



2022 Annual Report

EL CENTRO HISPANO, INC.

48th Anniversary

1974 - 2022

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 - 2022 by offering a variety of programs and by presenting bilingual and cross-cultural activities throughout the year.

Celebrating 48 years of supporting and strengthening the Hispanic community

HISTORY OF EL CENTRO HISPANO

Supporting and strengthening the Hispanic community for over 48 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 three 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 dreams of thousands whom they serve into reality.

WE ARE ALMOST THERE!

On June 6, 2022, El Centro Hispano purchased its new permanent home at 295 Central Ave in White Plains. Our home is going through a full restoration with the goal of opening its doors in June 2023.

Thank you so much to all our supporters and friends who have helped to make this dream come true! Our project is 86% complete - we are on the homestretch! Help us raise the remaining \$350,000 and continue the mission of El Centro!



BE A PART OF THIS LEGACY... DONATE TODAY!

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

**EL CENTRO HISPANO, INC.
346 SOUTH LEXINGTON AVE
WHITE PLAINS, NY 10606**

OR...DONATE VIA PAYPAL!



If you already donated, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts! We appreciate all of your support!

WITH MUCH LOVE TO YOU...

This Annual Report is dedicated to our dear friend and former Board President, Honorable **Larry Delgado**, in appreciation for his continued unwavering commitment to El Centro Hispano for more than 30 years



On behalf of the Board of Directors and El Centro Hispano's team, we thank you, Larry, for your service and commitment to our community!



About Us

1974 - 2022

The most successful organizations, those that thrive and grow, are the ones that remain true to their initial vision while at the same time adapting to the ever-changing needs of the community they serve.

Under the sponsorship of the White Plains Community Action Program, El Centro Hispano first opened its doors at the Chapel Hall at St. Bernard's Roman Catholic Church on a cold January day in 1974. This fledgling organization was created by a group of compassionate citizens who realized that the growing Hispanic community of White Plains was in urgent need of a variety of social services that no one was offering.

Those citizens were wise enough to understand that their first job, their most important job, was to listen. They undertook a needs assessment and asked the members of the community to tell them what they perceived their needs to be. Very early on El Centro established an Advisory Council drawn from members of the community. The Council was an invaluable guide in planning and implementing programs and services offered by El Centro.

Forty-eight years later El Centro Hispano is one of the most active social service agencies devoted to supporting and strengthening the Hispanic community in White Plains and Westchester County. We have grown and expanded along with the Hispanic population of the area.

In more than five decades El Centro Hispano has undergone many changes, eliminating programs that were no longer needed or appropriate, instituting new ones, and expanding others. But we have never lost sight of our mission to strengthen and support Hispanics as they adapt to their new life in the United States. Right from the beginning our work has focused on six crucial areas of concern: housing, employment, health, education empowerment, community outreach and legal services.

We hope long-time supporters of El Centro will find some wonderful old memories stirring and that those who have become involved more recently will gain a deeper appreciation of the path we have taken to get to where we are today.

The Early Years (1974 – 1985)

Determination and enthusiasm made up for limited resources and a small staff as El Centro Hispano first reached out to the Hispanic Community of White Plains. In addition to the housing and jobs center, clients of El Centro could take advantage of translation services for medical appointments and assistance filling out official forms and dealing with public and private agencies, a new mother's program, classes in English as a Second Language, a bilingual Girl Scout Troop, a Senior Center, and instruction in sewing and embroidery - complete with a fashion show. Interns from Pace University began working with us and in 1980 El Centro Hispano's Scholarship Program was established.

The Second Decade (1986-1997)

Our experiences during those first ten years convinced us that we were truly making a difference in the lives of our clients and the community as a whole. However, we were also aware that new needs were arising all the time. In collaboration with other organizations we began co-sponsoring an Annual Health Fair and we also established an Emergency Food Bank for those in crisis. The White Plains High School – Centro Hispano Program was organized to encourage Hispanic high school students to further their education. We served as a vital link for those applying for citizenship or permanent residency by assisting them with the preparation of their documents before they were forwarded to the Diocesan Immigration Center. We began offering conferences to help Hispanic parents better understand their children's public schools. It was during this time that the Director and Assistant Director began hosting El Centro Hispano Informa – a TV program on Channel 14 designed to bring topics of immediate concern to the larger Hispanic community.

