



todos juntos
Going Places

Volunteer Spotlight: Ana Rodriguez



Meet Todos Juntos volunteer Ana Rodriguez.

Ana is the oldest child of immigrant parents who value education. She is a first-generation college student at St. Edward's University studying psychology, taking 15 hours a semester, working, and volunteering with two other organizations besides TJ.

Ana learned about Todos Juntos through the SERVE program at St. Edward's University. SERVE has been a trusted partner since 2017, placing St. Edward's students at our Center to support our teachers and kiddos with service-and-return interactions, reading, and more. Ana said that after visiting our website and reading our mission, she felt a connection and knew this was the place for her.

When asked what she was most surprised to learn about working with TJ, Ana said it was the immediate sense of community one feels when you arrive. She said that she's found inspiration in the love and care she's seen our ECE teachers show each child. She wishes that many others could know how impactful this work is and how personally she knows programs like ours would have benefited her own parents who, as immigrants, were unfamiliar with US culture, the language and critical resources.



Ana reading during snack time with the Butterflies Class

Ana plans to graduate in 2024. When she isn't busy being an incredible volunteer, student, and community member, she can be found spending time with her family who keep her grounded and remind her why she's working so hard to be the first in her family to graduate from college.

In a recent visit with TJ Executive Director Christina Collazo, Ana said each day she is at TJ, she is fulfilled by seeing so many smiling faces, good human will in action, and people who truly want to be here. *¡Gracias for your volunteer work, Ana!*

Dichos at Abriendo Puertas!

It's great to be back for in-person learning, and that includes returning to our Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors program. During the first session, parents connected and shared *dichos* (sayings) they grew up hearing from their mamas and abuelitas that they now use as adults. Parents also had a chance to discuss graduation statistics and their role in building a fundamental education foundation for their kiddos' futures!

A favorite dicho shared: "No hay mal que por bien no venga."
Translation: "Every cloud has a silver lining."

What's your favorite *dicho*?



Adult ESL End of Year Celebrations

Todos Juntos LC
5/10, 11am-12:30pm, Cohort A
5/12, 11am-12:30pm, Cohort B

ECE Graduation

Todos Juntos LC
5/13, 9:30am

ACC, ESL Honor Awards,
ACC Eastview Campus
6/9, 6:30pm



Critters, Dancing & More at Mi Familia & Me!

We've been busy with many wonderful Mi Familia & Me programming days this spring. We were able to host our Annual Family Picnic again after two years! Thank you to Robert Greenfield for bringing Easter Bunny magic to our picnic and egg hunt.

We also partnered with several organizations to enrich our programming and provide unique opportunities for families to learn and make lasting connections together. We danced with **Leap of Joy**, sang with **Armstrong Community Music School**, met adorable *animales* from **Tiny Tails**, made healthy snacks with **Healthstart Foundation**, and had a chance to pick out new books each week for our home libraries from our friends at **BookSpring**.

A special shout out to **Superior Health**, **Con mi Madre**, and **St. David's Foundation Dental Program** for keeping our families connected and informed!



Language Shouldn't Be A Barrier to Health Care

A few years ago, a student shared she was having health issues for months and despite her best effort to explain to her physician, he just didn't seem to understand her needs, leaving her gravely ill and unattended. We jumped into action and found out that she'd never been informed about her right to a translator. If this was happening to her, then we knew others were experiencing the same. It was this experience that helped launch our "Know Your Health Care Rights and Fair" several years ago.

This year we expanded our health offerings to include onsite evening mental health workshops aka "Pláticas" led by the YWCA for parents and teens. We were also able to host 15 local health-centered organizations during our Annual Health Fair in April which helped our families who are uninsured or underinsured access affordable and quality healthcare alongside mental health support resources. Community is powerful and we can do so much more when we do it juntos!



Feeling Confident Communicating

As the school year wraps up, it's important that our students leave us for the summer feeling confident to have key conversations in English. That is why one of our English classes this year focused on learning how to communicate with teachers and administrative staff at schools since many of our students are parents of school-aged children.

TJ students were required to communicate with their English teacher about missing class, making up work, or clarification on a homework assignment. These interactions with TJ instructors have provided our students with opportunities to practice their English and apply what they have learned in class.

Our students felt especially empowered by these lessons because they learned they could confidently communicate with their child's school about a doctor's appointment or other reason they'd need to miss school that day. We love seeing how our students take what they learn in class and use it to become further involved in their child's education!

STAY STRONG & POWER ON

