

# NEWSLETTER

MAY - AUGUST 2015



## Portraits of Success: 45 Years of Building, Investing, and Achieving

Over the last 45 years, the United Community Center has been fortunate to serve a community of hard working families, individuals, and young students eager to reach their potential and achieve their dreams. Through the years clients have shared their stories and photographs with us. If these years could be captured in a photo album, it would contain pages filled with these portraits of success. These portraits keep us focused on what is important in our work every day; to provide services and support to each individual that comes in our doors and help them find their own journeys to achieve their goals.

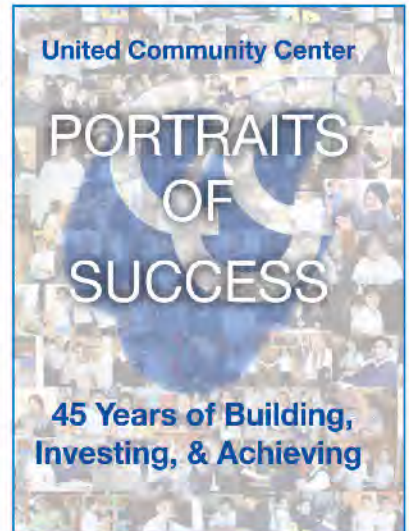
During the past four and half decades, we have created new programs and constructed buildings with the investments of thousands of supporters who believe in our work. We are currently finalizing our Building on Success capital campaign, having reached more than \$6 million of our \$8 million campaign goal. This campaign built the recent expansion of our school and will fund another middle

school when completed, which will have technology focus for students looking to pursue technical careers in the future. To find out more about the campaign and how you might help go to:

<http://www.unitedcc.org/BuildingOnSuccess.htm>.

Just like your family photo album, the UCC family history is filled with stories of happiness, growth, and adversity – but what always remains true is that by working together, we know we can always succeed.

*Ricardo Diaz*  
Ricardo Diaz



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## Middle School PASOS with Carroll University is a Slam Dunk!

United Community Center and Carroll University have partnered to offer an extremely unique opportunity to Bruce-Guadalupe middle school students – the PASOS Program (Preparing and Advancing Students for Opportunities in Science). As 8th graders, students have the opportunity for early admittance to one of Carroll's Health Science programs.

A bus filled with 8th graders and their families participated in a recent visit to Carroll to obtain their PASOS. Program Applications, interact with current health science students and faculty, tour the athletic training facilities, and enjoy the men's and women's basketball games. Twenty-four applications were submitted and reviewed to identify the first cohort of 16 PASOS students on April 20th.

As PASOS program members, students will become prepared for college health science programs of study through participating in health science workshops and camps facilitated by Carroll faculty and students, working with current student mentors, and receiving academic, career, and financial aid advising. Students who maintain their high levels of academic achievement throughout high school and choose to enroll at Carroll University will be provided direct admission or an advantage for placement into their chosen health science program of study.





# Wall of Fame 2015

Each year UCC and Badger Mutual Insurance Company select five exceptional individuals for the Badger Mutual Wall of Fame. These young achievers were acknowledged on stage at UCC's 45th Anniversary Dinner, and their pictures, as well as brief overviews of their accomplishments, are framed to be hung on the walls of UCC's Community Learning Center. UCC is proud to recognize the following individuals:



**Ana Isabel Cortés** dedicates her time mentoring youth, working with an impressive list of Milwaukee organizations including UCC, Milwaukee Art Museum, Casa Romero, Medical College of Wisconsin, St. Alexander Parish, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee's Stein Scholars, MPS Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, and the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. Ana's strong work ethic, self-motivation, determination, and desire to make a difference in the world propel her to seek ways to help urban youth discover their potential to become productive community members. She will graduate this June from Carmen High School of Science and Technology with honors and pursue art therapy/art education and community leadership as a means to empower youth to discover their self-worth and voice.



**Dalahi Esmeralda Luna-Martinez** is always willing to help others and strives to achieve her best academically, choosing a rigorous class schedule at Carmen High School of Science and Technology. Dalahi is a dedicated Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) member volunteering her past three summers mentoring youth. She is also an intern at First Stage and is a member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee's Stein Scholars, as well as the Alverno Girls Advanced Academy in Science and Mathematics. She is an excellent example of a Bruce-Guadalupe graduate willing to mentor and share her ambition and positive attitude with younger students.



