



# todos juntos Going Places

## Celebrating Graduation

May was a month of celebration and joy as we closed out our program year with a center wide graduation ceremony. We had 16 of our little learners graduate from our Early Childhood Education program, and we also celebrated our Adult English Students' completion of their year of English classes. Many of these adults will be moving onto the next level of English this Fall at Todos Juntos. The graduating kiddos are headed off to either PreK 3, PreK 4 or kindergarten depending on their ages. We are so proud of our TJ families and all they accomplished this year. Although we will miss them we are very excited for them to enter their next phase of education, knowing that TJ helped prepare them for school!

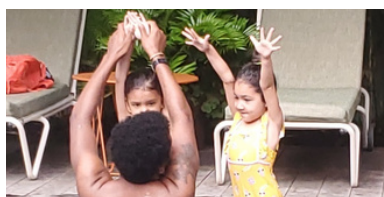


## National Adult Education Honor Society

The Todos Juntos Community is so proud of six of our adult English Language Learners, who were inducted in the **National Adult Education Honor Society** this summer. Inductees were invited to a celebration at Austin Community College where they were joined by ACC trustees, staff, and friends and families. Please join us in congratulating the following TJ students on their hard work and perseverance: **Brenda Perales, Laura Benitez, Mary Rodriguez, Magdalena Santiago, Margarita Guerrero, and Anabel Martinez.** We'd also like to congratulate TJ Board Member and former student, **Yessica Marroquin**, who participated as a student speaker to share her own success story. Felicidades to everyone!

## SUMMER FUN & SAFETY

According to a 2017 USA Swimming Foundation study, 45 percent of Latino children do not know how to swim or have low swimming ability, putting them at risk of drowning. That number rises depending on parent's swimming ability. This summer, we once again partnered with **Tankproof**, an organization that specializes in giving zero-cost swimming lessons and food security to kids, who provided free swimming lessons to some of our TJ families. We passed out some TJ swag and Tankproof added some sunscreen to the summer bags for kiddos. The groups attended classes together for five days in June learning all the basics of water safety and getting comfortable being in the water. Some of the crucial skills learned were how to float, basic arm and leg movements, climbing in and out of the pool, and breathing techniques while in or under the water. There was also tons of fun involved like the cannonball contest and all the yummy take home snacks. We were able to provide this service to both current and former TJ families this year, as well as children of TJ staff members.



**62% of Latino children are likely to not have good swimming skills if their parents have no, or low, swimming ability**

- USA Swimming Foundation





## YUDI & FAMILY

So many students who come to Todos Juntos had thriving careers in their native countries - some were lawyers, accountants, nurses, etc - and left them behind to pursue a better life for their children in this country. One of the best parts of this work is getting to know each family through daily hellos, a quick phone call, or sitting down together while they share their story.

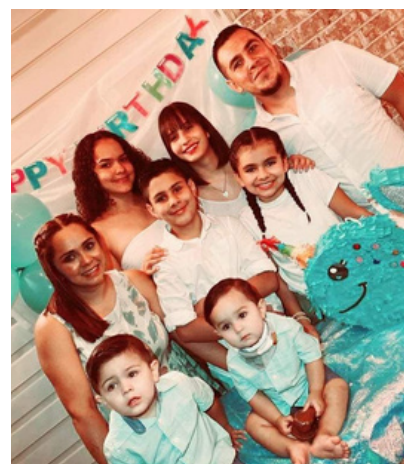
This year, we had the privilege of serving Yudi and multiple members of her family. We knew Yudi's sister was a nurse in their country, but somehow it wasn't until a recent conversation that we found out that both Yudi, and her husband, were lawyers in their native country. And even though they lived a comfortable economic life, their country felt unstable, and less and less safe for their family, so they decided to leave it all behind and immigrate to the US where their children would be safer.

She shared, "I suppose it is up to us, the parents, to sacrifice our careers, our lives, so that our children can have a better future. My husband works seven days a week in maintenance. He enters early in the morning, comes home at 6pm, then leaves again for a second job at 9pm. I miss so much about the way my life was. I miss my family. I miss the people, the customs, the culture, my career, everything. I miss my rights. In this country, you arrive, and we can feel that we are not valued. At the beginning, I just stayed home, but when I found Todos Juntos, I felt supported, encouraged, understood, valued, respected, and loved.

*"Here I feel important, and like I can succeed."*

Here I can be an example for my children. I study so I can reach more and do something different. I currently clean apartments, but eventually I hope to lead the whole apartment office and operation. Learning English amplifies your ideas and perception. Learning makes me feel more empathetic and less frustrated. I still have a lot to learn, but I can understand the people at my children's schools now. I love telling people that I attend ACC classes. It makes me feel confident. It elevates me. I love that my child is learning here, too. Todos Juntos makes you feel like family."

When asked if this was also a successful year for her son, Santi, in our ECE program, she said "Absolutely! When Santi started here, he was enrolled in three different therapy interventions. In the first three months, he was able to stop two of those because of how much progress he made because of school. I have seen a 180% difference in one year. He functions like a 5 year old now. Each day when he wakes up, he asks if he will get to go to school (TJ) today."



United Way for  
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**Deloitte.**

**GRACIAS**

## A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!

*"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men." – Herman Melville*

If it was not for volunteers, the Center would not be what it is today. While our volunteers play many different roles in our ability to serve our community, no one act is less than the other. Each volunteer, each moment, each action plays a vital part in who we are and the work we do. This summer, two of our longtime partners showed up in a big way to help prepare our facilities and grounds to welcome back our students this fall. **United Way for Greater Austin** coordinated volunteers from various corporate partners to help paint a beautiful mural on one of our playgrounds during their Day of Caring. And during **Deloitte's** Impact Day, their team members created a beautiful playground music wall for our littlest learners, added colorful mini-murals to our crosswalk, and helped our office get organized in preparation for our new Community Hygiene Closet sponsored by **Superior HealthPlan**.

Muchisimas gracias, *amigos*, for all the good that you do!