Dear Community,

Before I take time to reflect on the past year, first, I would like to acknowledge the pain and losses that each one of us have experienced since the onset of the pandemic. It is my desire to be present for each one of you and share a moment of silence. As life goes on, we learn to accept and celebrate the many gifts that life gives us every day.

The best gift our center could have ever received is the support of the community. This includes all the loyal donors who have thoroughly believed in our mission and vision, our diverse board of directors, our staff and leadership team who have dedicated themselves in heart and soul to serving our families, and of all our partners who have worked with us during these difficult times.

The Family Center/La Familia is one of 33 family resource centers across the state and is a member of the Family Resource Center Association. Since last year we began working on a strategic plan around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion under the sponsorship of the Colorado Health Foundation and with the guidance of the Colorado School of Public Health’s Center for Public Health Practice.

Through this initial work we identified four critical strategies to be implemented in the coming years. These strategies include:

a) The creation of equitable networks of care to ensure that any family using our programs receives the appropriate support to meet their needs.

b) The second priority is the integration of culturally rooted strategies that provide solutions from the origin rather than offering solutions from a position of power.

c) The third is the creation of a culture of care at the organizational level to eradicate inequities, create awareness and educate, because we know that change begins from within.

d) The last one involves the integration of best practices and principles of equity to staff’s performance goals.

We know numbers are just numbers, what really counts is the impact we make on our community and our families. We know we have succeeded when families attain the support they need to continue their progress and gain a sense of belonging.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who has supported me in this new leadership challenge in one of the most difficult times. I am proud to be the first Latina to serve our community through this wonderful center that is La Familia!

With gratitude,

Gloria Kat
(She/Ella)
OUR PROGRAMS

Since 1995, The Family Center/La Familia has served as Larimer County’s only early childhood and family resource center. Our center provides high quality early childhood education (ECE) to children whose parents work and attend school, extensive crisis response and family support services as well as leadership and policy opportunities to families annually.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM “EL NIDITO”

The Early Care and Education Program is dedicated to providing safe, stimulating and nurturing education for young children. Our program, is a state licensed, Colorado Shines Rated, School Readiness site. With our curriculum we encourage learning through exploration and discovery, and we enable children to develop confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills that will support them throughout their lives. We utilize the evidence-based assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD, which shows children’s progress in all learning domains and all age groups.

OUR IMPACT

Childcare has been one of the industries hit hardest by the COVID-19, further exacerbating issues that existed prior to the pandemic. Significant public investment is required to create a stable and skilled workforce. Despite a temporary closure of onsite operations at the start of the pandemic, our El Nidito early care and education center has remained open with only minimal disruptions since June of 2020. During the fiscal year 20-21, we served 68 children from 56 different families.

The Pyramid model, an evidence-based program to promote the social and emotional competencies of children, continues to be an effective approach to fostering positive and nurturing relationships and addressing behavioral issues inside and outside the classroom. Implementation of the Pyramid model is made possible through the support of the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County (ECCLC), and in collaboration with other community partners. This model has shown that through creating nurturing and responsive environments, children can develop positive social and emotional skills. We are currently working to secure funds to continue this intervention that has proven to be highly effective particularly in these times of constant change.
68 Children, representing 56 families served in 2020–2021

Development of Employee Wellness program, intended to provide educators with consistent classroom supports

100% of educators participating in Reflective Practice

100% of educators trained in and receiving coaching around Pyramid Model
"This building has become our home and the people within are our second family."

"Thank you for all the hard decisions that need to be made over the past year. The staff at the center have been nothing except welcoming, generous and supportive; despite what I can only imagine has been challenging situations for them. I know my child's safety, and staff safety is top priority and that has made this entire year so much easier. Thank you for creating this environment. The Family Center is a special place. Thank you."

"It is the best childcare center."

"Our son is excited every morning when we pull into the parking lot. He is so loved and cared for here. It's really such a great peace of mind for a parent. Knowing he's being exposed to diverse languages and cultures too."

"I love El Nidito. It was recommended to me and it was the best decision I've made. The staff is great and I've seen my daughter learn so much and she feels so happy and excited to attend."

"I highly recommend it because my children are happy when I pick them up. They get a lot of help with their education and manners."

"It's clear that the teachers and staff care so much about the kids here. It truly feels like a family."
Our bilingual team utilizes evidence-based interventions such as Motivational Interviewing and the Colorado Family Support Assessment Tool (CFSA 2.0) to provide home and community-based family strengthening services. The team works with families to develop goals that promote well-being and offer culturally attuned bilingual support to navigate community resources, provide parent education, emergency assistance funding, social support to address basic needs, mental health, health care, adult education, government benefits information, children’s developmental and learning needs.

