



Group Health Foundation
*Lessons Learned from Community
Engagement*
June 29, 2018

Who is La Casa Hogar?

- 23 years old as an organization
- Mission: Connect and educate Latina families, to transform lives and our Yakima Valley.
- Three programs:
 - Adult Education
 - Early Learning
 - Citizenship
- 600 families/year partner with La Casa





What is La Casa Hogar?

A house....a “home” in downtown Yakima.



Values to live by...

(as described by team members)

- **Empathy:** “We disagree with the idea of ‘treating others how you’d like you be treated.’ Instead, we have learned that it’s better to treat others how *they’d* like to be treated. To know that, we must first build those authentic and trusting relationships.”
- **Respect:** “If you know them well enough you will respect the families in all ways: their culture, their beliefs, their tradition, their manners, their religion, etc. Respect opens a door of trust.”
- **Relationship and Trust:** “Because we come from a similar background, language and culture as the families, we are one of them. We’ve overcome those same barriers, then we believe in the potential of each of the families. We have the same kind of dreams, challenges, culture, language, and barriers, they know that we want the best for all of us and they are part of us.”
- **Authenticity:** “Be who you are. Then families can be who they are.”
- **Justice:** “Align yourself with those whose voices are not heard or listened to. Everyone has a voice; but, historically, there’s only space for white voices. Create the space for others, and we ask white voices to step down.”
- **Equity:** “All families deserve what they need to thrive. Many families at La Casa do not have access to what they need. We educate others on racial equity and operationalize it.”

Adult Education

Includes English, pre-GED, Spanish literacy, computer literacy, drivers' education, women's leadership, health & nutrition. Each year, over 100 adult "students" attend classes at La Casa.



La Escuelita (Early Learning)

Offers bilingual education 55 children annually, ages 2-5, and their parents using the Creative Curriculum and STEM.





Citizenship Education + Legal Services

Recognized by the Department of Justice, La Casa offers citizenship education and naturalization legal services. Over **905** “students” at La Casa have become U.S. Citizens since 2014.



How does La Casa engage and build relationships?

- **Equitable Staffing:** Hires students to become paid team members; 8 of 14 current staff started as students
- **¡Celebremos!** Cumpleaños, clases, participación, familias. Cada 10 semanas, tenemos celebraciones para cada clase (a veces 6 celebraciones por semana). Celebramos porque avanzamos juntos.
- **Hablamos español.** No puede trabajar aquí si no habla español.
- **La Casa listens:**
 - Carmen, La Casa's English student, decided she wanted to become a US Citizen. In 2010, she approached the Program Director and asked "Por qué no ofreces clases de ciudadanía?" The response? "Find 10 others who want citizenship classes and we will offer them." Carmen fue downstairs y preguntó 10 otras estudiantes en el salón. She returned upstairs 15 minutes later and declared, "We're ready."
- ...and then **responds:**
 - ...classes began in 2010. La Casa received DOJ recognition and employed the first DOJ-Accredited Representative in Yakima in 2014. The rest is *our* story...
- Our **experts** are our **students** and those who began as our students. Withhold judgment and assume expertise.
- We expect relationships to build slowly and are willing to put in the work for the long vision.

How does La Casa co-design and co-create?

- It's easy when we *are* the community we serve.
 - La Casa develops leadership and mentors staff members in the same way it offers that support to students.
- We build strong relationships because people trust La Casa because we don't have an agenda...we are not here to sell something, to take advantage or financial gain, impose our religious or political beliefs or ideas.



Systematic inequities, poder, privilegio, oppression, salud.

We use language and words that families and students understand; at La Casa, students and families know best how their health is impacted by “systematic inequities”. They do not need to use those words to tell us. Their stories, their lives, their resilience tells us. We remove the assumption of formal education and fluency in English when we talk about “systemic inequities” so that families feel equipped and self-confident in identifying what they need.

We discuss power and privilege and race among our team...and then we *use* the powers and privileges we each have- whether based on age, race, gender, language capacities, or other – we work together to strategize who has access to certain spaces, use our access, then step out of it for another to step in.

-We show up together to trainings, meetings, classes, and at tables– requiring another space at the table and supporting one-another as an integrated team using each other’s respective powers, privileges and strengths. Estamos en la solidaridad junt@s.

-Los que tienen acceso trata de compartir el acceso a los que no lo tienen. Ejemplo: when our white director is given a spot in a leadership program, we perceive it as “La Casa’s spot”...not hers. We **discuss** how to use her privilege and access and then, **decide together**, she will decline her spot and instead a person of color from La Casa Hogar will go.

-Our high value: La Casa is a physically, emotionally, mentally, intellectually safe space.



