

2024

Casa De Luz

2024 Newsletter



A NEW BRIGHTER FACE



We welcomed a new look to our building in 2024! Our old building artwork had to be taken down to ensure we received the proper permits and licenses to operate in the area.

Once all of that happened, we wanted the artwork back! What

better way to welcome refugees who've been on long arduous journeys than to welcome them to a happy bright warm building painted with happy hopeful art.

With generous donations by Ryan Bedrosian, Jack Nooren, Markus Zaugg, and Alexandra Sacani, we were able to commission Jaime Carbo to produce this wonderful positive work of art.

November 2024



EIN: 86-2469077

Av. Parque Azteca
Norte #744
Tijuana, MX 22500

Casa De Luz SD
PO BOX 3482
San Diego, CA 92163

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

A NEW BRIGHTER FACE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SOLAR POWERED

BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISERS
IMPRESS

VISITORS DISCOVER THE
BEAUTY OF CASA

THE INTERNATIONAL
IMPERIAL COURT

SERGEI'S JOURNEY

IN LOVE, THEY SHARE

SPECIAL THANK YOUS AND
HOW TO GET INVOLVED!

[HTTP://WWW.CASADELUZ.COM](http://www.casadeluz.com)
CASADELUZSDCA@GMAIL.COM

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD: Tan Carlin

In our third year, we've encountered quite a few obstacles but have grown our brand quite wonderfully. We continued to have success in helping asylum seekers find safe crossings into The United States. Despite that, most times we are still housing 50+ refugees in our 23-bedroom building. With the political climate changing even more in 2025, we can only hope that we can continue to have the successes in crossings that we have in the past.



On the fundraising front, we unfortunately had to postpone our largest fundraising event for a year, our annual pool party because we outgrew our old venue and could not plan in time for the new venue. We hope to come back in 2025 with a bigger and better pool party. The International Imperial Court Council continues to be our greatest supporter, and we could not imagine not having them by our side, helping us grow and continue to do the great work. Additionally, we saw many successful birthday fundraisers and even a wedding fundraiser.

From the depths of my heart, I truly appreciate and am thankful for all who have helped, whether you fundraised, donated money, donated time, or even just by spreading the word. Without your kindness and empathy, we would not be able to focus on doing the work that we do.

Thank you, and to a better tomorrow!
Tan Carlin
Board President

SOLAR POWERED

We are officially online with solar! It took some time for the city to finally connect the solar panels to the building, but it is finally done!

The solar grant and with the help of the former Casa Loto non-profit, we are now able to say that we are running on solar!

This will help keep us not only green but help keep our utility bills manageable!



BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISERS IMPRESS!



This year, we had multiple people help raise thousands of dollars just from celebrating their birthday! Big Mike Phillips had his second year in a row birthday dinner with the sponsor of the Rise & Shine restaurant group represented by Johan Engman.

Additionally, we had many people dedicate their Facebook birthday fundraisers to Casa De Luz, raising thousands of dollars for the charity.

The largest birthday fundraisers went to Big Mike Phillips, Moe Girton, Michael Zarbo/ Lala Too, Bill Farnum, Lisa Burgess, Peter Storm, Leslie Seiger, and Ralph Farinella. We thank everyone who has given us their time and birthday dedication!

VISITORS DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF CASA DE LUZ

In the past year, we've had many organizations and come down to tour Casa De Luz. We welcome all to visit and see the beauty of kindness in action. You'll see in the picture to the right, This Is Humanity, and the picture below, USF Graduate students.

Meet the residents and hear their stories! Find out



about the journeys that the refugees have to go through just to get to the shelter, and the long arduous journey they still have to find ahead of them!



Take a tour of the facility and see for yourself what your generous time and money is doing for humanity. While touring, you may even perchance upon ways that we can improve and other things that can be added to make a greater impact on our residents!

OUR CONTINUED THANKS TO NICOLE MURRAY RAMIREZ AND THE INTERNATIONAL IMPERIAL COURT

Once again, we want to thank Nicole Murray Ramirez and The International Imperial Court Council for their continued support of Casa De Luz with having her heirs apparent and members of the International Imperial Court Council do a national fundraiser for Casa.



You will see many of our rooms named after members of The International Imperial Court, because they've done so much and contributed so much to Casa De Luz. We had Carlos Silva/Selena Diamond & Friends dedicate their Cinco De Mayo event to Casa.

We've had events all across the nation raising funds to keep the shelter up and running. We

truly would not be the same without The International Imperial Court.

SERGEI'S JOURNEY



My name is Sergei, and my journey has been long and far from easy. Not so long ago, my husband and I were living in uncertainty. We stayed in a wonderful place called Casa De Luz, and I can confidently say that the support and care of the people who help Casa De Luz and are closely connected to this home helped me overcome many fears.

America welcomed me warmly, and I was immediately surrounded by support, love, and care. I consider myself incredibly fortunate and unique in this regard because we received so much help and were given the opportunity to live in San Diego. After two months, we had to leave sunny and soulful San Diego and set off for the great city of New York.

