



Home at St. E's

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Winter 2022

Cleaning Up

Residents at Casa Cerrillos, St. Elizabeth's supportive housing program for adults with disabilities, have a new perk – ongoing cleaning of their apartments. Elena Salinas, who had been doing occasional volunteer cleaning there and at Sonrisa during the past years, was contracted part-time in 2021 and began working full-time this past February to do so. Some apartments are cleaned weekly and others monthly depending on the amount of work needed.

“Many of the residents, because of their disabilities, can't really keep their apartments clean and tidy,” explains Neal Windham, program manager at Casa Cerrillos. “And every apartment has been recently renovated so we don't want them to fall into disarray and disrepair.”

While the cleaning is important, the bigger story may be Elena herself. Born in Houston, she was raised in Mexico and moved back to Texas as an adult with her children to live with her family. But eventually her boyfriend had trouble with the family, so the couple moved first to Oklahoma to be with his family and then to Albuquerque where they became homeless. After staying briefly at Joy Junction, they heard about Casa Familia and moved to Santa Fe to enter the program. Soon after an apartment opened up at St. E's Sonrisa Family Program and they moved there in December 2014.

“We loved Sonrisa,” she says. “I gave birth to my fifth child the month after we moved in and it was wonderful having our own place. All my children were little then and



Elena Salinas keeps a resident's stovetop clean at Casa Cerrillos.

they loved the Thornburg Christmas parties and all the wonderful gifts they received.”

Things were fine for a while. Her boyfriend had jobs at the *New Mexican* and Smith's, Elena enrolled at Santa Fe Community College for a degree in community justice and they successfully moved from Sonrisa into Santa Fe Civic Housing in 2016. But then his father died and shortly thereafter his sister as well.

“After that his personality totally changed and we broke up,” Elena says. “Then COVID hit and the community college shut down so I didn't finish my degree. I needed to find work and since I had always stayed in touch with Neal (Sonrisa's program manager), he hired me in 2020 to clean apartments there when residents moved in or out.”

When Neal assumed the program manager position at Casa Cerrillos as well and began inspecting and renovating the apartments, he realized the need for professional cleaning. To better maintain the

apartments, he hired her part-time in 2021 and full-time this past February when funding from the New Mexico Community Trust became available.

“Some of the apartments were in pretty bad shape when I started,” Elena says. “The residents hadn't done any cleaning so I had my work cut out for me with the toilets, sinks and baths. Some people were upset with me at first because I disturbed their privacy, but now they're calling the office and asking when I'm

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St. Elizabeth is dedicated to assisting homeless individuals and families by providing emergency shelter, food, case management, counseling, supportive housing and referrals to partnering human-services agencies.

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 505-982-6611
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Director's Corner



Edward Archuleta

If there's anything good about COVID it's that it brought new awareness to the link between homelessness, increased number of infections from contagious diseases and potential spread to the overall community. This helped lead to the creation of the S3 Santa Fe Housing Initiative, a new collaborative effort between local government, philanthropic organizations and nonprofits.

St. Elizabeth is a leading player, along with other homeless-serving organizations as the Interfaith Community Shelter, Life Link, Española Pathways Shelter, Youth Shelters and Family Services, Adelante, Consuelo's Place and more. Other members include Santa Fe city and county, Anchorum St. Vincent, Santa Fe Community Foundation, Thornburg Foundation, McCune Charitable Foundation and the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness.

By working together strategically, we aim to address Santa Fe's lack of affordable housing and limited capacity to provide necessary supportive services for those in need. We view housing as a basic human right and the basis for a healthy vibrant community. As such, our goal is to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring by ensuring that safe, affordable and sustainable housing is available for all.

All of us understand that homelessness is a complex and longstanding problem and realize that a potential solution will require creative thought, collective action, collaborative will and long-term commitment. Often the first step toward solving any major issue is to recognize the problem at hand and then begin to assemble the forces needed to remediate it.

The challenge has begun. Does anyone out there want to join us?

Executive Director

New Faces / New Positions



Riyah Garcia

Riyah Garcia is the new program manager at the Men's Emergency Shelter. She arrives with more than 15 years managerial experience working at Cirque du Soleil in various locales.

Born in Santa Fe, she is a dancer and musician in her free time and came to St. Elizabeth as a shift supervisor one year ago.

"While I've had a lot of managerial experience, I'm new to this scene," she says of St. Elizabeth, "and it's been a big honor to work with Edward (Archuleta) and others who have been doing this work for years. I believe that everyone deserves a second chance and enjoy working with people in recovery programs or these formerly incarcerated to help them get jobs and reintegrate into mainstream society."

Riyah sees her role as providing structure and support for these and other homeless clients and is looking to partner with other organizations interested in offering similar opportunities. She also hopes to reenergize the shelter's intern program after COVID seemingly stalled the application process. But she's well aware of the challenges she faces: the lack of mental health support throughout our society and the local housing crisis in Santa Fe.

