

CASA ESPERANZA INC.

Strengthening Families Through Recovery

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2000-2004**





MISSION STATEMENT

Casa Esperanza Inc.'s mission is to help Latino men and women to recover from alcoholism and drug addiction, and to re-unite with their families. Our priorities are to help people gain the skills to be self-sufficient, contributing members of society and to strengthen families that have been torn apart through substance abuse.

Casa Esperanza Inc. believes in AA's 12-step philosophy of self-help. We believe that anyone can recover from addiction and that self-motivation is central to recovery. We are committed both to the preservation of the family and to the welfare of the children and the entire community. We recognize that recovery is a lifelong endeavor that extends beyond treatment and addresses the long-term mental, physical, economic and spiritual health of the individual and the entire family.



Casa Esperanza provides comprehensive recovery rehabilitation services in a supportive, culturally and linguistically sensitive environment. Casa Esperanza is committed to working with any individual who is able to fully participate in the program regardless of mental or medical health, while ensuring resident safety as a top priority.



January, 2000



Dear Friend:

It is with tremendous pride and enthusiasm that we present Casa Esperanza's Five-year Strategic Plan for the years 2000-2004. This ambitious blueprint offers a broader perspective than traditional substance abuse recovery homes, and more far-reaching goals than Casa Esperanza has previously undertaken. Yet it is firmly rooted in our 15 years of experience in helping members of the Latino community transform their lives through recovery from addiction. It also embraces some of the most pressing challenges facing the Latino community as we enter the new millenium.

From first-hand experience, Casa Esperanza knows the devastating long-term impact of substance abuse on families across the Commonwealth. Over a thousand men and women have graduated from Casa Esperanza's residential treatment programs. Many of these graduates still view Casa Esperanza as their source of strength, calling on their old counselors for support. Yet Casa Esperanza has never had the resources to provide graduates with the transitional supports they seek as they work hard to maintain their sobriety. Without the benefit of any ongoing supports, graduates struggle to re-unite with their families and to mend bonds that were broken during their addiction; they strive to make a decent living that will allow them to support their families; they battle to find and keep affordable housing, they work to prevent their children from repeating their mistakes. These challenges go beyond initial recovery to preventing relapse and stabilizing families.

As a central focus of its five-year Strategic Plan, Casa Esperanza will launch a bold, new initiative to support the graduates of our residential treatment programs in their quest to unify and stabilize their families. We will open an outpatient facility and create transitional housing that can provide continued support for graduates and their families. We will expand our partnerships with other community institutions to help graduates access career and educational services. We will work to effectively integrate substance abuse treatment with bilingual mental health and medical services. Finally, we will look to our graduates as an untapped resource and draw on them to serve as mentors, peer counselors and leaders in the governance and future direction of Casa Esperanza.

This Strategic Plan represents the work of many people who generously gave their time and ideas, helping us grapple with our past, present and future. I extend my deep appreciation to our Strategic Planning Committee for their tireless effort to create a vision that truly reflects the values and aspirations of Casa Esperanza. We look forward with great enthusiasm to seeing this plan come to life, and toward a stronger, healthier Latino community.

Sincerely,

Ricardo Quiroga
Executive Director





CASA ESPERANZA:

A History of Innovation in a Changing Environment

Casa Esperanza, the House of Hope, began in 1984 as a leap of faith by a group of community members, who came together in response to the growing crisis of alcohol and drug-abuse in the Latino community. They set out to create the Commonwealth's first bilingual, bicultural substance abuse recovery home, based on AA's 12-step philosophy of treatment, but culturally adapted to serve the needs of the Latino community.

Even before the house had opened, Casa Esperanza had attracted a strong base of community support. In a neighborhood besieged by drug dealers and vandals, and neglected by City Hall in providing basic services, Casa Esperanza began by organizing the Eustis, Dunmore and George Street Neighborhood Association. It played an active role in pushing the drug dealers out of the neighborhood while advocating downtown for better services. In contrast to the "not in my backyard" philosophy of some communities, most of Casa Esperanza new neighbors welcomed the organization with open arms.

