

# MCRC NOTICIAS



ZWAN1.COM



*"Celebrating 40 years (1975 to 2015)  
of providing hope and opportunity  
for the ESL community"*

Volume 5, Issue 12

December 2015

## The Year in Review



2015...what a year! MCRC celebrated 40 years of providing hope and opportunity for the ESL community here in Erie, Pennsylvania. On April 29, 1975 The Hispanic American Council of Erie was incorporated as a non-profit organization. On March 22, 1983 we found our home here in the old Penn School on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Ash on Erie's east side. Over the years, with the addition of refugee services in 1998 and the development of our childcare center in 1999, our programming has filled not only the rooms in the main building but also warranted growth.

In September of 2009, our name was changed to the Multicultural Community Resource Center to more accurately reflect the diverse and ever increasing population served. On August 22, 2012 we expanded our campus to include the 10<sup>th</sup> Street United Methodist Church next door to our main complex. With this addition, came more space to hold functions, and programs to provide services to our vast clientele. In the summer of 2014 a lengthy kitchen remodel was completed to allow us to offer a food program to all the children attending daycare. Today, through our 95 full-time, part-time and per diem staff, we continue to provide a variety of educational and employment programs to the Immigrant and Refugee populations in Erie.

But aside from this milestone, we had many other stories we shared with you throughout 2015. Below are some highlights of the year that was...

### Coming Events

- December 22—Winter begins
- December 25th—Christmas
- December 26th—Kwanzaa
- January 1—New Year's Day
- January 7—Orthodox Christmas
- January 11—Human Trafficking Awareness Day
- January 14—Orthodox New Year
- January 17—Benjamin Franklin's Birthday
- January 18—Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 24—Compliment Day
- January 31—Inspire Your Heart with Art Day

### Multicultural Community Resource Center of Erie

Richard Perhacs, Esq., Board President  
Joanna Cherpak, Executive Director

### MCRC Noticias Editorial Team:

Cathie Whitmire, ESL Instructor  
Carol Brigham, Education Manager  
Gregg Sikora, IT Specialist  
554 East 10<sup>th</sup> St., Erie, PA 16503  
Ph: 814.455.0212 FAX: 814.453.2363  
Email: [MCRC@mcrcerie.org](mailto:MCRC@mcrcerie.org)

**January:** We met Gladys Blanco, a Cuban native who attends our ESL classes here. We taught our readers about Mendi, which is the art of painting the body in ornate designs with henna. And our Elder Program learned how our "Water Works" by visiting the Erie Water Works.

**February:** We learned about the traditions of marriage and different wedding traditions celebrated throughout the world. The Hispanic Federation Grant was renewed through September 2015. And our Elder Program Pulako's Candy to see how candy is made.

**March:** We showed you the steps on a path to U.S. Citizenship. Some Mercyhurst students visited with our Elder Program to help practice their English and to hold mock interviews of citizenship questions.

**April:** WE TURNED 40!!!! On April 29, 1975 the HAC was incorporated as a non-profit and in September 2009 changed to Multicultural Community Resource Center to more accurately reflect the diverse and ever increasing populations served. And in part to commemorate this, MCRC hosted it's First Annual Trivia Competition that was based on the United States Citizenship Exam. MCRC was also recognized by Highmark for being a ten-year participant in the Walk for a Healthy Community Fundraiser!

**May:** The MCRC Employment team held a job fair targeting high school students and young adults; 43 students attended. Kathy Dahlkemper presented MCRC with a proclamation celebrating our 40 years of service to the Erie community. Senator Wiley visited with some students on campus and also presented us with a proclamation celebrating our 40 year anniversary.

**June:** Dr. Garcia, arranged by the MCRC Wellness Program, gave four talks about the important health issues affecting the Hispanic Community. AmeriHealth also sponsored our community garden for the second straight year! Their financial contribution helped us to continue the tradition of providing a green space for our clients to contribute and enjoy fresh produce. ServERIE helped to beautify the landscape in front of our main building.