Spreading Our Wings (1998-2007)

These were exciting years at El Centro Hispano. After 26 years under the auspices of the Community Action Program, we became an independent, self-governing entity. The Advisory Board was replaced by our own Board of Directors. It was also a time of important changes. As it became apparent that in order to succeed in the modern world, more and more job-seekers would need to demonstrate familiarity with computers, El Centro took up the challenge: we began offering computer classes for adults at the Mercy College Annex in White Plains. In conjunction with the YMCA we also initiated a Culture through Technology Program for high school students. To support families as they struggle to adapt to their new lives we offered workshops in Parenting Development Strategies. The Family Excel Program provided structure and guidance for Hispanic middle school children and their parents in an after-school setting. The Pace Women's Justice Center assisted clients of El Centro who had been victims of domestic violence or sexual assault.

Leading the Way (2008-2022)

So great was the demand for our computer classes that in 2008 El Centro Hispano built a state-of-the-art Technology Center in our facilities at St. Bernard's Church. In addition to 3 levels of computer classes we also offer Introduction to Accounting and QuickBooks. Classes are always full. We are convinced that education is the key that will enable our clients to fulfill their potential and become productive members of the community. We started a Summer Literacy Program for second and third graders who need extra help to get a good start in school and we also run an Early Literacy Program for kindergartners and first graders. We sponsor three mentoring and tutorial programs for middle and high school students (The Lanza My Older Sister/Brother Programs, and the Perkins Saturday Academy). Clients of El Centro have been able to get assistance in applying for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act as well as legal assistance with a variety of issues. More than 120 families take advantage of our free food distribution program twice a month. Thanks to our partnership with BOCES we offer one daytime ESL and GED class four times a week, a Citizenship class once a week on Fridays: one virtual ESL and Citizenship class over the weekend.

In the wake of COVID-19, these programs proved to be indispensable for our community, especially our food distribution program which at one point served over 500 families in one day and continued to serve as the venue for El Centro's essential programs. BOCES and El Centro Hispano worked together to make our classes available online to students all over Westchester County. Regardless of the circumstances, El Centro Hispano's team adapted to the needs of the community, responding immediately and effectively to any situation that emerged. Right at the beginning of 2021, El Centro Hispano became one of the vaccine registration hubs in White Plains and the County, ensuring that our seniors and Hispanic community were protected against the deadly virus. However, we realized that even though we were trying our best to meet the needs of our community, we were not providing all the services needed because of our lack of space. Therefore, we began to search for a new place to go which would allow us to grow together with our community.

After many months of tedious search for the perfect place, in June 2022, we finally found it. After 5 decades of careful planning and saving, we were finally able to purchase our permanent home. We are so grateful for everything we have been able to accomplish in our community from our 900 sq/ft home. However, our new location with 10,000 sq/ft at 295 Central Ave in White Plains, will give us the opportunity to reach out to more areas in White Plains and Elmsford. We look forward to inaugurating our new facility with 5 different new programs, while enhancing our existing programs by the end of June 2023. The nostalgia is overwhelming, but the future is very promising.

What does the future hold for 2023?

Thanks to you, our amazing friends and donors, El Centro Hispano has been meeting the challenges of the Hispanic and immigrant community from day one. Through your inspiration and generosity as well as the creativity of our talented and adaptable staff, we have continued to fulfill our mission to serve the Hispanic Community of White Plains and Westchester County.

In many ways, our future depends on the support we receive from all our donors. El Centro Hispano has always operated on a very tight budget and we stretch our resources through partnerships with many public and private agencies and organizations. We have also been blessed to receive financial support in the form of grants from local, county and state governments, foundations and charitable institutions not only for our programs but also for the refurbishing of our new home. However, it is the generous financial support of all our donors who share in our commitment that enables us to carry out our mission to serve those in need of our services.

The **41** 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; legal assistance and a Westchester County Affordable Care Program; sponsorship of cultural events; as well as translation services and assistance in finding housing and employment. The new programs will include and not be limited to: help with the completion of naturalization and petition applications; the filing of annual taxes onsite; sponsor consular service; the offering of special training sessions; the hosting of informative meetings.

