La Casa Norte serves youth and families confronting homelessness by offering housing and supportive services to increase the stability and self-sufficiency of our clients. Through the work of our staff and partners, residents of Chicago are safer, healthier, and more productive members of the community.

Since being founded in 2002, we have provided more than 25,000 individuals with the tools to increase their self-sufficiency and housing stability through:

**HOUSING**
- We provide transitional and permanent housing to youth and families that allow them to rapidly exit homelessness and begin working on their goals.
- Our emergency shelter beds operate 7-days a week and get youth experiencing homelessness off the streets of Chicago each night.

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**
- Our staff meet the immediate needs of clients by providing food, clothing, household items, hygiene products, and other needed supplies.
- We support long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency with our clients through bi-lingual case management, resources, and opportunities that support their education, employment, food security, and increased income.

**Our Impact**
(*2014 outcome highlights)
- 4,524 individuals were served to increase their housing stability through housing and supportive services.
- 1,029 people were placed into housing that allowed them to prevent or exit homelessness.
- 348 youth had a safe bed to sleep in at our emergency shelters.
- 405 clients received employment support to increase their income.
La Casa Norte’s mission is to serve youth and families confronting homelessness. We provide access to stable housing and deliver comprehensive services that act as a catalyst to transform lives and communities.

In 2014, we served...

4,525 youth & families,

in 105 zip codes,
throughout the Chicagoland area.

Jaime

“I was unstably housed and living on the streets in Chicago. While staying at a shelter, I had my belongings stolen from me. After a while, I could not tolerate the chaos any longer and decided that I would ride the trains through the night. I never felt safe and I never knew what to expect until I learned about the housing program at La Casa Norte.”

Today, Jaime has his own apartment and since entering the program, has had the opportunity to go back to school.

In addition to being able to focus on his education, Jaime can now pursue his goals with dignity and looks forward to a positive future.

Jaime is one of thousands of youth and families that we have provided housing, supportive services, and the opportunity to transform their lives.
More than a decade ago, La Casa Norte made a commitment to serve youth and families confronting homelessness in Chicago. By focusing on our client’s unique needs, La Casa Norte has empowered over 25,000 people to achieve their goals and live a life free from poverty.

Ending poverty is no small task, but with skilled, culturally competent staff, La Casa Norte acts as a catalyst in transforming lives and communities. We provide our clients with access to emergency beds, transitional and supportive housing, drop-in centers, holistic case management, homeless prevention services, and food and nutrition counseling.

Today, more than ever, our youth and families are in dire need of access to stable housing and comprehensive services. We at La Casa Norte, believe that by equipping each client with the right tools we can end homelessness—one person at a time.

At La Casa Norte, we are providing more than housing and hope… we are building our community, home by home!

**PATRICE**

After losing her housing, Patrice was forced to live in a shelter with her children. At the shelter she was referred to La Casa Norte where our staff assessed her needs and found she was eligible for Rapid Rehousing Assistance.

Through case management and advocacy, Patrice worked with our staff to help find an apartment for her and her family. Today they are housed and Patrice is excited that she has a safe, stable apartment that she and her children can call “home.”

“I am now looking forward to what my future has to offer, it all started with having a home to call my own... Thank you La Casa Norte!”
GET INVOLVED

Every day, people just like you donate and volunteer at La Casa Norte to support our efforts to end homelessness!

You too can get involved by:

- Cleaning out your closet and donating clothing to support our clients.
- Picking up extra rolls of toilet paper or cleaning supplies and donate them to support clients settling into their new homes.
- Volunteering to cook a warm meal for youth in our shelters.
- Instead of birthday gifts, ask your friends to donate to La Casa Norte.

To make an in-kind donation, contact info@lacasanorte.org
To volunteer, contact volunteer@lacasanorte.org

For more information or to donate online please visit:

www.lacasanorte.org
La Casa Norte
3533 W. North Avenue
Chicago, IL 60647
773-276-4900

For a list of our Board of Directors and Next Generation Board Members please visit:
www.lacasanorte.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government $2,857,706</td>
<td>Community Programs $1,496,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations $596,977</td>
<td>Youth Programs $1,723,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations/Individuals/Other $448,130</td>
<td>Management &amp; General Development $657,931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These reflect unaudited figures. For a full list of donors, please visit www.lacasanorte.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>405</th>
<th>729</th>
<th>695</th>
<th>7,014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People received workforce development services</td>
<td>People used our community computer lab</td>
<td>Households received life-skills or education services</td>
<td>Volunteer hours donated to our mission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mission statement:
La Casa Norte’s mission is to serve youth and families confronting homelessness. We provide access to stable housing and deliver comprehensive services that act as a catalyst to transform lives and communities.

