

# WH

## WORD & HOPE

### The Earthquake in Mexico: Students Share Personal Stories

The world needs a big hug! This was the sign in front of a manufacturing company in St. Charles. How true! Earthquakes in Mexico City, hurricanes in Texas, Puerto Rico and Florida, followed by the wildfires in California! All of these natural disasters have left us feeling vulnerable and helpless.

There are some members of our Dominican Literacy Center community who have been touched intimately by these disasters. Haydee' Martinez, Sister Irma Luna Lira and Juana Romero all have personal stories to tell about the earthquake near Mexico City. They are all very grateful, as are we, that their loved ones escaped serious injuries.

Haydee's friends were temporarily unable to work due to building damage. Restoration of their place of employment was quickly completed and they were able to return to work.

Sister Irma is a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family, who are doing missionary work here and in Mexico. As a student at The Dominican Literacy Center, she is working to improve her English. As a religious education teacher for 1200 students in Aurora, many of

whom are Spanish speaking, she is responsible for preparing some of them for their first sacraments.

Her sister convent in Jaltenango Chiapas near Mexico City, was badly damaged in the earthquake and is beyond repair. The Sisters were not at home during the earthquake and no one was injured. The convent was not only their home, but their place of ministry. There are six sisters in the convent who work on apostolic development within the community, as well as providing faith formation for the children in the orphanage. Their congregation is raising funds for a new building.

Juana's sister is sad because her daughters can't start school. One school has cracked walls and the other school is rubble. Although Juana's sister still has her home, many people in her neighborhood have lost everything. They are living in the street. A woman who owns a beauty salon is helping her neighbors by giving them access to the bathroom as well as her electricity so they can charge their phones.

When Juana's sister explained what this woman was doing to help, she was in tears. The hearts of many ache, thinking of those in our world affected by these disasters. The disasters have become old news, but the recovery efforts continue and the effects of these events will be felt in these areas for many months and in some areas, for many years.

Let's continue to keep all our brothers and sisters who are victims, as well as the tireless volunteers, in prayer. The following organizations continue to accept donations: Catholic Charities, [www.catholiccharitiesUSA.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesUSA.org) and Catholic Relief Services, [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org)



Convent of the Sisters of the Holy Family in ruins



Juana Romero & Sr. Irma

*"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others."*  
— Ghandi

## In Their Words

**DLC students share holiday recipes! Our students seem to cook by taste and soul — minimal measuring!**

### PASTA SAUCE

Mix cream, cumin, salt and chopped pimento with tomato sauce. Pour over cooked spaghetti. Top with parmesan cheese and serve. **Claudia**

### VEGETABLE SALAD

Mix together and chill before serving — 1 lb. thawed frozen peas, 1 cup corn, 2 large potatoes, boiled and chopped, 1 tablespoon chopped pimento, 1 cup mayonnaise, 3 tablespoons sour cream. **Alicia**

### KOREAN RADISH WRAP

Slice large radish very thin and marinate overnight in vinegar, sugar, salt, water. Cook julienne vegetables (carrots, cucumber, peppers) and crabmeat or shrimp or meat in pan with separated egg. Make sauce by combining chopped peanuts, mustard, sugar, pineapple juice and sesame seed. Wrap julienne vegetables in radish slice. Arrange on plates. Serve with sauce. **Hyemee**

### RICE WITH MILK

Wash and boil 1 lb. white rice in 1 liter water with cinnamon stick. When rice is cooked, add 1 can condensed milk and ½ cup white sugar. Boil for 2 minutes, while constantly, gently stirring. Add raisins, if desired and serve. **Haydee**

### CHICKEN BREAST

Salt and pepper chicken breast and simmer covered in water until cooked. Then slice it. Serve with a sauce made from 1 apple sliced thinly, 1 small container yogurt, 6 chopped pecans, ½ each of a green, yellow and red pepper, sliced thinly, 2 tablespoons raisins, 4 oz. chopped ham, and 1 garlic clove uncut. **Lucy**

## A Dream Takes Shape

In 1993, Sister Kathleen Ryan, OP, began thinking about how to help immigrant women build a basic mastery of the English language, leading to fluency in reading, writing and speaking. Having watched the Charles Kuralt TV show on women's literacy, she began working on the concept throughout August of that year. She strategized that a year of planning could bring the dream to reality.

Bertha Manzo, who worked at St. Nicholas Church, changed that time frame. Ms. Manzo connected Sister Kathleen immediately with neighborhood women from St. Nicholas. This parish received a great number of families moving in to the Aurora area from Mexico and welcomed them warmly. With Ms. Manzo's encouragement, Sister Kathleen approached the St. Nicholas parish to see if they would allow her to teach English, and later citizenship classes, in their basement. The church responded by offering free space for this new endeavor.

Sister Kathleen began her tutoring and was soon joined by three other Sisters: Sister Ann Clennon, OP, Sister Judith Curran, OP, and Sister Virginia Derhake, OP. Kathy Snow was the first lay person who joined the group. All instruction was offered one on one. With these 5 teachers, the "Pioneers", the first 5 evening students to receive instruction were assigned to these 5 teachers.