**Natalia Perez** will graduate from BGCS this June with a near-perfect cumulative GPA of 3.9 and attend Divine Savior Holy Angels High School, where she plans to continue her rigorous education. She is a community leader and role model, acting as point guard for the 8th grade girls' basketball team and occupying second chair of the alto saxophone section of the BGMS Jazz Band, and she recently attended a mission trip to El Salvador. Her teachers remark on her incredible work ethic as well as her selflessness.



**Chris Rojo** is a role model to youth in the community, working with the Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program and the Crime Strategy Initiative at UCC, tutoring high school students to pursue a college education, and leading by example. Chris is currently an intern at the District Attorney's Office and will soon commence her internship at the Wisconsin Department of Justice in the Narcotics Unit where she will be working alongside federal agents reviewing crime cases. Chris plans to graduate from the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and pursue a career as an agent at the Wisconsin Department of Justice.



**Mileena Anahi Sanchez-Luna** will attend Brookfield Academy on a full scholarship this fall. While at BGCS, she enjoyed participating as a member of the girls' basketball team and BGMS Jazz Band. Mileena is very involved in the community, volunteering at a warming shelter for the homeless and attending various outreach events sponsored by her church. She captivates her peers and mentors with her positivity and the consistency with which she excels in her studies and activities.

# Students Help Build an Educational Foundation

In late February, twelve 7th and 8th grade students from Bruce-Guadalupe Community School had the opportunity of lifetime when they traveled to El Salvador to complete mission work. They were joined by students and staff from Milwaukee College Prep School and St. Marcus School. During the week-long trip, which was generously funded by the Ramirez Family, the group spent time volunteering at Casa La Atarraya, a private school in Ahuachapán, El Salvador.



Each day, the group helped with service projects in the morning and played sports in the afternoon with local students. Service projects included digging a foundation for a new technology center, packing bags of food to donate to the neighborhood, helping in English classes, painting recycled items to decorate the kindergarten play area, and creating a mural with BGCS art teacher Mr. Lovo.

All students and staff were expected to write in a journal about their experiences daily. Here are some journal entries from Bruce-Guadalupe students about the amazing opportunity to serve in El Salvador:

"Each time I strike my pickaxe on the ground, I say to myself that I am helping develop the future education of young students in El Salvador. This is one of the thoughts that keeps me going. Once that technology center is finished, I can say with pride that I helped lay the foundation for that building."  
-Oskar Meneses, BGCS 7th grader

"The most important thing that many children in the US take for granted is education. Many of them go to school because they are forced to go and don't try and drop out. In reality, many kids around the world, not just in El Salvador, would be willing to do anything to be in their spots."  
-Jair Ramirez, BGCS 8th grader

"I think that the mission trip was accomplished because many students from St. Marcus, Milwaukee College Prep, and Bruce-Guadalupe interacted and put their ideas together so that we could have one idea and help others. I feel like the mission trip was accomplished but I feel like I am able to do more and help others in El Salvador. I feel like I accomplished a lot and served others because I saw many kids and even adults laugh and smile."  
-Daniela Vaca, BGCS 7th grader





# Students Record Album with Grammy Winners

Latino Arts Strings Program (LASP) students recently had the experience of a lifetime when they were featured in a new song by Grammy winners La Santa Cecilia. After meeting the students last fall during their visit and performance at Latino Arts, the band was amazed at the talent of the Strings students and wanted to include them in their album recording. Thirty-three students took part in the recording, which was held at a local recording studio with the band. After the recording session, the parents held a potluck for the band and the students at the Bruce-Guadalupe Community School, which erupted into an impromptu jam session. "It was a positive mood that turned into a musical joy fest," shared Dinorah Marquez, LASP Program Director.



was waiting to wake up from. The fact that they're famous intimidated me. I couldn't stop worrying. What if I mess up? What will they think of me? I thought day and night. When I actually met them, they welcomed me as if I were one of them. My nightmare finally became a dream. I let go and played even better without all that weight on my shoulders. This was an unforgettable experience that will follow me throughout my life," shared Enrique.

Gaby commented, "The most meaningful aspect about recording with and meeting La Santa Cecilia is that I was able to go deeper into the music. Music is very personal even when it's not telling my story. Seeing Marisol's, La Santa Cecilia's vocalist, emotional connection with her songs made me feel extremely grateful to have music in my life and to know that through music I can meet people like her. It was incredible to record with a group that changes lives through their music, their stories and their humility."

