

Casa De Luz

2023 Newsletter



A Message from the President

By Jack Nooren

Casa de Luz: Providing Hope and Support for LGBTQ+ Refugees in Tijuana

Five years ago, I became involved with a small shelter in Tijuana that was founded by Irving Mondragon. Irving has led numerous caravans from Central America to Tijuana, with gay, lesbian, and trans individuals who fled their countries in fear for their lives.

It is disheartening to know that there are still 67 countries criminalizing same-sex relationships between men, 41 countries criminalizing same-sex relationships between women, and 12 countries that even carry the death penalty for such relationships. These countries include Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Qatar, and Uganda.

At Casa de Luz in Tijuana, I have had the privilege of meeting many incredible individuals with heartbreaking stories of why they had to leave their families, friends, jobs, and countries simply because they were not accepted for who they are. Many of them have endured brutal assaulted or constant harassment by gangs or law enforcement.

After enduring a terrifying journey that often spans 2 to 3 months, these refugees finally reach Tijuana, Mexico. Irving had rented a home to provide them with temporary shelter while they search for food, sponsorship, legal representation, and, in many cases, medical aid. Witnessing the extent of Irving's dedication to this community left me in awe, and I knew I had to contribute and help in any way I could.

Three years ago, I was fortunate enough to purchase a property in Playas Tijuana, which has now become the permanent home for Casa

November 2023



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SPECIAL THANK YOUS AND
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[HTTP://WWW.CASADELUZ.COM](http://www.casadeluz.com)
CASADELUZSDCA@GMAIL.COM

2023

de Luz. With 23 bedrooms, we can accommodate up to 60 refugees. We have created a beautiful outdoor garden area and a spacious kitchen. Each private bedroom is equipped with a queen bunk bed, providing a comfortable and safe space for those seeking refuge.

Two years ago, we established Casa de Luz, SD, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that now serves as the financial support system for the program in Tijuana. Our dedicated Board of Directors works tirelessly to raise funds and ensure that the monthly bills are paid. With the support of individuals like you, we have been able to continue our mission of providing support and a brighter future for those who have fled their homes.

As the holiday season approaches, we ask for your assistance. Imagine the impact you could make by supporting Casa de Luz through a donation or by volunteering your time. Additionally, providing Christmas gifts for those who have absolutely nothing would bring immeasurable joy to their lives. Your help is truly needed and immensely appreciated.

To learn more about our program and how you can contribute, please visit casadeluz.com.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

Jack Nooren President Casa De Luz SD

Justcallme_Vixx Streaming Fundraiser!

In February, streamer Justcallme_Vixx did a charity stream for Casa De Luz SD and raised over \$1,000. Thank you Justcallme_Vixx. Check out her stream at twitch.tv/jusscallme_vixx



Big Mike's Birthday! Hosted by Johan Engman with Rise & Shine Hospitality



In January, board member Big Mike Phillips celebrated his birthday by having friends over at the Fig Tree Café in the East Village. Diners were asked for a donation to enjoy a great meal at the event and were given the opportunity to learn about Casa De Luz SD. Johan Engman with the Rise & Shine Hospitality group then matched the donations to have the event raise over \$10,000 in one night! Thank you, Big Mike, Johan, & Rise & Shine Hospitality.

Permit Granted



It was a long struggle, but we finally got it! After some months of pleading our case to the city, we had help from San Diego's mayor's office to make sure we were legal with the Tijuana government. We are officially permitted and no longer have to fear being told to evacuate the premises!



Our continued thanks to Nicole Murray Ramirez and The International Imperial Court Council

Thank you to Nicole Murray Ramirez and The International Imperial Court Council for their continued support of Casa De Luz with having her heir apparents and members of the International Imperial Court Council do a national fundraiser for Casa. One such event was held on Nov 19th at Splash Fresno!



Pool Party 2023!

July 2023 saw the return of our pride pool party fundraiser! Hosted at board president's house, we saw over 500 people join us for the event on the Sunday of San Diego Pride. We raised over \$55,000.00 this year! Thank you to all those who volunteered and contributed! Gilead, Mistr, Suja, Flick's, Rich's, Mo's Universe, Barrel & Board, Men's Spa, Rich's San Diego, Parlor on Fifth, Neurogum, Adam Clark, Brian Jinning/#1 on Fifth, Studio Europa, Craig Thomas and Friends for volunteering, the Board members, just to name a few!





Join us for our newest drive! Will you be our neighbor? Select your neighborhood plot and be displayed on our online neighborhood map!

As the Holidays approaches and the world is changing every single day, we are finding it more necessary than ever to come together as human beings and use our hearts to give compassion and financially to those escaping their home countries just so they will not be killed because they are Gay or Trans. What better gift to give than that of saving someone's life, the best gift i can ever image. Here is how: Casa de Luz is a shelter in Tijuana, Mexico, that provides LGBTQ+ refugees fleeing for their lives from brutal countries from all over the world a safe place for safety and help. This year our board at Casa de Luz is very excited to have created an opportunity that will invite anyone and everyone to join us and become our neighbors. Our goal is to have caring, loving, and compassionate neighbors that will help keep our doors open and allow Casa de Luz to be able to continue their work to help our fellow LGBTQ human being a better life. This will also help us towards our bucket list which includes a Van and solar panels with a better chance of becoming reality. That's what good neighbors do.

We at Casa de Luz invite each of you an easy and powerful way to help join our neighborhood, for any dollar amount you feel comfortable with to donate to our "Casa de Luz Homeowners Fees." Click on the "I want to be your Neighbor" bottom below and fill out the information we would need to have your bank send your gift once every month. With your kind donations, we will be able to give these scared and brave individuals temporary shelter, food, medicine if needed, help with legal representatives, hope, and sponsors to get them into whatever country their journey takes them.

That old saying it takes a village, is so true, we look forward to meeting and creating our new neighborhood. "WILL YOU BE OUR NEIGHBOR?"

For more information, please visit our website casadeluzsd.org

Thank you in advance for every life you join us in saving. You are earning your beautiful wings; you are an Angel as you give hope and love to other human beings. Thank you for your compassion and generosity.

After donating, your name will appear on the map below in one of the neighboring plots to our home!

Support Us!

We thank you if you've supported us in the past, but we continue to seek your support for our ongoing operations, and if you haven't had the chance to help us out yet, there are plenty of ways to get involved! We always accept donations through PayPal giving (search "casa de luz sd"), PayPal, Venmo (@Casa-deLuz-2), or checks sent to us.

Our current fundraising campaign is the "Will You Be Our Neighbor" campaign.

Additionally, for those seeking to visit the location, reach out to any one of us to make it happen and you will see all the heart and good that is involved in the cause.

Once again, we thank you for everything you do to help support a worthy cause, whether through directly or even just passing on the news of our mission statement and good work!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Jack Nooren

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Javier Gomez

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CASA DE LUZ SD is a 501(c)3 (EIN #:86-2469077) sister organization of Casa de Luz TJ a collective house open to LBGTQ+ refugees who left their home country in search of a better life. Casa de Luz SD raises money for Casa de Luz TJ so they can offer a safe haven for people who lived in fear of persecution because of their sexual orientation or gender identification.

Trans, lesbian, gay & bisexual people are fleeing from all over the world to escape "epidemic levels of violence" and threats by criminal gangs and security forces. Over 2,900 were killed in the past 5 years just in Central America.

These are the most vulnerable refugees entering the US.

Edited by Tan Carlin