

EVERY LATINO & LATINA
IN EAST TENNESSEE *thriving*
2021 ANNUAL REPORT



HOW DO WE CREATE *diverse, thriving* COMMUNITIES?

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We **LEAD**



*"I'm humbled by
and in awe of the
community we are
weaving together."*

In 16 years working in the heart of East Tennessee's Latino population, Centro Hispano has witnessed big changes in the fabric of our community: it is much larger, more established, and more integrated. Children from our afterschool programs are beginning to pursue higher education, students from our ESL classes are finding more fulfilling work and starting businesses, women from our Young Latinas group are establishing their careers and becoming leaders in the community. I'm humbled by and in awe of the community we are weaving together: a tapestry that becomes stronger, more colorful, more beautiful, and more representative of us all with every added thread.

I believe with all my heart that an educated, diverse, and prosperous Latino population will mean a more resilient community for everyone. I see the possibilities every day in the work we do here, and I am so grateful for everything you do in support of our vision.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping lines.

Claudia Caballero
President & CEO
Centro Hispano of East Tennessee



We **ALIGN OUR WORK WITH OUR VALUES**

Mission

To connect, integrate, and empower the Latino community through education and engagement, information and resource services, and community-strengthening initiatives.

Vision

To see every Latino and Latina in East Tennessee thriving culturally, educationally, and economically.

Values



Latinidad



Comunidad



Corazón



Workforce Development



Youth & Family Engagement



Community Resources

Identity

For more than 16 years, Centro Hispano has worked to fulfill the vision that if one person succeeds, we all succeed. We develop effective, relevant, and culturally aware programming that educates and lifts up participants, and we help Greater Knoxville understand the presence and contributions of Latino families in East Tennessee, as well as the challenges they face. By actively investing in Latinos, we seek to contribute to the strength of East Tennessee's communities. Centro also serves as a welcoming community center—a resource and a gathering place for families of all backgrounds to feel like they are an integral part of life here in the Tennessee Valley.

Program Areas

Centro **TIMELINE**

2005

Centro Hispano de East Tennessee opens its doors offering English classes (ESL).

2015

With support from United Way of Greater Knoxville, Centro begins its first bilingual and bicultural afterschool programs.

2016

Centro has 1.5 full-time employees, including Claudia Caballero. It offers after school programs, ESL, and HiSET classes.

2017

Centro adds women's wellness, youth leadership, health and community navigation, and financial education.

2020

Programming expands again during the COVID-19 pandemic. Centro creates a census awareness campaign and begins its professional consulting services.

2021

Centro counts more than 70 community partners.

We **BREAK DOWN BARRIERS**

Community Resources

3,919 phone calls fielded	266 walk-ins (during the pandemic)
1,240 internal referrals	1,896 external referrals



71% of Knox County's Latino population were vaccinated by the fall of 2021.

Far higher than any other demographic group, this number was the result of many months of vaccine outreach and coordination by Centro and its partners to maintain "a constant, steady presence" in the community.

Reyna's story

"We have always been able to reach out and get help finding what we need to get by."

When Reyna left her home nearly 20 years ago, life in Honduras was incredibly difficult. "There were few opportunities for work. I washed and ironed clothes but it didn't sustain us. We didn't even have a bed to sleep in. My father was a vendor, he sold small things to help support the family." When he died in an accident, Reyna reached a crossroads. "He died in such an ugly way and life in Honduras was so difficult. I realized I had to get away."

Reyna arrived in the United States via Mexico, where she was taken in by complete strangers. "There are so many good people in the world," she says. But arriving in the United States without papers would make them hard to find.

"Those that give you the opportunity to work without papers will yell at you, humiliate you, work you to death."

In the summer of 2020, Reyna heard about Centro Hispano. "I talked to Claudia Mata, who has a heart of gold," she says. As Centro's Housing Coordinator, Claudia Mata found rent and utilities assistance that made it possible for Reyna to establish herself here in Knoxville. Centro has also helped Reyna get health referrals, vaccinations for her and her three children, food assistance, a budgeting class, the option for therapy in Spanish, and more. "I'm so grateful for the support that Centro Hispano has given me," she says.