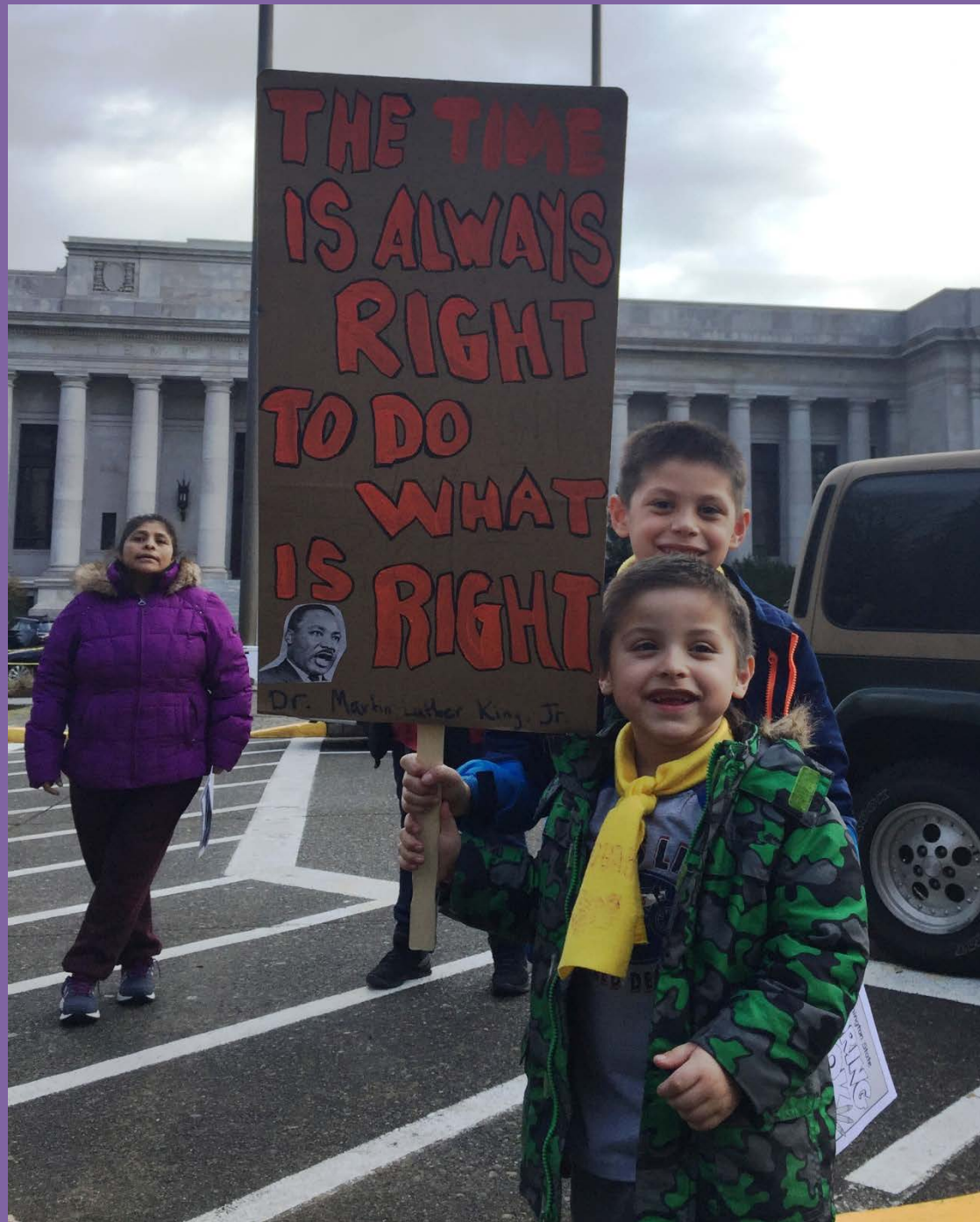


Organizational Cultura, Authenticity, Comunidad

La Casa's is:

- “Welcoming”
- “Family”
- “Alegre”
- “Pleasant”
- “Un lugar agradable donde me gusta estar”
- “People feel heard”
- “Transparent...because we don't have enough space, so we all hear each other's conversations”
- “We laugh”
- “We trust”
- “We share”





Desafíos y obstacles

- Being told we are “not professionals” because of white-culture definitions of “professionalism”
- Not being seen or recognized as líderes because we don’t use the white culture’s ideas/roles/process of leadership
- Being used as the “diverse” organization when other organizations seek Letters of Support or involvement of Latinx families
- Fighting for los derechos de nuestras estudiantes...en bastante lugares y contextos. Por ejemplo: en inmigración, o cuando negocios quieren “dar información” a la gente pero es más para tener acceso a las poblaciones latinxs.
- Espacio
- Managing discrimination and feeling discarded when attending meetings with other nonprofits that are all primarily white and fluent in English
- Embodying equity within fundraising strategies





Where do you find esperanza?

- Over 905 people are U.S. Citizens through La Casa Hogar
- Team growth– en números, sino también en liderazgo y capacidades
- Nuestra colaboración y voz colectiva