Stay tuned for details on the album's release on the newly revamped Strings website: [www.latinoartsinc.com/strings.htm](http://www.latinoartsinc.com/strings.htm)



Students also had a lot to share about the experience...

"Recording with a famous, Grammy-winning band like La Santa Cecilia was almost surreal. It was kind of like a dream-slash-nightmare that I

## UCC's Groovy Volunteers, Giving Back Since 1970

The 10th Annual Volunteer Celebration, held on March 26th, honored some of the most notable volunteer efforts at United Community Center throughout the last year. UCC is thankful for the 1000+ volunteers who help us serve the community each year, and gave special recognition to this year's "groovy" volunteers:



### Community Volunteer of the Year - **BOB WEBB**

Bob has been a generous community supporter and integral member of the UCC leadership team for years. He has led the organization through years of clean audits and balanced budgets.

### Long-Term Volunteer of the Year - **KARINA SANCHEZ**

Karina started as a Service Learner in 2013 and has not stopped giving her time to UCC programs since then. Karina has helped as a Homework Tutor, facilitated Enrichment Hour projects after school, and even helped some of younger students in our summer daycare program.

### Athletics Volunteer of the Year - **RICARDO HERRERA**

Every day Ricardo gives up countless hours coaching, supporting, and mentoring our youth through basketball and flag football. He is dedicated to helping build and assist with UCC's athletic programs.

### College Mentor of the Year - **JENNIFER FLAMBOE**

Jennifer has participated in our Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors) Program to help college students by participating in soft-skills workshops sharing her experience and wisdom about how to succeed as you transition from college to career.

### Corporate Volunteer Group of the Year - **NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL**

Northwestern Mutual volunteers have supported UCC Programs by providing reading opportunities to Bruce-Guadalupe Community School students through NML's Time to Read and Future Business Readers Programs. They also have participated in several projects such as Enrichment Hour with students, Field Trips, and Spa Days with our Adult Day Center seniors.



### Community Youth Volunteer of the Year - **DENNIS ORTEGA AND ARTURO ESPINO**

Dennis and Arturo have committed their time and energy to volunteer with Bruce-Guadalupe Community School students in the Homework Help Afterschool Program. We appreciate them serving as role models to our younger students afterschool and during the summer in the Youth Volunteer Corps Program.

### Youth Programs Volunteer of the Year - **ANA KAREN SALAS VALENCIANO**

Ana has been dedicated to helping our youth in programs such as UCC All Stars and Life Changers, programs to help prevent alcohol and drug use as well as to promote anti-violence and anti-drug strategies to youth and young adults.



**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND ENTHUSIASTIC EFFORTS!**

UCC Volunteers are Groovy





**CENTRO DE LA COMUNIDAD UNIDA  
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**Visiones Tomando Vuelo**  
*by Vivian Vivas*  
March 13 - May 22  
in the Latino Arts Gallery



**The Big Idea III:  
Envisioning**  
June 25 - August 25  
Opening Reception:  
Thursday, June 25  
5:00 p.m.  
in the Latino Arts Gallery

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**Congratulations to the Winners of  
UCC's 2015 Friends of Hispanic  
Community Award**

**Leesley (Buzz) & Joan Hardy**

**Dr. Douglas Hastad**  
Carroll University

**Gary & Judy Jorgensen**  
VJS Construction Services

**Paul Purcell**  
Robert W. Baird & Co.



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## Legal Help Now Available on UCC Campus with the help of Marquette University

The Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinics (MVLC) were delighted to find their newest home within the walls of the United Community Center's Senior Center, as of January 2015. The clinics take place throughout the week in various locations across the city. The clinic at UCC is held each Wednesday from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center at 730 W. Washington Street. Each clinic offers brief legal advice and referral services for civil legal issues (no criminal issues can be addressed) and is staffed by volunteer law students working with, and supervised by, licensed volunteer attorneys. Unlike other MVLC locations, the UCC clinic offers Spanish speaking attorneys and/or Spanish interpreters, as well as the presence of immigration attorneys. A child support specialist is also available the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. The MVLC has seen a great response from the community and continues to work to best serve the growing number of clients. Not only do the clinics benefit those who come to see a volunteer attorney, they also offer a unique opportunity for Marquette law students to work one-on-one with attorneys volunteering their time, and applying their classroom work to real life situations. From January through March 2015, over 200 clients were served at the new UCC clinic location.