**July & August:** We wrote about our safety concerns in our neighborhood. We told the story of how a father, who was walking along 10th Street to pick up his kids from our daycare, was brutally attacked in broad daylight in front of our Annex. A volunteer tutors bicycle, chained to our building, was forcefully broken free and stolen. Again, in broad daylight. And how a young man was shot in the head on the southwest corner of 10th and Ash Streets. With these unfortunate events, MCRC was granted funds with the support of Erie Police Chief Randy Bowers, to upgrade our security cameras to make us, our clients and our neighborhood a safer place.

**September:** It was Hispanic Heritage Month and we heard from two Hispanic Clients what it means to be Hispanic, and why it is important to celebrate their heritage. We told of the Christian history of Halloween and why this holiday is what it is today. And we learned about the harvest moon and what it means to different cultures around the world. MCRC also hosted it's 4th Annual Golf Tournament, which was again a resounding success! Next year's event will be on Thursday, September 15, 2016.

**October:** Our Healthcare Navigators are ready to assist you! The healthcare system can be difficult to wrap your head around, but MCRC now has some dedicated people to help our clients and others navigate through the system. Our camera system upgrade was completed and our Tobacco Cessation Program launched! And on Friday, October 2nd, MCRC Staff showed their support during the Fund Our Schools! Rally as we all, and still are, awaiting the passing of the Pennsylvania State Budget.

**November:** The world witnessed the tragedy unfold in Paris, France on November 13, 2015. After learning some of the attackers snuck into Europe posing as refugees, a backlash swept through our country over allowing refugees on our own soil. Our front page story cut through the rhetoric and shared with our community a closer look at the facts surrounding entry into the United States. We hosted our annual Thanksgiving Feast for our clients and staff. And we unveiled our new Rosetta Stone Language Lab!

Here is to the year that was 2015 and look forward to another great year to come as we step into 2016, our 41st year! Cheers!

**MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER**

554 East 10th Street  
Erie, PA 16503

Phone: 814-455-0212  
Fax: 814-453-2363  
Web: [www.mcrcerie.org](http://www.mcrcerie.org)



**Your Donation  
is Appreciated**

To make a financial gift to MCRC, send it to **Joanna Cherpak, Executive Director**, 554 East 10th St., Erie, PA 16503 or donate online at [www.mcrcerie.org](http://www.mcrcerie.org).

**MCRC volunteer opportunities** exist for one-time or continuing activities.

Please visit the

Volunteer tab at our Website at

[www.mcrcerie.org](http://www.mcrcerie.org)

or look for us on the Get Connected

Erie website at

[www.getconnectederie.org/agencies/mcrcerie](http://www.getconnectederie.org/agencies/mcrcerie)

To inquire, send an email to

[MCRC@mcrcerie.org](mailto:MCRC@mcrcerie.org). Be sure to include your name and phone number in your message.



Corner of  
10th & Ash



**Life is Good**

When my son graduated from Cathedral Prep years ago, the keynote speaker at Baccalaureate was Fr. Tom Brooks. At the time he was the pastor of Our Lady of Peace Church, the church my family belongs. He is also a family friend. As most keynote speakers do, he talked about his experiences while he attended Cathedral Prep and life experience in general. He ended his speech with two Latin words "Tempus Fugit" which means "Time Flies". As each year comes to a close I always seem to say to myself "Tempus Fugit" because before you know it, December has arrived and the New Year is just about here!

Looking back on 2015, MCRC grew in so many directions and with the help of my management team; we got the agency back on a good financial footing. Our biggest challenge of this year was the Pennsylvania State Budget Impasse which as this point in time is still not resolved. We are the last state in the Union to not have a budget. It comes down to those making budgetary decisions can't seem to play nice in the sandbox. Well you know what happens to children who can't behave, they lose their access to the sandbox! Our legislators are asking not to be voted into their offices when the next election arrives. Why would they want to do that to themselves is beyond me. However until they can come to a resolution on this budget, MCRC is holding its own. We have been able to make payroll the last 6 months without creating debt for ourselves or laying off any staff. As I have told people, we saved for a rainy day. We just didn't anticipate the rain would last this long!! We will continue to be optimistic because everything always works out. I believe that.

From the MCRC Family, we wish everyone a very happy holiday season and the best of everything for the Year 2016. Life is good so enjoy this time with your family and friends. Peace.



Genuinely yours,

Joanna R. Cherpak, Executive Director



Proudly serving the needs of the Hispanic and refugee communities since 1975.