Changing Lives Through... Education

Scholarship Program

Since 1980, El Centro has awarded **\$544,050** in scholarship money to **575** deserving high school seniors. In 2022, **10** 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.

To incentivize our younger tutors and college mentors, El Centro offers these volunteers small stipends as a thank you for their valuable time and contribution to our educational programs. To date, El Centro Hispano has awarded our amazing volunteers **\$319,897** to **307** mentors and tutors. These volunteers work in all of our educational programs including the Lanza My Older Sister/My Older Brother (*Mi Hermana Mayor/Mi Hermano Mayor*) Mentoring Tutorial Program, Saturday Academy, and the ENL Academic Success Center at the White Plains High School

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 (three of our current Board members are former recipients).

English as Second Language, High School Equivalency Prep, and Citizenship Classes

El Centro has offered English classes for adults for the last **48** years. This year, BOCES offered a daytime and weekend ESL class for adults, a Citizenship class on weekends, and an HSE (High School Equivalency) class in Spanish throughout the week. For the first half of 2022, BOCES offered these courses in hybrid mode – ESL and Citizenship were offered online as well as in person. As of September 2022, all our courses were moved permanently back to the classroom, open to up to **25** fully vaccinated students at a time. In response to the influx of immigrants in Westchester, the G.E.D. program was extended for underage newcomers who were not enrolled in their local high school. Last year, a total of **349** students were enrolled in in-person ESL, GED, and Citizenship classes.

The ENL Academic Success Center at the White Plains High School in Partnership with El Centro Hispano

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.

For the 2021-2022 school year, we had an enrollment of **110** students. From September to December, and continuing this year, **98** students are currently enrolled. That number will increase as the school year progresses.

In 2022, the program received support from the White Plains High School, Westchester County Youth Bureau, MVP, and the Lorraine O'Brien Foundation.

The Perkins 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 various academic subjects.

At the beginning of the **2022-2023** school year, **67** Hispanic seventh through twelfth grade students enrolled in the tutorial program. Participating students are required to actively engage with their Program Coordinator three times a week for at least an hour and half to ensure all assignment completion. In order to continue having a successful program, parent and student participation has been strongly encouraged by the Coordinator's constant communication with all participants.

In **2022** the program was funded by the Perkins Family and 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 sixth grade female Hispanic students at the White Plains Middle School – Eastview Campus with Hispanic “sisters” attending local colleges 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. 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.

At the beginning of the **2022-2023** school year, **11** girls were recommended to the program. As the year progresses, more students will be recommended by counselors and teachers.

This is a collaborative program between El Centro Hispano and the Eastview Middle School. In 2022 it was funded by the Lanza Family Foundation and the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

The Lanza My Older Brother - Mi Hermano Mayor Tutorial Program

With 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. Like the girls in the program, the boys have their own set of special male guest speakers that provide them with insights about how to navigate the future to be academically and professionally successful.

The program pairs sixth grade male Hispanic students with tutors from surrounding colleges 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, and other academic subjects.

At the beginning of the **2022-2023** school year, **13** boys were recommended to the program. As the year progresses, more students will be recommended by counselors and teachers.

In 2022 the program was funded by the Lanza Family Foundation and the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

El Centro Hispano’s 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. 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 program is offered to kindergarten through third grade students. Following the new normal after the pandemic, the curriculum was revised to be taught virtually. We hope to go back to in person and/or hybrid by the summer of 2023. In summer of 2022, we had registered 50 kindergarten through third grade students. At the end of the program, we had **40** students actively participating in the program.

In 2022 the Academy was funded by the Westchester County Youth Bureau and St. Faith’s House Foundation.

The Marcia and Richard Cohen Early Literacy Program

This after-school 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. Originally, the program served **10** kindergarteners and **15** first grade Hispanic students from September through May. The success of the program prompted us to expand the curriculum to offer year round support to Kindergarten through third grade.

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 and first grade children and two days a week to second and third graders at Post Road Elementary School. All of the components of the curriculum aid students to thrive in the program and in school.

