

# CONNECTING OUR VOICES: OUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

A PLATFORM FOR  
EMPOWERMENT & COMMUNITY

INSPIRING CHANGE, ONE VOICE AT A TIME

NEWSLETTER: QUARTER 3 / ISSUE 3 / SEPTEMBER 2024

## OUR MISSION

Our **mission** is to be a community - and comprehensive data-driven prevention model that focuses on creating conditions that support youth 18 years and younger in staying healthy and creating healthy environments.



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## QUOTE OF THE QUARTER



“Yes, I am the first Latino poet laureate in the United States. But I’m also here for everyone and from everyone. *My voice is made by everyone’s voices.*”

**Juan Felipe Herrera** 1



# A REFLECTION BY PROGRAM SPECIALIST DELUBINA MONTOYA

*¡Saludos y bienvenidos a todos!*

Welcome friends, collaborators, colleagues, and community to the third issue of the Connecting Our Voices Newsletter. Through this newsletter, we aim to inspire you with stories of people and programs that are making a difference in our community. We do this by showcasing their talents, resources, and voices. This newsletter is a labor of love, and it's one way we can connect with you and share the vision and work we do.

I am honored to serve my community through my work with Connecting Our Voices. I want to emphasize the significance of the program's name. "Connecting Our Voices" beautifully captures the essence of our program. Connection is essential to the success of any program, and through connection, we can make a significant and lasting impact on our community. Connection lies at the heart of COV. We are leaving a positive and lasting impression on our community through our connections with our community partners. From assisting the soup kitchen in packing emergency food boxes to collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce on community events, and mentoring youth interns and students, our connections make our collaborative efforts beautiful and meaningful.

Voices, especially "Our Voices," are instrumental in creating the communities we deserve. By speaking up and using our voices, we can bring about the greatest change in our community. Teaching our youth the power of their voices, both individually and collectively, is my greatest honor. Empowering our youth with the understanding of the power of connection, collaboration, and advocacy through programmatic curriculum and the examples we set as mentors and community advocates is what makes COV an outstanding program.

It has been a privilege to serve NLBHA through my work on the Everyone Deserves Campaign. While our role in the campaign has ended with the close of September, the impact it had on New Mexico will endure. The Everyone Deserves Campaign is a mental and behavioral health equity initiative that aims to connect people in rural areas with the resources they need to improve mental and behavioral health outcomes. Throughout the campaign, the Everyone Deserves team referred hundreds of New Mexicans to the local resources they needed. I will miss our team and the work we did, but I will forever be grateful to have served in my capacity with the Everyone Deserves Campaign.

## DELUBINA MONTOYA



**Delubina Montoya**

**NLBHA, Program Specialist**

September COV Newsletter, 2024

Delubina is the mother of two adult children, Kayla and Dion, as well as the grandmother of the most amazing five-year-old in the whole world, Miah Grace. Delubina and her husband, Eric, have been married for over 35 years. Delubina has been a community organizer and advocate for over twenty years in Espanola, NM, the place she loves and calls home. She has served on the board of directors for the Espanola Lowrider Association since its inception. She is also a painter, writer and student. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Integrated studies in the Humanities with a concentration in Literature.

Delubina serves the National Latino Behavioral Health Association as a Program Specialist. She works at creating mental and behavioral health equity as it is essential to the wellbeing of her community and has worked with local youth to end the stigmatization of mental illness and encourage self-esteem through culture, community advocacy and self-care. She believes in collaboration and cooperation and works diligently with several community service organizations such as, Hands Across Cultures, Compassion Through Action, San Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen, The YMCA and the Espanola Chicax Cultural Heritage Preservation.

# WARM WELCOME TO DR. J. ROCKY ROMERO CONNECTING OUR VOICES PROGRAM DIRECTOR

## Dr. J . Rocky Romero



**Dr. J. Rocky Romero**  
**COV, Program Director**

September COV Newsletter, 2024

Dr. Romero, LMSW is the CEO and owner of JR Romero & Associates, a company he started 21 years ago that focuses on behavioral health program development, program evaluation, consultation, and specialized training.

Dr. Romero completed his doctoral studies at the University of New Mexico in Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies (LLSS) with a focus on analyzing legal discourse related to Spanish colonization while applying a critical race theory lens.

Dr. Romero has been a trainer and consultant for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded National Hispanic & Latino-Mental Health Technology Transfer Center for the last 13 years. In his role as a Technical Assistance expert for the NHL-MHTTC he has recently helped plan, develop, solicit funding for projects.