Vision:
La Casa Norte dreams of a world where all people have dignity, communities thrive, and everyone belongs.

Acuerdos (Core Values):
We value the belief that when we:

- Work collaboratively
- Demonstrate empathy
- Cultivate mutual respect
- Provide access to resources & opportunities
- Create a just experience for all people

The result is that people have the power to create change within themselves, their families, and their communities.
La Casa Norte Awards

2013

- Marshall Memorial Fellowship-Sol Flores representing La Casa Norte

2012

- Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Award
- Latina Professional Award from Chicago Latino Network-Sol Flores
- White House Champions of Change-“Ending Youth Homelessness”
- Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund Board-Sol Flores Appointed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel
- LISC Chicago Neighborhood Development Private Bank Norm Bobbins Leadership Award-Sol Flores

2011

- Network Partner of the Year by the Greater Chicago Food Depository-La Casa Norte’s Northwest Food Partners Network (NFPN)
- Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness-LCN receives highest scoring on Transitional Housing Evaluation for Solid Ground Supportive Housing Program
- Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow-Sol Flores
- “Field Supervisor of the Year”- NFPN’s Daniel Pasquini-Salazar-Congressional Hunger Center

2010

- National Hispania Leadership Institute nominates Sol Flores to participate
- Chicago Community Trust Emerging Leaders Fellowship awarded to Sol Flores
- Low Income Housing Trust Fund Board-Sol Flores Appointed by Mayor Richard M. Daley
- Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness-LCN receives highest scoring on Transitional Housing Evaluation for Solid Ground Supportive Housing Program

2008

- La Casa Norte receives Fannie Mae Award of Excellence for the Solid Ground Supportive Housing Program
- La Casa Norte receives the Richard H. Driehaus Award for Architectural Excellence in Community Design for Solid Ground Supportive Housing Program
- Sol Flores is selected as Aflac Hispanic Business Person of the Year for Impact & Civic Responsibility
- Sol Flores receives Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley’s Inaugural Ruby Slipper Award for leadership & advocacy.
College students navigate homelessness

By Ted Gregory | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

This month, with a mix of anxiety and exhilaration, college students across the country will cram for final exams, then pack their bags for home.

It's a little different for undergraduates Malachi Hoye and Caprice Manny. They don't have homes to return to—at least not in the traditional sense. Hoye and Manny are among the estimated 36,000 college students nationwide who are considered homeless.

"I don't have anything from any outside sources. It literally is just me. So, if I don't get my crap together, I am just going to be out there," Manny, 21, said one afternoon in a Humboldt Park apartment where nonprofit La Casa Norte placed her in March.

Manny, who finished her second year at Truman College, a community college in Uptown, earlier this month, for years had bounced from the homes of sisters, grandparents and friends, as well as a couple of long-term housing centers, after leaving her mother's home in 2011. She called the rent-free living program "a blessing" that let her focus on 12 credit hours of classes, which met Monday through Thursday at Truman, and juggle jobs at Starbucks, Walgreens and Bath & Body Works.

One factor contributing to homelessness on campuses is low-income high school students' "laser focus" on going to college, said Sheny Bridges, assistant dean of students and community resources at DePaul University. They obtain financial aid to cover tuition, books and a few related costs but fail to consider remaining expenses, including housing, she said.

Hoye, 20, left his mother's home in the Austin neighborhood at 16 after another in a series of arguments with her, he said. Since then he has stayed at friends' homes, shelters, a hospital, apartments, a Columbia College Chicago dormitory and on the streets.

In March, he and his older brother began living rent-free at El Rescate, an independent living center in Humboldt Park run by the Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

Hoye, who is finishing his second year at Columbia this week, is holding about $9,000 in debt, he said. That debt was a major factor in his decision to leave school for now, Hoye said.

Until now he has managed to stay in school through federal grants, scholarships, state food aid and a job at a Dunkin' Donuts, Hoye said.

"Ain't nobody else out here doing anything for me and my brother," he said. "If I don't do it, I will be pushing a cart at the expressway, trying to look for change."

In January 2012, he and his brother had left home, exhausted the hospitality of friends and spent part of the bitter cold night sleeping next to a Metra station on the South Side.

