herbert Hadad; Lisa and John Manuele, Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, Kimberly and Steven Rockefeller Jr.; Bronze: Center for Vein Restoration; New York Presbyterian Hospital; Paraco Gas Corporation; The Westchester Bank; Forme Rehabilitation, Inc; PKF O’Connor Davies; People’s United Bank; White Plains Hospital; and the new Family Circle Donors: Aguedo Camacho; Linda A. Ellis; Frank L. Lanza; Katerine Moore; Joyce and David Rheingold; Westchester Knicks; Eric V. Eitel; Lucy Harrington; Dr. and Mrs. John Lyden; Fred and Alice Perkins; Donald W. Stever.

Special Presentation on the Importance of Regents’ Exams. On May 18, Hispanic students from White Plains High School and their parents attended a special meeting at El Centro Hispano with science teacher Robert Petingi who discussed the importance of the Regents’ Exams and how to prepare for them.

Lois Bronz Children’s Center Awards Dinner. At this event which took place on May 26, Isabel E. Villar was presented with the Lois Bronz Leadership Award for Vision and Outstanding Service to Children. In addition, El Centro Hispano was awarded the Lois Bronz Children’s Center Community Service Award for the broad spectrum of services provided to all age groups for the last 42 years.

Hispanic Heritage Night at Yankee Stadium hosted by NYC Football Club. Cabanillas and Associates invited El Centro Hispano’s staff, the Board of Directors, Mayor Tom Roach and this year’s scholarship winners to their private suite to enjoy the match between the Orlando Soccer Club and the NYC Football Club on Sunday, May 29th.

June

Computer Class Graduation. 65 adult students who attended computer classes at the Technology Center from February 2016 - May 2016 received diplomas from elected officials and guest dignitaries on June 2 and were congratulated for completing their course work. The ceremony was followed by a delicious international dinner.

Presentation of El Centro Hispano’s Scholarships at the White Plains High School Awards Ceremony. This ceremony took place on June 7 at the high school and 8 Hispanic seniors received a total of $17,500 in El Centro Hispano scholarships in recognition of their academic achievement and involvement with El Centro Hispano.

El Centro Hispano’s Scholarship Presentation. On Thursday, June 16th, Cabanillas & Associates, P.C. and El Centro Hispano honored twenty-two students and graduates from the White Plains area for high academic achievement and strong community leadership. Eight of the recipients were graduates from White Plains High School and fourteen were college students who have served as tutors/mentors in El Centro’s Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor/Mi Hermano Mayor (My Older Sister/Older Brother) Tutorial Mentoring Program and Saturday Academy.

In addition to the outstanding students and their families, attendees of the event included El
Centro Hispano Board members, staff, volunteers and supporters, and the White Plains School District Director of the World Language and ELL Programs Lisa Panaro. A special appearance was made by La Mega 97.9’s DJ Tony Sanchez a.k.a. “El Tiburon”.

All the attendees enjoyed an unforgettable evening at the Cabanillas & Associates, P.C. Penthouse. This is the second year that Cabanillas & Associates, P.C. have generously donated to El Centro Hispano’s Scholarship fund and hosted this magnificent event.

**Closing Ceremony of The Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor and Mi Hermano Mayor Saturday Academy**
On June 18, El Centro recognized the students who participated in The Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor, Mi Hermano Mayor and Mi Hermana/Mi Hermano Mayor Saturday Academy Tutorial/Mentoring Programs. Tutors and volunteers were recognized for their service, dedication, and commitment. After the ceremony 230 people enjoyed a delicious international luncheon prepared by all the parents in appreciation for the academic help their children received during the school year.

**Mobile Ecuadorian Consulate.** The mobile Ecuadorian Consulate came to El Centro Hispano on June 25 to provide services usually offered at the Consulate in New York City and Queens to the Ecuadorian community of White Plains and surrounding towns. The mobile Consulate assisted more than 100 Ecuadorians. The New York State General Consul and the Secretary of State of Ecuador presented Mayor Thomas Roach with a typical souvenir from Ecuador and a plaque in appreciation for what the city does to help the Hispanics in White Plains. El Centro Hispano also received a token of appreciation for their services to the Hispanic community.

**July**

**Hispanic Heritage Day at the Kensico Dam.** El Centro Hispano co-sponsored this event on July 17 with Neighbors Link of Mt. Kisco, the United Community Center of New Rochelle and the Community Resource Center of Mamaroneck and Larchmont. This festival gives non-profit organizations an opportunity to make themselves and their services known to the large number of Hispanics who come to enjoy a day of typical music, food, and international crafts. Police estimated that approximately 12,000 individuals were in attendance.

**August**

**Maritime Center Trip.** On August 13, 22 children and 3 adults visited the Norwalk Maritime Center. The children enjoyed a day full of excitement and unforgettable educational experiences. The trip was made possible by funds received from St. Faith’s Foundation and by the generosity of the Maritime Center, which gave us a substantial discount.