"St. E's has such a strong program but our work hits the wall due to the lack of housing available for our clients. We work very hard to get them restored, excited and ready to



Mara Melton

"As St. E's is expanding we need to look at our organizational structure to make sure that the foundation can support the growth that's needed in this community to assist people experiencing homelessness," says Mara Melton, director of operations.

In this new position, Mara directly reports to Executive Director Edward Archuleta and the board of directors. Her directive is to examine each individual aspect of the shelter's various programs to see how they can better coordinate their activities to optimize functioning together. To that end, she is talking to everyone in the organization, listening to their input and looking at every activity and piece of the current structure to see how things are working and recommending changes to improve overall effectiveness.

The various policies and procedures manuals that each program has is a good example. Mara is incorporating them all into one all-encompassing living document to incorporate best practices in the field while keeping abreast of changing federal directives that all HUD-supported programs, like Casa Cerrillos and Sonrisa, must follow.

Born in Santa Fe, Mara has degrees in social work and was pursuing a doctorate in integrated behavioral health. She has 35 years of experience working with nonprofits and in criminal justice



Shannon Milligan

Getting people housed at Santa Fe Suites is often just the first step. The bigger challenge can be keeping them housed.

That's where Shannon Milligan comes in. As supportive housing navigator her goal is to stabilize them in their new home, address whatever needs they present, provide whatever assistance is needed and eventually help them move into other permanent housing to make room for new residents.

"Many of our new residents come directly from the streets and don't have the skills to live independently in their own apartment," she says. "Depending on their needs, I can help organize their apartment, enroll them with Healthcare for the Homeless, make medical and behavioral health appointments, apply for food stamps, get bus passes, work out a budget and even take some shopping since it may have been years since they've been to a grocery store."

Shannon meets at least weekly with her high-needs clients, many dealing with serious trauma or in crisis with psychotic breakdowns.

"You need to take their concerns seriously, calm them down and have patience to help them," she says. "There's always something I can do."

Prior to the Suites, Shannon worked at Casa Milagro as a case manager, Santa Fe Sobering Center as a med/tech and at Christus St. Vincent as a crisis intervention

Cleaning Up

...from page 1

coming back to clean.”

Neal seconds this.

“She’s a serious hard worker and very talkative,” he says, “so she spends a lot of time with the residents and they’ve taken to her. And seeing their apartments clean gives them more pride in where they live, as well as minimizing the risk of aggravating their asthma or getting sick from all the accumulated dust.”

There are other benefits to Elena’s regular cleaning as well.

“In my coming and goings, I’m

also keeping track of the residents by talking with and checking up on them,” she says. “I tell them that I’m keeping my eyes on you to make sure you’re OK. And if I don’t see someone for several days, I tell Neal and we follow up to see if everything is alright with them.”

Elena wants to leave civic housing and buy a home for her children. She is working on saving money, improving her credit score and has applied to Habitat for Humanity, Homewise and the Santa Fe Housing

Trust, but the waiting lists are long.

Despite the challenge of finding affordable housing in Santa Fe, she is keeping her spirits up.

“I always wanted to work in a nursing home and help people,” she says, “so being at Casa Cerrillos is great for me. I like helping people and making their lives easier and more comfortable. And seeing how people are so happy to see me when I arrive to clean their apartment is very rewarding.”



Santa Fe Suites residents and staff on a field trip at Chance of a Lifetime, a therapeutic center for humans and horses (and dogs).

New Faces...from page 3

Riyah Garcia

leave on their own, and then reality hits when they’re faced with long waiting lists – sometimes years – for something they can afford. It’s a lot to ask of them, and we could be so much more successful if more opportunities were available.”

Mara Melton

in Colorado, California, Hawaii and New Mexico, and was executive director of the Northern Colorado AIDS Project.

“I’m excited to work with St. E’s and look forward to the challenges presented while helping to build an even stronger organization to better serve Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico,” she says.

Shannon Milligan

specialist where she still teaches one day a week.

“It’s a humbling job and my clients have taught me a lot,” she says. “They’ve gone through so much trauma compared to my petty concerns. I’m grateful to have a job that’s meaningful to me and like going home each night knowing that I’ve been able to help someone.”

New Things in Store at Casa Cerrillos



Larry Montoya enjoys a drink from the new convenient bodega.

Casa Cerrillos residents no longer have to leave the premises to pick up needed supplies or wash their clothes. Since the new in-house bodega and adjoining laundry opened up in April, these amenities are only a few steps away.

Funding from the Thornburg Foundation paid for the three-door commercial refrigerator and freezer as well as the four commercial-grade new energy-star washers and dryers. Fresh, frozen, boxed and canned provisions arrive weekly

from the Food Depot and are free to all residents, while washers and dryers cost \$2 per load. There's even a television in the laundry room for residents to watch while cleaning their clothes.

"It's just a few steps from my apartment and certainly makes my life easier than going out to the store," says long-time resident Larry Montoya. "I cook a lot and it's where I pick up my meat, cheese, fruit and spaghetti. Sometimes I even use it twice a day."