The goals of the program are to help students with weaker literacy skills, build confidence in tackling difficult assignments, create a fun learning environment that keeps the interest of every student, encourage strong writing ability, and have every student reach reading level by the end of the program. Several volunteers from El Centro Hispano help with the tutoring.

It was and continues to be our intention to offer this program in a hybrid format to accommodate the needs of the students and their families. However, the flu-season has prevented us from accomplishing this goal. At the beginning of the **2022-2023** school year, we had registered 50 kindergartens through third grade students. At this time, we have **19** students actively participating in the program.

An obstacle we have continued to encounter is that many parents have not been able to connect to the program because of lack of technological knowledge. To bridge this gap, El Centro is trying to encourage parents to register for our January low-cost Beginners skill computer classes.

The program was funded by St. Faith’s Foundation and Richard Cohen in 2022.

Bilingual Girl Scouts Troop

This troop, founded in 1974, is the oldest continually running program of El Centro Hispano. At the end of 2022, our Troop had **40** girls enrolled. This total includes: **3** Daisies, **5** Brownies, **9** Juniors, **12** Cadettes, **10** Seniors, and **1** Ambassador. The Girl Scouts were able to go back to their regular activities in September at Post Road School.

Bilingual Scouts Pack and Troop

El Centro Hispano’s Scouts Troop, which was founded in 2005, held their scouting activities in Post Road Elementary School. At the end of 2022, El Centro Hispano’s Cub Scouts Troop had **24** boys enrolled.

Educational Workshops

Planned together with staff from the White Plains Public Schools, parents are given special workshop sessions on college planning and post-secondary school options, and how to apply for financial aid. The workshops were led by school district staff.

In addition to White Plains Public School workshops, El Centro Hispano hosts orientation meetings for its own educational programs before they begin each year. Presently, the meetings are taking place virtually. We hope to go back to in person when we move to our new location.

This year, El Centro Hispano and the White Plains High School Guidance Department hosted Junior Night on April 7 at the First Baptist Church of White Plains. In October, El Centro was active in the outreach of the White Plains High School FAFSA workshop on October 4, which took place at the high school.

Workshops on Other Issues

Since the 1980's, El Centro has offered workshops on nutrition, major illnesses affecting Hispanics, domestic violence, rights of immigrants, abuse of women, the stock market, housing trends, safe communities, investments, and safe banking practices. However, we have discontinued these workshops due to the pandemic and will resume them in our new facility.

Internship Program for High School and College Students

The Internship Program, which began in 1985, has included college students attending local colleges and high school students from White Plains High School and Scarsdale High School. Since 2019, the program was revised to be a paid internship, primarily for high school students. The program will resume in 2023 with El Centro's big move to our new home.

Changing Lives Through... Technology

Technology Center

Our Technology Center has been in constant demand since the first class began there in May 2009. This has been made possible thanks to the support of our County Executive George Latimer and many other individuals and agencies. Our Technology Center has been vital for the past 14 years in providing an educational setting for children, adults, and seniors alike. As of June 2023, we will be inaugurating our brand new Technology Center, which will be equipped with the latest technology to continue serving our immigrant community with their educational needs.

Our current Technology Center has been opened for instruction seven days a week and serves adults and seniors. 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

From January to December 2022, El Centro offered **9 in-person** computer classes: **3** Beginners, **3** Intermediate, and **3** Advanced classes

A total of **103** students completed the classes offered this year. We are incredibly proud of our students and of their accomplishments.

Culture through Technology Program

The Culture through Technology Program which began in 2001 met last year on Saturdays in person at the Eastview Middle School Campus. A total of **9** fourth and fifth graders participated in the program from January - June. **12** students were enrolled in the program from September to 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 themes 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 2022 the program was funded by the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

Study Skills Program

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 **15** 5th grade students met every Saturday from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. from January to June. 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 other skills. A total of **15** students enrolled in the program from September to December.

In 2022 the program was funded by the Westchester County Youth Bureau.

