

# Casa Cuentos *-Stories of Hope-*

## A Door Opens

Juanita Tomah laid in her bed, thoughts racing through her mind. Just days ago she was diagnosed with Stage II Breast Cancer and the diagnosis had not quite set in yet. "What if the tests were wrong? Should I get a second opinion? What are we going to do?" Juanita thought.

That was almost a year ago and while Juanita and her husband Kent have adjusted to their new reality, those feelings from a year ago are, still feel very fresh. "I felt like someone dropped a house on me," Kent recalled.

Juanita started chemotherapy but the cancer continued to spread. Her doctor recommended she have surgery. While in surgery, Kent waited in the waiting room with their children. The hours passed. Lunch came and went. Dinner was approaching before the family received any word from the doctor. "It was only supposed to be a 3-hour surgery. I finally got an update and it was that another doctor had to come in and help with my wife. All I could do was wait more," Kent said.

Finally, at 9 p.m. – 13 hours after she went in to surgery, the ordeal was finished. The cancer had spread in the opposite direction the doctors had originally thought and had spread into her lymph nodes. But the fight wasn't over and there were still many hurdles to cross. Juanita was discharged that same night as her surgery, but

was in no condition to travel 2 ½ hours home. Her family stayed at a Motel 6 that night and the next morning they were back on the road because Kent had a football game to coach at Alamo's local high school.

For Juanita's second round of chemotherapy, Casa Esperanza was suggested to her. "When you run into a problem, there is always a door that opens

for help," Juanita said. Various family members traveled to Casa Esperanza from all over the country to help Juanita in her journey. "Casa Esperanza was the central meeting place for us all," she mentioned.

Even though Kent still has to continue to travel because of work and football games, he knows that his wife is safe and taken care of. "We do everything together. When I walk into the house and she isn't there, it is hard," he remarked. "But

when I come to Casa Esperanza to be with her, we are able to keep up a routine with cooking, laundry and daily activities. That has helped us through this," he said.

While Juanita and Kent's journey is almost complete, they know just how important Casa Esperanza has been in their course. "Casa Esperanza is stress free. I'm healing here. It's my home. More people need to know about this wonderful place," Juanita added thankfully.





A special THANK YOU to everyone who supported Casa Esperanza with our 4th Annual Gala for Hope! Our volunteers, staff, guests and a number of people in our community made this event possible. We appreciate all that you do to support our guests each and every day!



Have an old vehicle taking up space in your yard? Are you looking for a first car for a new driver? We can help! By donating and purchasing a vehicle from Casa Esperanza, you are helping raise the necessary funds to help the thousands of residents from all over the state of New Mexico. 100% of the funds generated by your donation remains in NM! Auctions are every 2nd Saturday of the month. For more information, call (505) 266-4427.

## - You're Invited -

The Casa Esperanza Michelle Moore Memorial Golf Classic was established in loving memory of Michelle "Mike" Moore who died on August 21, 1997 after a valiant battle with cancer. Her husband, Fred Moore, created the tournament in 2001 in her name after spending time at Casa Esperanza and seeing first-hand all of the benefits provided to those seeking medical treatment in Albuquerque.

This year we partnered with Camp Enchantment New Mexico who provides childhood cancer support programs for pediatric cancer patients, survivors and siblings giving them the opportunity to participate in a 7 day residential camp. Camp Enchantment New Mexico is held at Manzano Mountain Retreat while Camp Super Stars (for siblings) is held at Fort Lone Tree in Capitan, NM. Together, these camp sessions serve approximately 120 children annually.



Friday, June 8, 2018  
Santa Ana Golf Club  
288 Prairie Star Rd.  
Bernalillo, NM 87004

For more information, please contact:

Richard Castillo, M.D.  
505-235-1159  
rick81656@gmail.com

Sean O'Neill  
505-350-5267  
oneill.abq@gmail.com