



# Mano en Mano

## *Hand in Hand*

Fall 2010 Newsletter

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### **NOTES**



## Connecting Families in our Community

BY EDITH FLORES, *Outreach Worker*

**M**Y RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO BE connected with the Latino community's needs and to communicate information to our constituency about our programs and events. Other things that I do as an outreach worker are interpretations, transports, helping with finding jobs and housing, assisting with filling out applications, and making referrals to other social services.

During the last few months I've had to make more home visits to

families so I can provide more timely assistance to increasing needs. So far this year, I've had over 350 requests for assistance compared with 200 for all of 2009! What we do at Mano en Mano is not only more important these days; it's also becoming more successful.

Every last Wednesday of the month we have a potluck which helps people connect and build community. This truly makes us very happy that an organization like Mano en Mano exists.

## Summer Education Programs Introduced

**S**UMMER OF 2010 WAS THE FIRST season that Mano en Mano ran educational programming for migrant youth ages 14-21.

Ana Blagojević, our new Education Programs Director, Michelle Hammond, Megan Leavitt and Laura Thomas (the new ESL teacher for the school district) went to seven camps during the blueberry harvest to provide educational services. Maine Migrant Education made this possible with a competitive grant that will support working with youth throughout the year. Here are some highlights from the summer program:

• Teachers introduced the use of MP3s as a way to provide an additional audio element for English as a Second

Language students to continue their learning independently after the season.

• Students created the Wild Blue Harvest Recipe Book by recording and collecting favorite and traditional recipes from different camps.

• A group of youth took a ferry boat from Winter Harbor to Bar Harbor and learned how to navigate at sea!

• Youth at the Henry Goo goo camp organized a community event that included karaoke, face painting, a nail salon, basketball and football.

Additionally, the staff offered group classes to English Language learners to help them work toward better communication in the workplace,

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## NOTES



## The Work of Many Hands: Five Years of Community-Building at Mano en Mano

By CHLOE DOWLEY, *Board President*

**F**ALL IS UPON US IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, bringing shorter, cooler days, multi-colored landscapes and wafts of wood smoke on the chilly evening breeze. The season's joys are contrasted by some harsh realities, however. Many residents are wondering how to afford to heat their homes in the winter months, whether they will have a steady paycheck, or even if they will be able to feed their families.

In times of economic uncertainties, the services offered by Mano en Mano are even more critical to helping local families find employment, feed their children, and access social services. With over 400 requests for assistance so far in 2010, it is clear that the services offered by Ian, Edith, Bethany, and our newest staff member Ana, are filling a much-needed niche in our community.

Yet the work of Mano en Mano is far greater than the efforts put in by our paid employees. If you are reading this newsletter you are part of Mano en Mano's success story. Whether you have volunteered as an English tutor, attended a community potluck or town meeting, served on the Board of Directors, or sent a donation to our office, you have contributed to our mission:

**"To build a stronger community in Downeast Maine by working with diverse populations to provide affordable housing and educational opportunities, remove barriers to health and social services, and advocate for social justice."**

Please remember as you read this newsletter – without your support, none of our accomplishments would be possible. With your help, since incorporating as a non-profit organization five years ago, we have reached out to dozens of Latino families, responded to hundreds of requests for assistance, broadened the educational aspirations of high

school students, created safe spaces for cultural exchange, taught English to Spanish-speakers and Spanish to English-speakers...the list goes on. By this time next year, six local farm-working families will be living in the safe, clean, and attractive apartments which are currently under construction in Milbridge.

Building community is not easy work. It requires dedication, patience, perseverance, passion, vision, and the willingness to listen to and respect each member of the community. The staff and volunteers at Mano en Mano are willing to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty doing this important work. When you lend your support to our efforts, you help us get just a bit closer to our vision:

**A world *donde quepan muchos mundos* (in which many worlds are possible); a world where solidarity is evident in the actions of individuals, businesses, and organizations; a world where people treat each other with respect, recognizing our common humanity, our differing cultures, and our unique abilities; a world where racism, prejudice, and discrimination no longer exist.**

Mano en Mano envisions a community where we:

- ✦ Feel safe and welcome in all places.
- ✦ Have housing that meets the needs of our families.
- ✦ Can access appropriate, high quality health care.
- ✦ Work in jobs that adequately support ourselves.
- ✦ Pursue educational opportunities that enhance our skills and abilities.