Just a few months later, I discovered the world of cinema. I could never have imagined that I would be able to work on film sets alongside some of the biggest and most famous actors in the industry. It's incredible and inspiring. I am

continuing to grow, evolve, and realize my potential. I'm working on improving my English, meeting new people, and exploring new opportunities and friendships.

Casa De Luz and the team in San Diego taught me to approach the world and people with an open heart, kindness, and respect, and I truly believe that this opens any door.

At the moment, we're navigating the usual immigration challenges, but that doesn't stop me from dreaming and making plans in a country where I can finally be myself. I can learn to embrace who I am and explore my deepest dreams and desires.

Of course, we encounter many challenges where we need the help of others, especially in such uncertain times around the world. However, I try not to lose myself and focus on doing what brings me joy, even if it's not always a choice that delivers immediate results.

Now, I want to believe in the best, especially because, at the very beginning of our journey, we were lucky to find such a unique place as Casa De Luz, which filled us with kindness and care.

Sergei (Instagram: @sergey_slavin)





IN LOVE, THEY SHARE

Megan (she/they) and Ella Mora (they/them) met many years ago in New York City making theatre and art together. They were best friends for a long time before they fell in love, moved in together in Brooklyn, got engaged, and adopted their cat Chiquita. They worked together as singers and actors in theatre, as servers in restaurants, and now they work as political organizers trying to make the U.S. a better, more inclusive place. Megan and Ella got married in Mexico on October 5th with a garden ceremony and personal vows, surrounded by friends and family.



Megan and Ella surprised their guests during the reception with a performance from drag queen Sabina Rose and then danced all night to celebrate. Megan and Ella would like to give back to the LGBTQ+ community by donating \$1115 to Casa De Luz in honor of their marriage.

BRINGING THE HOLIDAY CHEER!

Every year we help bring Christmas cheer to the residents and this year we



hope to do the same. Help us by reading one of the letters written by one of the residents and finding the perfect holiday treat for them. Then we take them all down and have a holiday party everyone to celebrate the good tidings that have been bestowed upon us all! Text 858.750.5000 to receive a letter to respond to and collaborate on coming down or dropping off the presents!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

Tan Carlin

Secretary:

Javier Gomez

Treasurer:

Markus Zaugg

Members:

Jack Nooren (Founder)

Michael Albo

Ed Parsley

Big Mike Phillips

Ed Miller

Moe Girton

Michael Zarbo

Andy Acosta

Advisors

Craig Thomas

Washington Nabong

Honorary Board Members:

Nicole Murray Ramirez

John Joseph

SPECIAL THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HAS GIVEN IN THE PAST YEAR!

- The International Imperial Court
- Tijuana Sin Hambre
- Rich's San Diego
- Gossip Grill
- Hillcrest Sandiego (@hillcrestsandiego)
- First Lutheran Church San Diego
- Refugee Health Alliance
- AIDS Healthcare Foundation
- &Bar
- Rise & Shine Hospitality Group
- Club San Diego
- Board & Barrel
- LE Parties
- Aesthetica Spa
- MO's Universe
- Kiwanis Club of Hillcrest

Support Us!

We thank you if you've supported us in the past, but we continue to seek your support for our ongoing operations, and if you haven't had the chance to help us out yet, there are plenty of ways to get involved!

At just 4 dollars a day per resident! We are able to give two meals a day, safe housing, and a sense of community to those who are in need! We always accept donations through Pledge, PayPal giving (search "casa de luz sd"), PayPal, Venmo (@Casa-deLuz-2), or checks sent to us at:

Casa De Luz SD
PO BOX 3482
San Diego, CA 92163

Additionally, for those seeking to visit the location, reach out to any one of us to make it happen and you will see all the heart and good that is involved in the cause.

Once again, we thank you for everything you do to help support a worthy cause, whether through directly or even just passing on the news of our mission statement and good work!

CASA DE LUZ SD is a 501(c)3 (EIN #:86-2469077) sister organization of Casa de Luz TJ a collective house open to LBGTO+ refugees who left their home country in search of a better life. Casa de Luz SD raises money for Casa de Luz TJ so they can offer a safe haven for people who lived in fear of persecution because of their sexual orientation or gender identification. Trans, lesbian, gay & bisexual people are fleeing from all over the world to escape "epidemic levels of violence" and threats by criminal gangs and security forces. Over 2,900 were killed in the past 5 years just in Central America. These are the most vulnerable refugees entering the US.



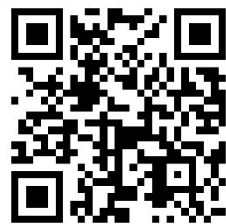
@casadeluz.tijuana



<https://www.pledge.to/organizations/86-2469077>



<http://venmo.com/casa-deluz-2>



<http://paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/4355498>