457
housing inquiries

602
health inquiries

35
new enrollees in
telehealth programs

We **FORGE NEW PATHS**

Workforce Development

292

ESL students

6,036

ESL instructional hours

80%

ESL participant success rate



Karen's story

“She started at the beginner’s level and is now on track to get all the way to the end of Centro’s ESL programming.”

Karen is a 28-year-old woman from the state of Hidalgo. In Mexico, she operated a successful food truck business with her husband, studied agroindustrial engineering, and gave birth to a daughter, Adriana. But Karen felt something was missing, and decided to reunite with her mother, who had emigrated to the United States when she was five.

She started at the beginner’s level and is now on track to get all the way to the end of Centro’s ESL programming. English is her third language, as she speaks Nahuatl (her native tongue) and Spanish.

Karen now lives with her sister and her daughter, and makes a living cleaning houses. Grateful for the opportunity to study English with Centro, she hopes to one day return to school and finish her education.

As soon as Karen arrived in the United States, she began to study English with Centro, even quitting one of her two jobs to be able to focus on learning.



26
small business class participants



13
HiSET students



67
financial education students

With over 15 years of ESL programming, Centro has helped generations of English students better integrate into life in East Tennessee. This long-running program is tailored to fit our clients’ schedules and abilities, has generated tens of thousands of instructional hours, and will expand to include career counseling, goal setting, resume writing, and more in 2022!



We **EDUCATE, GUIDE & INSPIRE**

Youth & Family Engagement

170 students served through afterschool programming	109 families served through our family support program
80% increase in reading proficiency	100% reported increase in positive family relationships



Annie's story

“Everyone needs a mentor. It’s such a comfort to be able to ask for help when you need it.”



Annie Durán Pérez came to the United States from the Dominican Republic with her mom and sister at the age of 18. She began to volunteer with Centro Hispano’s children’s programs, where she impressed her supervisors with her passion for the children and families she worked with.

They walked the campus, talked about Knoxville’s best Latino foods, discussed their interests and their goals. Maria helped connect Annie to UTK’s multicultural spaces, and encouraged her to put herself forward.

With an associate’s degree from Pellissippi State Community College, Annie had begun child and family studies at UTK, but she felt disconnected. All of her classes were online, so she never even took a campus tour. At the urging of Centro staff, Annie joined Latinos Empowered to Advocate and Dream (L.E.A.D.), a college access program that pairs Latino mentors and mentees on the path to higher education.

Annie began to take more chances and look for more opportunities. She participated in the VOLbreaks program, served as the secretary for the Latin American Student Organization, and became involved with the Latino Student Success Coalition. She traveled to Nashville and Washington, D.C. to speak for Latino civil rights. She had known she wanted to become an advocate, but hadn’t known how to begin. Now, she was emerging as a student leader on campus.

Through L.E.A.D., Annie met Maria Martinez, who would become a mentor and champion.

Annie will graduate in 2022, and plans to continue working with immigrant youth and families in the nonprofit sector.



51 college coaching hours	221 students served through college access programming
83% students accepted to post-secondary institutions	100% L.E.A.D. program seniors graduated from high school

We **LIFT EACH OTHER UP**

Daniela's story

Daniela Foronda took increasingly deep breaths to steady herself as she prepared to take the stage for her final presentation. She was shaking. The women gathered around her pantomimed staying calm, chin up, and she nodded and forced a smile. It was time.

Her presentation would be the culmination of ten weeks of work, taking the construction business she shares with her husband to another level with financial projections, a website, and a firm business plan. Her knees wobbled as she approached the podium but when she spoke, her voice was clear and steady. "As entrepreneurs, we have to banish our fears. And in the face of obstacles, we only have two choices: we can throw in the towel, or we can use that towel to wipe the sweat off our faces, and go to work."

