



Casa Nueva Vida, Inc.



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Meet Idony Lisle and her amazing story

I became homeless in January 2008 because I became chronically ill and unable to pay rent on my small disability income. My teenaged daughter and I were frankly terrified: We had been briefly homeless some years ago due to a family argument, and had stayed in a shelter which can only be described as nightmarish.

I don't have the space to describe how very different our stay at CASA NUEVA VIDA was. The facility is comfortable and beautiful, and the staff are the most wonderful people imaginable. They went miles out of their way for us--they effectively sent my teenager to her prom, from arranging for her dress, to buying her ticket, to being dropped off by case manager Zaida Estremera--not to mention our fellow residents enthusiastically pitching in for hair and makeup, or the staff who loaned (and gave) her jewelry to make her outfit complete.

We always felt safe, respected, and actually loved. We're not Latina, but we felt welcomed and embraced by the culture. Sure, the idea of eating rice with beans every single night was new to us! However, I got there in January after school Spanish which basically gave me the skills to find the library or the bathroom--and left in September able to make myself more or less understood (given somebody cooperative). We were vigorously encouraged to make the best of every opportunity offered, and would not have made it through the confusing and conflicting DTA/BHA system without their help.

I was honored and delighted to be able to give something back to CASA NUEVA VIDA by helping write and physically assemble the massive new DTA grant in August. I profoundly hope and pray that they are completely and continually funded, because they made seven months of one of the saddest human conditions bearable--and yes, sometimes even enjoyable: I remember coming *home* in the middle of a birthday party on the lawn, and sitting by Dona Carmen as she sang to the accordion player.

This is when I realized that "It's Now or Never" and "O Solo Mio" are the same song. Other things I learned: I can't cook rice for 40 people to save my life. How you actually say "It's done," and "Excuse me" in Spanish, instead of what non-Latinos think. Maria cookies are habit-forming. Stuff in old houses keeps breaking, but you keep fixing it, and life goes on. And that people who really love you don't give up on you.

I feel lucky that my apartment is in the area, because when I visit I get enthusiastic hugs from everybody. Although I'm ecstatic not to be homeless any more, returning to CASA NUEVA VIDA will always be coming home.

SPOTLIGHTS

Lawrence Grand Opening will be February 1, 2009
You are welcome to visit our new site at any time.

Thanks to all your support we have raised \$177,000 in a year mark.
Our goal is \$1.2 million.

We have placed closed to 600 families since we open our doors.

Come and Meet Bradley Ortiz and have a pleasant Conversation

Bradley came from Colorado in March 2008, where he lived with his grandparents for 3 years. After Bradley came to live with his mother dramatic changes were blooming in the horizon for the young Bradley and his mother.

Bradley came to Casa Nueva Vida with aggressive behavior towards his mother, an indication of separation and resentment. Every time a comment was said or something was done, he will get an outbreak and show aggressive and disrespectful behavior. For the past several months, Bradley's mother and Doris Gaitan (Director of Children Education) have been working together to help Bradley adjust and cope with idea of being homeless. It has not been easy for Bradley (16), his sister Keisha (6), his brother Johnny (13) and his mother Kimberly.

We created a systematic approach to reach in and took the time to listen to his problems and worries. It was noticeable by having frequent talks with Bradley, we were able to understand the situation he was going through. Every time he got upset, we took the opportunity to engage him in to a conversation where we emphasize keeping control of his anger and the importance of being respectful to others, and to himself.

After being at Casa Nueva Vida for 9 months and a few therapeutic talks, Bradley is a different teenager. He listens more, does better in school and has accomplished many other good things. Bradley is now more confident and has a lot of courage to take responsibility for his acts.

Come to Casa Nueva Vida, and have a pleasant conversation with a young bright man. Come and meet Bradley Ortiz!

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Our most sincere thanks to the

? [Please help us furnish our new shelter](#)

We will need bunk beds, mattresses, dressers, chairs, cribs, full beds, twin beds, table, etc...

Our most sincere thanks to the
Following individual for their
dedicated support

Albert Kirsch & Kim Chmura
Alvin Shiggs & Maria Quiroga
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Thomas & Denise Monks
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full beds, twin beds, table, etc...

For complete listing please contact us at:

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? Few Random Pictures