"It hit in my head," Hoye said. "It was time for me to stop playing around, stop being a child. Now it was time to shift and I had to be the adult. So, that's what I did."

Manny's low point came after she decided to leave her mother's home in 2011, she recalled. After bouncing from one temporary living situation to another, she started to find stability in Job Corps, a federal education and job training program. She's receiving federal grants to cover her educational costs at Truman. But they don't cover housing.

Manny will be allowed to remain in the apartment this summer. If she resumes her full-time student class load in the fall, maintains a 2.0 grade-point average, refrains from unsafe behavior and communicates with her case manager, La Casa Norte will continue to pay her rent.

What is homelessness on campuses?
It generally means students are living in temporary, unstable situations, including friends' or relatives' homes, cars, shelters, parks, abandoned buildings, motels or bus and train stations.

Fighting homelessness on campus

- Federal proposals include charging in-state tuition to homeless and foster youths, giving them priority for federal work-study programs and finding housing for them during school breaks.
- The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth is expanding. About 350 schools in four states have single points of contact, said Cykela Lee, the organization's director of higher education initiatives; another estimated 150 schools in at least nine other states are receiving training in "best practices" to support homeless students.
- DePaul in April began offering a "home host program" in which area homeowners offer rooms for free to students who are "housing insecure," a phrase the school uses to characterize students who are homeless or without a long-term place to live.

By the numbers

56,224
College students who classify as homeless nationwide, according to federal financial aid records for the 2013-14 school year

3rd
Illinois's national ranking in number of homeless college students—about 3,400 last school year—behind California and Texas.
A World Where All People Have Dignity, Communities Thrive, and Everyone Belongs

Posted by Sol Flores on July 16, 2012 at 03:49 PM EDT

Sol Flores is being honored as a Champion of Change for her work to combat homelessness among children and youth.

Justice, Family and Achievement. These are the pillars of my core values. My passion and determination to serve those in need is rooted in these values. It has been my greatest personal and professional privilege to be of service to others and work towards fulfilling our vision of a world where all people have dignity, communities thrive, and everyone belongs.

Ten years ago, with an enormous amount of passion, faith and dedication, a small group of people came together to step out on a bold mission of impacting youth, family and Latino homelessness in Chicago. As the founding Executive Director of La Casa Norte, I had the opportunity to design, develop and sustain an organization that has impacted the lives of thousands of youth and family households in Chicago. We have been accountable for ensuring that our mission is implemented such that our clients achieve their outcomes and that we exhibit the best possible stewardship with the resources allocated to us. As the Executive Director, I have provided infectious enthusiasm and boundless energy at La Casa Norte as we reshape the physical infrastructure of our neighborhood and rebuild broken lives to foster hope, stable homes, and healthy communities. When this happens, I know I am being true to my values.

La Casa Norte was established in July 2002, during the midst of an economic recession. Also in 2002, Chicago was one of the first municipalities to adopt a comprehensive city wide strategy for ending homelessness. During this time, there were few advocates articulating the challenges and needs of the youth and Latino communities within this sector. With this context, from its inception La Casa Norte distinguished itself with the following approach: 1) nurture a stellar board and staff leadership; 2) have strong community support for our work; and 3) take bold advocacy to articulate and represent an underserved community. As a result, La Casa Norte has developed a continuum of housing and support services steeped in a client centered approach and focused on moving homeless youth and families with children towards housing stability.

Under our vision, La Casa Norte is currently developing a new comprehensive community center and supportive housing project to serve youth and families with children experiencing homelessness. This unique, bold new endeavor will bring critical programs and resources, such as a nutrition center, a federally qualified health center, a youth drop-in program, technology center and permanent supportive housing units for homeless youth and families. The new development will also provide much needed economic redevelopment and revitalization on Chicago’s west side.
In 2002, Sol Flores became the founding Executive Director of La Casa Norte, a community-based organization whose mission is to serve youth and families confronting homelessness. La Casa Norte provides access to stable housing and delivers comprehensive services that act as a catalyst to transform lives and communities. Since opening their doors, La Casa Norte has served more than 25,000 homeless and at-risk individuals.