In 1987, after 3 years of fundraising, Casa Esperanza opened Massachusetts' first bilingual, bicultural residential treatment facility for 25 men. From the beginning, economic self-sufficiency was at the core of Casa Esperanza's philosophy of recovery from addiction. All the men were expected to secure paid employment within two weeks of entering the house and contribute toward their room and board.

By the late 1980s, heroine, crack and AIDS had begun to take a serious toll on the Latino community, and Casa Esperanza's clients rapidly broadened beyond the anticipated alcoholic to a new, younger population, struggling with more difficult addictions, along with severe medical problems. Casa Esperanza was challenged to adapt its treatment methods to effectively serve this emerging set of clients. It successfully made the needed adjustments, and the program continued to attract a long waiting list of men seeking treatment for both drug and alcohol addiction.





By 1990, more and more Casa Esperanza graduates were facing homelessness as they completed residential treatment because of the growing lack of affordable housing in the Boston area. In 1991, Casa Esperanza opened Nueva Vida (New Life), a congregate living house providing transitional, affordable housing for 8 graduates.

Almost as soon as the doors of the men's facility were opened, Latina women began to call for a similar facility for women and their children. Throughout the Latino community, women were losing their children to foster care as a result of substance abuse problems. In 1994, after another major fund drive over several years, Casa Esperanza opened Latinas y Niños Center. The Latinas y Niños Center (The Women and Children's Center) was a bold innovative model for residential treatment, focused on re-unifying families that had been torn apart as a result of substance abuse and stabilizing families that had managed to remain together despite the use of drugs or alcohol. The Latinas y Niños Center encouraged women to bring their children with them into the facility.

The women's program posed many challenges to Casa Esperanza's existing treatment model. The organization once again adapted to serve its client population most effectively while maintaining its commitment to AA's 12-Step philosophy.

The women and children's program compelled Casa Esperanza to re-examine its requirement that residents immediately find employment upon entering the house. Most of the women were struggling with past abuse and psychological trauma and were not ready to hold a job until they had received both substance abuse treatment and mental health services. Few had any prior work experience. In addition, many women were taking care of their children while in treatment, while others were spending endless hours addressing the legal hurdles required to re-unite them with their children. Almost all the women needed to locate affordable housing for their families since most were previously homeless or living in unsafe or unhealthy family situations. Few had a high school diploma, and many had significant literacy needs that would severely limit their employment options and earnings capacity.

The Latinas y Niños Center began to develop a program focused on literacy and job readiness rather than immediate employment while the women were in residential treatment.



"I'm here to change, to learn how to live life without drugs, to do positive things for myself, and to be there for my girls, as a friend and as a mother."
—Latinas y Niños Client





CASA ESPERANZA IN THE YEAR 2000: Taking A Broader View of Recovery

Casa Esperanza's view of recovery has broadened as a result of its experiences with women and children. It has focused the organization's attention on the longer-term challenges to sustained recovery. But preventing relapse and helping families to recover from the impact of substance abuse is a long, uncharted road. Casa Esperanza's experience highlights some of the most critical challenges.

Family Unification

Family unification is central to a family's recovery from substance abuse. It may take months or years for women to re-unite with their children. Men may be seeking to unite with their children for the first time, finally ready to take on their responsibilities as fathers. Support, advocacy, and family therapy are key to successful family unification.

Economic Self-Sufficiency

To sustain recovery and stabilize their families, Casa Esperanza graduates must be on a path toward economic self-sufficiency. A mother who cannot feed her children is much more likely to relapse into substance abuse. Yet most Latino graduates from 6-12 months of residential treatment, male or female, are not prepared to secure the kind of jobs that will allow them to support their families. Welfare reform, with its expectation that women go to work after two years of public support, adds urgency to the need to address the long-term economic challenges facing low-income families. Men's capacity to earn a living wage and support their children is equally important for family stabilization. Literacy is also a key element of any economic self-sufficiency plan for Casa Esperanza graduates.

