Greetings!

On behalf of everyone at Casa de Esperanza, Happy New Year! Although we are already well into the new year, we did not want to let January come to an end without thanking you for your generosity in 2019. You supported the children and families served by Casa de Esperanza in so many ways - from making our Triple the Hope annual campaign a resounding success, to sponsoring children and families with gifts, clothing, diapers and food, to volunteering in our neighborhood, and many things in between. Thank you, sincerely, for helping to make the holidays so special for our children.

Casa de Esperanza’s vision for 2020 includes a continued focus on strengthening relationships within the community and with the families we work with. Of particular importance is creating an awareness around our great need for voluntary community foster care families and Hands of Hope Interns. Both play an integral role in keeping children safe and providing a sense of home for them while their parents work to improve their circumstances and individual lives. You’ll read about Claire, a Hands of Hope Intern, in this newsletter. We invite you to learn more about both programs and how you might help.

This time of year is always exciting as we prepare for Casa de Esperanza’s
Chili Cook-Off. This event - fun for the entire family - raises vital funds for the work of Casa de Esperanza and is a great way to learn more about our mission while meeting new people and tasting some great chili! We hope you’ll be a part of the 10th annual event on February 22, 2020. Learn more, register your team, or sponsor here.

Thank you for helping us make 2019 a better year for children and families in need of our help. We look forward to working with you in the new year to keep our children safe and help our families stabilize.

Sincerely,

Shelley M. Starr
Executive Director

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10 Years of Red-Hot Fun

On February 22nd, our Young Professionals Group will celebrate 10 years of bringing the Houston community together for tasty chili, friendly competition, and red-hot fun all in support of Casa de Esperanza’s mission to provide hope and a home for children in crisis.

What began in 2011 under the leadership of co-chairs Ben Brown and Alan Falik has now raised a collective $455,000 and is a staple event at Casa de Esperanza, bringing much-needed resources and awareness to our organization while creating a new generation of supporters. Venues have changed over the years - first Blanco’s Bar & Grill, then Cottonwood, then Kirby Ice House, and now at The West End – but what remains the same is the community’s abounding support to make it a success for the sake of children in our care. From sponsorships to raffle donations, team entries to individual tickets, volunteers & staff, every avenue to get involved with the Chili Cook-Off is valued and greatly appreciated.

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary, inaugural Chairs, Ben and Alan, plus co-chairs from past years’ Chili Cook-Offs have all joined together to support the event as Honorary Chairs and Host Committee members. Meredith Flaherty Photography will return for her 10th year in a row, generously donating her services to capture the team costumes, smiling faces, and memories for the day.

The annual amateur cook-off has always proved very popular and is even noted as one of the “Top 100 Things To Do in
“Houston Before You Die!” Teams display their creativity and culinary talents and compete for coveted prizes and titles such as Best Chili, Most Creative Team Name, or People’s Choice. Fun fact: The Cody Johnson Band played at the first annual Chili Cook-Off in 2011. While he has upgraded his gigs to venues such as the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, we are excited to bring back live music for the 10th Anniversary with Chris Webb accompanied by Grammy-Award Winning artist Tim Gonzalez.

Although hosted by the Young Professionals Group, the Chili Cook-Off is open to guests and Casa de Esperanza supporters of all ages, including children! We’ll even have some kid-friendly activities to keep them entertained while you enjoy tasting great Chili. It will be an afternoon you don’t want to miss!

Click Here to Purchase Individual Tickets or Enter a Team

Past Chili Cook-Off Winners

WIN THIS YEAR’S BIG SPOON!
Sign up a team today

1st Annual Chili Cook-Off 2011
2nd Annual Chili Cook-Off 2012
3rd Annual Chili Cook-Off 2013
4th Annual Chili Cook-Off 2014
5th Annual Chili Cook-Off 2015
6th Annual Chili Cook-Off 2016
7th Annual Chili Cook-Off 2017
8th Annual Chili Cook-Off 2018
9th Annual Chili Cook-Off 2019
10th Annual Chili Cook-Off 2020
Meet Claire, a University of Minnesota - Twin Cities graduate from Ely, Minnesota!

