



**SANTA MARIA**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

# Life in the Community

Helping Families Help Themselves Since 1897



WINTER 2016

## Message From the President & CEO

As 2016 begins, we are reflecting on the accomplishments of the past year and looking with anticipation toward the new year.

The families we work with--parents raising young children, youth succeeding in school, home child care providers caring for children, young adults completing their GED studies, families stabilizing their housing conditions, people getting and keeping jobs, uninsured adults connecting to health resources and immigrants learning English--they are all setting positive goals for themselves, planning steps to achieve those goals and moving toward improved conditions for themselves and their neighborhood. Santa Maria's staff and volunteers come alongside and provide hope, help and encouragement to assist them on their journey. What a privilege to be involved in the lives of these families who are so determined to make a better life for themselves and their children!

Psst! Did you notice our new logo, colors and newsletter layout? The bright colors and re-designed logo represent our excitement for a bright future, continuing to serve in a solid, supporting role of helping families help themselves, which we've been doing for 118 years.

Would you please consider making a gift to invest in Santa Maria's work for the coming year? We are deeply grateful!



H. A. Musser, Jr.  
MA, MSW, LISW

## Santa Maria Honors La Salle High School at Annual Brunch

Santa Maria celebrated its 118th year of "helping families help themselves" at the 2015 Birthday Brunch on Sunday, December 6 at the Cincinnati Woman's Club in Clifton. Corporate sponsors of the event included PNC Bank and SC Ministry Foundation.



Tom Luebbe  
2015 recipient  
Sr. Blandina Segale  
Award

Tom Luebbe, La Salle High School Principal, received the Sr. Blandina Segale award for his unparalleled commitment to justice, servitude and empowerment--qualities of the award namesake, Sr. Blandina Segale, SC, who is currently on the path to canonization. The La Salle High School Key Club received the Organization Award for its dedication and service to the international community in Price Hill, where they volunteer at Santa Maria's International Welcome Center (IWC.)

Event proceeds benefit Santa Maria's IWC program, which gives Cincinnati's immigrants a unique, effective and open community education. The IWC program has served clients from (who spoke 13 different languages) from 22 different countries by offering English and Spanish literacy classes and support groups to allow immigrants to connect with valuable resources and support one another. H. A. Musser, Jr., Santa Maria President and CEO, states: "Santa Maria and its International Welcome Center continue to serve dramatically evolving communities in an ever-changing world."



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## Santa Maria GED Students Attend Computer Training

During the second week of October a handful of Santa Maria's GED students attended a



Thank you to the staff at the Kenwood Apple store for sharing their expertise with Santa Maria's GED students!

computer training class at the Kenwood Mall Apple store. The business team at Apple has recently begun a community outreach program, where they work with organizations in the city to provide meaningful experiences that foster creativity. These trainings also expose members of the community to different Apple technologies that can support their organization in many different ways. The Apple store in Kenwood is one of 28 stores throughout the country to have training space available on-site.



A finished product

Santa Maria's GED students learned how to utilize a program called Pages, and they were tasked with writing their own personal story in a creative way. Each student had the

opportunity to work on a Mac laptop throughout the training, and staff at Apple assisted them with crafting their story. Students also learned the ins and outs of presenting and how to fully engage an audience.

At the end of the training, the students presented their story to the class, and for some, this was the first time that they presented something to a group.



Santa Maria GED students learn how to tell a personal story in a creative way with Apple's Pages program.

Santa Maria would like to thank Lisa Reichert, Business Events Lead, and the rest of the Business team at Apple for providing the opportunity to participate in an event like this.

## Price Hill Pacer Training Group Celebrates Holidays

On Tuesday, December 29, members of the Price Hill Pacer Training Group met at Willie's Sports Cafe in Bridgetown to enjoy each other's company at a Holiday Celebration dinner.

Thanks to generous members of the group, several packages of diapers were collected for



Members of the Price Hill Pacer Training Group enjoyed some social time during the Holidays

Santa Maria's programs.

