



BIENESTAR WELCOMES NEW STAFF September, 2011

We are so pleased to announce new Bienestar staff joining us this month. We welcome Jessie Turner as our new Resident Services Program Manager. Gracie Garcia has been promoted to Program Services Director, and Jessie will be providing badly needed new support concentrating on Homework clubs, our volunteer program, the Born to Learn program and our mental health counseling program. Jessie has many years of experience working with children from birth to 12, and has worked with families as a bilingual social worker for the last seven years. Jessie received Bachelor's degrees in Journalism and Spanish from the University of Missouri – Columbia in 2004 and completed her Master of Social Work degree at Arizona State University in 2009. Jessie recently relocated to Hillsboro from Phoenix, Arizona, and she is originally from a small town in Missouri. Jessie enjoys spending time with friends and family, hiking, reading and meeting people from diverse cultural backgrounds.



Jessie Turner
Resident Services Program Manager



Alekski Merilainen
Development Coordinator

Alekski Merilainen served as Bienestar's first VISTA volunteer in 2010-2011 through the Oregon Microenterprise Network. His VISTA assignment was to develop a new youth IDA (Individual Account) program for the children of Bienestar. His work in launching the pilot program—Bien \$tar \$avers with a group of 20 Bienestar children was excellent. During the year as he worked to raise matching funds to support the new program, we discovered his amazing skill in grantwriting. When his VISTA term ended in August, we were delighted that he accepted a new position at Bienestar as our Development Coordinator. Alekski has more than six years of experience in nonprofit administration. Prior to joining Bienestar, he held the position of training coordinator at Metropolitan New York Library Council where he organized 75 workshops and events each year. He supported development efforts at the United Way of Long Island and was office manager at the Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School. He received a B.A. in Political Science and Spanish from Stony Brook University in 2006. Born in California and raised in New York, Alekski relocated to Hillsboro in 2010. Alekski enjoys spending time with friends and family, camping, hiking and long walks with his dog.



Raine Dalton
Jesuit Volunteer
Program Coordinator

Raine Dalton is our Jesuit Volunteer for 2011-2012. She will be based at Sunset Gardens Apartments in Hillsboro, and will be working with Homework Clubs and teaching the adult ESL and Citizenship classes. She is originally from New York and is excited to be living and working on the west coast. A recent graduate of Fordham University in the Bronx, Raine graduated with a double major in Political Science and Comparative Literature. Previously she worked for 90.7 WFUV News in New York City, and interned with Fordham's International Institute of Humanitarian Affairs, VIVAT International, NY1 Noticias, Eyewitness news, and News 12 Long Island. Some of her favorite hobbies are traveling, photography and music.

Samantha Dillman joined Bienestar in August as our 2nd VISTA volunteer through the Oregon Microenterprise Network. She will be working on youth and adult IDA programs, social enterprise opportunities for Bienestar, and helping with Homework Club, ESL, and yoga classes for children. She received a degree in history from Portland State University in 2006 and spent her time outside of school working within the local community at an afterschool program for low-income and at-risk children and youth. Samantha served in the U.S. Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic as a youth development volunteer teaching health education and literacy classes to both children and adults. She spent last year focused on literacy and cupcakes as the Grassroots Fund Coordinator at The Children's Book Bank and as Office Manager of Saint Cupcake, both in Portland. She comes to us with an enthusiasm to hone her skills working with youth and adult social services as well as working in asset and capacity building for Bienestar.



Samantha Dillon
VISTA Volunteer
Program Coordinator



Rebecca Mijares
AmeriCorps Volunteer
Youth Coordinator

Rebecca Mijares grew up in sunny Southern California where she learned to speak Spanish and understand her Latina heritage. She moved to Oregon in 2008 to attend Pacific University and graduated with a degree in Exercise Science. After college she worked part-time for a few different organizations leading outdoor excursions and team building activities. She is our new AmeriCorps volunteer through the Oregon State Service Corps and will be the site coordinator for youth programs at Jose Arciga and Elm Park Apartments. She loves to be outdoors, loves dark chocolate and coffee, and is the first in her family to finish college.