For Daniela, these were not empty words. In Guatemala City, she had studied Business Administration and Accounting, but the loss of her first husband while she was carrying their second child had been a devastating blow. Then her father had become incapacitated due to a stroke. In the United States, she thought she might be able to help support her parents and build a better life. "This is a country of dreams and second chances," she says. "I had to try."

In 2014, Daniela arrived in Knoxville after finding love again with her second husband. But again, she would endure unthinkable loss. She and her husband lost their first baby together late in term, and she spent their second pregnancy in and out of the hospital with complications.

At two, their son was diagnosed with severe autism. Though she remains grateful for her blessings, she admits to struggling. Caretaking for her son and homebound during the pandemic, Daniela's isolation threatened to suffocate her spirit. When she happened upon Centro's virtual programs, she says, "I tried everything they offered. It was all via Zoom so I could attend even though I couldn't leave home. Health programs, therapies, classes, and Centro's good energy helped me so much," she says. "I stopped taking medicine for stress, blood pressure, and depression."

By 2022, Daniela and her husband had been working as a team in home construction for years, but it had always been in the service of someone else. In February, she signed them up for the very first cohort of Centro's Grandes Sueños en Pequeñas Empresas (GSPE) program.



"As entrepreneurs, we have to banish our fears. And in the face of obstacles, we only have two choices: we can throw in the towel, or we can use that towel to wipe the sweat off our faces, and go to work."

On Tuesday, April 19th, their class met in person for the first time after many weeks of virtual studies. The setting was an echoey basketball court, but the warmth and camaraderie emanating from the group was palpable. Something else was special about this cohort, too: all of the presenting entrepreneurs were women.

An electrical engineer using chemistry to perfect her confections, a baker bringing the famous Venezuelan "tequeño" to Knoxville, a Reiki therapist passionate about healing, a lawyer bringing a personal touch to bilingual immigration law services, and Daniela. "This is an incredibly strong group of women," she says. "We are all warriors, fighters."

When all the entrepreneurs had presented, the judges huddled together to choose the winners in each category. Daniela froze for an instant as the room erupted into applause. Not only had she made it through her presentation—she had won.

Just days before, Daniela had left a voicemail for Brandon and Hilda, the architects and facilitators of GSPE. "I'm so grateful," she said. "We all are. For myself, I know now that I can move forward, I can accomplish the goals I set, and I have the strength to keep going. I'm intelligent," she says, stopping a moment to compose herself. "And I'm worthy."

We GATHER ALLIES

A Step Ahead of East Tennessee
 Adelante Nonprofit Law Firm
 Allies of Knoxville's Immigrant Neighbors (AKIN)
 AmeriCorps VISTA
 Bank of America
 Beardsley Farm
 Belle Morris Elementary School
 Bridge Refugee Services
 Catholic Charities of East Tennessee
 Cattywampus Puppet Council
 CDC Foundation
 Cherokee Health Systems
 Cigna
 Community Action Committee
 Direct Relief
 Dogwood Arts
 Doorway to College
 East Tennessee Children's Hospital
 East Tennessee Foundation
 Ed Trust Tennessee
 Emory Valley Center
 Family & Children's Service (FCS)
 Fish Hospitality Pantries
 Free Medical Clinic of America
 Friends of Literacy
 Gene and Florence Monday Foundation
 Helen Ross Mcnabb
 HoLa Hora Latina
 HOLA Lakeway
 HomeSource East Tennessee
 Hope Resource Center
 Interfaith Health Clinic
 Jane Pettway
 Johnson University
 KCS - Welcome Center & Dept of English Language Learners
 Knox Area Urban League
 Knox County Grants & Community Development
 Knox County Health Department
 Knox County Public Library
 Knox County Schools
 Knox Education Foundation
 Knoxville Area Project Access (KAPA)
 Knoxville Community Development Corporation (KCDC)
 La Lider WKZX 93.5 FM Knoxville
 Legal Aid of East Tennessee
 LMU - Duncan School of Law
 Lonsdale Elementary School
 Maryville College

Gracias to our allies who have made this work possible!