The FREE Price Hill Pacer Training Group continues to meet on Saturday mornings during the winter -- visit the training page at [www.pricehillpacer.org](http://www.pricehillpacer.org) to access the training group calendar.

**Save the Date!**

**2016 Price Hill Pacer  
5K/10K Run/Walk  
Saturday, June 4, 2016**



## Welcome to Santa Maria's AmeriCorps Volunteers!

AmeriCorps, Project Advance, is a grant awarded to Santa Maria Community Services from the Corporation for National and Community Services through ServeOhio, the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism.

Roberts from West Price Hill, Amy Stevens from Price Hill, Latasha Hambrick, from Avondale, Meghan Thomas from Batavia, Brendon Felton from Chicago, Timothy Frey from Cleveland, Jaedin Dean from Mt. Auburn, David Beck from Riverside, Katherine Wilhelm from Cheviot, Ellen Kessler from Bridgetown, Hunter Lang from Cincinnati, Hannah Stein from Oakley, Gabrielle Boyd from Cincinnati and Deirdre Eflers from Sunman.



Santa Maria's AmeriCorps program welcomes its new members for 2015-16

AmeriCorps volunteers commit to one year of full-time service in established social service programs at Santa Maria and at partner organizations throughout Cincinnati.

Santa Maria's program year started September 1, 2015 with 17 AmerCorps volunteers. They are Jasmine Russell from Avondale, Kimberly

Department.

Please welcome all of our AmeriCorps volunteers. They can be identified by their AmeriCorps grey logo t-shirts, or their AmeriCorps lapel pins. Best of luck to all of them for a great year!

## Foundation Corner

Thanks to the many supporters of Santa Maria and its programs! We have recently received support from the following foundations:

### For the Price Hill Earned Income Tax Credit/VITA Initiative

- SC Ministry Foundation

### For the Price Hill Youth Education Project

- The Daniel and Susan Pfau Foundation

### For Promoting Our Preschoolers and Family Child Care Programs

- SC Ministry Foundation
- Scripps Howard Foundation

### For the Youth Program

- Charles H. Dater Foundation
- Williams Foundation
- Crosset Family Fund of The Greater Cincinnati Foundation

### For the Wellness/Bienestar Program

- The HealthPath Foundation of Ohio
- Cincy Cinco (for Health Fair)

### For the Workforce Development Program

- John C. Griswold Foundation
- US Bank Foundation
- L & L Nippert Charitable Foundation
- Maxwell Weaver Foundation

## Santa Maria Wellness Program Gets a New Face!

Luz Elena Schemmel, Director of Santa Maria's International Welcome Center (IWC), has added Director of Wellness/Bienestar program to her job title. Ms. Schemmel has been with Santa Maria for over 6 years and helped shape the IWC program into the success that it is today.

On Saturday, October 3rd, Ms. Schemmel joined volunteers at the 17th Annual Price Hill Women's Health Fair, held at the Price Hill Recreation Center. Santa Maria and community partners, including St. Elizabeth Hospital, the Sisters of Charity, the Price Hill Recreation Center, Closing the Health Gap, Talbert House, area nursing schools, colleges and universities provided more than 70 individuals with FREE health screenings and health education materials from over 25 exhibits.

Santa Maria's Wellness/Bienestar program is committed to the Price Hill area residents in providing avenues "to attain their educational, financial and health goals."



Luz Elena Schemmel (right) with H. A. Musser, Jr. and Sr. Margarita Brewer, SC



## A Story to Celebrate! By Santa Maria Board Director and Volunteer, Sr. Patmarie Bernard, SC

Did you notice? There is a very **BRIGHT LIGHT** shining from these pages! The bright smile, demeanor and joy radiate from this picture of Mary Ann!

Her story is indeed a blessing, and Mary Ann has given us written permission to share the reason for her bright smile, her bright eyes and the alleluias she can now hear!