Many hands make light work. Thank you for joining us. Hand in hand, we are building a stronger community in Downeast Maine.

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restaurants and in social settings, and provided students with information on the resources available to them during the harvest.

Another highlight for teachers was meeting the wonderful group of individuals who help make Maine blue-

berry harvest happen!

Moving forward in the academic year, Ana will be staying on at Mano en Mano, supporting local students with core content area tutoring, ESL, life skills workshops, and GED assistance for those not enrolled in school. She is very excited to be working with us and is already enjoying meeting members of the community.

## NOTES



## Looking to a Second AmeriCorps Term

BY BETHANY WOODS, *Programs Manager*

WHEN I BEGAN MY FIRST AMERICORPS TERM of service at Mano en Mano over a year ago, I hadn't planned to stay a second year. All that changed over the following eleven months as my responsibilities and experiences piled up, and I quickly realized how much I enjoy my work and believe in Mano en Mano's mission and goals. Little could be more fulfilling than dedicating another year to an amazing organization that has afforded me such opportunity for growth.

Without contest, my most exhilarating moment this last year was receiving an email over the summer from Central Maine Community College telling me that Maria, who I had mentored since the spring, had passed her entrance exam and was accepted for the fall semester. Two fist pumps in the air later, I called Maria to share the thrilling news, and we immediately began planning for her transition onto a college campus.

Maria and I had worked closely during the spring and summer strengthening her English level and completing college and scholarship forms - and our hard work had paid off! While I feel fortunate that I was able to guide Maria through the application process and all that it entails, I doubtlessly learned far more from her about strong motivation, gracefully overcoming challenges, and true commitment to pursuing a college education. Moments

like these provide all the energy needed to move forward.

As my second term gets moving, I'll be working with the nearby EdGE After School Program to offer additional support to Latino students when needed. Together with Edith, our Outreach Worker, and Ana, our Education Programs Director, we are creating several cultural toolkits that include interactive activities and crafts for EdGE and other programs to utilize. I am looking forward to working with juniors and seniors on their plans toward college or other technical programs. We are also redeveloping our volunteer program over the coming winter to encourage even greater community participation. While this just touches on our upcoming activities, we always welcome any suggestions or ideas for new projects to bring on board!

I am so grateful to Mano en Mano and the Community Resource Corps (my sponsoring organization) for making this second AmeriCorps term both a reality and an extremely positive experience.

My co-workers continuously inspire me and are a wealth of support. It is with these sentiments that I look very forward to the coming year and everything that we can accomplish together.

*Bethany Woods*

## Meet Maria, High School Senior Turned College First-Year

MANO EN MANO'S DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS Program is a chapter of the nationwide Dollars for Scholars division of Scholarship America, a widely recognized organization committed to supporting higher education with college scholarships. Although we are a small chapter, we remain dedicated to awarding a renewable scholarship to a Latino/a student each year from Washington or Hancock counties who is moving on to a 2-4 year college, university, or other technical program. Now in its third year, our chapter continues to support Olivia and Leticia Pérez of Milbridge, both nursing students at the University of Maine - Orono, and we convened this past June to review new scholarship applications. It

was with great pleasure that the Scholarship committee awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to Maria Mandujano of Jonesport, Maine.

Maria grew up in El Talayote, a small town in Guanajuato, Mexico. Four years ago, she moved to Maine and graduated from Jonesport-Beals High School in June 2010. Maria worked hard during high school, constantly staying focused on her studies and excelling academically. For two summers, we sponsored Maria's attendance at the Intensive English Institute at the University of Maine - Orono, which is a demanding college preparatory program

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# Flowers, Dances, and Surprises for Mother's Day



FIESTA: Jean Carlos, Wendy, Mirna, Vicki, Leydi Ly, Nan

**T**HIS PAST SPRING, MANO EN MANO HOSTED OUR 4th Annual Mother's Day Event and Cultural Celebration on Saturday, May 8th, at Milbridge Town Hall. The event was heavily attended by over 200 people and culminated by an exciting surprise performance! A delicious community potluck preceded a variety of traditional Latin American dances, folk music, poetry, and plays put on by Latino youth to share their culture and heritage with the wider Milbridge community.