Mosaic: Fellowship Church
 Northwest Middle School
 Norwood Elementary School
 Nourish Knoxville
 Pellissippi State Community College
 Planned Parenthood
 Project GRAD
 Remote Area Medical (RAM)
 RhiTA - Walter State Community College
 Roane State Community College
 Rotary Club of Knoxville
 Second Harvest Food Bank
 Siddiqi Foundation
 STEP, Inc. (Support & Training for Exceptional Parents)
 Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Knoxville
 Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC)
 Tennessee Immigrant Empowerment Solutions
 Tennessee Society Daughters of the American Revolution
 The MUSE Knoxville
 The Restoration House of East Tennessee
 TN State Department of Children's Services
 Transformation Church
 Truist
 Two Bikes
 UnidosUS
 United Way
 University of Tennessee College of Law
 University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine
 University of Tennessee Dept. of Child and Family Studies
 University of Tennessee Dept. of Sociology
 University of Tennessee Dept. of Theory & Practice in Teacher Education
 University of Tennessee VOLbreaks
 University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Division of Diversity & Community Engagement
 University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Global Studies
 University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Hispanic Studies
 UT Extension, Institute of Agriculture
 UT Medical Center, Cancer Institute
 Village Church
 Visit Knoxville
 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
 Westview Elementary School
 Women's Fund of East Tennessee
 YMCA
 YWCA Nashville

We INNOVATE

What does it mean to not only be the leading resource for Latinos, but to be the area's leading resource regarding Latinos, as well?

It means educating our neighbors in Greater Knoxville about how we can: be stronger allies, better serve our Latino employees, support and promote diversity, and practice deeper cultural literacy. It also means sharing the best of Latino culture whenever and wherever we can!

List of professional services:

- Translations
- Market Research
- *Latinidad 101*
- Cultural Competency
- Diversity Speaking Engagements
- Cooking Classes
- Spanish Classes
- Focus groups
- Consulting
- And more!



We CELEBRATE



The Latino Awards is Centro Hispano's biggest fundraiser of the year, supporting programs like ESL and HiSET, health navigation, civic engagement, afterschool enrichment, youth development, small business training, and the creation of a pipeline of trained interpreters for East Tennessee. The event also kicks off Hispanic Heritage Month by gathering friends and allies to celebrate the work of individuals, organizations, and businesses that do so much for East Tennessee's Latino community.



Supporting the Latino Awards means investing in the community around you, and it's easy! Contact Katie at k.willocks@centrohispanotn.org for more information.



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University of TN College of Law

University of TN College of Social Work

TVA

LMU/Duncan School of Law

Vulcan Materials Company

We **WORK TOGETHER**

Executive Team



Claudia Caballero
President & CEO



Brandon Ledford
Workforce Development Director



Megan Barolet-Fogarty
Youth & Family Engagement Director



Cristina Cáceres
Community Resources Director



Katie Armendarez-Willocks
Development Director



Maria Matney
Director of Operations



Staff Team

Annie Durán Pérez
Claudia Mata
Celeste Paula
Daniela Durán
Doris Fernandez
Eli Kirshner (VISTA)
Francía Zelaya Zapata
Hilda Castillo
Jaquelina Schmittlen
Luci Diego
Leroy Goñez Rodriguez
Mallika Vohra (VISTA)
Maria Zevallos
Noelle Barber (VISTA)
Wil Turner

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Dr. Gary Weedman
Katrina Vargas
Dr. Eboni Winford
Gloria Palacios

2021 **INCOME & EXPENSES**

July 2021-June 2022

INCOME

Grants	\$1,163,987.08
Fundraising	\$142,406.33
Donations	\$63,462.02
Total Program Income	\$16,334.73
Professional Services	\$117,832.80
PPP Loan Forgiveness	\$77,742.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,581,764.96

EXPENSES

Programs & Services	\$982,109.77
Fundraising	\$22,852.00
Occupancy	\$78,099.99
Overhead	\$66,365.14
Increase to Emergency Fund	\$100,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,249,426.90





UNIDOSUS
AFFILIATE

