



**HOPE**  
CommUnity Center  
Building Community. Enriching Lives



# Annual Report

2023 - 2024

A message from

**Felipe Sousa-Lazaballet**  
Executive Director



Dear Friends,  
¡Aquí Estamos! We Are Here!

As I reflect on the past year, I'm struck by the immense challenges we've faced as a community—and the resilience that continues to define us. From legislative attacks to growing xenophobia, we're living in a moment of existential crisis. Immigrants are being targeted in ways we haven't seen in decades, and our community is being called to fight for the very soul of this country. What does it mean to be an American? What does it mean to have equitable access to opportunity—the chance to thrive, make choices, and live in freedom as your true self?

At Hope CommUnity Center, we've made it clear that we won't be a well-kept secret tucked away in Apopka. We're standing tall, not only for our community but with them. This is why we've been hard at work, building leaders across the state, investing in our internal capacity to serve more people, and bringing our organization fully into the 21st century. It hasn't been easy—far from it. We've faced opposition at every turn, but we've stood firm, just as I did when I marched and encountered the KKK. Today, we're up against many of the same forces, but we're stronger than ever before, becoming an undeniable force for change.

We're fighting for something much bigger than ourselves. We're building a bigger "we"—one that unites us as a powerful collective. Alone, we may feel like a minority, but together, we are the majority, and together we are unstoppable.

We are here. Over the past year, we've talked to voters, organized, and served over 20,000 individuals. None of this would have been possible without the dedicated volunteer hours, community support, and the unwavering belief that Hope is more than just a name—it's a promise.

Less than three years ago, Sr. Ann passed the torch, and I am honored to be holding it today. But this torch doesn't belong to me alone. I'm sharing it, passing it to a new generation who is ready to meet this moment with courage, conviction, and compassion. This work, this mission, isn't easy. In fact, it's incredibly hard. But it's also incredibly necessary.

We are investing in people—our staff, our volunteers, and most importantly, our community. We're creating infrastructure that brings Hope out of our buildings and into neighborhoods across Central Florida. We're preparing the next generation of leaders, training them to be advocates, organizers, and voices for change.

As I look toward the future, I am filled with hope—not because the challenges are behind us, but because I see the strength in our community. Together, we are building a movement. Together, we are shaping a future where everyone belongs. Thank you for being part of this journey. We are here. We are growing. And with your support, we will continue to rise.

In solidarity,

A message from

**Sr. Ann Kendrick**  
Founder



**“DO SOMETHING!! MAKE A DIFFERENCE!! BE ENGAGED!!**

**It Can Be Small or Large, One time or Ongoing**

I thank you for your love and support all these many years. This work and life with you, lifting-up the lives of immigrants, farmworkers, LGBTQ+ folks, and giving awareness of white supremacy and racism as well as all forms of oppression. This work has been the LOVE OF MY LIFE!

Together we are the BELOVED COMMUNITY, living in communities of connection and belonging.

In 1971 I came to FLORIDA with three other Sisters of Notre Dame to serve the migrant farmworkers for a year or two at the most. I have stayed for over 53 years because of YOU!

I fell in love with YOU ALL: with your goodness, hospitality, solidarity, culture, faith, resilience and FIESTA! We together have made changes, fought injustices, and created the BELOVED COMMUNITY among us. A few of the results of this work include Community Health Centers, Farmworker Association of Florida, Homes in Partnership, Self-Help Credit Unions. All of these are still in several locations. Also established for the community were Legal Aid Services.

None of this would have happened without the Office for Farmworker Ministry as the founding organization and its faith-based mission. All of this resulted in the flourishing of Hope Community Center and its many programs which address: Immigrant Rights, Anti-Racism, LGBTQ+, Citizenship, Youth Groups, Adelante Caminantes, and many other social justice issues expressed often through the creative arts.

If you want to honor me, I ask you to act on behalf of justice, peace, community and kindness. Here are some prompts: HELP GET OUT THE VOTE, volunteer, tutor, gather friends and family to have a conversation that matters, support a cause YOU care about, make up something you think will make the world a better place. Of course, another option is a donation to Hope Community Center.

As Teddy Roosevelt said, “Do what you can, with what you’ve got, where you are.”

DO IT. KEEP ON DOING IT. Let us know. Send us a message telling us what you are doing and how it is turning out.

Gracias”.



# Our Mission

Hope CommUnity Center fosters diverse, empowered, learning communities engaged in personal and societal transformation. Through service and advocacy, we stand together with immigrants and others who are tenacious and courageous in the face of all systems of oppression.