Transitional, Affordable Housing

The housing crisis further challenges the graduates' capacity to sustain recovery and stabilize their families. Women cannot re-unite with their children until they have secured affordable housing. To provide housing for their children, many women graduates either move to more depressed parts of the state where they can afford housing or they return to living situations that do not support recovery or stable family life. Male graduates generally earn too little to provide housing for their families.

"In recovery, we learned how to love ourselves. As graduates, we need to learn how to nurture our families."

—Rafael Morales, Alumni Committee Chairperson, Class of 1994



VISION FOR THE FUTURE: Strengthening Families Through Recovery

Recovery from substance abuse may begin with residential treatment but it does not end there. Over the next five years, Casa Esperanza will chart a new path for relapse prevention and family stabilization of its graduates. This dynamic, new initiative will focus on an Alumni Family Center that provides a full array of services for graduates of residential treatment and their families, from career development and literacy to outpatient services and family therapy to family housing. Developed in collaboration with other community-based institutions, the Alumni Family Center will serve as a resource and touchstone for graduates of residential treatment, offering them the supports they need to stabilize their lives, strengthen their families, and ultimately help to build a stronger community.



"As an addict in recovery, my addiction affected my kids. To break the cycle of addiction to drugs, alcohol, and family violence that is passed down from parents to children, the whole family needs to recover. My vision is that we destroy the root of the addiction by educating our children."

Rafael Morales, Alumni Committee Chairperson, Class of 1994





SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategic Initiative 1: Strengthen Existing Client Support Services

Strengthen the range of client support services to increase sustained recovery.

Strategic Initiative 2: Increase Access to Treatment

Increase access to bilingual, bicultural substance abuse services.

Strategic Initiative 3: Strengthen Graduate Families through Expanded Aftercare Services

Strengthen graduate families through a full array of aftercare services that support the transition to sustained sobriety and economic self-sufficiency.

Strategic Initiative 4: Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Strengthen the organization's infrastructure and capacity to support future growth.

Strategic Initiative 5: Commitment to Excellence

Ensure quality results through continuous improvement.



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Strategic Initiative 1: Strengthen Existing Client Support Services

Strengthen the range of client support services to increase sustained recovery.

Casa Esperanza continually adapts its services to meet the needs of its clients. Over the past few years, the need for integrated mental health and substance abuse recovery services has grown dramatically. About 80% of female residents and many male residents seek mental health services to help them cope with past trauma and other mental health issues. The need for medical services and related supports has also grown, with more than half of the residents facing HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis and other serious illnesses. Casa Esperanza will cultivate new and existing partnerships to forge an integrated system of bilingual mental health, medical and substance abuse services for its residents.

Casa Esperanza Inc. has always focused on economic independence and literacy as key aspects of relapse prevention. Building on our past experience with job referrals, Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language, Casa Esperanza will strengthen its effort to integrate continuing education and career development into its treatment plans for both men and women.

Objective 1: Strengthen access to appropriate mental health services.

- Develop a partnership to provide access to consistent, high quality bilingual psychiatric services and integrated mental health/substance abuse recovery services.
- Continue to provide training to staff on serving clients with mental health disorders.

Objective 2: Improve access to medical services.

- Explore possible funding for case management and collaborative services for HIV positive clients.
- Explore collaboration for regular on-site medical services for residents.

Objective 3: Strengthen emphasis on literacy and economic self-sufficiency of clients.

- Create and pilot *Literacy and Economic Self-sufficiency Curriculum* for women.
- Incorporate education, economic self-sufficiency and job placement into treatment plans for both men and women, including self-assessment at entry and exit plan.



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Strategic Initiative 2: Increase Access to Treatment

Increase access to bilingual, bicultural substance abuse services.