**Cabanillas and Associates Distribution of School Supplies to children in Kindergarten -6 grade participating in El Centro Hispano’s educational programs.** On August 25, Cabanillas and Associates hosted a special park celebration to welcome the new school year with pizza and refreshments. The 102 children who attended the celebration not only received school supplies, but also were delighted by the guest appearance of the renowned soccer player Federico Bravo of the New York City Football Club.
**September**

**Gift Card Distribution to purchase school supplies for children in El Centro Hispano Girl and Boy Scouts Troops.** Thanks to the generosity of Lucille and Richard Fontana, El Centro Hispano was able to distribute 40 Target gift cards with a value of $30.00 each to the children in the Scout troops. The distribution took place on Friday, September 2 and 9.

**Fidelis Care and New York Liberty Award to Caring New Yorkers.** Fidelis Care and the New York Liberty honored four individuals with the Caring New Yorker award on September 13 at Madison Square Garden. Honorees were each presented a commemorative plaque during the New York Liberty versus Washington Mystics game. The Caring New Yorker award honors community leadership and commitment to caring for those in need. One of the honored Caring New Yorkers was Isabel Villar who has shown great dedication to enhancing the lives of children and families.

**Training and Introductory Meeting for The Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor, Mi Hermano Mayor and Saturday Academy Mentoring/Tutorial Programs.** On September 10 mentors, tutors, and volunteers in these programs received a half day of training. The same day, students and parents were informed about the regulations of the program along with the required commitment and responsibilities. The 50 children in the Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor/Mi Hermano Mayor Saturday Academy also received school supplies from Cabanillas and Associates.

**Annual Health Fair.** White Plains Hospital, in collaboration with El Centro Hispano, Slater Center, and Calvary Church, sponsors this health fair every year in order to provide members of the community with a complete check-up at no cost. Informational materials were available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. 298 African Americans, Haitians and Hispanics registered to benefit from the many medical exams offered at the fair which took place this year on Saturday, September 17th.

**Training and Introductory Meeting for the Culture through Technology and Study Skills Program.** On Saturday, September 17, all students of the Culture through Technology and Study Skills Program and their parents attended a special workshop in which they were trained and informed about the objectives and expectations of the programs.

**Hispanic Day Festival in White Plains.** El Centro Hispano staff served on the committee that organized and ran this important cultural event, which took place on September 18 at the Eastview campus of the Middle School. About 3,000 adults and children enjoyed traditional music from many countries, folkloric dances, games, and various Hispanic foods that were for sale.

**The Early Literacy Program at Post Road Elementary School and The Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor and Mi Hermano Mayor Mentoring/Tutorial Programs at Eastview Middle School Opening.** The official opening of these programs for Kindergarten, first and sixth grade students took place on Monday, September 19.

---

**October**

**Computer Class Graduation** 48 adult students who attended computer classes at the Technology Center from June 2016 - October 2016 received diplomas and were congratulated for completing their course work by elected officials and guest dignitaries on October 13. The ceremony was followed by a delicious international dinner.
IAHD salutes those who make a difference. Isabel E. Villar was honored at the 2016 Annual Richard P. Biondi Corporate Recognition Awards Breakfast for her dedication and commitment to helping the Hispanic community in Westchester for the last 42 years.

**November**

Celebration of Isabel’s 50th Anniversary as a member of the St. Bernard’s Church parish and the Spanish Choir. On November 14, Isabel Villar was praised and recognized by Father Morris for her contributions to the St. Bernard’s community. All 353 attendees enjoyed a delightful afternoon of music by the International Group Mambo Blue and feasted on delicious Mexican tortas and empanadas.

The Lanza Mi Hermana Mayor, Mi Hermano Mayor and Saturday Academy Programs’ Student Progress Meeting. On November 19 the Director of Children’s Educational Programs and the coordinators of these programs met with each of the parents in attendance to discuss individually the academic progress of their child.

**December**

White Plains High School Financial Aid Workshop. The White Plains High School Guidance Department sponsored this event in cooperation with El Centro Hispano. It took place on December 8.

Distribution of knitted hats to students in our Early Literacy Class, Culture through Technology and Study Skills programs. 62 students received a hat knitted by a volunteer group at Our Lady of Sorrows Church. We are very grateful to all of them for making our children’s holyday celebration so special.

Distribution of food vouchers thanks to the generosity of Fidelis Care. 25 needy families benefitted from a $15 voucher distributed on December 15 to help them with their holiday food expenses. The vouchers were raffled to families participating in our Educational Programs and also to senior citizens who participate in El Centro Hispano’s food distribution.