## Our Programs & Services

Access to Education	Hope Rising	Elementary Tutoring	ESOL	School Registration Events
Youth & Family	Women Empowerment Group	Art-Ivist Kids Camp	Adelante Caminantes	Sin Fronteras Youth Group
Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Americorps	Hope CommUnity Center	St. Andrew Catholic School	The Farmworkers Association of Florida	Grace Medical Center
Immigration	Legal Services	Citizenship		
Service Learning	Schools	Corporate		
Social Impact	CommUnity Organizing	LGBTQ+ Immigrant Justice Organizing	Youth Organizing	
Social Services	SNAP	Medicaid	Medical Referrals	



# Hope in Action: A Year of Impact!

Over  
**20,000**  
Community  
members  
served

Over  
**7500**  
Volunteer  
Hours

Over  
**150**  
Volunteers

Access  
to  
Education



## ESOL CLASSES

153 students  
48 classes  
96 hours of instruction  
Over 80% of our ESOL students  
showed a marked improvement.



## Hope Rising Scholarship

47 Hope Rising Participants

\$55,000 in scholarships distributed from Hope

9 full-ride scholarships at Seminole State College

(funded by the generous donors of the Foundation for Seminole State College)

One Rollins Holt School Scholarship

## 3 Workshops:

1. Resume & Interview Skills with attorney Dan MacIntosh
2. Essay Writing Workshop with Seminole State College Professor Dr. Frankie Huff
3. Pathways to Academic Excellence with the Hispanic Federation



### Elementary school Tutoring

22 students received tutoring.  
48 tutoring sessions were offered  
this year making it 60 hours of tutoring time.



## Partnerships



### OCPS (Orange County Public Schools) School Registration events

24 children received free  
age-appropriate immunization  
23 children received Free School  
Physicals  
39 children were assisted with School  
Registration

### Crealde Art-Camp

Provided scholarships for five young girls from the  
Hope CommUnity to attend.



Hope's Access to Education program  
benefits students and tutors! One  
student, Abel, excelled at math and  
was invited to the OCPS Math  
Olympics, while a tutor, Boris, was able  
to explore his dream of being lawyer  
through connections made at Hope.





# Immigration Program



**Citizenship Program**  
240 students participated in classes throughout the year. 128 of our students obtained their citizenship.

**Legal Services**  
Assisted 2400 immigrants  
349 consultations supporting DACA, Advance Parole, FOIA and resident renewals applications.  
103 recent arrivals supported through change of venue and address, and ICE check-in appointments  
151 immigrants served through translations, power of attorneys, passport applications, and more.



After 26 years as legal residents, finally became citizens of the US. Orlando's case was complicated because he's deaf and both a sign language interpreter and a Spanish interpreter were required.





7 immersions were hosted during the year.

Participated schools: Stetson, Stonehill, Gonzaga, Rollins.

156 students were empowered.

21 families hosted our students, with some families hosting multiple times.



We virtually presented our advocacy module to a group of 25 students from Gonzaga College High School for their Ignatian Heritage Day.



Two alumni returned this year to visit their host families, highlighting the lasting bonds formed through our immersion program. These reunions show the deep impact of our Host Families, who foster meaningful connections that make our program unique.



# Service Learning

## Partnerships



This past year marked 33 years of our longest-standing partnership with Gonzaga College High School.

Scotts Farms, Green Masters Nurseries, FWF’s Garden, and Dewars Nursery.

“As a Clinical Social Work Intern at Hope Community Center, I supported immigrant families in coping with mental health challenges. At Kids Camp, I helped children build self-esteem and resilience through activities like affirmation jars, encouraging positive self-identity and emotional well-being”.

-Erika Intriago





# Youth & Family

**Sin Fronteras**  
77 active members in Sin Fronteras.  
15 Graduated students are actively enrolled in college / tech school.  
13 received the HCC Rising Scholarship & 1 received Dr.Vaayas Foundations.  
12 students participated in the Monarch Theater Group.  
15 students participated in the Social Justice Group.



**Artist**  
42 students registered and, in the program, 17 returning students.

**Empowered Women's Group**  
28 women attended weekly meetings and benefitted from mutual support.





## **Kids Camp**

**July 2023**

1210 meals provided for students

240 meals provided

65 students registered

**June 2024**

1353 meals provided

182 family meal

51 students registered

## **Las Promotoras**

12 women became Promotoras and are actively supporting others within the community.



## **Parenting Mi Casa Es Tu Casa**

40 families graduated in Fall and Spring Semesters.

## **Toy Sale**

300 families benefitted

## **ADELANTE CAMINANTES**

117 students attended English Classes.

63 students attended Mental Health support.

83% Percent of students who participate in at least 10 classes per semester who show improvement in English language acquisition.





# CommUnity Organizing

**Hope CommUniversity:**  
Launched in 2023 with over 600 participants attending trainings.  
  
Community leadership program providing skills for young people to lead and organize.



**Civic Engagement:**  
Made hundreds of thousands of calls and canvassed 400+ houses.  
  
Engaged in over 25,000 conversations with voters to ensure voting plans.