The need for bilingual, bicultural substance abuse services in the Latino community across Massachusetts continues to grow. The toll of substance abuse is visible throughout the community. Latina women struggling with substance abuse face the added fear that they will bring shame and stigma on themselves and their families, causing many to avoid treatment. Casa Esperanza Inc. will develop more pro-active ways to reach Latina women struggling with addiction, through strengthening alliances, forging an early intervention strategy, and conducting a public awareness campaign to change the cultural perception about substance-abusing women in the Latino community. Casa Esperanza will add outpatient services consistent with its current treatment model and philosophy, both for individuals who completed residential treatment and for those who do not need residential services. Simultaneously, Casa Esperanza will begin to address its extensive men's waiting list by expanding its number of beds and, in response to the number of residents coming from other parts of the state, by exploring a possible satellite program in another Latino community in Massachusetts.

Objective 1: Improve access to treatment for Latina women.

- Increase referrals through strengthened collaborations with detox. centers, health clinics, churches and community organizations.
- Develop a collaboration with DSS for early intervention with substance-abusing women before children are taken by DSS.
- Conduct a media and public awareness campaign on Latina women and substance abuse, possibly in collaboration with other organizations.

Objective 2: Expand services for men at Casa Esperanza.

- Add five additional licensed beds to Casa Esperanza

Objective 3: Provide outpatient services consistent with Casa Esperanza's 12-step philosophy and treatment methodology.

- Obtain a license to provide outpatient services.
- In collaboration with other Latino organizations, work with Department of Public Health to expand funding for bilingual, bicultural outpatient services.

Objective 4: Explore future satellite programs in another Massachusetts community with a large Latino population.

- Identify potential communities for satellite programs, and meet with key community leaders to explore interest.



Strategic Initiative 3: Strengthen Graduate Families through Expanded Aftercare Services

Help stabilize and strengthen graduate families through a full array of aftercare services that support the transition to sustained sobriety and economic self-sufficiency.

Addiction takes its toll, not only on individuals, but on entire families. Sustained recovery requires much more than several months of residential treatment. It is a long and complex process of profound personal transformation and family re-unification. Economic self-sufficiency is a central pillar of sustained recovery. Casa Esperanza will pioneer a new model program to increase the long-term impact of residential treatment on graduates and their families through a range of aftercare services that includes affordable, transitional housing for graduate families, outpatient counseling and career development services.

Objective 1: Develop an Alumni Family Center with an array of services for male and female graduates.

- Help launch an Alumni Association, run by and for graduates, that cultivates graduate leadership, mentoring and peer support.
- Provide outpatient services for graduates at the Alumni Family Center.
- In collaboration with Morgan Memorial, provide career development services for graduates, with an on-site Career Development Counselor.
- Develop collaborations to provide adult education for graduates.
- Provide space for Spanish AA/NA meetings.

Objective 2: Create affordable, transitional housing to unify graduate families.

- Add two handicapped-accessible units at Casa Esperanza's current graduate house for men.
- Create transitional supportive housing for graduate women and their children.
- Create transitional affordable housing for graduate two-parent families.



"Everything that the parent goes through is passed on to our children. Our families need counseling—for the parents, separately and together, and for the children."

– Sandra Crespo,
Alumni Committee Vice Chair,
Class of 1996

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Strategic Initiative 4: Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Strengthen the organization's infrastructure and capacity to support future growth.

Over the past 15 years, Casa Esperanza has grown from an idea to a small, neighborhood-based organization to a community institution with two and a half million dollars in capital assets and a one million dollar annual operating budget. Casa Esperanza will build its capacity to support future growth by expanding and strengthening its Board of Directors, increasing its financial management capacity, expanding its resource development efforts, building new facilities, and continuing to develop its staff.

