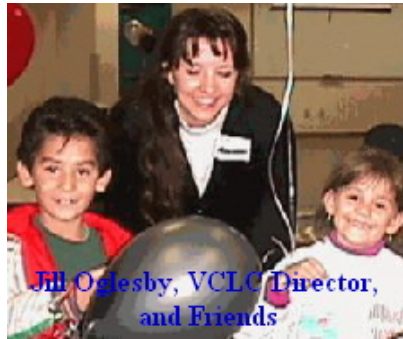


With Literacy and Justice for All

--by Jill A. Oglesby, Director, Valencia County Literacy Council



Haz Bien y No Mires a Quien

In one of my favorite songs, “Blossoms in the Orchard,” Albuquerque songwriter Armando Ortega of the group Wagogo says, *“De los sabios y los viejos, no desprecie los consejos/Haz bien, y no mires a quien/Sea luz en su hogar, sea lámpara en su pueblo/Si usted no puede ser estrella en el cielo.”* Here’s my translation: “From the wise ones and the elders, don’t scorn the advice/Do good, and don’t consider for whom/Be a Light in your home and a lamp in your community/That is if you can’t be a star in the sky.”

I go around singing this all the time. I’ve hogged the bathroom in the staff area at work singing this song. (It’s got great acoustics.) It’s everything I love about being born and raised in New Mexico. It gives me strength for Literacy work and sets my feet back on the path when I’m veering into places I should not let me go.

Each week, besides running around all cranky, I do try to do a little good in my community. One way is volunteering in El Cerro Mission. Every Tuesday and Thursday morning, I tutor English to beginners. I look forward to this like you wouldn’t believe. Right now, I have a class of nine. Maria, one of my students, is hilarious. She is always

joking. When asked to bring something in that showed her talents, Maria told me she was going to bring in a television. (This was not true—she brought in beautiful traditional embroidery and *empanaditas*.) Patty also brought embroidery, Cristina her paintings (she's had two exhibitions in Mexico), Antonia a dress she'd made her daughter.

Today, however, I told the class they had each just won 3 million dollars and had them write what they were going to do with it. Maria wrote that she was going to get an operation for her 8-year-old son, who has a cleft palate. (If you know of an organization that can help this family, please call me at 925-8926.) It was a stark reminder of how poverty really affects these students. We know money can't make us happy, but that amount to get our basic needs met is vital.

It's the same with the Valencia County Literacy Council (VCLC). Loving music of all kinds, I am so happy that our FUNdraiser for Literacy this year is a Mariachi show produced by Pedro Rael. It's May 10, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., at the Los Lunas High School Auditorium. (Doors open at 6:00 p.m. for the Silent Auction.) Lydia Solano, Mayela Alejandra, and Sandra Montoya are the stars. They will be singing songs traditional to Mother's Day, and they will do duets in the second half of the show with Mayela's father, Arnoldo Arrieta, and with Romano Enrique, back from Spain for a special guest appearance. Baila Baila Dance Academy will perform six dance numbers from regions throughout Mexico.

It's going to be a great event! We still need sponsors, so if you'd like to participate, please call me right away at 925-8926. We also need Live and Silent Auction items. Tickets are \$20, \$15, and \$12 and can be obtained by calling 227-6986.

We know that education for parents and children helps to break the cycle of poverty in families, and VCLC is your local affiliate of a worldwide Literacy movement.

Thanks for making our work possible.