El Centro's Homework Help Center

In 2018, El Centro Hispano's administrators decided to begin a new program to end the digital divide afflicting the students of the White Plains School District. College and high school tutors were available Monday – Friday from 3:30 to 5:30 to help. On a daily basis, an average of **12-15** students take advantage of this virtual program, and receive academic assistance from high school volunteers

Since our Technology Center's schedule has been maximized with adult educational courses, El Centro's Homework Help Center will return in person at our new location. In addition to homework help, the program offers students help in learning how to use the new school software, as well as offering parents and students materials to safely navigate the internet when requested.

El Centro Hispano gives a very special thank you to the Westchester County Board of Legislators and to the Lorraine O'Brien Foundation for their unwavering support to our students!

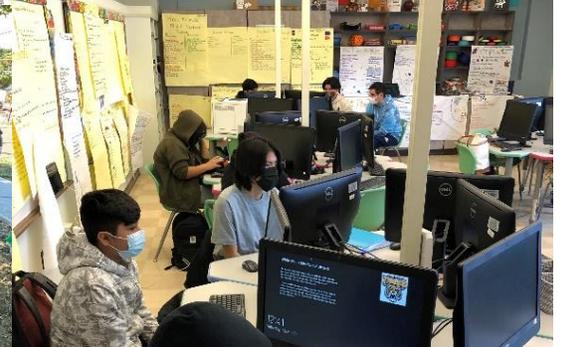
Changing Lives through... Services

Community Service Program

Our volunteers were essential in all of the activities El Centro Hispano conducted, from its Educational Programs to its bi-monthly food distributions. We are **extremely grateful** to all our volunteers who are dedicated to our community. As previously mentioned, as a token of our appreciation, all volunteers in our educational programs receive a small stipend.

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, and 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. **105** students registered to perform community service in 2022.





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. **20** clients were assisted in 2022. Our clients were assisted via telephone to ensure safety for both our clients and the Westchester County Health Department Navigator.

Legal Assistance

Since December, 2019, Robin Bikkal has been the head of our Legal Assistance Program, where she has been providing legal advice on immigration issues every Thursday starting at 12:00pm. In total, **88** clients were assisted in 2022. We extend our most sincere gratitude and appreciation to Robin Bikkal for her services and unwavering support for our community!

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 to communicate and disseminate important information or publications to the local Hispanic population.

El Centro Hispano's social media pages and food distribution venue continue to be essential in spreading the word about important community programs, vaccine clinics, food distributions, and health information from the City of White Plains and Westchester County.

The Idania Rosa Cancer Support & Families in Need Program

Since 2008, El Centro has supported **71** 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.

Additionally, **6** families received assistance in 2022 from El Centro's Families in Need Fund.

The Stephen Michael Sules Food Distribution Program

Since 2013, twice a month, El Centro has also been distributing fresh bread, fruits, dairy products, meat, frozen foods, and vegetables throughout the year. Thanks to 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 **151,221** pounds of food to **2,701** families from **January** to **December**.

Our Food Distribution program has become the hub of essential services and the official venue for all kinds of special and cultural events.

Changing Lives through... Cultural Events

El Centro Hispano's mission statement specifically calls for our agency to help our families maintain and enrich their own culture. This is accomplished every year through events that bring families together around food, typical music and traditional clothing from their countries. The events help keep alive our families' ties to their heritage. This year, we participated in the following events that celebrated our clients' Hispanic heritage: The Westchester County Hispanic Heritage Day at the Kensico Dam; the Three Wise Men celebration and El Día del Niño at Post Road Elementary School during El Centro's Food Distribution.

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, Westchester County Legislator Ben Boykin, New York State Assembly Amy Paulin, New York Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins, and the various foundations that support and maintain El Centro Hispano's Core Programs.

