

# groundviews



## REACHING SOLID GROUND

# She was always by my side *Ella siempre estaba a mi lado*

See story, pp. 2 & 3

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION

### Brilliance... Kindness... & Persistence...

It takes a village to grow a community farm! Thanks to **Triad Associates** for geotechnical survey services and to **Furney's Nursery**, **Greenwood True Value**, **Molbak's**, **Sky Nursery**, **Southern Exposure Seeds**, **Swanson's Nursery**, **Wells Medina**, **West Seattle Nursery** and **Wright's Home & Garden** for large donations of seeds for our **Seattle Community Farm!** ... Thanks to **Sprague Israel Giles** for supporting our **Adopt-a-Family** program, which also benefited from the generosity of **Garfield Community Volunteers**, **Provail**, **Quilts From The Heart** and **Seattle Pacific University**. ... Thanks to **Sparling** for noise reduction services at our main office. ... Thanks to the **UW Horticulture School** for sprucing up **Santos Place** and to **Google**, the **Seattle Waldorf School** and the **Woodinville Unitarian Universalist Youth Group** for hosting the **3rd Annual Holiday Supper** for our **Sand Point** transitional housing residents. ...

Laura Torres in her building lobby with her Case Manager, Pamela Calderón

*Laura Torres en su edificio con su trabajadora social Pamela Calderón*

## PROGRAM NEWS

### From the Ground Up

**Statewide Poverty Action Network is leading efforts** to protect Washington State's safety net programs, including TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) and Housing and Essential Needs (formerly Disability Lifeline). Poverty Action's annual MLK Day mobilization was snowed out, so Lobby Day has been rescheduled for Presidents' Day, February 20, 2012. Washington State residents living on low incomes and their allies will meet with lawmakers to speak out against proposed budget cuts to basic needs programs, and to urge the legislature to raise revenues to protect our communities. For more information on the basic needs programs and how to get involved in Lobby Day, go to [www.povertyaction.org](http://www.povertyaction.org).

**Senior volunteerism increases:** RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program) reports that over 1,300 volunteers provided nearly 58,000 hours of service to 65 community agencies in the 4th quarter of 2011. From 2007 to 2010, RSVP reported a 12% increase in senior volunteer hours, a trend that continued in 2011. Among the community agencies these volunteers serve are meal and nutrition programs that provide 20,000 meals each month to seniors living on low incomes. ●

The holiday season was also bright for women and kids at our **Broadview** residence thanks to **Alaskan Fisheries**, **Center for Spiritual Living**, **Getty Images**, **Phinney Neighborhood Association** and the **Sea Gals** – and **CB Richard Ellis** and **Borracchini's Bakery** provided birthday cakes to Broadview kids. ... And **The Pink Door** donated 30% of their revenues to Solid Ground during the entire month of December 2011! ...

Now, that's brilliant! ●

## REACHING SOLID GROUND

(Interview interpreted & translated by Pamela Calderón)

# She was always by my side

When Laura Torres moved to Seattle from Mexico City, she dreamed of a better life for herself, her baby boy and her husband. But eight years later and now separated from her husband, she desperately needed a stable place to live. “It all started when I lost my job,” Laura says. “I was living with my siblings, but we had a lot of problems – and my son and I needed our own space.”

Through her health clinic, Laura learned about Housing Stabilization Services (HSS), a Solid Ground program that provides financial and housing search support to Seattle-area people who would very likely lose their housing without the assistance. HSS helps people either hold onto housing or find a place to live, and prevents the spiral into homelessness.

HSS also highlights our Language Access efforts in action: Through HSS, Laura connected with a Spanish-speaking case manager, Pamela Calderón, who is originally from Bolivia. Laura says, “I always try to speak a little English, and I always ask questions, because I like it and I want to learn it.” However, when it came to the stressful process of searching for a place to live in a hurry, the opportunity to work with a case manager in her own language was invaluable.

