



Centro de Recursos Familiares, Iglesia Metodista Unida Jonesboro  
Family Resource Center, Jonesboro United Methodist Church



## OVERVIEW

- STUDENT VOICES
- JOIN OUR ESL CLASSES
- THANK YOU TO DONORS
- BILINGUAL RESOURCE
- PAID INTERNSHIP
- CITIZENSHIP CLASSES
- 2020 REFLECTION
- PARTNERSHIP
- NEW LEADERSHIP
- JOIN OUR TEAM!

Newsletter: Highlights of El Refugio's Programs and Activities

## Student Voices

**About: Mirsha Padilla, ESL Program Graduate /GED Student**

"When I came to the United States in 2001, I went through a cultural shock. Everything was different from Mexico. I had so many limitations when I arrived because I lacked transportation and English skills.

I relied on others to interpret for me, but realized there would be matters I had to handle on my own. I struggled at work even more when they moved me to a different department with only English speakers. I had to pay close attention to what they were saying because I could not keep up."

"After encouragement from my boss, I started classes at El Refugio in 2019. I wanted to teach my kids that it is never too late. I want to show them anything is possible when you are determined. I want to be a part of their lives and be able to support them in school."

"I didn't want to settle anymore. I put pressure on myself to continue. I have the hunger to learn because I know it will open doors. There were many challenges to overcome, but I needed to progress for my children, job, and myself. My advice to other students is to be patient and consistent. It takes discipline, but it is not too late to invest in yourself."

"I am now a GED student at Central Carolina Community College. I want to study human resources. I see a lot of hope for me."



Mirsha, in the middle, with her children

**" BE PRESISTENT  
AND CONSISTENT"**

## JOIN OUR CLASSES ONLINE

In partnership with Central Carolina Community College, El Refugio continues to offer online English as Second Language (ESL) classes with evening and morning class schedules available. If you know someone interested in ESL, please fill out the form ([click here](#)) to preregister or visit our [website](#). You can email us at [elrefugioed@gmail.com](mailto:elrefugioed@gmail.com) or call 919-352-9709.



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

## TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We met our goal for our Fall Fundraiser in 2020!  
 Thank you to all the individuals and businesses that contributed.  
 We appreciate you and all you provide to El Refugio's programs!  
 Donations help us provide language classes, cross-cultural activities,  
 and resource connections for people in need of services.



### GOLD SPONSORS

MORRIS CHAPEL UNITED  
 METHODIST CHURCH  
 JONESBORO ROTARY CLUB



### SILVER SPONSORS

WILSON, REIVES, AND SILVERMAN  
 ATTORNEYS  
 AT LAW  
 ABC RESTORATION  
 UNITED BANK



### BRONZE SPONSORS

COMFORT FIRST HEATING & AIR  
 EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT  
 PROFESSIONALS  
 JASON HOWARD ELECTRICAL COMPANY  
 JONES PRINTING COMPANY, INC

We are grateful to our special guest, Itziar Armabula! All the way from Chiapas, Mexico, Itziar performed a rendition of "El Cantador" by Antonio Aguilar for our Virtual Fall Fundraiser on November 4, 2020.

In 2019, Itziar was 1 of 20 artists that visited Sanford, NC from our sister city, Atizapan, Mexico to perform at El Refugio's Festival Latino. Since then El Refugio and Itziar have stayed connected. We hope to continue to establish relationships with artists like her to engage in a cultural exchange that focuses on art, music, dance, and fun.



Photo credit: Revista Latina



# Community Resources (Part 1)

Assistance /Nutrition	Food Assistance /Nutrition	Housing
<b>EL REFUGIO OUTREACH CENTER</b> Food assistance, utility assistance 8:00am – 6pm Tues and Fridays 12pm–2pm 885 Lee Ave, Sanford, NC 27332 Phone: 774-8485 <a href="http://www.elrefugio.org/">http://www.elrefugio.org/</a> n't have the center's new forms filled n identification, and know the date d wages for family members. <b>DE LA LUZ DEL EVANGELIO</b> Food assistance Second and third Wednesday of the month 46 Oakwood Ave, Sanford, NC Phone: 919-7321 Person: Yanelly Garcia <a href="http://www.delaluzdel.org/">http://www.delaluzdel.org/</a>	(cont) <b>BREAD BASKET OF SANFORD</b> Services: Food Assistance Mondays-Fridays 11am-12:30pm Address: 140 E Chisholm St, Sanford, NC 27330 Phone: (919) 774-3118 Website: <a href="http://breadbasketofsanford.org/">http://breadbasketofsanford.org/</a> <b>CHRISTIAN FAITH MINISTRIES</b> Services: Food assistance Address: 3110 Cameron Dr, Sanford, NC 27332 Phone: (919) 499-3194 Website: <a href="https://www.christianfaithministriesinc.com/">https://www.christianfaithministriesinc.com/</a> <b>SALVATION ARMY OF LEE COUNTY</b> Services: Food, utility/rent assistance Mon.- Thurs. 9:00 am- Noon & 1:00pm- 4:00 pm	<b>BRICK CAPITAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b> Services: Housing assistance Address: 403 W Marketpeace St, Sanford, NC Phone: (919) 775-2300 Email: <a href="mailto:INFO@BC-CDC.ORG">INFO@BC-CDC.ORG</a> Website: <a href="https://bc-cdc.org/">https://bc-cdc.org/</a> <b>FAMILY PROMISE</b> Services: Emergency housing and support Address: 2302 Woodland Ave, Sanford, NC Phone: (919) 718-1540 Email: <a href="mailto:familypromiselee@gmail.com">familypromiselee@gmail.com</a> Website: <a href="https://www.familypromiseofleeconomy.org/">https://www.familypromiseofleeconomy.org/</a> <b>OUTREACH OF SANFORD</b> Services: Shelter for Men and Women Director: P.O. Box 496 Sanford, NC

## Bilingual Resource List

Created by El Refugio Volunteer

We are excited to share our bilingual (English and Spanish) resource page on our website ([elrefugioleeco.org](http://elrefugioleeco.org)). The list is composed of resources frequently asked by our callers and community.