**Disaster Relief and Climate Resiliency:**  
Prepared for Hurricane Milton, which escalated from a tropical storm to a hurricane within 24 hours.  
  
Contacted community members pre-storm and coordinated support for recovery.  
  
After the storm, phone banked and canvassed to assess needs, served 2,000+ hot meals, and distributed food and supplies to 1,000+ families.

**Hope in Action:**  
Partnered with Florida Youth Power to bring 30+ young people to Tallahassee.  
  
Advocated against HB49 changes that allow minors to work over 8 hours on school nights.

Watch Hope in Action





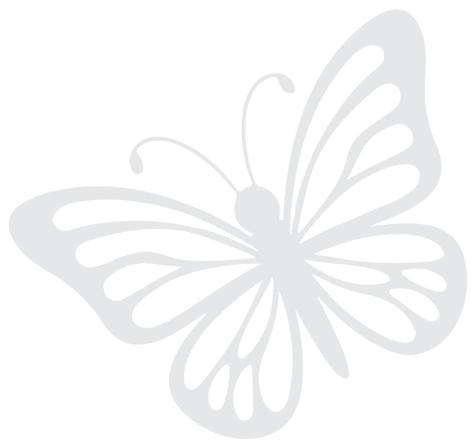
# NDA Mission Volunteer AmeriCorps

9 Notre Dame AmeriCorps members  
5 at local schools, 3 at Grace Medical Home,  
and 1 at Hope CommUnity Center

A total of 11,633.25 hours served between all 9  
members

**Two Team service projects:**

1. Society of St. Andrew corn gleaning
2. Preparing comfort items for the children at  
Arnold Palmer Hospital.



**A Year of Personal and  
Professional Growth  
and Development**

“I became inspired to  
join AmeriCorps after  
being connected to  
the program through  
my professional  
experiences while  
studying for my  
undergrad at Stetson  
University.”



**-Skye Cronje**

Scan to read  
Skye Cronje’s story





## Social Services



Over 1,800 people were assisted with Medicaid and SNAP benefit applications.

Over 2,500 referral clinic letters were issued.

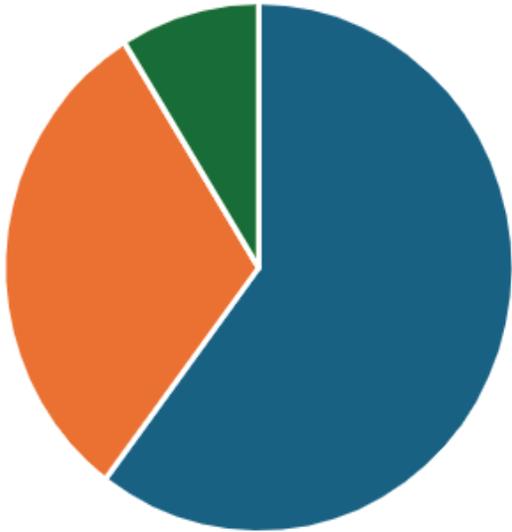
Over 200 additional services were provided.

## Financial



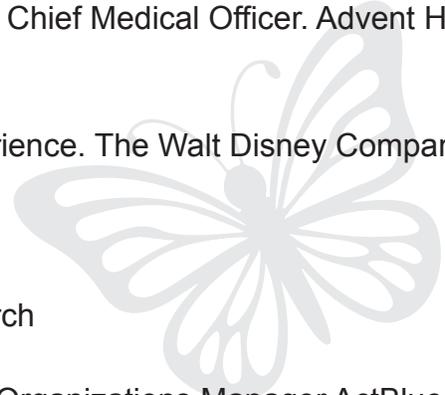
### Expenses

● Programs	\$1,927,934
● Admin	\$987,359
● Fundraising	\$283,065
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,198,358</b>



## Our Board of Directors

Melissa Byrd. Board Member, District 7. Orange County Public Schools  
Terrance Hunter. Development Director. 26Health  
Chevalier Lovett. Chief Operating Officer. Florida Rising  
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Anne Piervil. Attorney. Florida Legal Services  
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Astrid Rodriguez Pineda. Agent. State Farm Insurance  
Evelyn Rivera. Paralegal. Kids in Need of Defense  
Pastor Sarah Robinson. Pastor. Audubon Park Covenant Church  
Roxanne Rose. Owner. Rose Property Management  
Samuel Vilchez Santiago. Movement, Issues, and Charitable Organizations Manager ActBlue  
Dr. Elizabeth "Betsy" Swart, PhD, LCSW. Adjunct Professor. University of Southern California, Berkley. Executive Director. Amboseli Trust for Elephants



## Our Staff

Felipe Sousa-Lazaballet  
Yenny Atuesta  
Danilo Borgues Días  
Ely Castillo  
Samuel Cherisier  
Minerva Colón  
Ximena Cualio  
Paola Da Silva  
Lynn Devanie  
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## Connect With Us

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