**OUR IMPACT**

Our family support program is working at full capacity, helping families on how to access community services and financial supports. More than $27,000 have been earmarked to support housing stability through rent payment and eviction prevention.

103 Families enrolled in Family Strengthening Program

86 families utilized our advocacy closet to obtain diapers and hygiene items

500 families received utility assistance for $240,000

42 families attended car seat classes

557 HOUSEHOLDS SERVED IN 2020
COVID-19 RESPONSE
In collaboration with the Larimer County Department of Health & Environment, our center serves as a COVID-19 vaccination site for anyone in need. More than 300 people have received the vaccine at our center! This work is made possible with the support of the Bohemian Foundation and Caring for Colorado.

HOLIDAY SEASON
We are truly grateful for our partners, congregations, and our board of directors for providing gifts during the holiday season to 325 children through the adopt-a-family program! Thank you Foothills Unitarian Church, Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church, Genesis Project, Toys for Tots, Realities for Children and Clothes Pony!

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
This year we conducted relevant work around mental health. We offered 10 information sessions and classes to raise awareness of the importance of mental health in the Latinx community. Thanks to the sponsorship of Larimer County Behavioral Health Services 35 families have participated in different informational classes on self-care, parenting adolescents, trauma and how to talk about loss of loved ones with children. In addition, 16 community members will complete Mental Health First Aid training in Spanish gaining the skills to support mental health needs in their community.

Thanks to the dedication of a multidisciplinary Task Force, we have identified gaps in mental health services and are preparing a report that includes a qualitative assessment of the main mental health needs in our community.
“Thank you each and every one for the growth opportunities you give us, as parents as well as part of the community, for every learning opportunity and for helping us with activities for us and our children, thank you family center for being part of us as a community, we are all FAMILY.”

“We feel very happy because we always find the support we need, they have really helped us a lot and I thank them infinitely!! The services they offer are excellent for us!!”

“Good resources, excellent customer service.”

“The Family Center has been for me and my family a point of support, as they have offered us information and guidance in all aspects, plus I consider all the girls who work in the family part of my family for how kind they are!”

“Thank you to the Family Center for the great support I have had for my family with my children and all the supports we have had in general and the staff who are very friendly.”

“Staff has always been very friendly and are willing to help, even outside of their work schedules and at any time, that is amazing, and I appreciate it very much. My family has been blessed for 13 years by this wonderful place and I really don't know another like it, or I wouldn't know where to turn in case of a problem that comes my way. And I've felt confident to always refer other members of the community and they're really satisfied. I can't imagine what my life would be like without this place.”
Mi Voz is dedicated to making positive changes in mobile home parks and the North College corridor by utilizing community strengths to create community solutions. Mi Voz builds on the desires and strengths of the Spanish speaking community.

Three pillars guide and inform Mi Voz:

**Community-Led**: Utilizing community-led principals work is informed and guided by community leaders. By ensuring issues and solutions are community based we not only address needs, we amplify the strengths of the community.

**Civic Engagement/Advocacy**: Working alongside community members to shape the community around them through engaging with elected officials, participating in public input, and mobilizing voices to make changes.

**Leadership Development**: Providing and connecting community members to leadership development opportunities, including the Leadership Lab, to support community work.
OUR IMPACT
The Mi Voz program has been dedicated to providing the technical assistance necessary for residents of mobile park communities to acquire leadership skills and improve their neighborhoods. This year we witnessed the results of effective civic engagement policies that have strengthened communication between communities and governing bodies. The establishment of such positive dialogues has led to the rezoning of six mobile parks within the city of Fort Collins.

Building on our commitment to leadership development, this year we launched the Leadership Lab. A program designed to strengthen leadership and collaboration skills of participants to be engaged fully in creating more inclusive communities where families can thrive. In partnership with the Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI), 13 participants completed over 30 hours of training, discussions, and collaborative work to graduate this summer. Graduates are now preparing to implement projects in their community. Projects ranging from addressing mental health, wellness and movement, and improving community safety in mobile home parks. We thank CSU Extension and FLTI for their support.

Community leaders and residents continue to talk and plan for a Community Center that would be representative of the culture and spirit of the diverse Latinx community for future generations to enjoy and value.