You can also view our [COVID-19 Resource](#) tab for more information and resources in Lee County (English and Spanish). The resource packet can be downloaded in PDF formats to print for easier access.

## Paid Summer Internship Opportunity with El Refugio!

Through Z. Smith Reynolds (ZSR) Foundation, Nonprofit Internship Program, El Refugio will be offering a paid summer internship. This opportunity was created in an effort to help diversify the pool of young candidates in non-profit organizations and improve quality of life within North Carolina.

Summer Interns will receive \$3,200 during the period of eight weeks working closely with El Refugio team. The intern will contribute with event planning, social media communication, and community engagement. **Candidates are NOT required to be fluent in Spanish. Deadline to apply is February 15, 2021 at 12 PM.**

For more details about eligibility or to apply please visit <https://www.zsr.org/non-profit-internship>



**USCIS revised the civics portion of the exam with 128 questions in 2020. If your naturalization application filing date is on or after December 1, 2020, you will take the new 2020 version of the citizenship test.**

**For more info visit:**  
<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/2020test>



**Cristina Dominguez  
Civics Teacher**

**We are excited to welcome back Cristina as our instructor for our citizenship class. Cristina previously taught ESL classes and comes with lots of experience teaching adult learners!**

**Class Schedule:**  
**Monday - Thursday**  
**6:00 PM - 8:30 PM**  
**Enrollment period ends**  
**2/11/2021**

2021



## REFLECTION OF 2020 TOWARDS 2021 DIRECTION

In 2020, El Refugio experienced a new normal with new challenges after COVID-19. We adapted to online learning for the first time. Our students learned with us to overcome technology barriers. Our teachers took leadership and adapted to new online platforms. El Refugio team and students demonstrated resiliency in a time of uncertainty.

We partnered with Morris Chapel United Methodist Church and Lee County Schools Migrant Program to deliver food boxes. We connected with agencies to obtain masks, hand sanitizers, and preparedness kits. We created bilingual resources and posts to inform.

We had a successful International Culture Night on March 2020, which exceeded previous records with 24 countries represented. We also went virtual for our first online Summer Fest with 18 instructors and various workshops for families to enjoy.

This year we will continue to serve by helping our community stay informed, connected to resources, and reevaluate how we do cross-cultural engagements in order to share, dream, and understand one another.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH FAYETTEVILLE JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

El Refugio establishes a new partnership with Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) based in Fayetteville, NC. Our former director, Oscar Hernandez, now serves as the Executive Director of FJFON. Fayetteville JFON is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing low-cost legal aid to low-income immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers of all faiths, backgrounds, and identities.

For more information email [information@fayettevillejfon.org](mailto:information@fayettevillejfon.org) or call (910) 441-3753, Monday-Thursday from 12 PM TO 4 PM.



## NEW YEAR WELCOMED NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



El Refugio welcomed Sandra Torres as the new Executive Director in January 2021. You may recognize Sandra from her prior work as El Refugio Program Director and her service as an instructor and volunteer in grant writing, events and more!

Sandra is a Sanford native who grew up with Mexican and Salvadorean parents. Sandra was exposed to the richness of the Latinx cultures and the distinct challenges immigrant families face due to cultural and language barriers.

Her vision is to work to inform, and to empower immigrant communities. She holds a Bachelor in Social Work from UNC-Pembroke and Master of Social Work from North Carolina State University. Her experience includes professional positions in domestic violence, rape crisis, social services, and as an ESL instructor the College & Career Readiness department of Central Carolina Community College. We look forward to her leadership!

# ABOUT EL REFUGIO

## Mission

To promote opportunities for interaction between cultures that encourage positive relationships based on sharing knowledge, hopes and experiences. To foster individual growth in Lee County by identifying people's needs and talents, and finding the resources to develop them.

## Programs and Activities

El Refugio's programs involve language and citizenship classes, family enrichment activities, direct connections with community resources, and cross culture events (International Culture Night, Summer Fest, Festival Latino).

## JOIN OUR TEAM!!

Join us as a volunteer or intern and let's make things happen. You do not have to speak Spanish to share your talents! Visit our website or call for more information.

You can offer assistance in the following areas: social media, communications, events, translating, office support, tutoring, and more!

## CONTACT STAFF

Sandra Torres | Executive Director  
elrefugioed@gmail.com



Maria Zamora | Administrator  
elrefugioad@gmail.com



# Board of Directors

OSCAR ROBERTO  
CHAIR

ANGEL MILLS  
SECRETARY

DEB TAYLOR  
TREASURER

BOB FINCH

DEBRA GROCE

BOB BRIDWELL

SANDRA RUIZ

ROBERTO MONTERO