“It is definitely not the same when you are getting help from a Spanish speaker than an English speaker, because working with an English speaker delays the process,” Laura explains. “I don’t understand English very well, and it is much easier to receive help with someone who speaks the same language.”

And beyond shared language, Laura is thankful for the cultural understanding Pamela was able to bring to her situation. She tells Pamela, “You are Latina – you understand our needs. And being able to talk to you about my problems, you were able to help me.”

Laura says, “Once I was enrolled in the program, Pamela gave me a list of places that I could go and

apply. She made sure that everything was fine; she did a good job. She was always by my side, helping me find a place.”

Pamela points out that Laura herself found the apartment she ended up moving into. Laura says, “I was also doing my own housing search to find an affordable place with a good location so my son can be OK. The most important thing to me is to make sure that my son is fine and safe. So walking around, I found this place, and we really liked it.”

Laura now has a steady job with good hours. Her new housing is located in a brand-new, mixed-income apartment building with community spaces and resources for residents.

She says her 4<sup>th</sup> grade son is very happy: “We don’t have a computer, so here in the lobby area, he can access the computer. And they have games for him, and there is a gym. So he goes and takes advantage of it.”

Her apartment itself is spotless. “Look around,” she says. “Everything is really clean here and it is nice. I’m just very thankful for the program. It helped me a lot, and you can see the difference. I’m really happy here, but without Pamela, this wouldn’t have been possible.” ●

**For more info on Housing Stabilization Services, visit [www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Housing/Stabilization](http://www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Housing/Stabilization), or contact Pamela Calderón at [pamelac@solid-ground.org](mailto:pamelac@solid-ground.org) or 206.694.6841.**



Laura Torres in her apartment

Laura Torres en su departamento

***“It is very good that you can help us in Spanish, because I don’t understand English very well, and it is much easier to receive help with someone who speaks the same language.”***

## Ella siempre estaba a mi lado

Cuando Laura Torres se mudó a Seattle de la Ciudad de México, ella soñó con tener una mejor vida para ella, su hijo y su esposo. Pero después de ocho años y ahora separada de su esposo estaba desesperada en encontrar un lugar estable para vivir. “Todo empezó cuando perdí mi trabajo,” dice Laura, “Estaba viviendo con mis hermanos pero teníamos muchos problemas entonces mi hijo y yo necesitábamos tener nuestro propio hogar.”

Laura se enteró del programa de Estabilización de Hogar y Servicios de Solid Ground a través de su clínica de salud. Este programa provee ayuda financiera y apoyo en buscar viviendas para los residentes de la ciudad de Seattle, si no fuera por esta asistencia la gente perdería sus hogares. El programa de Estabilización de Hogar y Servicios ayuda a la gente a mantener su hogar o a encontrar un lugar donde vivir y evita que las personas vuelvan a caer en el círculo de quedarse sin hogar.

El programa también destaca nuestros esfuerzos en Acceso de Lenguaje: A través del programa, Laura se puso en contacto con una trabajadora social bilingüe, Pamela Calderón, quien originalmente es de Bolivia. Laura dice, “Siempre traté de hablar un poco de Inglés y siempre hago preguntas por que me gusta y por que quiero aprender.” Sin embargo, cuando se trata de procesos más estresantes como buscar un lugar donde vivir lo más pronto posible, la oportunidad de trabajar con una trabajadora social en nuestro propio idioma es invaluable.

“Definitivamente no es lo mismo cuando alguien te ayuda en Español o en Inglés por que trabajando con un persona que solo habla Inglés retrasa el proceso,” Laura explica. “No entiendo Inglés muy bien y es mucho más fácil recibir ayuda con alguien que habla el mismo idioma.”

Además de la comprensión del idioma, Laura está muy agradecida por el entendimiento cultural que Pamela pudo compartir en la situación de Laura. Ella le dice a Pamela, “Tu eres Latina y tu entiendes nuestras necesidades y estas disponible para hablar de mis problemas y me pudiste ayudar.”

