

March 23, 2011  
Bienestar Annual Meeting

At our Annual Meeting last night, one of the volunteers who received an award as Volunteer of the Year was Ginny Rosenkranz. Ginny was honored for her dedicated service for the past two years in providing ESL instruction weekly to our Promotores, and for providing technical assistance and serving in an advisory capacity as we developed our ESL classes for residents.

Ginny prepared these remarks which we would like to share with you:

“Thank you so much for recognizing the people who volunteer at Bienestar. We do it because we love it. Not only do we feel needed, but we are inspired by students with their hard work and intelligence. And for me, it’s helping people who were given fewer options in life than I was. But these brave people didn’t just accept that fate. Instead they gathered their courage, left their homes and came to this new country to try for a better life for themselves and their families.

After working hard in agriculture jobs, they were lucky to find Bienestar. This organization is so supportive of the immigrants in many ways. The thing they do best, in my opinion, is building community. I work closely with the Promotores, who make sure everything is working smoothly for all the families in the housing sites. A lot of effort goes into their training for them to become goodwill ambassadors. I know personally what a great group they are, since they are my students and I’m very proud of them. Many of them do this after working all day. Some travel a long distance to get to the meetings and ESL classes. If they can put in that much effort, then the least I can do is teach some English lessons.

I taught ESL at Portland Community College and retired a few years ago, but I found I really missed being in a classroom and having students. It’s wonderful to come here every week and work with all of you. It is my great privilege. Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome and for this honor.”