For residents who don't cook, the bodega has prepared meals and snacks available.

"All the residents have disabilities and many don't have any income, so this really helps them," says Neal Windham, Casa Cerrillos' program manager. "It allows them to get the things they need for a nutritious meal. People come throughout the day and at least 80 percent of the residents take advantage of what it has to offer."

The bodega is just one of many improvements being made at Casa Cerrillos and other St. Elizabeth properties. Casa Familia has a new laundry room, too, and splits are being installed at the Sonrisa Family Program to give the residents air conditioning to deal with warming summer weather.

"The bodega is a nice-looking space," Neal says, "and the residents are seeing the amount of time, care and money we're putting into the program for their benefit and are responding accordingly. It's given them a new sense of pride in their home and their own accomplishments."



New washers, dryers and a flat-screen TV make laundry more enjoyable for Casa Cerrillos residents.

Thank You to Our Dedicated Chefs!

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St. Elizabeth Shelters & Supportive Housing wishes to take this time to say
"Thank You Santa Fe and beyond for coming out to support the
10th Annual Hungry Mouth Festival!"

It was a great evening with old friends and new ones!
Thank you to all of our sponsors, donors and auction suppliers!
Thank you to the amazing chefs that participated and truly tantalized the taste buds!
Thank you to the Scottish Rite Temple for the amazing venue!
Thank you to the volunteers that helped to pull everything together!
Thank you Bruce Adams for the auction and Kerry Gallagher for the amazing photos of the event!
And finally, thank you Betsy McCart, Lara Terrell, Camilla Kennedy, Kate Carswell & Tim Schmoyer –
you are an amazing team, and I am so glad I get to work with you on the Hungry Mouth Festival.
Happy Holidays and may you all be blessed this holiday season and in the new year.

Cheers,

Calvin Fields, Event Fundraiser / Community Outreach
St. Elizabeth Shelters & Supportive Housing

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Winter Wish List

MEN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER

Please call (982-6611) or bring the smaller items to St. Elizabeth at 804 Alarid Street.

Clothing – Hats, gloves, boots, shoes, socks, men's jackets, sweaters, hooded sweatshirts, long underwear, and winter outerwear.

Personal Hygiene – Disposable razors, shampoo, deodorant, chapstick.

Other – Sleeping bags, sleeping pads or mats, blankets, hand warmers, disposable blankets.

Non-food items – Non-alcoholic cough syrup, Thera-flu, multivitamins, Emergen-C® packets, cough drops, Vitamin C, lip balm, band-aids, Alka-Seltzer cold®, Pepto-Bismol®, hand sanitizer, hand wipes, tissues, Lysol spray, foot powder.

Volunteers – Handyman for repairs, front-desk receptionists for 4 - hour block of time once a week, cooks for dinners any night.

CASA FAMILIA

Please call (983-2042) or bring the smaller items to Casa Familia at 1604 Berry Ave.

Clothing – Women's underwear, socks, jackets, rain wear, hand warmers, shoes, boots; girl's/boy's clothing, school uniforms.

Personal Hygiene – Hand sanitizer, shampoo, conditioner, moisturizer, feminine hygiene products, disposable razors (female), toothbrushes, toothpaste, band aids, hair brushes, foot powder, body soap, nail polisher & clippers, nail files, deodorant (women's) alka-seltzer cold®, pepto-bismol®, over-the-counter medication (ibuprofen), baby wipes, baby powder, make up.

Food – Non-perishable food, bottled water, juice, coffee & tea, \$25 gift cards for Walmart, McDonald's, Wendy's, Subway, etc.

Other – Blankets, sleeping bags, tents, bed sheets (twin), diapers (all sizes, particularly 2-5), cleaning supplies, dish soap, toilet paper, paper towels, Qtips, cotton balls, laundry detergent, latex-free gloves, kitchen utensils, can openers, plastic plates, silverware, kitchen pots & pans, water bottles, shower shoes, AA/9-volt & AAA batteries, backpacks (adult & children), ear plugs, headphones, bus passes (Santa Fe Trails one-day, round trip or monthly), passes for community activities (eg. Chavez Center or Children's Museum), standard tools for home repair, microwaves, mini-fridges.

Volunteers – Front-desk receptionists from 4- to 8-hour blocks of time once a week, cooks for dinner any night.

CASA CERRILLO

Please call (471-3456) to discuss their current needs before bringing them to the facility at 381½ Cerrillos Road.

Household Items – Kitchen appliances, cleaning supplies, pet food.

Larger Items – Flatscreen tvs, computers & laptops, fencing materials.

SANTA FE SUITES

Please bring to 3007 S. St. Francis Drive (behind Albertson's) but call first (505-494-4231) for furniture.

Clothing – Winter coats & boots.

Household Items – Cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, pots/pans, crockpots, toaster ovens, silverware, cooking utensils, plates/bowls, full size sheets/blankets, towels, dish soap, dish towels.

Other – AA/AAA batteries, doggie bags, bus passes, hygiene products