***
Board of Directors

Cecilia Bikkal, Esq., President
Nicholas Wolff, Vice President
Dr. Scott MacDonald, Treasurer
Luz H. Barrera, Secretary

Chris Cabanillas, Esq.
Hon. Larry Delgado
Lucille Fontana, Esq.
Lourdes Lopez Valle
Dr. Scott MacDonald
Teresita Wisell
Leslie Zane

Robin Bikkal, Esq., President Emeritus
Maria Amado, Media Specialist

***

Administrative Staff

Isabel E. Villar, Founding Executive Director
H. Judith Aucar, Deputy Director
Claudia Málaga - Chief of Operations
Laura Floréz - Director of Children’s Educational Programs
Keyla Garcia - Director of Marketing/Branding and Adult Educational Programs
Jennifer Abreu - Administrative Assistant
El Centro Hispano’s Family Circle

Our most sincere gratitude to the following members of El Centro Hispano Family Circle. Their special contributions of $500 or more in 2016 has helped us tremendously to carry out our mission:

Jean Marie Arduino
Robert H. Arnow
Robin Bikkal
Brady and Goldberg
Betsy Broyd
Betsy and Steven Bush
Christopher Cabanillas, Esq.
Aguedo Camacho
Millie and Elizardi Castro
Leo J. Corbett
Catherine and John Cronin
Anita y Larry Delgado, Esq.
Eric V. Eitel
Linda A. Ellis
Rosa Fonseca
Lucille and Richard Fontana, Esq.
Rachel and George Gumina
Avelino Gutierrez
Federico Guzman
Evelyn and Herbert Hadad
Lucy Harrington
Jeffrey and Ronny Hersch
Libby and Tom Hollahan
Gary Katz
Mary Helen Jordan
Anthony Lanza
Louie Lanza
Frank L. Lanza
Joel Laitman
Lourdes Lopez Valle
Hon. Nita M. Lowey
Mr. and Mrs. John Lyden
Dr. Scott B. MacDonald
David and Rosemary Mace
Lisa and John Manuele
Katherine Moore
Anita Nordal and Kevin Conroy
Frederick and Alice Perkins
Clare Pierson & Peter Humphrey
Yvonne and Leslie Pollack
Jean and Henry Pollak
Joyce and Paul Rheingold
Ann Rockefeller Roberts
Annette Rotter PhD
Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky MD
Mark Stagg
Richard E. Stout
Donald W. Stever
Maria Trusa
Dorothy and Jonathan Schere
Nicholas Wolff
Acknowledgements

We give thanks to our wonderful volunteers, to all those who have helped us in the past 42 years to accomplish our mission to assist, support, and strengthen the Hispanic community.

Our sincere appreciation also goes out to the following special benefactors and collaborators - private, corporate, and governmental - for their help this past year.

Apple Bank for Savings  
Astoria Bank  
Archbishop Stepinac High School  
Archbishop Stepinac High School Athletic Department  
Bet Shalom Synagogue  
Boy Scouts of Westchester and Putnam  
Cablevision  
Calvary Baptist Church  
Center for Vein Restoration  
Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation  
Fidelis Care  
Food Bank for Westchester  
Formé Medical Center and Urgent Care  
Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson  
Giving Circle of Westchester  
Hitchcock Presbyterian Church  
Honorable Amy R. Paulin  
Honorable George Latimer  
Honorable Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive  
Honorable Thomas Roach, Mayor of the City of White Plains  
HSBC Bank USA, N.A.  
Katherine and David Moore Foundation  
LPL Financial  
Lanza Family Foundation  
Manhattanville College  
MVP/Hudson Health Plan  
New York Presbyterian Hospital  
Our Lady of Sorrows' Gladhatters  
Paraco Gas Corporation  
Kevin Plunkett, Westchester Deputy County Executive  
Patrina Foundation  
People’s United Community Foundation  
PKF O’Connor Davies  
Play Group Theatre  
Post Road Elementary School, Rye Presbyterian Church  
Scarsdale High School Spanish Club  
Scarsdale Woman’s Club  
St. Bernard’s Catholic Church, White Plains  
St. Faith’s House Foundation  
The Generoso Pope Foundation  
The Salvation Army/White Plains Corps  
The Westchester Bank  
Thomas H. Slater Community Center  
Toy for Tots  
Westchester Community College  
Westchester Community Foundation  
Westchester County Office for Women  
Westchester County Youth Bureau  
White Plains Planning Department  
White Plains School System, White Plains Middle School - Eastview Campus  
White Plains High School  
White Plains Hospital  
White Plains Woman’s Club

We sincerely apologize to any individual or group of individuals whom we have inadvertently omitted from this list.
El Centro Hispano, Inc.
346 South Lexington Avenue
Isabel Elsa Villar Boulevard
White Plains, New York 10606
914.289.0500
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 12 noon-7 p.m.

Educational Programs at the Technology Center
Mondays and Wednesdays - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays - 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Saturdays - 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Sundays - 8:00 a.m. - 12 p.m.
elcentrohispano1@gmail.com
www.elcentrohispano.org

El Centro Hispano, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization.