

Centering Prenatal Care at Esperanza

Building Friendships, Preparing for Childbirth Together



Shakira (above), who participated in Esperanza's first-ever Spanish-speaking Centering group held at our Kensington site, with her two children

Also Inside...

- A Message From our Executive Director
- Esperanza Receives \$1 Million Grant Award from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Making Delicious Meals Together at EHC

Since Esperanza started **Centering pregnancy groups** two and a half years ago in January 2016, the program has become a vital part of our Women's and Prenatal Care services. We've completed five Centering groups and enrolled a total of 41 women to date, and the program is continuing to build momentum!

During Centering pregnancy groups, between eight and 12 pregnant women with similar due dates meet over the course of 10 sessions. Expecting moms are also encouraged to bring a support person with them—their spouse or partner, a friend or another family member. Karyn Lozada, Esperanza's OB Coordinator, explained: "As you learn about your pregnancy, your support person learns how to be readily available for whatever needs you may have throughout this journey...and that is such a beautiful thing to have."

A typical Centering session starts with each woman meeting individually with an Esperanza medical provider for a pregnancy checkup. During the second hour, all of the women and support persons gather for a time of group discussion and fun activities.

A key emphasis of the Centering model is to develop relationships and learn together. Said Karyn: "Rather than a provider giving the same information to many women one at a time, it's an opportunity for expecting mothers to build community while learning not only from their provider, but from their peers as well."

We spoke with one of our patients, Shakira (L, with her two children), who participated this past Spring in our first-ever Spanish-speaking Centering group to be held at our Kensington site and shared her thoughts about Centering groups and what she gained from them:

What did you love about Centering?

"All the ladies were awesome! I loved hearing different stories from everyone and different opinions about breastfeeding, delivery, and other topics. I could share my history with others. That was awesome. Everything was great. It was one of the best experiences I've ever had during my pregnancies. I loved it!"

(continued on next page)



Esperanza's OB/GYN Nurse Care Manager, Michelle Randolph, RN (photo, 5th from left), shown here with Esperanza staff members Karyn Lozada (far left), Heidi Sykora, LSW, Behavioral Health Consultant (3rd from left), and Kensington Centering class participants, explains what is going on! "At the end of our last group meeting, we pass around a ball of yarn, and each person shares what they will take away from our time together in Centering. It represents how we are all connected and have grown and learned together. The participants can tie their piece of yarn on their wrist until the last woman has given birth."

What was your relationship like with the other participants in the group?

"They all loved me, and I loved all of them! Now that we're done with Centering it's going to be my first appointment without them....I can't imagine not going to the program."

How do you think your pregnancy would've been different if you didn't participate?

"In Centering, you have the opportunity to ask and learn. It was especially helpful to hear about other stories and pregnancies from other women in the same situations. You don't have the same opportunity when you're just by

yourself. Sometimes when you're alone, you don't have the opportunity to learn and share or ask."

What would you say to patients who aren't sure if they want to do Centering?

"Honestly, I'm friendly, but I'm not the kind of person who likes to be in groups—I couldn't wait until Tuesdays! It was a moment to relax, to remove yourself from situations in your home and life, especially for me as a single mom with two little ones and pregnant. You get there and you see people smiling at you, happy...asking you how you've been, how are the babies, how is everything? It was like a family; we were all together. I loved it!" 🙏

Lessons in Cooking, and More, in the Esperanza Kitchen!



As Esperanza's urban garden at our Hunting Park site grows over the weeks of summer, it means that our **bilingual Cooking Classes** can use freshly-picked vegetables to prepare recipes! The June class (photo, L) taught by Esperanza dietitian Holly Evans, RD, LDN featured a menu of zucchini lasagna, spinach salad, and chocolate covered banana bites, with fresh spinach, radishes, oregano, and basil that the class had just picked from the garden.

"I was a little frustrated that the lasagna didn't quite turn out the way I hoped it would," Holly explained. "But, when the little girl in the class (photo, R) asked me if we could go out to the garden again, I remembered that even if the class does not go well, it still has an impact. She also told me after the class that she now wants to be a chef and have a cooking class for her birthday next month! The ways that our Cooking Class brings joy and accomplishment to people—and the continuing lessons I learn—are why I enjoy teaching it!" 🙏



A Message from the Executive Director

June 2018

At a recent all-staff training we acknowledged over 50 new employees—those who have joined the Esperanza family during the past twelve months! At the same meeting, we honored and prayed for Andrea Daft, RN, our dear Director of Nursing who is retiring after 23 years of service to Esperanza. Andrea's life has been a consistent reminder to me of how faithful God is when we are in need.

Throughout her years at Esperanza she has impressed on me, again and again, that we can trust God to provide for us. Andrea's faith is a direct result of trusting God in times of need at Esperanza Health Center. Her faith was helpful to me when I arrived as the new director, years ago. When something difficult would occur, with a big smile on her face, Andrea would look at all of us confidently and declare, "I cannot wait to see how God fixes this!" I was amazed at her faith, and throughout the years I have gained the confidence she modeled for me, that God indeed will care for us and supply our needs with His great grace.

So, as I sat at this staff training thinking about 50 new employees and the retiring of Andrea, this verse came to mind: "And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel." (Judges 2:10b, ESV)

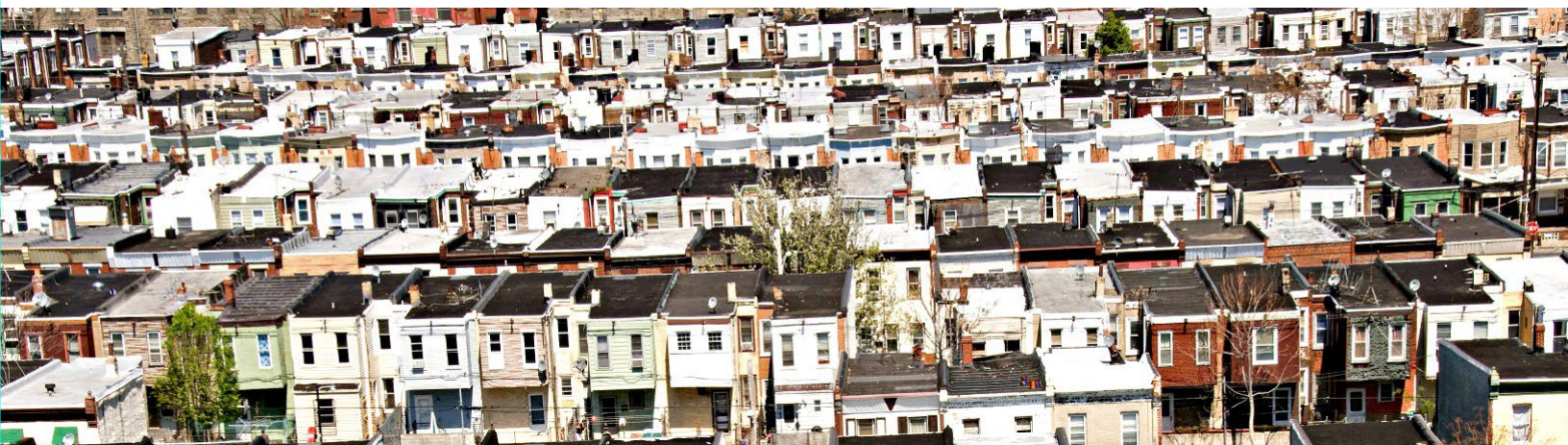
I realize how important it is for us, as a ministry, to continue to express to the next generation—our new employees—the wonderful ways God has taken care of our needs here. When it seems like there is no way, He provides for us again and again. I sensed that God was giving me a directive about the many new people who have come and will come to serve at Esperanza—we need to find our confidence in the God who has sustained us at every turn throughout the years. I thought of new partnerships, donors, and neighbors. It is important for the next generation of employees and friends to understand God's faithfulness so they will "know the LORD and the work He has done for Esperanza."



After serving here for almost 14 years, I am still surprised by how amazing it is to see God at work in our community and at Esperanza Health Center. God's ways are truly beyond all that we can imagine or think. He has sustained and grown Esperanza, and yet there is still much to be done. Building on this incredible history of God's faithfulness, we move towards a future that is full of promise with a "new generation." *To God be the glory!*

Susan Post

Susan M. Post, D.Min, MBA
Executive Director





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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Compelled by the love of God in Christ Jesus, in cooperation with the Church and others, Esperanza Health Center is a multicultural ministry providing holistic health care to the Latino and underserved communities of Philadelphia.

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Esperanza Awarded \$1 Million Grant by the Commonwealth of PA!

On June 11th, Governor Tom Wolf announced that Esperanza will receive a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant of \$1 million in funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to support the construction of our new Kensington health center at 861 E. Allegheny Avenue. Esperanza was one of three Philadelphia organizations to receive a grant through the RACP program during this round of funding. Grant funds will be used for the renovation of a historic, 35,000 square foot former bank building, the Kensington Trust Company building (photo below, lower left), which will be transformed into a primary health care center that will serve up to 11,900 patients annually and will also include a new healthy Cafe. Esperanza will also build a new parking structure adjacent to the site with 95 spaces for patients, staff and visitors.

"Esperanza Health Center is thrilled to receive this RACP award to help us build our comprehensive primary health care center," said Susan Post, Executive Director. "Motivated by Christian faith, we work from the perspective of God's love and value for each patient. We are excited to invest in the health of this community and hope to be an anchor organization in the rebuilding of Kensington." Construction for the new Health Center will begin in early July, with anticipated completion by early 2019. During phase two of our overall project to create a Kensington health and wellness campus, a community health and wellness center with a complete exercise center and conference center/community space will be built on an open lot adjacent to the new health center. To learn more about our Pillars Campaign to support these projects and other initiatives, please visit our website at: esperanzahealth.com/pillars.

