

El Encuentrolero

EDITION 3 * SUMMER 2021 * HOME AND BELONGING

Letter from our Executive Director

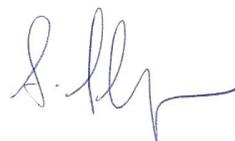


Encuentro has represented “home” for hundreds of immigrants since we opened our doors in 2010. *Un hogar*, made by and with immigrants, where together we celebrate culture, language and learning.

For individuals who have come to New Mexico alone, we have formed a new family. For those struggling to support their families, we have pulled our collective resources together. For those whose dreams were temporarily lost to survival, we have sparked a new flame of possibility, regardless of age, gender or status.

As we close out this academic year with two semesters of online distance learning behind us and over 14 months of no in-person contact (no hugs, no high fives, and definitely no potlucks!), I can honestly say Encuentro managed to create an online home thanks to the commitment and hard work of over 125 students and teachers. Now, with the hope and excitement of coming together again, we are making plans for a new kind of home – one that we can call our own and that allows Encuentro to set roots, grow, and blossom like never before.

In this edition, we are excited to share BIG news... the purchase of our first building. We believe this decision will grow immigrant power in our community through ownership, increased visibility and broader impact. Deep appreciation to everyone who has already provided seed money for this endeavor, and we invite you all to learn more about our plans and invest in this collective dream to build a new home for Encuentro!



Andrea Plaza
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Our Mission

Encuentro's mission is to transform New Mexico into a thriving community for all of its residents by engaging with Latino immigrant families in education and career development opportunities that build skills for economic and social justice.

To support Encuentro's mission, fuel educational and career opportunities for immigrant adults, or the purchase of a new home, GIVE TODAY.

Make your donation at encuentronm.org



**There's
no place
like
home!**

By Ilse Grijalva and Julia Cusatis



For many, home is a place of belonging and security, something particularly complex for our immigrant community, for whom “home” is translocated. There is the home they left behind and the new one they hope to create. Unfortunately, for many immigrants, feeling at home and welcome is challenged by language barriers, social isolation, and discrimination.

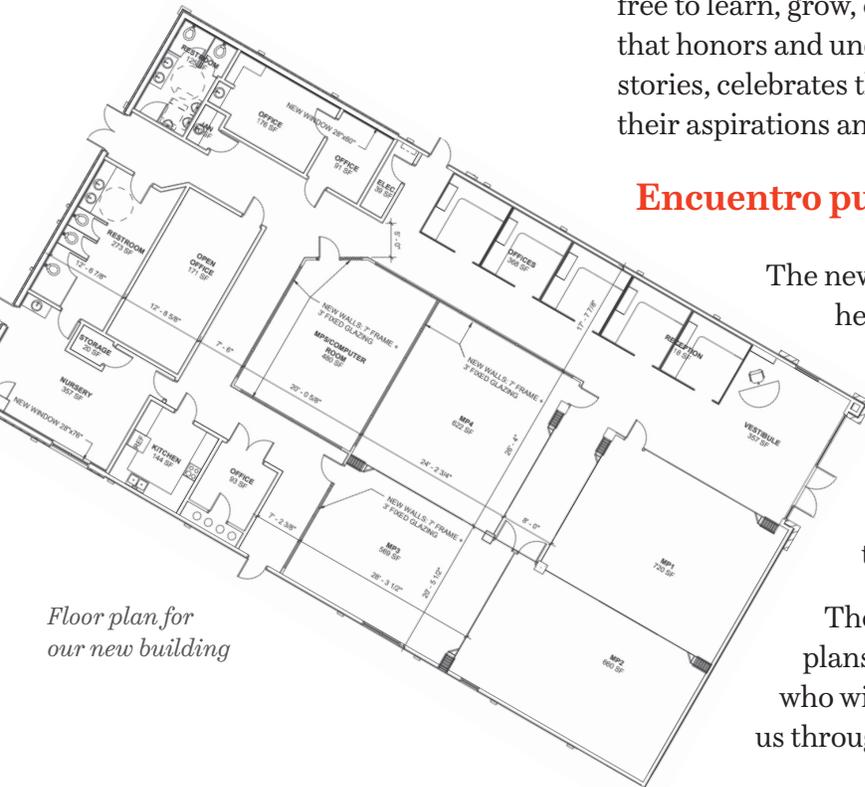
For our students, Encuentro is a home-away-from-home where they are free to learn, grow, connect with community and turn in a crisis. A place that honors and understands their lived experiences, amplifies their stories, celebrates their resilience, recognizes their sacrifice and elevates their aspirations and dreams.

Encuentro purchased a new home!

The new building, located at 907 4th Street SW, is in the heart of Albuquerque’s Barelas neighborhood. It is 7200 square feet and will expand the number of classrooms to five, accommodate all of Encuentro’s programs, on site childcare, offices for our growing staff, and provide satellite offices to partner organizations offering essential resources to our immigrant families for years to come.

The architectural drawings are complete, renovation plans are ready to go, and we have secured the contractor who will guide the remodel process, which we expect to take us through the end of the year.