In Latin America, the observance of Mother's Day (*El Día de las Madres*) has a unique significance and is more highly celebrated than in the U.S. Our outreach worker, Edith, explained that in Mexico planning begins in

schools at the start of the New Year. Teachers pick dances, songs, plays, and poetry for each grade to perform, which concludes in a community event on *El Día de las Madres*, always May 10th in Mexico. In fact, most people take the day off and use the time to prepare for the festival.

A group of about fifteen practiced for the month leading up to our Mother's Day Event, aided by parent volunteers who provided instruction, costumes, and music. The morning of the celebration, another group of dedicated volunteers led by Board member Beth Russet decorated the hall with colorful streamers, balloons, and flowers.

By evening, families and local residents had packed the space and offered rousing support to all of the performers.



cy, Carla, and Paola came together for the Mother's Day Event and Cultural Celebration at the Milbridge Town Hall.

With an impressive thirteen total acts, the youth's performance included traditional dances and plays, with a surprise number called "El Moreliano" (a dance with a bull called the Morelian). While the program has always involved music, dances, and theater, this was the first year that we had ever experienced anything like "El Moreliano!" A local family constructed a huge wooden bull as a costume centerpiece for the dance and crafted additional costumes for other participants. Multiple times at the end of the night we heard: "I really felt like I was in Mexico!" For the full experience, take a peek at a video of the dancing bull on our website.

Following a very successful and exciting evening

program, the dancers volunteered more of their time the following week to practice several dances for performance at a nursing home. Ten Latino students and parents from Milbridge and Gouldsboro traveled to Machias to perform several traditional Latin American dances for the residents at Marshall's Health Care Facility. "We so appreciated having all of the participants come and perform their dances," said Marshall's director Brandi Walston. "Our residents and staff really enjoyed the music and traditional costumes!"

We would like to extend sincere gratitude to all of our volunteer support and to the Maine Humanities Council for their generous funding. We are eagerly anticipating the energy and surprises in store at next year's celebration!

## NOTES



## Looking Back & Moving Forward

BY IAN F. YAFFE, *Executive Director*

I'VE GREATLY ENJOYED MY FIRST SIX MONTHS AS your Executive Director which I've spent familiarizing myself with our constituency, community, friends, and donors. Even though this process will never truly be over, my focus has shifted to providing more resources to our staff so they can be both more effective and more efficient. Finally, we're constantly thinking about ways we can adapt our services to ever-changing community needs while maintaining key programs in times of decreased funding.

Without support from area individuals and businesses—and I cannot stress this enough—we would not be able to continue providing the services that our constituency needs. In talking with community members, it is clear that much more needs to be done. I am tremendously privileged to work on behalf of Mano en Mano's dedicated staff and Board of Directors. All of these talented individuals are here for one simple reason: they believe in the work that we are doing.

Now that I've been here for a few months, I'd like to share with you the vision that I bring to Mano en Mano. This vision is based upon Paulo Freire's idea of praxis—or rather, the unification of theory and practice. As we move forward, I am constantly reflecting on our past, studying the theories and best practices that will shape our future, and never forgetting the most important part of this equation: action and results. To get to this point, there are three ideas that I always keep in mind:

**MEETING NEEDS, NOT CREATING THEM:**

Nonprofits are founded because of genuine community needs and must strive to constantly reassess and tailor programs and services to those needs, not the organization and its personnel.

**COMMUNITY CHANGE, NOT COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

Put simply, the goal of every nonprofit should be to run itself out of a job. It's not just about meeting needs, it's about challenging the reasons why those needs exist in the first place.

**BUSINESS, NOT CHARITY:** The nonprofit model of pure charity is inefficient and no longer effective. It's possible to change communities and generate income at the same time. Take a look at some recent figures from D.C.

Central Kitchen (of which I am a former Board Member): today, they're generating over 50% of their own revenue! It's also time to think about nonprofits themselves as businesses and a sector: right now, nonprofits hold \$3 trillion in assets and employ 7% of the U.S. workforce (14 million people).

I think we do an excellent job of meeting the first two ideas that I've mentioned above, so I'm going to focus on the third in the future. While we will always need your support to carry out our mission, it's my hope that we can find some additional ways to generate our own revenue—in effect, turning donated dollars into more dollars that will allow us to better meet community needs. We've already started doing this—from having Spanish classes, to providing office resources and select services to other agencies, to receiving contracts to conduct some of our most essential programs. I look forward to reporting future activities in this important component of our Development Plan in the future.