Mary Ann is a senior who has attended the Senior Wellness site of Santa Maria's Wellness/Bienestar program for a number of years. The Senior Site is hosted at the Price Hill Recreation Center generally on the third Wednesday of every month.

During the nursing evaluation of her overall health, Mary Ann complained of not being able to see very well. Indeed, her vision was 20/400... .. She could not even see the color of the traffic light. Through numerous efforts over a nine month period by the volunteer nurse and Santa Maria's staff, who were in communication with the University of Cincinnati Hospital Ophthalmology Department, Mary Ann finally had her cataracts removed. Numerous phone calls, appointments, and help with taxi money (because she could not see to take a bus) preceeded



this. The recovery went well, and Mary Ann can **SEE!**

Mary Ann then pointed out that she couldn't chew food... .. it always had to be pureed or a liquid, because she did not have any teeth. Santa Maria's social workers again sprang into action identifying resources and a most generous dental practice. After a lot of effort to get the dentures to fit properly, she is sporting her beautiful **SMILE!**

Mary Ann's hearing was another problem. She can now **HEAR** the birds singing, her phone and some things she'd rather not hear, due to resources identified via the expertise of the Santa Maria Wellness/Bienestar program staff. Hearing aides that are now part of her attire, and hearing aid batteries are made available through the Bahmann Foundation and distributed at the Senior Wellness sites.

Gratitudes are lifted up by Mary Ann, Santa Maria staff and volunteers to so many organizations and benefactors who, with Santa Maria, help make outreach of services possible.

## Now I'm The Employment Coach! By Santa Maria Public Ally, Emmanuel Gray

As a teenager Billie was thrust into a bad situation and found herself taking on the responsibilities of adulthood far sooner than expected. She was working a job she did not like and in need of a place to lay her head at night. That was when "out of legit desperation," as she puts it, she called 2-1-1 and was referred to Santa Maria.

As soon as she attended orientation Billie began seizing opportunities to help prepare her for a better life. Santa Maria's Tenant Education class, that teaches clients about their rights, how to speak to a landlord, budgeting and being a good tenant, peaked her interest and so she signed up right away. After completing the class, Billie found herself in a tight spot where although she could afford rent, she could not afford the safety deposit without taking out a loan. At this point Santa Maria stepped in and removed her barrier to housing by paying for her deposit. "They helped me find my apartment--and my

home. My beautiful home that I have today, is thanks to them."

Billie did not stop there. During the Tenant Education class she was introduced to our Financial Coach and decided that since this was the first time she was paying her own bills, she would benefit from some financial guidance. After completing one-on-one coaching, she acquired the skills she needed to work out her own budget.

Before long Billie was feeling financially aware and stable; she had a home, and car, but one thing was lacking. She did not like her place of employment. Therefore she began working with our Employment team and attending Employment workshops. For Billie, the certificates of completion she earned from each class she attended helped boost her confidence when

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## Santa Maria Board Chair, Jorge Seda, Honored By His Alma Mater

In September, Santa Maria Board member, Jorge Seda, was honored at St. Louis University's Alumni Merit and Celebration Gala. He is a graduate of Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology. Santa Maria's Development Director, Nune Krayterman, talks with Jorge about his career, family and service life.

**Nune Krayterman: Where are you from? What brought you to the United States? Why Cincinnati?**

**Jorge Seda:** I was born in Puerto Rico, and was the youngest of six siblings. When I was growing up, I dreamed of becoming a pilot and working with airplanes. Part of the reason for this is that I grew up during the NASA space exploration decade of the 60s and the moon landing. I was a finalist to the US Air Force Academy, but due to my limited proficiency in English, I was not accepted. The University of Puerto Rico did not have a degree program in Aerospace Engineering, but I found out about an accelerated BS degree program at St. Louis University where I could finish my BS in Aerospace Engineering degree in three years. This time I made it! As I was getting ready to graduate, I received job offers from three prominent aviation companies: McDonald Douglas in St. Louis, Boeing in Seattle and Martin Marietta in Georgia. I accepted the one with McDonald Douglas since it was in St. Louis, where I had a budding romance going on with my now wife of 44 years, Kathleen. However, a month before graduation, McDonald Douglas called all the seniors that had accepted job offers from them and encouraged them to consider looking for other job opportunities as the company had just lost a major government contract, and they could not guarantee me a job for more than a year. I had to look for

more permanent employment options. I contacted Nelson Rosario (who currently also serves on the Board of Directors of Santa Maria), who graduated from St. Louis University two years before me and was working at GE Aviation in Cincinnati. He told me that they were hiring and gave me a contact name. And so I ended up in Cincinnati with a job offer from GE Aviation. Nelson and I were roommates until I got married and brought my wife Kathleen to Cincinnati. I received my Masters degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Cincinnati.

**NK: What excites you about Santa Maria? Why do you serve on the Board?**

**JS:** I am amazed at the very broad scope of services Santa Maria provides to the Price Hill community and its residents within its limited budget. I want to be part of the team! The fact that the agency works with the Hispanic population is an additional incentive for me. I have a passion to provide the same opportunities I had growing up with and throughout my life and career to immigrants when they are striving to build their lives in this country and become successful. I come from a family of humble beginnings. My father was a mailman, and my mother was a homemaker, but they always placed big emphasis on education. I was very fortunate to never lack any key necessities like food, shelter, healthcare and love, and I am now in a position to give back and help provide opportunities to succeed to those less fortunate.

**NK: What is the craziest thing you have done in your life?**

**JS:** When I was in college, my friend Ruben made a date with a girl named Kathleen. For their first date, my friend asked me to meet Kathleen at the dorm lounge and entertain her while he was



Jorge Seda (center) & his family at the St. Louis University Alumni Merit and Celebration Gala

finishing his work. I agreed. After we met, I took her to the student lounge music room and brought my Latin music LPs. We talked and danced until my friend came back from work two hours later. Ruben went to get cleaned up to go out with Kathleen, but it was getting too late for a week day and she did not want to go out anymore that night. When Ruben came back, Kathleen told us: "it is getting too late...why don't WE go to guitar mass at the main campus on Saturday?" And so we agreed. When she left, Ruben and I looked at each other puzzled at what did she mean by "WE?" Since we did not have the answer, we flipped a coin to decide who will go with her on a date. I won the toss, I got to go out with Kathleen. She has been my wife for 44 years now.

**NK: What do you do in your spare time?**

**JS:** I spend lots of time with my family.

... .. Please continue reading on Page 7



## Santa Maria Celebrates Journey to Kindergarten

Santa Maria's Promoting Our Preschoolers (POP) program, along with its partner, Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) program, celebrated its yearly graduation for the children who are entering kindergarten. With 70 children getting ready for kindergarten, over 300 proud parents, grandparents and guardians attended and participated in the event. A Representative from Senator Sherrod Brown's office attended the event giving the students an official congratulatory letter.

The POP program provides home visits twice a month with other supports for the families. The goal of the program is kindergarten readiness with school success, and it maintains an annual enrollment of over 225 children. Congratulations to the children, their families and the staff at Santa Maria who all work hard to accomplish the goals of the program!



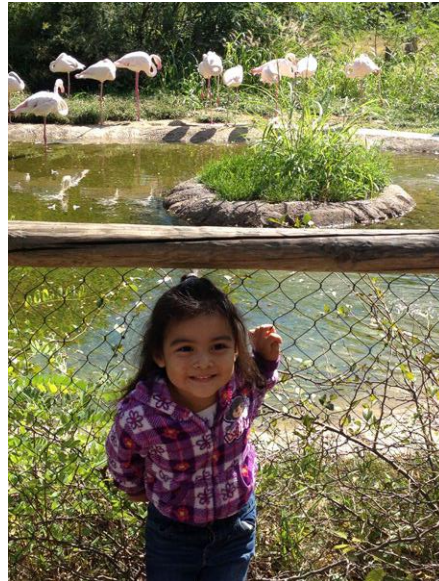
Children and their families, who participate in Santa Maria's POP and SPARK programs, celebrated their readiness for kindergarten!





## Family Child Care Expands Program

In 2014 Santa Maria extended its Family Child Care provider support program to enroll Hispanic providers within Price Hill. The program aims to improve the health, safety and education of in-home childcare. Educational activities and experiences within the program enhance child development and educational success. Furthermore, Hispanic providers have the opportunity to participate in educational groups and share their childcare experiences. On September 22nd, the childcare program took a trip to the Cincinnati Zoo -- many of these women and children enjoyed their first zoo experience!



## Promoting Our Preschoolers Take a Walk

The small group component of Santa Maria's Promoting Our Preschoolers (POP) program took a nature walk with the Hispanic parents and families this fall. During the walk, families matched colors in nature along with other fun activities. One mom even brought homemade tamales for the group to share!



Santa Maria's Family Child Care program visited the Cincinnati Zoo this fall.



Santa Maria's POP program enjoyed the great outdoors!

## Jorge Seda continued... ..

I have three adult children and three grandchildren ages, 6, 6 and 2. I babysit them, I meet them from school when they get off the bus a few days a week and love spending time with them. I also take care of my wife, Kathleen, since she has been having health issues for a while. I also serve on the Board of Directors of Franciscan Ministries, Inc. In addition, as co-founder (with Nelson Rosario and two P&G friends) of the Greater Cincinnati Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSA) Gala,

I spend a lot of time organizing our annual fundraiser in Cincinnati. In 14 years we have raised over \$1.4 million and provided over 450 scholarships to Hispanic students. I also serve as advisor to the Greater Cincinnati Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) Professional chapter, an organization I co-founded in 2010. One of their main initiatives is bringing robotic education to Hispanic middle school students in Greater Cincinnati.

Although I retired from GE Aviation six years ago, I was rehired as a Pensioner/Consultant by them, and I still support and volunteer for the GE Aviation Hispanic Forum, an organization whose main goals are to attract, retain, develop Hispanic talent and give back to the community. Nelson Rosario and I co-founded this organization in 1998.

I am truly blessed!



# SANTA MARIA COMMUNITY SERVICES

*Helping families help themselves since 1897.*

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[www.SantaMaria-cincy.org](http://www.SantaMaria-cincy.org)

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## Now I'm the Employment Coach Continued ... ..

applying for new jobs. Billie notes “[I just don’t think] anybody at Santa Maria realizes how much their support and them believing in me means to me.” Following a lead from her employment coach about an AmeriCorps leadership program called Public Allies, Billie spent hours working on an application for the position. At first she thought she did not get the job, but then she received the call that she could start working as a Public Ally on September 22nd 2015! Looking back, Billie describes her employment coach as a mentor, “When I was in job search, I was there every day and [the employment coach] was there every day... helping me with my resume... going over my job applications... he told me about Public Allies. I just thank him so much.”

In her position as a Public Ally Billie has been matched with a non-profit organization, at which she will apprentice as a Job Search Assistant. In her position she is serendipitously turning the tables to help others through the employment process. With a big smile, Billie will tell anyone who asks, “Now I’m the Employment Coach.”

In describing success, Billie stresses that “it’s not the materialistic things, it’s how you perceive yourself when you

wake up every day. Coming from two years ago I live in a tiny little apartment with my dog and a little hoopy car ‘97, but I’m happy... I’m on the right track, I am where I want to be.”

When asked to give some advice to others coming through Santa Maria, Billie says, “You have the resources. Utilize them. I feel like when I went in there every day looking for help with a job search, they gave me the utmost support.”



Billie and Santa Maria Public Ally, Emmanuel Gray