

JUNTA for Progressive Action

Spring 2006 Newsletter

THE OLDEST LATINO NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION IN NEW HAVEN



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pierrette C. Silverman
President

•

Kica Matos
Executive Director

•

Dr. Abie Benitez

•

Anne T. Calabresi

•

Alicia Schmidt-Camacho

•

Brett Dignam

•

Norma Franceschi

•

Paul Nuñez

•

Angelo Reyes

•

Dr. Evelyn Robles-Rivera

•

Regina Winters

CONTACT US!
169 Grand Avenue
New Haven, CT 06513
(p) 203-787-0191
(f) 203-787-4934
www.juntainc.org
info@juntainc.org

JUNTA OFFERS NEW FINANCIAL LITERACY & SOCIAL JUSTICE COURSE

JUNTA's new Financial Literacy & Social Justice course is here! The course, which is licensed by New York's Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP), focuses on all areas of personal finance with special attention paid to budgeting, banking, credit, and social justice issues. It will be offered six times per year at JUNTA; the first course was held in February.

Many Latino families lack access to quality financial information and advice that prevent them from purchasing and preserving assets and building wealth. Studies show that there is a considerable Latino-White wealth gap in the U.S. In fact, the median Latino family income in New Haven is \$23,815 per year; well below the White median family income of \$34,196. In Fair Haven, the median income is \$10,593 for all households. According to a Pew Hispanic Center survey, over 35% of Latinos do not

have a bank account; that number rises to 42% among foreign-born Latinos. As a result, Latinos often pay too much for check-cashing, remittances, auto loans, and

The course also explores issues of economic development and social justice and teaches participants how to advocate on their own behalf.



All financial literacy classes are held in the evening to facilitate attendance, and child care is available onsite at no cost.

Classes meet at the recently renovated Fair Haven Middle School, 164 Grand Avenue, across the street

from JUNTA.

other financial services; and many are enticed into predatory or high-cost loans with exorbitant interest rates or fees.

This course aims to prevent these and other financial injustices and to teach students the basics of financial management and responsible investment and spending practices, encouraging long-term financial stability for neighborhood families.

JUNTA is currently looking for further financial support to sustain this project. If you are interested in supporting this initiative, please make a donation to JUNTA and earmark it for "Financial Literacy & Social Justice Fund." Donations can be made by sending a check to JUNTA or by visiting our Web site, www.juntainc.org.

JUNTA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AWARDED CORNELL PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Cornell Law School elected JUNTA's Executive Director Kica Matos to be a recipient of the inaugural Cornell Law School Exemplary Public Interest Award. The award was established to recognize alumni who "contribute to the public good through

their work with public interest organizations, government agencies, and law-firm pro bono projects," according to a Cornell Law School news release. The award ceremony was hosted by the Cornell Club in New York City in early February.

Who hasn't uttered the words, "I wish there was something I could do to help?" Now you can. Start shopping! At www.iGive.com/JUNTA, you can buy items you've always wanted, and up to 26% or more of each purchase is donated to JUNTA! It's FREE; no invisible costs or obligations. Shop for everyday items at over 650 stores at the Mall at iGive.com. A list of participating stores and additional information is enclosed.

JUNTA SERVES A RECORD NUMBER OF CLIENTS IN 2005

For the fourth consecutive year JUNTA has served a record breaking number of clients! In 2005, we served a total of 4,446 individuals; an increase of 729 additional clients since 2004.

The numbers reflect a client increase in every program area. The most popular program is Adult Education; a record number of students enrolled in

GED, ESL, Computer, and College Preparation Classes.

JUNTA offers programs in seven different areas, including Adult Education, Economic Development, Legal Advocacy, Children's Afterschool and Summer Program, Family Management, Cultural Awareness, and Immigrant Rights.

MEET OUR STAFF: CHEILA SERRANO

Cheila Serrano, one of the most senior staff members at the organization, joined JUNTA in 2001.

Cheila was born in New Haven, is the second oldest of ten siblings, and she attended local public schools. After graduating from Wilbur Cross High School, she enrolled at the New Haven Adult Education Center. Her parents are from Puerto Rico, and she was raised in a bilingual environment.

Cheila began as a volunteer for the Energy Assistance Program, helping clients complete application forms. She quickly ascended to the positions of energy assistant coordinator, office manager, and, last year, accepted the position of program coordinator for



Family Management and the Community Lawyering Clinic. In this capacity, she works with individuals and families in need of guidance, support, and advocacy; and coordinates all aspects of the legal clinic. She also

works directly with clients to help resolve immigration related matters and coordinates workshops.

Steve Wizner, clinical professor of law at Yale Law School, stated that Cheila "is super capable, competent, reliable,

and smart. She coordinates the clinic at JUNTA with great efficiency, and she is a pleasure to work with."

Cheila is also the mother of the first JUNTA baby, Kiana, who recently had her first birthday.

YOU MUST VISIT JUNTA'S PLACE IN CYBERSPACE

Everybody's talking about it: After many months of hard work, JUNTA's new Web site is up and running, and it looks absolutely beautiful!

The project began almost a year ago when JUNTA was awarded a \$5,000 pro-bono grant from Axon Design and Marketing, a Portland-based design and marketing firm. This competitive and innovative award gives two grants per quarter to non-profit organizations that need to upgrade and redesign their Web sites but lack the resources to invest in the project.

JUNTA's new bilingual Web site was officially launched on January 20. The site serves as a wonderful vehicle to showcase the importance and scope of JUNTA's work and provides our friends, donors, and community with valuable, up-to-date information. JUNTA's new Web site also provides a new, simple, and secure way of donating to JUNTA: prospective donors can log on to the site and send monetary gifts electronically, and they may choose to do so anonymously. The new Web site has the capacity to be a powerful communication instrument for JUNTA; our very own open window to the rest of the world. In its first month of operation, the site received 507 new visits.

Many thanks to Axon Design for their generous grant, their wonderful work, and their talented, professional, and friendly team.

To visit JUNTA's new Web site, please log on to www.juntainc.org. Enjoy!

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & ADULT EDUCATION

AIDS WORKSHOPS

JUNTA has teamed up with the New Haven Department of Health in a project, "VOCES" ("VOICES"), that will bring a series of informational workshops about AIDS to the Latino community in Fair Haven. The workshops, taught in Spanish, are aimed at helping Latinos understand the causes and dangers of the disease and teaching the most effective prevention measures.

Recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that, although Latinos make up about 13% of the U.S. population, they comprise 20% of new HIV infections. Currently, between 110,000 and 170,000

Latinos in the United States are living with HIV. As of November 2002, Latinos accounted for 40% of HIV cases reported in Connecticut. Approximately 67% of all Connecticut Latinos living with HIV reside in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven.

The 90-minute workshops will be held at JUNTA twice a month in March and April. Attendees are eligible for one free AIDS and hepatitis test and will receive a \$15 gift certificate for C-Town Supermarket.

NEW ESL CLASS!

JUNTA is thrilled to announce the addition of a new "Survival ESL" class to the Adult Education spring schedule.

JUNTA currently offers six different Adult Education classes, including four levels of ESL, GED, and Computer Literacy.

The need for new ESL classes has continued to grow in the last few years along with the growth of the Fair Haven/New Haven Latino community. JUNTA's unique program, offered in partnership with New Haven Adult Education, offers high quality, free classes, free onsite childcare, and a flexible schedule to accommodate working young adults.

In 2005, JUNTA's Adult Education program served approximately 1,000 students.