As interest in the program grew, Sister Kathleen knew additional space would be needed, so she began to look for a larger building with many rooms. Perhaps a convent building? Because the Sisters at St. Therese School in Aurora were retiring and their building would become vacant, an agreement to rent was reached in 1994, and the Dominican Literacy Center began its work.

At the end of the first year, there were 18 students and 18 teachers. Citizenship classes as well as English tutoring were offered. Soon the number grew to 60 with a simultaneous expansion of the Center. All tutors formed a volunteer force. By 2000, the Center became incorporated in the state of Illinois and received 501 (c) (3) status. By the year 2000, the Center had three full time paid staff personnel and one part time staff member.

Through hard work and dedication, a vision had created the Dominican Literacy Center, where women from many countries found a loving and accepting path to the empowerment that learning English would provide for them and their families. Our Spring newsletter will continue the DLC story, highlighting where the Center is today, and the dreams for the future.

## DLC Students Build Community Spirit

The Dominican Literacy Center students receive a valuable education, but they give a great deal back as well. The students pay a twenty-five dollar fee to help cover the cost of their books. They contribute coffee and cookies which are shared in the kitchen where students and tutors can take their break with others and practice the lively art of conversation in English! Students also supply the Center with tissues, soap and paper towels. At the end of the year, they share their time and energy cleaning the Center from top to bottom.

In December, the tree in the dining room is weighted down with donated ornaments, many of them handmade, reflecting the students' cultural heritage. At the annual Christmas party, the table overflows with tamales, chicken tinga, dumplings, and exotic offerings like a whole fish stuffed with plantains. After each party, everyone fills up another plate to take home, as the table must be cleared for the next class's feast. Check out "In Their Own Words" for some Christmas party potluck recipes!

By taking ownership of the Center, students help shape a vibrant community of learning and fellowship.



Kathy Snow; Sr. Judith Curran, OP; Sr. Kathleen Ryan, OP; Sr. Virginia Derhake, OP; Sr. Ann Clennon, OP





# Popular Feast Day Commemorates Miraculous Apparitions

Although the Dominican Literacy Center serves students from various countries, many women of Mexican heritage have a special devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast day is Dec. 12th. Catholic parishes nationwide, as well as in Mexico, will commemorate Our Lady's apparitions to the peasant Juan Diego (whose Aztec name meant "speaking eagle") in the 16th century. Sent to the bishop by Our Lady requesting a church be built, Juan found an intricate and highly symbolic image of Our Lady of Guadalupe had miraculously imprinted on his cactus-fiber tilma, which is still displayed in Mexico City today. Within 7 years of her appearances, 9 million people were converted, and devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe remains strong today.

Check local parishes for special events like Las Mañanitas, a loving serenade to Our Lady; indigenous Aztec drumming or traditional village folk dancing and dress; Masses, novenas, and, of course, celebrations with favorite Mexican foods. Or consider visiting the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Des Plaines, which is a replica of the Basilica in Mexico City. On December 11 and 12, thousands of pilgrims make a yearly December journey, with many visitors camping out nearby.

The belief in the love and protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the strong beliefs that immigrants from Mexico to the United States carry with them, and they successfully infuse this belief into their new lives in America.



Hortencia Ramirez and Elisa Barocio

## Make a Difference

Please participate in the mission of the DLC by using these opportunities to donate:

**Giving Tuesday donations** are still being gratefully accepted. Go to [www.dominicanliteracycenter.org](http://www.dominicanliteracycenter.org), click the Ways to Help tab and donate via Razoo.

**Giving through Amazon:** Combine your online Christmas shopping with supporting the DLC. Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and select the Dominican Literacy Center, Aurora as your chosen charity. The Amazon Foundation will donate 0.5% of your purchase to the Center. You shop, we benefit!

## Save the Date

Dear Readers,

As you visit with family and friends this holiday season, please mention us to those who might be interested in tutoring. Ask them to SAVE THE DATE for our upcoming Tutor Training which will take place on 2 consecutive Saturdays, January 13th and January 20th, 2018 from 9AM to 3PM. For more details, email [alison@dominicanliteracycenter.org](mailto:alison@dominicanliteracycenter.org). Thanks much!

*"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." — Etienne de Grellet*

## Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides guidance and support for the many initiatives of the Dominican Literacy Center:

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## The Dominican Literacy Center provides ...



DOMINICAN  
LITERACY CENTER

*The mission of the Dominican Literacy Center is to provide opportunities for women to receive individual tutoring in reading, writing and speaking English. We provide these opportunities through individual tutoring by trained volunteers within the neighborhood setting. The Dominican Literacy Center believes in empowerment through education, and in the dignity of each individual person.*



- free 90-minute weekly individual tutoring sessions for women in reading, writing and speaking English as a second language.
- customized curriculum of English-only instruction appropriate to each student's level.
- sessions that run from September through May, with day and evening formats.
- the opportunity for a student to remain in the program for three years, usually working with the same tutor during the entire time.
- conversation classes open to current students and "graduates".
- citizenship classes for both men and women.

*For more information, call 630-898-4636, M-F 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
or see our website at [www.dominicanliteracycenter.org](http://www.dominicanliteracycenter.org)*