These are exciting times for us here at Mano en Mano. In the coming months, we'll continue construction on Maine's first off-farm affordable housing project for farmworkers, begin providing the academic-year support services that are the rights of students qualified for Migrant Education, and continue building a stronger Downeast Maine with the many programs we offer that have been a proven success. I hope you enjoy reading more about what's been happening here at Mano en Mano during the past six months and encourage you to contact me in the future if you have ideas or just want to check in. My e-mail address is [iy@manomaine.org](mailto:iy@manomaine.org) and you can also reach me at (207) 619-2822.

Thanks for reading and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

All my best,

## Construction Begins on Hand in Hand Apartments

**C**ONSTRUCTION HAS BEGUN ON MAINE'S FIRST off-farm affordable housing project for farmworkers, with \$1.4 million being used to invest in the local community. When completed, Hand in Hand Apartments will house six families in 3 three-bedroom and 3 two-bedroom apartments at 173 Wyman Road in Milbridge. Offering affordable housing options to local families who choose to make some of their annual income from working on a lobster boat, on the blueberry barrens, or in the clam flats will help keep these works in the area to support our resource-based economy. Construction is currently scheduled for completion by May 31, 2011.

"We are heartened by the incredible work that Mano en Mano has done to provide stable housing for farmworkers in Washington County," said Ron Phillips, President of Coastal Enterprises, Inc. "It's a nice fit for CEI, as the project supports access to local food for area residents and to good-quality housing for farmworkers, key participants in the local economy."

"These apartments represent the vision of a community and long over-due support for families who embody the character and tradition of Downeast Maine," said Ian Yaffe, Executive Director. "Finally, the farmworkers who have made this area special for generations will have a building they can afford to live in that was designed with their needs first. We're excited to offer these families an opportunity to stay here as they help sustain our local economy, enrich our community, and foster our quality of place."

Key partners are E.W. Littlefield, Inc. of Hartland (General Contractor) and WBRC Architects/Engineers of Bangor (Architect/Engineer). Major funding is through a \$1,005,722 USDA Rural Development Farm Labor Housing Grant and a \$176,778 Farm Labor Housing Loan, as well as a \$220,000 loan from CEI of Wiscasset.

Additional support and technical assistance for this project include: a Pre-Development Loan of \$60,000 from MaineHousing, HUD's Community Development Block Grants, a component fund of the Maine Community Foundation, Edmond Bearor, Rudman & Winchell



**DIG IN:** Crews on site in early November.

Attorneys, Pathstone, Housing Assistance Council, and generous community donors.

This project, begun by Anais Tomezsko, our previous Executive Director, is a small, yet important step toward achieving the goal of affordable and decent housing at the local level.

Hand in Hand Apartments will be open to permanent residents or U.S. citizens who earn a substantial portion of their annual income from agriculture or aquaculture work. Detailed qualifications will be released in the coming months along with the application process for living in this building.

"This is an excellent project and we are glad to have been able to participate," said Dale McCormick, Maine-Housing's Director. "We congratulate Mano en Mano for their perseverance and wish them every success."

Mano en Mano has relied upon numerous community members and officials from the Town of Milbridge who support this project and will continue to provide guidance throughout the construction process.

More information, updates, and time lapse images of the construction progress will be posted online at [www.manomaine.org](http://www.manomaine.org) so be sure to check in often!

### MARIA, continued from Page 3

that offers four weeks of English instruction on a college campus. In addition, Maria was on the cheerleading squad at Jonesport-Beals, participated in a number of service projects with her class and school, and was a member of the Art club at Jonesport-Beals. She danced for three years in Mano en Mano's Mother's Day Event and has often volunteered her time in our after school programs.

In August, Maria began her studies at Central Maine

Community College in Auburn, studying Early Childhood Education so that she can pursue a teaching career. She feels that as a bilingual teacher she would be able to offer even more support and help to students struggling with language learning, and hopes to work in areas with high need. She is the first person in her family and her town in Mexico to attend college. Maria writes us from CMCC that she is really enjoying college life and spends most of her time studying. We are so proud of her and look forward to watching her progress in the coming years!

# MANO EN MANO | HAND IN HAND

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## MIGRANT ED:

Mano en Mano launched a summertime learning program for young teens this year. See details, Page 1.



**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Construction began last month on Maine's first off-farm affordable housing project: Hand in Hand Apartments. Read about the groundbreaking on Page 7.