EL CENTRO HISPANO BY THE NUMBERS 2022



6,404
TOTAL UNDUPLICATE AND
NEW CLIENTS SERVED*

21,856
TOTAL SERVICES
DELIVERED**

**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.*

OUR IMPACT

El Centro Hispano's Activities throughout 2022

January

48th Celebration of the Three Wise Men On January 6, El Centro Hispano celebrated a socially distanced Three Kings Day with the participants of El Centro's Food Distribution. In addition to the toys given to each child present, our participants enjoyed the distribution of coats for children and adults, face masks, clothing for children and booster shots for eligible participants. A special thank you to the following for making this such a special event:

- 🌟 This year's Three Wise Men, Barry Synnott, Bernie Thombs, and Claudio Benavides for graciously accepting to take part in this traditional celebration, and for distributing **350** toys to the children present.
- 🌟 Nancy Chockrek and Claire Civetta from Houlihan Lawrence/Scarsdale, and the Scarsdale community for their generous contribution of **125** coats to the "Sharing the Warmth" campaign.
- 🌟 Heidi Seruya for her wonderful donation of coats, toys, bicycles, and her incredible work during our food distribution
- 🌟 Sunshine Pharmacy for providing booster shots to **66** eligible participants
- 🌟 Jennifer Puja, Labor Council Director, Westchester/Putnam Central Labor Body AFL-CIO, and White Plains City Council member for her donation of toys
- 🌟 The Hersch Family for their generous donation of toys
- 🌟 Doriane Lucia DiFlora from Humane Nation, Inc. for donating much needed food to the pets of our community

Rapid Tests and Board Games Starting on January 27, El Centro Hispano was able to distribute **more than 270** rapid antigen tests thanks to Amy Paulin and Westchester County. Additionally, during that food distribution, **66** board games were distributed to our participants thanks to the generous donation of Barbara Myer.

New Year, New You! For the month of January, students in our Youth Educational programs learned about the effects of kindness and the social cost of bullying. Students were given the challenge to perform acts of kindness with family, friends and peers.

February

El Centro Hispano Celebrates Black History Month For the month of February, our Youth Educational programs focused on literature, films, and other activities related to Black History Month. Students participated in an immersive research project which covered the Civil Rights Movement, historical figures, and modern day activists that continue working towards bridging the gaps of socio-economic disparities and balancing the scales of justice and inequality.

El Centro Hispano Celebrates Lunar Year In addition to Black History Month, El Centro Hispano's students learned about the cultural significance of Lunar Year as celebrated by Eastern and Southern Asian countries. Students also learned about this celebration in the context of Latin America and the Asian influence in countries such as Peru.

March

Congratulations to our Executive Director Isabel Villar! On March 10, the White Plains Youth Bureau presented the Annual Women's History Month Celebration, honoring women who have served our community.

Congratulations to our beloved Executive Director, Isabel E. Villar for such an honor, and to all the exceptional women that have dedicated themselves to the community. Congrats to all!

Successful Celebration of the Pinewood Derby of Pack 2005 of El Centro Hispano Congratulations to Pack 2005 of El Centro Hispano for their wonderful participation in the Pinewood Derby on March 19. A special congrats to their Cubmaster Irma Rivera for her excellent leadership. Our deepest gratitude to Irma, all the Den leaders, and the parents and children for making this celebration so special and fun. Congrats to all the winners!

Saint Patrick's Day Around the World For the month of March, students in our Culture through Technology program were tasked with researching the significance of such a large-scale event, and its influence on popular culture in the United States. Students were prompted to research the origin of the celebration, while at the same time learning about our local Irish community.

April

White Plains High School Financial Aid Workshop On April 7, the White Plains High School Guidance Department sponsored this event in partnership with El Centro Hispano at the First Baptist Church of White Plains. A total of **48** parents and students received first-hand information and help on how to fill out FAFSA applications for the upcoming college semesters.

El Centro Hispano Celebrates the Day of the Child On April 21, El Centro Hispano celebrated its 7th Day of the Child, a cultural event dedicated to the children in White Plains during El Centro's Food Distribution. To celebrate this event, **17 brand new bicycles**, which were donated by 2 anonymous donors, were raffled among the children present. The children also had the opportunity to receive **1** of **48** brand new backpacks filled with school supplies, donated by the UNICEF Club from Scarsdale High School.

A special thank you to the following for making this celebration possible:

- 🌐 **Feeding Westchester**
- 🌐 **Mitesh Patel and Sunshine Pharmacy**
- 🌐 **The Scarsdale High School UNICEF Club**
- 🌐 **Doriane Lucia and Humane Nation, Inc.**
- 🌐 **The White Plains High School Latino Coalition**
- 🌐 **Post Road Elementary School**

"Art in the Park" with ArtsWestchester Starting in April, ArtsWestchester began the Arts in the Park program for the elementary-level students in our Youth Educational Programs. From April through June, these workshops benefitted a total of **60** students.