With Sol’s infectious enthusiasm, boundless energy, intelligence and entrepreneurship, La Casa Norte is reshaping the physical infrastructure of the Humboldt Park neighborhood and rebuilding lives to foster hope, stable homes, and healthy communities. Sol’s passion and determination to support under-privileged people, has built La Casa Norte from two employees with a $200,000 annual budget to an 80+ employee, $4.1 million dollar organization that delivers inspiration, housing, and hope to the lives of homeless families, single parents, victims of domestic violence and abandoned youth.

La Casa Norte has rapidly grown over the past ten years to meet the increasing needs of poverty and homelessness throughout Chicago. As it has grown, so has Sol’s portfolio of awards and accomplishments:

- 2013: Sol is selected for the Marshall Memorial Fellowship.
- 2012: Sol is presented with the LISC Chicago Neighborhood Development Private Bank Norm Bobins Leadership Award.
- 2012: Sol is appointed to the Low Income Housing Trust Fund Board by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.
- 2011: Sol is selected as a Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow.
- 2010: Sol receives an Emerging Leaders Fellowship Award from Chicago Community Trust.
- 2010: Sol completes the National Hispana Leadership Institute Executive Training Program.
- 2008: LCN wins the Fannie Mae Maxwell Award of Excellence, one of four awarded in the country.
- 2008: LCN wins the Driehaus Award, for Architectural Excellence in Community Design.
- 2006: Sol receives the inaugural Red Ruby Slipper Award by Chicago’s Mayor Daley for her efforts to support the Chicago Plan to End Homelessness.

Under Sol’s vision and leadership La Casa Norte is currently developing a new comprehensive community center and supportive housing project. The new facility will provide a vital economic development and revitalization element to the Humboldt Park community. This bold new endeavor will bring critical programs and resources, such as a nutrition center, a federally qualified health center, a youth drop-in program, technology center and permanent supportive housing units for homeless youth and families.

Sol is a Chicago native, growing up with a single mother and an extended family who emigrated from Puerto Rico in the 1950’s. Her family served as her primary role model and has fueled her commitment to make a difference in the lives of others through her work at La Casa Norte.

She currently serves on the board of directors at the Latino Policy Forum, The Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund, the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County, Hispanic Housing Development Corporation and Kuumba Lynx. She is an appointed member of the City of Chicago Zoning Board of Appeals and Mayor Emanuel’s second-term transition team.
A helping hand

Remarkable Woman Sol Flores and La Casa Norte provide resources and housing to those in need

Relationships
How to let go of secrets and come clean with loved ones

Balancing Act
For Heidi Stevens, working at home is no day at the office

Garden
LaManda Joy’s new book has growing tips for community gardens
Sol Flores
Executive director of La Casa Norte fights poverty, homelessness in Chicago

BY JENNIFER WEIGEL
Tribune Newspapers

Having a sunny disposition is almost a birthright for Sol Flores, executive director of La Casa Norte, a nonprofit organization based in Humboldt Park that serves homeless youths and families.

“I get teased a lot because my first name, Sol, means ‘sun’ in Spanish,” says Flores, 41. “My middle name is Amores, which means ‘loves,’ and then my last name, Flores, is ‘flowers.’ So, yeah, my mom was definitely a hippie, but she also really wanted a strong name that was something that inspired her.”

Flores was raised in Chicago’s Lincoln Park neighborhood by her mother, Rosa (her father died when she was very young), and her grandparents, who came to the U.S. from Puerto Rico in the 1950s. “My mom didn’t have a college education, but she still wanted to expose me to things,” recalls Flores. “She said, ‘I want to break these stereotypes that women should stay at home and not get involved,’ so she was really intentional about showing me what was out there.”

It was her grandparents’ dedication to fostering children that opened her eyes to the needs of many low-income families in Chicago, especially among Latinos.

“In the ’70s, there was a big push to get Latino foster parents to take in Latino foster children, and my grandparents signed up,” Flores says. “My mom and I lived with them, and over the span of 20 years, my grandparents fostered 200 kids, and they adopted four more. I would wake up in the morning, and they would hand me a baby and say, ‘Here’s your new primo,’ which means cousin in Spanish. ... Seeing how my family took a part of this — this idea of doing what’s right for a family, even if they weren’t related (to you) — really had an impact on me.”

Flores has been running La Casa Norte since 2002. Today the nonprofit operates emergency shelters, transitional housing and permanent housing for families and young people facing homelessness throughout the city, as well as connecting them to therapists, case managers, legal or medical assistance, educational resources and life coaches.

The following is an edited conversation.