Objective 1: Board Development

- Recruit additional board members, especially graduates and board members with financial, fundraising or public relations expertise.
- Establish a Finance Committee.
- Conduct Board trainings on fiscal oversight and organizational evaluation.
- Develop Board capacity to support governmental networking, advocacy and fundraising.
- Review and revise bi-laws.
- Develop written Board Policies and Procedures to supplement bi-laws.

Objective 2: Financial Management

- Strengthen and expand the financial management capacity of the organization.
- Develop an annual capital budget for properties.

Objective 3: Resource Development

- Create an annual fundraising plan linked to the annual budget.
- Diversify funding sources. (Pursue collaborations with criminal justice system, federal funding sources; corporate and foundation funds, individual donors.)
- Develop collaborations to access resources beyond traditional substance abuse funds and services, in partnership with Morgan Memorial and others.
- Strengthen governmental relationships at the state and local level.

Objective 4: Facilities

- Develop new facilities to provide alumni services and transitional graduate housing.
- Develop a preventive maintenance plan and related reserve for all existing facilities.
- Move administrative facilities to the new Alumni Family Center to increase space for the men's program.
- Transfer ownership of Casa Esperanza facility to Nueva Vida Inc.

Objective 5: Staff Development

- Increase the number of certified, bilingual Substance Abuse Counselors. Sponsor certified training courses for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors at Casa Esperanza facilities which incorporates Casa Esperanza's expertise in working with bilingual, bicultural populations.
- Create a staff development plan for each staff member, and explore options for continuing and higher education including potential partnerships with area universities.
- Develop a staffing plan for the expansion of Casa Esperanza's programs



Strategic Initiative 5: Commitment to Excellence

Ensure quality results through continuous improvement

Casa Esperanza has always had a commitment to continuously improve its programs and services. The organization will reinforce that commitment through a focused effort to document and evaluate the results of its programs. Recognizing the untapped wisdom that its graduates can bring to the organization, Casa Esperanza will undertake a series of initiatives to increase graduate input in its programs and governance. Finally, Casa Esperanza will monitor the implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan to preserve the ideas and recommendations that emerged from this planning process.

Objective 1: Strengthen capacity to document and evaluate results.

- Establish outcome measurements for the organization.
- Develop a computerized system to gather and analyze information.
- Collect client feedback surveys from all exiting clients.
- Develop “pre” and “post” treatment assessments.
- Provide the Board with quarterly results for review.

Objective 2: Create opportunities for alumni involvement in the organization.

- Create an Alumni Committee to participate in the planning process.
- Add two alumni to the Board of Directors.
- Involve alumni as mentors to current clients.

Objective 3: Monitor progress toward completing Strategic Plan.

- Create an Implementation Plan and Timeline.
- Provide quarterly management report to Board of Directors.



Alumni Committee

Anna Alvarez, Class of 1996
Jose Amaro, Class of 1992
Ramona Bermudez, Class of 1999
Sandra Crespo, Class of 1996
Eric Lozada, Class of 1998
Rafael Morales, Class of 1994
Pedro Reyes, Class of 1993
Osvaldo Rivera, Class of 1995
Robin Rivera, Class of 1991
Zaida Rodrigues, Class of 1998
Jose Rodriguez, Class of 1999
Diana Rosado, Class of 1998



Casa Esperanza Inc. Supporters

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Massachusetts Turnpike Authority • Ratshetsky Foundation
Mabel Louise Riley Foundation • ROSE Fund • State Street Foundation
TJX Foundation • US Trust

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"Latinas y Niños gave me back my self-respect. They taught me how to live, and how to regain my family's trust. But addiction is a lifetime disease—always there, ready to take over. An Alumni Center will help me remain stable and stay in tune with my recovery."

—Diana R, Graduate Class of 1998





About This Strategic Plan

Special thanks to The Boston Foundation for funding this Strategic Plan. The planning process included indepth discussions and analysis by the Strategic Planning Committee, focus groups with residents, graduates and staff of both the men's and women's programs, and interviews with several key supporters

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