

La Luz

Centro Cultural

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Special Points of Interest

April Service Total	170
• Programming	37
• Social Services	133
May Service Total	233
• Programming	30
• Social Services	203
June Service Total	229
• Programming	18
• Social Services	211

Board Members

<i>President:</i>	James Kohls
<i>Vice President:</i>	Valeria Gonzalez
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<i>Secretary:</i>	Janette Flores Acolt
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Immigration Services

Even in the midst of COVID-19, good news still abounds!

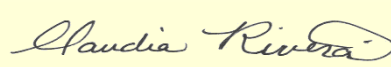
After a lengthy process, La Luz Centro Cultural received notice from the U.S. Department of Justice granting permission to assist clients in submitting immigration forms. This is a major step toward filling a service gap in North Central Iowa.

Executive Director Claudia Rivera and Associate Director Aimee Lenth are now “partially accredited” to handle immigration matters, meaning they may aid in submitting applications and represent clients before the Department of Homeland Security. However, this partial designation does not allow them to represent clients in immigration courts. Claudia and Aimee join many other non-profit practitioners around Iowa and the US in expanding access to these types of services, especially to those for whom private attorney fees are cost prohibitive.

This joyous moment is only slightly tempered by the realities of COVID-19. In an abundance of caution, staff at La Luz Centro Cultural are continuing to provide services remotely. This means for the foreseeable future, those who are interested in immigration services with La Luz will do so via phone and video calls.

We at La Luz are honored at this new designation and ability to expand services to include immigration assistance. We especially thank United Way of North Central Iowa for their financial support for the training and equipment necessary and to Justice for Our Neighbors - Iowa for allowing staff to job shadow their attorneys to fulfill requirements for the accreditation process.

We look forward to serving the community in this new way!




Over the past few months, Opal Foods has made multiple donations of eggs to La Luz Centro Cultural in an incredible show of support for the local community! Especially as many struggle to afford daily expenses, gestures like this go a long way to alleviating a burden.

Staff at La Luz Centro Cultural pick up the eggs from the facility outside of Bradford, bring them to the office, and hand them out to families in need.

To date, we have received



and given out over **13,860** eggs to families! In moments like this we are immensely thankful for community partners who use their strengths to fill a need.

We have been blown away by the generosity of Opal Foods in their continued donations and extend our heartfelt thanks for their commitment to Hampton, Franklin County, and beyond.

SERVICES

English Classes

We teach English classes in the evenings during the fall and spring. Class levels range from basic to advanced.

Conversational Spanish

Practice your Spanish with our weekly conversation group.

Interpretation/Translation

We can assist with interpretation at appointments and phone calls. We offer translations of documents for a small fee.

Referrals to Social Services

We are here to help connect you with appropriate services outside of La Luz Centro Cultural.

Citizenship Tutor Connection

We connect students studying for the citizenship test with tutors to aid them in their civics learning.

Services for Survivors of a Crime

Anyone who has experienced a crime can receive comprehensive case management and support from trained staff.

Volunteer spotlight

The past few months have been a time of reimagining how to best provide services and how to maintain connection from a distance. English classes transitioned to virtual learning in March and as the end of the academic year approached, it was apparent that students were eager for more practice and connections. We put out a call for virtual language tutors and received interest from across Iowa!

The students from our classes and the staff at La Luz extend their deepest thanks to the volunteers who have stepped up to fill this need. These individuals are giving hours of their time each week to interact with students to help them practice English. Some even set up a mutual language exchange so they can practice their Spanish as well.

Please join us in thanking the following: Amanda Fender, Becca M., Denise Pralle, Geoff Collins, Mary Hartel, Mary Klein, and Michelle Schott.

Upcoming events

- **All in-person programming is currently suspended**
- Spanish Conversations, every Friday 12:30pm-1:30pm (online)
- Women's Support Group, 2nd Monday of the month at 5:30pm (online)
- Men's Support Group, 3rd Monday of the month at 5:30pm (online)

-An update from Liliana Velasco, Victim Advocate

SOMOS Latinx, the comprehensive program for survivors of crimes, participated in National Crime Victims' Rights Week which took place April 19-25. This year's theme was **"Seek Justice | Ensure Victims' Rights | Inspire Hope"** which recognizes the progress made by those before us as we look ahead to have crime victim services that are even more comprehensive, welcoming, and trauma-informed.

The month of April is also Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The goal of SAAM is to spread the word about sexual violence and inform communities on how to prevent it. We participated in various activities online during the month of April. We painted our social media with posts throughout the month. One of our favorite activities was participating in Denim Day. Denim Day is a campaign on a Wednesday in April in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month to signify that no matter what someone is wearing, assault is never acceptable. We encouraged our subscribers to take a picture of themselves wearing denim and tag us on social media. It was a fun way to get others involved while spreading awareness. SOMOS Latinx worked with a local shop to make all the promo materials for NCVRW and the items turned out great!

SOMOS Latinx advocates continue to offer services remotely and are working hard to keep in touch with our clients through the phone, Zoom or text messages. Our advocates aim to provide the best services. We are fortunate that most of the agencies we train with are providing trainings online and we can

learn so much during these unprecedented times.



DIRECTORS REPORT

In this newsletter, you will find all the new services and programs we have done to help the community in these times of need. What you won't see or hear about is how tirelessly the staff has been working to make these services a reality while adapting to working from home, becoming fulltime educators, and helping the people we serve to cope with these changes.

After the pandemic shut everyone out, La Luz staff began their work behind the scenes to set up the food pantry ahead of time for people to have access to food. They also converted to doing everything online and teaching our clients how to reach out remotely through video, text, and phone. It has been a challenge trying to do services by phone for everyone but the staff does not give up. They are still trying to help in any way they can to help people navigate through the system.

I applaud the staff for their resilience and for adapting to our changing needs, they have done so much while trying to stay safe and helping their families cope. They are the heroes in the frontlines as they tend to the drive-thru food pantry, deliver food items to clients who can't leave their homes and try to advocate for the underrepresented community. They go above and beyond while trying to keep their family safe.

La Luz

Centro Cultural

The mission of La Luz Centro Cultural is to promote cultural awareness and diversity with hospitality and supportive services for all. Situated in downtown Hampton, Iowa, the center is a space where Latinos can share and build their strengths, where social isolation is not a barrier, and where hope and a sense of possibility are fostered.

Tax deductible DONATIONS TO a cultural center

At La Luz Centro Cultural we welcome all donations to our organization and we have simplified the way you can donate to our important cause, as we know the only way to thrive is through community support.

PAY PAL: You can now donate through PayPal by going to our website at www.laluzcc.org

CHECKS: Mail to La Luz Centro Cultural 7 2nd Ave NE Hampton, IA 50441.

LEGACY GIVING: Be assured your legacy will live on and give life to your community by leaving a gift to La Luz in your will.

VOLUNTEERS: We always welcome volunteers looking to be a part of our various programs. Call or email us today to find out how you can help!

GRAN FESTIVAL SPONSOR: Become a sponsor for our annual festival.
www.granfestivalnorthiowa.org

La Luz Centro Cultural is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

If you would prefer to receive an e-newsletter, please let us know at info@laluzcc.org or sign up online at www.laluzcc.org.

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