# A 17-YEAR-OLD'S TRIUMPH: EMBRACING ADVOCACY AND RECONNECTING WITH CULTURE BY SILVIA AGUIRRE

Presenting at a conference is an accomplishment that many of us work our entire careers for.

This year, my 17-year-old sister had the amazing opportunity of presenting and co-facilitating a session at the NLBHA conference. She presented on the community-based work she did as an intern with NLBHA's Connecting Our Voices Coalition, the prevention framework used, and the benefits of having youth advocate for youth.

Seeing her prepare for this and watching her confidence grow as the expert of her own experience was wonderful to witness. This opportunity has inspired her to remain engaged in the world of advocacy and prevention because she now knows that her voice is important, valued, and heard.

This conference also gave me an opportunity to reconnect with my culture in a way that I'm not able to in my day-to-day life and in a way I didn't know I was missing. Seeing folks who look like me speaking on issues that impact our community reminded me of the importance of representation in all places, but specifically in the world of behavioral health.

It's not an easy thing to inhabit and navigate spaces that are meant to keep us out but seeing a conference full of Latinx/e professionals was exactly what I needed to fill my cup and continue the work.

Thank you, NLBHA, for creating a space for us to connect with each other and our culture!

## SILVIA AGUIRRE



**Silvia Aguirre, LMSW**

**LANL Foundation, Scholarship Program Coordinator**

September COV Newsletter, 2024

Silvia Aguirre joined the LANL Foundation in 2022 as the Scholarship Program Coordinator. She first became involved with the Foundation when she was awarded a Bronze Scholarship as an undergraduate student in 2019. During her senior year at New Mexico State University, she served as the LANL Scholar Ambassador. In this role, Silvia provided support to freshmen and transfer students by connecting them to resources on campus.

Silvia, a first-generation college graduate, earned an associate degree in Liberal Arts from the University of New Mexico Los Alamos in 2019, followed by a Bachelor of Social Work in 2021 and a Master of Social Work in 2022, both from New Mexico State University.

Silvia is passionate about advancing social justice, immigrant rights, and helping first generation students navigate higher education. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her parents and sisters.



[silvia@lanlfoundation.org](mailto:silvia@lanlfoundation.org)

# SAN MARTIN DE PORRES SOUP KITCHEN'S PAINTED PLATES GALA: NOURISHING HOPE AND IMPACTING LIVES

## BY KRISTEN TRUJILLO

On August 24, 2024, San Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen held its second Painted Plates Gala at Anthony's at the Delta and La Fonda de Sol Restaurant. This vibrant evening brought together community members in support of our Soup Kitchen, showcasing an impressive collection of hand-painted plates, each crafted by talented local and world-renowned artists.



The gala featured live music from Ryan Dominguez and captivating performances by Moving Arts Espanola, creating a lively atmosphere. The evening kicked off with a cocktail hour, followed by an exquisite 5-course meal prepared by three-time Food Network champion Fernando Ruiz of Escondido, paired with specialty wines.



### KRISTEN TRUJILLO



**Kristen Trujillo**

**San Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen, Executive Director**  
September COV Newsletter, 2024

Kristen Trujillo, a native of Northern New Mexico, grew up in the Española Valley and attended Northern New Mexico College. With over 16 years of experience in financial data management and small business entrepreneurship, Kristen now serves as the Executive Director of the San Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen.

Inspired by her grandmother and aunts, who founded the Soup Kitchen in 1992, Kristen is dedicated to expanding its impact.

She leads efforts to secure over \$200,000 annually in grants and donations, while actively participating in multiple community coalitions focusing on addressing food insecurities in her beloved community.



# SAN MARTIN DE PORRES SOUP KITCHEN'S PAINTED PLATES GALA: NOURISHING HOPE AND IMPACTING LIVES

## BY KRISTEN TRUJILLO



The Painted Plates Gala was a resounding success, raising significant funds for our mission. We are immensely grateful for the support from everyone who attended and contributed, helping us make a meaningful impact in our community.

Together, we continue to nourish hope and provide essential resources to those in need.

Fifty ticket holders received a unique, hand-painted plate curated by esteemed artist Toby Morfin, making for a truly memorable experience.

We are especially grateful for the generous donations from local businesses and community members, which enabled us to host a silent auction that further supported our mission.

The primary mission of our Soup Kitchen is to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry.