Increased participants’ skills, knowledge and confidence to advocate for change

Decreased toxic stress by protecting residents’ rights

Increased flow of information, advocacy, and civic engagement with Larimer County Commissioners, Fort Collins City Council, and Poudre School District Board

Preservation of Mobile Home Parks through the adoption of Mobile Home Park Zoning by City Council

100% of participants reported Mi Voz increases their motivation to engage in initiatives in their communities, focused on solving common problems.
“Mi Voz has encouraged me to start projects not only within Mi Voz, but also with the MHP offices in order to achieve bigger progress in the community.”

“Mi Voz encourages me to take action because they give us the tools and information that we need to succeed”.

“I have felt that since I am part of the Mi Voz program I have grown as an individual, and I feel more confident when asking about how can I collaborate to improve my community”.

“One of the strengths of the Mi Voz program is bringing more diverse voices to important public dialogues in Larimer County. The diversity of voices and talking through Community challenges is a strength that is solely attributed to Mi Voz.”

“Because of Mi Voz, elected officials know us and support us. One of the elected officials we connected with is now a county commissioner. I think that will carry on into county policy initiatives, because of their experience with what we’ve done in the city with mobile home park preservation and because of those relationships that were built between Mi Voz staff, residents, and elected officials.”
Thanks to the support of the Colorado Department of Health and Environment and the Colorado Health Foundation, 16 members of our community are certified as Community Health Workers or Promotoras. A Promotora is a well-known and respected member of the community who works within their community to provide necessary resources, advocacy and services.

Promotoras strengthen the capacity of Latinx communities to identify problems, remove barriers, propose locally defined solutions, inform policies, change organizational practices and improve individual and community health outcomes.

In collaboration with Fuerza Latina, the Promotoras conducted important work distributing information and education on eviction prevention clinics and connecting families with resources for rent payments. This year the Promotoras will be key to address vaccine hesitancy, food access, and mental health among the Latinx population.
Last year we raised $1,809,929 to support our programming. As always, we are profoundly grateful and would like to recognize the support received from the State of Colorado, the Larimer County government, the City of Fort Collins, the Poudre School District, as well as public and private foundations, service clubs, businesses, service providers, contractors, event sponsors, and individual and corporate donors. There is no small donation as long as it serves to fulfill our mission! While it was not possible to meet in person, Christine Forster with My Big Day Marketing & Events created vibrant online fundraiser events, which boosted our individual donors and event revenue.
As added incentive for our donors, monetary donations also qualify for the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit, which offers an additional credit up to 50% on an individual’s state income taxes. With your support, we can grow our non-profit program, allowing parents to work/attend school, afford childcare, receive resources and assistance, and pay fair wages to our valuable staff.
On December 9th, we were presented with the Human Relations Award under the Organization’s category. For over two decades, the Human Relations Award has recognized the remarkable contributions Fort Collins residents have made to support minority and disadvantaged community members. What an honor!

On May 27th, our center was included on BizWest’s 2021 Mercury 100 list as one of the fastest-growing private companies in Flight 4 of Northern Colorado!
Every day our team brings the best of their skills and talents, this translates into diversity in the workforce. We are proud to have a robust benefit package that includes, health, vision, and dental insurance, retirement contribution options, supplemental disability and accident insurance, generous paid time off for vacation, sick, and holidays, and flexible working schedules and conditions to navigate the pressures of the pandemic. This past year we were also able to add the Employee Assistance (EAP) program, which provides all staff and their immediate household access to 8 free sessions of mental health services, limited free consultation for financial and legal matters, and discounted pricing for more advanced services.

Recently three members of the staff received an E-bike, thanks to a grant from the city of Fort Collins through their FC Moves program. This is an important contribution to the environmental impact study to reduce greenhouse emissions.

Last year, our facility turned into a “happy facility” with the installation of a new storage shed thanks to the generosity of our donors. We also upgraded our facility to LED Lighting through the Efficiency Works program and our local utilities.

We cannot fail to mention the wonderful work that our Chef and Kitchen Manager in collaboration with board members, local businesses and volunteers have done in our community garden. Trees, seeds, materials and hours of work were donated to make the garden a safe and green place where children learn and play, the produce returns to the kitchen and to the plates of our families.

Finally, we want to thank all of YOU who always think of La Familia and have donated face masks, protective equipment, period kits, healthy homes kits, Christmas toys, gift cards, woven hats, manual activities, recreation passes, and books in Spanish such as the elementary school collections donated by the Consulate of Mexico in Denver, Theresa Funke, United Mailing, Nancy M. and Douglas Yeager Family Foundation and many more!

Thank you,
The Family Center/La Familia
OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Melanie Holzner
Beth Jaeger
Dan Ordaz
Emma Goulart
Latoya Noel
Maria Naumburg
Vanessa Fewell
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