In the months to come, we will share ways to get involved, schedule building tours, and provide progress updates. **Until then, thank you for your generous support of Encuentro and our immigrant families!**



Floor plan for our new building



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Maria de Jesus Gallardo

Maria de Jesus Gallardo, an Encuentro student for over 3 years and active community member, has participated in ESL, Computer Literacy, and graduated from the Home Health and Senior Nutrition Classes. Here is what Marychuy had to say about Encuentro's new building:

"From day one, Encuentro has been a place where I feel safe and surrounded by love. I can be myself, express myself in my own language and everybody understands my hopes, fears and the obstacles I have to overcome."
 –Maria de Jesus Gallardo

Maria de Jesus Gallardo (center) with ESL teacher Pat Bonilla (left) and Digital Literacy coordinator Veronica Salazar (right)

What does Encuentro mean to you?

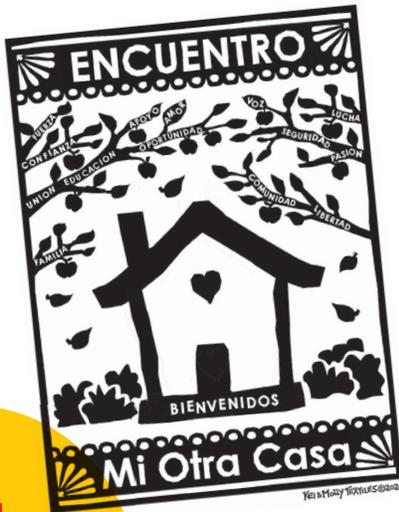
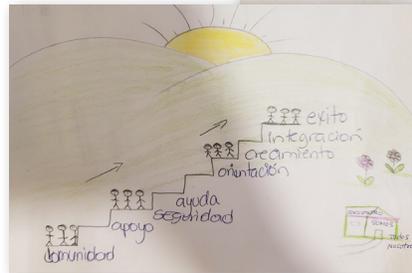
Before the pandemic, students were asked "What does Encuentro mean to you?" Using words and images here is what they created...



Drawing by Maria



Drawings by ESL class students



Kei & Molly Textiles drew inspiration from student designs to create a custom designed flour sack dish towel. The proceeds from the sale will support the new building. Information about how to purchase will be forthcoming.

Did you know?

★ Encuentro is the only center of its kind in New Mexico using education to build skills for social and economic justice.

★ Encuentro represents home where culture, language and learning is celebrated, career aspirations come true, and immigrant families can access vital community resources.

★ With historically low interest rates and a need for more space for our growing programs and staff, Encuentro decided now is the time to purchase our first building.

★ With your financial support, the new building will grow immigrant power through ownership, increased visibility and broader community impacts.



Crimilda Andrade
Administrative Assistant

Brook Bernini
Training and Employment Coordinator

Fiore Aragón
Leadership Development Fellow

Norma Casas
Pathways Navigator

Julia Cusatis
Development Director

Fernando Flores
Home Health Aide Assistant

Ilse Grijalva-Lastiri
Communications

Teresa Guevara
Education Director

Iliana López
Education Coordinator

Mayte López
Home Health Coordinator

Andrea Plaza
Executive Director

Veronica Salazar
Digital Literacy Coordinator



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With Gratitude



Thanks to the stewardship of our Capital Campaign Committee and the generous contributions of the following donors, Encuentro raised enough to pay the closing costs on our loan and begin chipping away at the cost of renovations.

DONATIONS RECEIVED PRIOR TO JULY 21, 2021

\$100,000 AND ABOVE

Anonymous

\$50,000 TO \$99,999

Nancy Croker
and Joe Gorvetzian

\$10,000 TO \$49,999

Anonymous
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Jenny Metzler
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Diana Ogawa
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\$500 TO \$999

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Julia Cusatis
Jessica Garate
and Ryan Congioli
Martha Good
Mindy and Stefan Gutow
Seth and Nancy Kreimer
Wendy Lewis
Eduardo Martinez
Claudia Medina
Michael 'Fe' Ruch
Denise Wheeler
and Joan Robbins

\$499 AND BELOW

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Dana Asher
Pat Bonilla
Kara Carlisle
Lucy Crane
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Alexandra Dest
Caroll and Richard Follingstad
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Esperanza Telles
Patricia Telles
Rudy Telles
Richard Wood and Dana Bell

Special thanks to the following for hosting Facebook Fundraisers for our Capital Campaign and for all of the donors who contributed:

Nancy Croker
Jazmin Irazoqui Ruiz
Sandra Ortsman
Robby Rodriguez
Patricia Telles

Join us in appreciation for our Capital Campaign Committee – the dream team leading our fundraising efforts:

Selene Concepcion
Nancy Croker
Ilse Grijalva
Kevin Hoover
Maura Lewiecki
Claudia Medina
Vences-Ortiz
Julie Radoslovich
Robby Rodriguez
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Patricia Telles

With expert guidance from **Lynn Trojahn of Thrive Consulting**



With aspirations to own the building outright, our next phase of fundraising is a goal to raise \$300,000 so that we can complete renovations and begin classes in person in Spring 2022.

[CLICK HERE TO GIVE](#)

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