For information on how to join the SMDP kitchen efforts, please contact **Kristen Trujillo** at **505-927-8284** or [smdpsoupkitchen@gmail.com](mailto:smdpsoupkitchen@gmail.com).

If you want to learn more about upcoming events, you can visit their website at [smdpsoupkitchen.com](http://smdpsoupkitchen.com)!



# CRISIS SUPPORT & TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW:

988 LIFELINE  
988 OR 988LIFELINE.ORG

FINDTREATMENT.GOV

FINDSUPPORT.GOV



#SUICIDEPREVENTIONMONTH | #SPM24

# OPCIONES DE TRATAMIENTO Y APOYO EN CASO DE CRISIS PARA USTED O ALGUIEN QUE CONOSCA:

988 LIFELINE  
988 O 988LIFELINE.ORG/ES/

FINDTREATMENT.GOV/ES/

SAMHSA.GOV/ENCUENTRA-APOYO



#MEDELAPREVENCIÓNDELSUICIDIO | #SPM24

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

## EVERYONE

can play a part in the



## RECOVERY JOURNEY

**NATIONAL**  
**RECOVERY**  
**MONTH**  
RECOVERY. HOPE. HEALING.

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

## TODOS

podemos contribuir al proceso de



## RECUPERACIÓN

**MES NACIONAL** DE LA  
**RECUPERACIÓN**  
RECUPERACIÓN. ESPERANZA. SANACIÓN.





*World Mental Health Day,  
10 October 2024  
“Mental Health at Work”*





# UPCOMING EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

## 2024 Annual Food Drive

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the San Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen's 2024 VIRTUAL ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE, running from October 1st to November 30th.

Your support will make a meaningful difference by helping to provide over 550 Holiday Food Boxes for those in need in the Espanola Valley and surrounding communities.

**Kristen Trujillo** at  
[smdpsoupkitchen@gmail.com](mailto:smdpsoupkitchen@gmail.com)  
 or 505-927-8284



## Espanola Police Department presents CHAT WITH CHIEF

Join Española Police Chief Mizel Garcia, along with your friends, neighbors, and local police officers, for a casual coffee gathering. Let's come together to share ideas and work towards making our community a safer place for everyone.

Connect with EPD non-emergency dispatch at  
**(505) 753-5555.**



## CALAVERA 2nd Annual Pop-up Fine Art Show

Join us for a fantastic event featuring free entry, catering, a cash bar, and a live DJ. Explore a stunning collection of paintings, jewelry, and retablos created by talented artists from the surrounding areas of Espanola.

Friday, Oct. 18  
 4 PM at OHKAY Casino Hotel

For more details visit:  
**Facebook Event: CALAVERA**



Join us for a day of fun-filled activities at the **2nd ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL** at Northern New Mexico College on October 26th, 2024, hosted by the Espanola Valley Chamber of Commerce!

Activities include costume contests, pet costume contests, free pumpkin painting, vendors, a DJ, community partners, activity booths, games, raffles, and more.

Questions?  
 Contact **Tilly** at **(505)614-4615**

## CELEBRATE WITH US!



**LEARNING**  
 through  
**RECOVERY**  
**TOGETHER**

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
<u>Suicide Prevention Month</u>	<u>Substance Use Prevention Month</u>	<u>National Homeless Awareness Month</u>
<u>National Recovery Month</u>	<u>National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day</u>	<u>Support During the Holidays</u>



**You are Enough**



# STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

## CONNECTING OUR VOICES

### PROGRAM STAFF



**Dr. J. Rocky Romero**  
Program Director



**Jorge Gonzales**  
Co-Program Director  
Jorge@NLBHA.org



**Delubina Montoya**  
Program Specialist  
Delubina@NLBHA.org



**Elizabeth Rodriguez Diaz**  
Program Specialist  
Elizabeth@NLBHA.org

**Connecting Our Voices: Our Community Newsletter** is the perfect opportunity to showcase your talents and achievements. If you want to be featured in the next edition, please reach out to newsletter editor Elizabeth Rodriguez Diaz at [Elizabeth@NLBHA.org](mailto:Elizabeth@NLBHA.org).

We invite you to attend our monthly Connecting Our Voices Coalition Meeting. The meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month, both virtually and in person. If you are interested in attending, please contact us for details and an invitation.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow community members and contribute your voice to vital discussions. Your presence and participation will make a difference.

Let's come together and strengthen our community through the power of communication and collaboration.