



# ARISE

*A Resource In Serving Equality*

Summer 2011 - Vol. 41

*Dear friends: It has been a while since our last newsletter. There are many moments, ideas, and images we want to share with you, but our space is limited on paper. Fortunately, we now send out monthly e-newsletters which can be accessed through our website. If you would like to be part of our email list, contact us at [arisesotex@arisesotex.org](mailto:arisesotex@arisesotex.org).*

*We hope that you are having a fruitful summer. Enjoy our newsletter!*

Community members from *colonias* all over the Rio Grande Valley have participated in various meetings with leaders. This has given residents the opportunity to voice their concerns over drainage issues in their neighborhoods. Many of their homes were badly damaged, streets flooded for months at a time, and families faced unsanitary conditions due to seeping

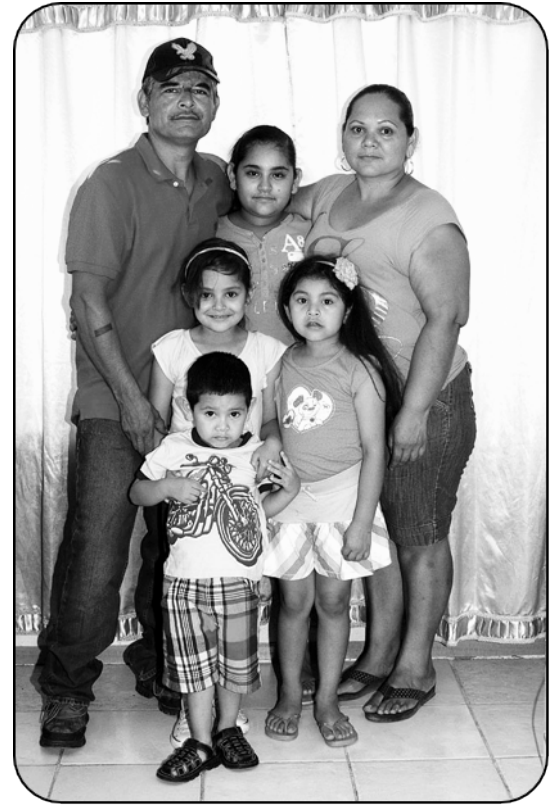
sewage during Hurricane Dolly. Residents have met with representatives from HUD (Housing Urban Development), the Lower Rio Grande Valley Council, Congressman Hinojosa's office, and from Hidalgo County Judge Ramon Garcia's office. These meetings will hopefully enable leaders to make decisions that will fix drainage problems in the *colonias*.



## THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO FAMILIES IN NEED.

It started off as a little mole on Enrique's forehead. A doctor's visit would inform him that he had cancer. His wife, Sylvia, was a stay-at-home mother. Enrique's work was the sole income for the family. Working long hours in the sun burned his skin and his working days were dwindling down as the intense headaches and exposed skin were making it very difficult to work. Sylvia started to have garage sales. This was all she could do to support the family while Enrique was ill. The cost of this life-saving surgery was daunting given their financial situation, which left them unable to pay for their basic household bills.

At ARISE Las Milpas, President Andrea Olvera was informed about a special program called "the 12 Days of Christmas". United Way and the Monitor would sponsor families, nominated by the community, who were in need of assistance. Many families were in need of assistance, but the Orozco family's situation was the most urgent. She wrote a letter nominating them for the program and they were selected. In December of 2010, Enrique was fortunate enough to receive surgical treatment. His physical and mental health has improved tremendously. The Orozco family is very grateful to the community that helped pull them through this trying experience.



### Familia Orozco

*From L to R: Enrique, Cristal, Sylvia, Sylvia, Citlaly, and Enrique Jr.*



### Familia Alegria

*From L to R: Fernando, James, Aida, Cecilia, Julissa*

Aida was cooking in the kitchen when she heard a neighbor yelling, "Neighbor, neighbor, your house is on fire!" She had just enough time to grab her packet of important documents and direct the kids outside. They stood there, along with many neighbors, watching their home burn. People in the community responded right away. Neighborhood children collected all the garbage and burned debris (most just wearing sandals and no gloves or masks) and cleared the house for them. One neighbor walked over, with tears in her eyes, and said, "I looked around my house and I really have nothing to give, but I'll help you with my hands". Proyecto Azteca, a local organization, donated a home. Volunteers from a church and youth from ARISE helped remove the remnants of the damaged house in order for Azteca to be able to install the new home. A month after that big setback, the Alegria family has a new place to call home!



## DIA DE LA MUJER

On March 8th, ARISE Las Milpas hosted the 3rd annual DIA de la MUJER March & Celebration. ARISE staff and community members marched side-by-side promoting the honor of women in our community. The march was followed by a

celebration of music, food, raffle prizes and an awards ceremony honoring Eva Carranza. She was presented with the Gerrie Naughton Award, which recognizes a woman who has shown exemplary leadership skills. Many thanks to the staff of ARISE Las Milpas for their creativity and hard work.



## ARISE HONORS WOMEN WITH 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Nine staff members were honored for their 10 years of ministry with ARISE. Hortencia Medina & Esperanza Berrones from ARISE Las Mipias; Eva Soto, Ludivina Escalante & Lourdes Sierra from ARISE Muñiz; Carmen Vargas, Maria Esparza, Angelica Nava & Emilia Vega of ARISE South Tower. They were presented with a plaque recognizing them for their personal development and leadership roles over the years.



## AINE O'CONNOR. A Sister of Mercy Who Traveled the World & Found...

Aine O'Connor is a Sister of Mercy from South Central who spent two months working with the women of ARISE. She is originally from Ireland, and currently lives in Baltimore, MD. She joined the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas in 1995. This past year Aine had the opportunity to meet with and learn from community organizers in different parts of the world. She spoke to me about that experience and how it led her to ARISE. The interview was included in our March e-newsletter, which can be accessed through our website.



Petra Hernandez, Sylvia Tovar, Aine O'Connor, & Emilia Vega at ARISE South Tower



# SUMMER AT ARISE



*Un Verano con ARISE:* Students from Heidelberg University and Mother of Mercy High School of Cincinnati collaborated with youth from our community to facilitate activities for local children. Our summer program gives students an opportunity to experience the realities of this area and to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to do service in a marginalized community.



# ARISE

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Please visit us at: [arisesotex.org](http://arisesotex.org) to learn more about the transformations that are happening in communities that ARISE serves. You can also make an online donation. It's fast & easy! To stop receiving ARISE information please contact us at (956) 783-6959 or [arisesotex@arisesotex.org](mailto:arisesotex@arisesotex.org).

We also always welcome letters to the above address. Thank you for the continued support!