Why did you decide to come to Casa de Esperanza?
I knew I wanted to take a gap year before applying to nursing school and Casa de Esperanza was the perfect one-year program. My degree was in Child Psychology and working with kids sounded wonderful.

Share a favorite memory.
I remember journaling about some of the emotions I was experiencing about a month into my internship. I had this feeling that I never felt before and had a hard time describing it. It was a type of fierce love swirled with anxiety and the need to protect my kids. After working through these feelings, I realized that what I was feeling for the first time was motherly love. The kids worked their way into my heart and made me care for them unconditionally without me realizing it at first. At Casa de Esperanza, we create a space where we care and support children as if they were our own. Although saying goodbye to children is incredibly difficult, I continue to approach this internship with the concept of motherly love and embrace all good that can come of it.

What is one thing you learned since arriving at Casa de Esperanza?
I learned that judgment has no place at Casa. Even when I’m frustrated with a parent for how the child has been impacted, I need to put judgment aside and understand the parent must have gone through trauma as well and needs to be treated with as much empathy as we treat the children in our care.

How to Support Hands of Hope Interns
Casa de Esperanza’s Hands of Hope Service Year program brings together approximately 30 recent college graduates from across the country to live with and care for Houston’s most vulnerable children.

We are always looking for ways to help them experience all that Houston has to offer. If you or your company have extra tickets to the arts, sporting events, or concerts that you would like to donate, please contact LBaumel@casahope.org.
If you know someone who may be interested in a post-graduate service year opportunity, please share and encourage them to learn more and apply.

Thank You to Our December Group Volunteers!

Thank you to the following groups for coming to Casa de Esperanza and sharing time with our children, bringing meals, or benefiting our organization through other efforts. Your generous gifts ensure that children are safe and their families receive the help and hope they need for a better future!

Casa de Esperanza Young Professionals
Clint Capela's CC15 Foundation
Junior League of Houston
m Strategic Partners
National Charity League, Inc., Memorial Chapter
Notre Dame Alumni
Palazzos
Prelude Music Foundation
Spencer Stuart

Find out how you can volunteer here!

"Christmas started before the sun was up. As soon as 4-year-old Matthew was awake and walked into the living room, his face lit up at the sight of the presents under the tree. When we told him that Santa had left gifts for him and the other children in the house, he began giggling with joy. After each present Matthew unwrapped, he proudly showed off each new toy and outfit he received."

Casa de Esperanza Hands of Hope Intern
Young Professionals Group

The Young Professionals Group was formed to support the mission of Casa de Esperanza through volunteerism, fundraising and increasing public awareness of the needs of children. Members enjoy networking opportunities and social events with an emphasis on

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Upcoming Events

**Young Professionals Group**

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**Upcoming Events**

**February 22nd**
10th Annual Chili Cook-Off

**March 10th**
Prof. Development Breakfast

**April 5th**
Easter Egg Hunt

**May 13th**
Networking Happy Hour

**June 7th**
BBQ & "Camp Out"

**July 14th**
Prof. Development Breakfast

**Aug. 19th**
Networking Happy Hour
philanthropy and fun.

Membership starts at $90 annually and includes:
- Drink ticket for 4 annual networking events
- Invitation to 4 neighborhood events
- Access to 4 professional development breakfast events
- 1 ticket to the annual Chili Cook-off

To become a member, click HERE.

Other Ways to Help

- Amazon Wish List
- Basic Needs Donation
- Volunteer
- Host a Facebook Fundraiser
- Employer Contributions

Share the love

Shop for your Valentine at smile.amazon.com and Amazon donates.

You shop. Amazon donates.

*Dates may change. Please check Casa de Esperanza Facebook page or contact Erika DuBose for more information.*