Q: What’s one of the biggest misconceptions about the homeless?
A: There’s this perception that if you’re poor you’ve done something wrong and made wrong choices, and that’s not always the case. Sometimes they are kids who were born into terrible circumstances. Others lost their homes in the recession. Part of my innate value system is, no matter what you’ve done or what’s happened to you, I strongly believe you have a right to housing, you have a right to food and you have a right to opportunity to economic independence. And I don’t mean that it should be handed to you, but we shouldn’t exclude you. And for those who are most vulnerable, they need some resources. I find it completely disgusting that we have 20,000 kids in Chicago Public Schools who were homeless in 2014.

Q: How do you make sure that some of the young people you help don’t wind up back where they started?
A: If a young person is homeless, there’s something pretty traumatic that happened to them. They may have been victims of crime, of sexual abuse, of trafficking, theft. We never tell young people what they should do — they’ve had a lot of adults in their life who say “you should” who have disappointed them. But what we do is engage them, encourage, coach, partner, model and show the way, and we heavily suggest a path. It’s about having each individual have their own
You've got to show up. You've got to be everywhere and be deeply committed to whatever community or sector you're serving. We started in Humboldt Park, so we showed up at everything in Humboldt Park that had to do with homeless people: education meetings, school meetings, housing meetings. We wanted to let them know, "We're here to help people in this community." That's how people got to know us. No one asks you to join the table; you take a seat at the table, and you say, "I'm here. I'm showing up."

Q: What's the best advice your mom gave you?
A: She constantly pushed me: "Don't be shy. Put your hat in the ring."

Q: What are your plans for La Casa Norte's future?
A: We are currently raising money to build this new facility here on North Avenue in Humboldt Park. It's going to be 55,000 square feet and will have 25 units of housing, a wellness center, training center, tutoring, a conference room and an art center. Where we are is known as a food desert, and we have no access to fresh produce, so we will also have a food pantry and a cafe/teaching kitchen.

Q: What words would you like etched on a plaque that would best describe you?
A: Used up. Meaning that every fiber, every opportunity was used. I want to be pushed, I want to be challenged, I want to be made uncomfortable and I want to feel like I gave. When I disappear from this Earth, I'd like someone to say, "Sol was used up. She had the experience of fully giving—giving emotionally, physically, intellectually, spiritually."

Q: What kind of a leader are you?
A: I'm collaborative, rigorous, willing to contribute and be contributed to, demanding, accepting and compassionate. I want young professionals to feel respected, developed as a professional where they not only learn about doing their job, but they learn about the sector and the industry. I want to be part of a team where people walk away and say, "I absolutely would commit to working in nonprofits for the rest of my life," because we need to attract awesome talent to this sector. I'm really proud of the mission and what we've accomplished, but I'm equally proud that I'm helping to manage a successful nonprofit.

Q: What do you do for fun?
A: I have a boyfriend, and I spend time with him, and I love to travel. But I also have a niece—she's 6½. Her name is Eulani, and she's my younger sister's child, and I spend time with her whenever I can. And we do Sunday dinners with my mom and my grandma too.

Q: Where are your favorite places to travel?
A: I was a Chicago Community Trust Fellow in 2010-2011, and one of the things I did was take a sabbatical and visit some nonprofits in Spain and England, so I got to spend nine weeks abroad. I love Europe—it's so magical and different. Spain, Italy, France, Germany.

Q: What book is on your nightstand right now?
A: I'm reading "The Plague" by Albert Camus.

Q: What advice would you give to someone who wants to give back but doesn't know where to start?
A: Chicago is filled with amazing volunteer opportunities at every level—opportunities you can do in an hour or something you can do once a month for the rest of your life. Exposing your kids young is so important. My mom had me volunteering every other week. It also dismantles fear. People can also donate their professional experience. As a nonprofit, we need lawyers, counselors, accountants and marketing help. And if you can't donate your time, look in your closet and grab those clothes you aren't wearing or that your son isn't wearing. Or an appliance or piece of furniture that's sitting in the basement. We can find use for them. If you care about your community or you're worried about public safety where you live, get involved. Do something. You really can make a change.

La Casa Norte will host a fundraiser and networking event 7-10 p.m., Feb. 20 at Sub Station 51, 51 W. Hubbard St. Tickets, $50, include appetizers. Go to lacasanorte.org/events.

jweigel@tribpub.com
Twitter @jenweigel

Nominate someone remarkable:
Know someone we should feature in this weekly column? Tell us about her at sunday@tribune.com.