

The oldest Latino  
non-profit  
organization  
in New Haven.

# JUNTA FOR PROGRESSIVE ACTION

2007 FALL NEWSLETTER

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Kica Matos plays congas with Aqua Pa Chocolate.

## JUNTA CELEBRATES 38 YEARS WITH ITS ANNUAL GALA!

Merriment and mojitos; these best describe JUNTA's annual gala, *Pa'Lante* (Onward) on Friday, November 2 at the

Community Outreach Center on Orchard Street in New Haven. The event honored Kica Matos, former Executive Director of JUNTA and a community leader for human rights and justice.

## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends:

What a year! I have to admit what a remarkable year 2007 has been for Junta. Just like the previous years, 2007 pose obstacles and challenges for JUNTA. We struggle with the persistent challenge of balancing our limited resources with the increasing needs of our community. This past summer we found ourselves working endless hours helping families who were affected by the raids. We're presented with daily crises. I do mean daily.

Despite the obstacles and challenges, JUNTA continues to progress and flourish. The success of JUNTA would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of its staff as well as our dedicated Board Members, volunteers and loyal supporters. As you read this newsletter, I want to take the time to thank every individual, state senators, state representatives, city of New Haven, businesses, foundations and corporations that believes action comes from the passion to do what is right for our community and our families. Without you, without them JUNTA can not continue to prosper.

Our mandate for 2008: We are dedicated to all that enter our doors regardless of race, ethnicity or status. We hope that you will assist us with these efforts.

Sandra Trevino  
Executive Director

The evening started with remarks from Sandra Trevino (Executive Director), Brett Dignam (Board President), and a special greeting from Alicia Schmidt Camacho (Board Secretary) who highlighted the history and struggles of the immigrant community and the triumph over social inequality, the latter which reared its head during the ICE raids this summer. Mayor John DeStefano presented JUNTA's first ever "Kica Matos Award" to our honoree, Kica Matos for her inspiration and leadership in the community. Kica, always gracious and candid, thanked JUNTA for the award and for its collaborative work, especially with the municipal ID card program.

And the party began! Homemade mojitos poured out as a crowd of over 200 guests dined, and danced to the sounds of Aqua Pa Chocolate. Alisa Bowers from Alisa's House of Salsa performed and provided a group salsa lesson for the crowd. Kica even took the stage to play the congas with the band. You could feel the camaraderie in the air. It was definitely a JUNTA kind of party, raising over \$20,000 to support our programs. Thanks to all who came out to support us. We'll see the rest of you next year!



## ¿CÓMO SE DICE "MÁS CLASES" EN INGLÉS?

The community has spoken: this fall, education centers all over New Haven experienced an unprecedented demand for adult English as Second Language classes, with Junta maintaining a waitlist of more than 85 students after classes began in September. In response, Junta almost doubled the number of free English as a Second Language classes available to the community, with new hours to accommodate students' busy work and family schedules. In conjunction with our partners, New Haven Adult Education and Literacy Volunteers, Junta now boasts nine different English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, including the organization's first morning ESL class. Among the other additions are an advanced ESL course (the highest level Junta has offered), a fourth Survival level course (the class in the most demand), and an innovative, student-driven conversational class, in which students discuss the questions about the English language, American culture, and current events to improve their comprehension and fluency. Volunteer tutors are also helping in many of the classes, working with students on a more individual basis to increase students' confidence and understanding.



Below:

*Thousands on the green protesting for immigrant rights during Summer 2007.*



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES TO GROW

The Economic Development program area is proud to announce that it has received a \$30,000 grant for its Employment Program from the United Way Foundation. To lead that program and to provide support for other Economic Development projects, Evelyn Silva has joined JUNTA's team.

Evelyn comes to us with a Masters Degree in Forestry and experience in the non-profit and private sectors. Evelyn has already developed exciting plans to expand JUNTA's computer skills workshops, interview preparation for clients, resumé building, and more. The program sees about 20-30 new clients per month and works with them on an individual and group basis to develop job searching strategies, work skills, and the management of income and savings.

In the area of financial literacy, JUNTA has significantly increased the number of workshops it offers to the community and approximately 70 individuals have attended workshops since June of this year. The Micro-Loan program, in turn, has continued to strengthen. This year alone, eight new loans have been disbursed and a third round of classes and loans is currently underway. Businesses receiving loans this summer include at-home day care centers, a linen design company, and an independent contractor.

JUNTA is also preparing for the 2008 VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) season. We are recruiting volunteers to help prepare individual tax returns. Last year, JUNTA prepared over 130 tax returns and helped bring in tens of thousands of dollars into our community in the form of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other tax refunds. If you are interested in becoming involved with tax preparation

or any other program, please contact the Economic Development Programs Coordinator: Laura Huizar at [laura.huizar@juntainc.org](mailto:laura.huizar@juntainc.org).



### *A Special Thanks to our 2007 supporters.*

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