Summer Internship for 10th graders with Glenfarne LLC On April 28, **10** sophomore students from the White Plains High School had their first orientation for a summer internship opportunity with Glenfare LLC in NYC. This new partnership ensured an immersive internship where participants were exposed to the financial workings of Wall Street and beyond. Participating students received a scholarship and a brand new laptop computer to aid them through their remaining two years of high school. The goal of the internship is to teach students to use their cultural backgrounds in a new setting for success.

Con Edison Bill Reduction Program in Partnership with Perch Community Solar In an initiative on behalf of the Mayor's office, residents of the City of White Plains could apply for a limited time to receive energy credits to push residents towards using clean solar energy. El Centro Hispano submitted **33** applications on behalf of its clients.

June

El Centro Hispano Purchases a New Home! On June 6, El Centro Hispano purchased its permanent home. We are grateful to everyone who made this dream come true! With our new home come new services we are excited to offer our community. The **NEW** Centro Hispano, coming June 2023!

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at El Centro's Food Distribution On June 16, MVP Healthcare partnered with El Centro Hispano to offer another COVID-19 pop up clinic for the community. A total of **10** individuals benefitted from this clinic. Additionally, El Centro's staff distributed clothing and toys to the food distribution participants.

Fair Street USA On June 29, El Centro Hispano participated in the City of White Plains' Fair Street USA, a community art exhibit supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This art exhibit was designed to promote the protections of the Fair Housing Act and to educate the public on their rights. Along with artist Jennifer Levine, several Centro Hispano families and volunteers designed and brought to life El Centro's Fair Street "National Origin" home. Check out our collage page to see our "home"!

July

Steve's Camp at Horizon Farms Offers Free Sleep Away Camp to El Centro's Youth from July to August Steve's Camp offered students from our Educational Programs the opportunity to enjoy 12 days at a sleep-away camp. A total of **12** students were chosen for this fun summer activity.

Hispanic Heritage Day at the Kensico Dam. El Centro Hispano co-sponsored this event on July 10 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 **4,000** individuals were in attendance.

El Centro Hispano and Glenfarne LLC Internship Program On July 11, our sophomore students from El Centro's Saturday Academy Program began their immersive two-week internship at Glenfarne, LLC. We are so proud of our students for being selected for such a prestigious program. Congrats, class of 2024!

August

Transportation for Senior Citizens On August 3, El Centro Hispano began a program with Along Car Service to provide transportation to senior citizens for only \$5. This service was implemented with the goal to give our unserved seniors a cheaper option to help them get to their medical appointments.

September

Back to School Supplies Drive and Haircuts On September 1, the Gamma Theta Regional Alumnae Chapter of *Hermanidad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.* distributed school supplies to **145** children present at El Centro's Food Distribution. Additionally, the local barbershop Authentic Hair Studio gave **25** boys free haircuts.

Adult Educational Programs Resume in Person On September 7, El Centro's ESL, GED, and Citizenship classes began their Fall cycle. This year, BOCES has added additional classes throughout the weekend. A total of **60** individuals are registered in these classes for this cycle.

El Centro Hispano's Youth Educational Programs Begin On September 18, all of our K-12 educational programs began the new school year. Students in our K-3rd grade programs are currently in hybrid mode. Students in grades 4-12 were able to return to the programs in person. A total of **230** students are currently enrolled.

Our computer classes have also resumed for the Fall cycle, completely in person. From January to June, a total of **64** students have taken Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced classes so far. A total of **37** students were registered for the winter cycle, which took place from September to December 2022.

THE STEPHEN MICHAEL SULES FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM at El Centro Hispano

Twice a month our food distribution program served as the **venue** for **essential services, special** and **cultural** events throughout the year

We are **grateful** for our partnerships with other Westchester County organizations, institutions and agencies that made this a memorable year for our community



2,701
FAMILIES

TOTAL
SERVED

151,221
POUNDS

OF FOOD
DISTRIBUTED

**Please note: the statistics provided above are based on data collected from January to December 2022.*

In addition to the food, El Centro also distributed...