Laura dice, “Una vez que estaba inscrita en el programa, Pamela me dio una lista de lugares a los cuales podía ir y aplicar. Ella se aseguró que todo estaba bien, ella hizo un muy buen trabajo. Ella estaba siempre a mi lado ayudándome a encontrar un lugar.”

Pamela indica que Laura encontró el departamento donde ahora vive. Laura dice, “Yo también estaba haciendo la búsqueda de mi departamento para encontrar un lugar que sea económico con una buena ubicación para que mi hijo este bien. Lo mas importante para mi es asegurarme que mi hijo este bien y se sienta seguro. Entonces caminando por esta zona encontré este lugar que nos gusta mucho.”

Laura tiene ahora un trabajo estable con buenas horas. Su nuevo hogar está ubicado en un edificio nuevo con espacios comunitarios y recursos para los residentes.

Ella dice que su niño que esta en el cuarto grado en la escuela está muy feliz.

“Nosotros no tenemos una computadora pero aquí en el edificio hay acceso a una computadora además de juegos y un gimnasio entonces el esta tomando ventaja de todo esto.”

El departamento en si es muy limpio. “Mira a tu alrededor,” dice Laura, “Todo esta muy limpio y es muy lindo. Estoy muy agradecida con el programa. Me ha ayudado mucho y se puede ver la diferencia. Estoy muy feliz aquí pero sin Pamela esto no hubiera sido posible.” ●

**Para más información del programa de Estabilización de Hogar y Servicios por favor visite [www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Housing/Stabilization](http://www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Housing/Stabilization), o contacte a Pamela Calderón al 206.694.6841 o a [pamelac@solid-ground.org](mailto:pamelac@solid-ground.org).**

*“Es muy bueno que nos puedas ayudar en Español por que no entiendo Inglés muy bien y es mucho mas fácil recibir ayuda con alguien que habla el mismo idioma.”*

Am I eligible?



Milk is not a luxury.  
Save our safety net.  
[www.povertyaction.org](http://www.povertyaction.org)

COMMUNITY NEWS

## Cool / Not Cool

**Cool:** In response to mounting calls and emails from Poverty Action members, a legislative committee held a work session to better understand the impact of three years of deep cuts to TANF. Solid Ground clients and Poverty Action members shared their stories about losing these vital benefits. As a result, there is now a core group of legislators dedicated to preserving this critical program in the budget.

**Not Cool:** Last year, TANF endured \$385 million in cuts. Now, the Governor has proposed further cuts to this critical program, including lowering the grant amount and imposing even stricter lifetime limits, making it nearly impossible for many Washington families to pay for basic expenses like rent and utilities.

**Cool: Nutrition education heats up:** Cooking Matters increased its healthy cooking and nutrition programs by more than 60% in 2011! 493 people living on low incomes graduated from six-week programs taught by volunteer chefs and nutritionists. Classes were held in conjunction with many Solid Ground programs and other community partners. ●

TAKE ACTION

## Some Ways to Get Involved!

- **3/24/12: Bowl-a-thon to Strike Out Hunger!** Join us at West Seattle Bowl (4505 39th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98116) to help feed thousands of infants and toddlers through Food Security for Children! Bowling shifts are at 2 or 4:30pm. For more info, contact Anna Ramos at **206.694.6857** or [annar@solid-ground.org](mailto:annar@solid-ground.org), and sign up to bowl at <https://support.solid-ground.org/registertobowl/>.
- **For Volunteer Opportunities** at Solid Ground, contact Indiigo Klyne, Volunteer Center Coordinator, at **206.694.6825** or [volunteers@solid-ground.org](mailto:volunteers@solid-ground.org), or visit [www.solid-ground.org/GetInvolved/Volunteer](http://www.solid-ground.org/GetInvolved/Volunteer).



**solid ground**  
Building community to end poverty  
1501 North 45th Street, Seattle, WA 98103-6708  
A Community Action Agency... Helping people, changing lives.

**groundviews** is Solid Ground's newsletter,  
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& caring community, free from poverty, prejudice & neglect.

**Reasonable accommodations for  
disabilities made on request.**



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