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## Checking in with the Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM RAY OCASIO

“Welcome, 2018!” We just wrapped up an excellent year that celebrated La Casa's 45th Anniversary. [you can read about our Gala, "[Together We Rise](#)," and our [#GivingTuesday](#) Campaign in this issue]. And now, we're excited for what the future will bring. This new year has the potential of being a great one.

During the last five years we've been diligently working to bounce back – to “recover” from the worst of the recession and the damages inflicted on this city, this community,

this agency and all of us.

At the agency level the recovery required critically assessing our work and how we do things, from protecting vital services and cutting back on others. We had to challenge norms and poor practices to be more efficient and effective. We also sought out new programs and resources, such as Head Start, Out of School Youth and Lead Remediation. A major undertaking was the restructuring of our financial underpinning to meet our liabilities and establish a sustainable financial foundation.

What does a great year look like?

- We have full enrollment in our Head Start program.
- The Early Head Start initiative gets into gear with infants and toddlers joining us in our community settings.
- We serve more families, including recent Puerto Rican relocates escaping the tragedy of Hurricane Maria.
- We build out our out of school youth program.
- We expand our weatherization work with a more comprehensive effort to deal with health related issues
- We build on the strength of the Lower Broadway Neighborhood Association in advancing and sustaining our community building efforts and expand on the budding community development initiatives in East Orange.

A great year will be supported and made possible by the direction and guidance provided by our board of directors, who will join with us in defining a new strategic plan for the next three years. And, what we have done and what we must do to make 2018 a great year is predicated on the investment of people like you. Together, we are confident that our team will continue to strive to achieve La Casa's mission and vision of empowering our community, its residents and our constituents.



## La Casa de Don Pedro Concludes its 45th Anniversary with "Together We Rise."

"Together We Rise" was a spirited celebration that showcased the creativity of a community united under one cause: the advancement of Newark. [\[Read More\]](#)

## Darlene's Story

One woman's experience benefiting from the multiple improvements La Casa provided to her home.

[\[Read More\]](#)



## Featured Partner: United Airlines

La Casa de Don Pedro is the recipient of a \$70,000 grant from United Airlines to provide emergency assistance and connect recent arrivals from Puerto Rico with job opportunities to help sustain their

households in the area in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

"United Airlines is committed to lifting up communities impacted by disaster, and we are proud to partner with La Casa to help connect families with the critical resources they need to recover from Hurricanes Irma and Maria," said Sharon Grant, United Airlines Vice President of Community Affairs.

[\[Read More\]](#)

### #GivingTuesday Helps The Holidays Shine Brighter for Hundreds of Families

Our #GivingTuesday campaign concluded on New Year's Eve on a high note, thanks to our dozens of supporters and donors of toys and food.

[\[Read More\]](#)



### In Memoriam / Descansa En Paz

We remember a dear friend and partner, Rodney Gilbert of Yendor Productions. For the last decade Rodney worked with La Casa on countless neighborhood revitalization and beautification projects throughout the Newark area. Through Rodney's unwavering dedication to his hometown and to the arts he pursued the idea to beautify Newark with murals on building sides that brightened the city's landscape.

[\[Read More\]](#)

Upcoming Programs & Course Registration Dates:

[Preschool, Head Start & Early Head Start](#) Ongoing Registration

[Afterschool Enrichment Program](#) Ongoing Registration

[Alternative High School Program](#) 1/24

[Formal English as a Second Language Course](#) 1/29

[First Time Home Buyers Workshop](#) 1/20

[Job Fair](#) 2/22

[Lead-Safe Home Remediation Program](#) Ongoing Registration

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program / Weatherization Assistance / Senior Citizen's Cooling and Heating Program](#). Ongoing Registration

Home Health Aid Training (Contact 973.481.4713 for more information)

## Upcoming Activities at The Family Success Center II

*Located at 282 First Avenue*

Contact us at 973.482.9002 for more information.

**Informal ESL Class 1/16-1/31**

**SNAP Program Assistance 1/19**

**Legacy for Children 1/16,1/23,1/30**

**Computer Sessions 1/19,1/26**

**Family Karaoke Night 1/17**

**Nails Course 1/22,1/29**

**Circle of Security 1/17,1/24,1/31**

**Sewing Club 1/22,1/29**

**Zumba 1/17,1/19,1/24,1/26,1/31**

**Dress for Success 1/24**

**Knitting Club 1/18,1/22,1/25,1/29**

**Family Movie Night 1/31**

## Recent Grants Awarded:

- **Victoria Foundation** for Unrestricted Support and a grant to support the development of the Strategic Plan
- **Nonprofit Finance Fund - Newark Resilience Initiative** to enhance the financial health of the organization
- **Greater Newark LISC** Newark Resident Leadership Academy for the Lower Broadway Neighborhood Association
- **Synchrony Bank** for Jobs Placement Program
- **Capital One Foundation** for Community and Economic Development Division
- **Horizon Foundation for New Jersey** for Healthy Living Initiative
- **PNC Foundation** for Jobs Placement Program
- **Prudential Foundation** for Unrestricted Support
- **Santander Bank** for Community and Economic Development Programs
- **United Airlines** for Hurricane Relief for Puerto Rican recent arrivals
- **Whole Food Market Newark** for Youth, Family, and Health Services programs
- **State of New Jersey**, Office of the Attorney General, Victim Assistance Grant
- **State of New Jersey**, Department of Children & Families, Family Success Center and Family Friendly Programs
- **State of New Jersey**, Department of Health, HIV Prevention Program & HIV Testing Programs
- **State of New Jersey**, Department of Community Affairs, Housing for People Living with AIDS (HOPWA),

Weatherization, and LIHEAP

- **State of New Jersey**, Department of Health, Heart Disease Prevention Program
- **State of New Jersey**, Department of Children & Families, Youth Counseling and Housing Assistance Programs
- **State of New Jersey**, Department of Education, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program for After School Enrichment

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