Toys and clothing
for Three Kings Day



Back to school supplies
and book bags



COVID-19 vaccines



Bicycles and back-
packs for Day of the
Child



Masks and COVID-19
rapid tests



Pet food

...and so much more!



October

The White Plains Hospital, Calvary Baptist Church, and El Centro Hispano Host the Annual Health Fair On October 1, 2022, the White Plains Hospital, in conjunction with El Centro Hispano and Calvary Baptist Church, hosted a socially distanced Health Fair. A total of **204** participants benefitted from this free community event. This year, El Centro helped to register **80** women to receive free mammograms and pap smears. The following exams and services were offered:

82 Blood Pressure Screenings	59 Screenings for Breast or Cervical Cancer
28 Dental Exams	49 Screenings for Pelvic Cancer
51 Podiatry Exams	35 Mammograms
31 Lab Screenings	68 Households benefitted from Fresh Market Food pickup

IMPACT:

- 🌐 **17** attendees were identified with high cholesterol
- 🌐 **12** attendees were identified with high glucose levels
- 🌐 **1** attendee was identified with high PSA level

One White Plains Comprehensive Plan On October 6, officials of the City of White Plains visited El Centro's Food Distribution to share with the community future for the City of White Plains. During this event, City officials had one on one interactions with community members to ask their opinions about the plan implementation timeline.

White Plains High School Financial Aid Workshop On October 4, the White Plains High School Guidance Department sponsored this event in partnership with El Centro Hispano at the White Plains High School. A total of **77** parents and students received first-hand information and help on how to fill out FAFSA applications for the upcoming college semesters.

November

El Centro Hispano offers ITIN (Tax ID) Services On November 9, El Centro Hispano partnered with Lider Tax Preparation, Inc. to provide our community members with low-cost IRS services. From November to December, **40** clients were able to file for and receive their Tax ID. Starting in January, we will begin to offer tax preparation services in addition to Tax ID filings.

Winter Theme Distribution to Food Distribution Participants On November 17, El Centro Hispano staff distributed **90** Soup Jars, and other typical Hispanic foods, which were generously donated by Bet Am Shalom. A special thank you to the Rotary Club for their donation of hat and glove sets for children, and to Lero's Limousine for their donation of children's face masks.

Turkey Distribution with the White Plains Firefighters On November 20, El Centro Hispano referred **100** families to receive a turkey from the First Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Takeaway at Station 6. Thank you so much to our firemen for their service and for giving our families a wonderful gift in time for Thanksgiving!

December

End of the Year Food Distribution On December 15, we closed the year with our final food distribution, where participants were able to receive clothing and other items. A special thank you to our donors for making this possible!

El Centro Hispano's Family Circle

Our most sincere gratitude to the following members of El Centro Hispano's Family Circle. Their special contributions of **\$500 or more** in 2022 have helped us tremendously to carry out our mission and to make our dream come true with our purchase of 295 Central Ave.

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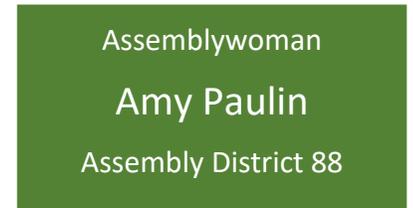
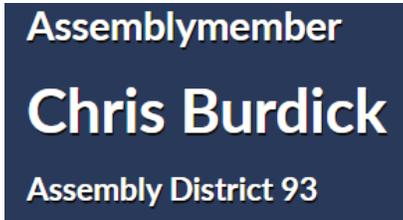
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And a special shout out to our most loyal supporters who have contributed less than \$500 throughout the year. Your commitment to El Centro Hispano and its mission is truly appreciated from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you for all you do for our community!

El Centro Hispano's Board of Directors and Staff are very grateful to those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in 2022.

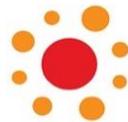
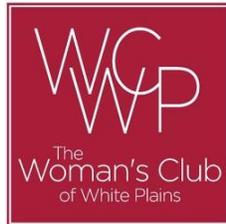


The Scarsdale Woman's Club





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