



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR

# Casa de las Amigas

160 N. El Molino Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101 Spring 2015  
626.792.2770 [www.casadelasamigas.org](http://www.casadelasamigas.org)

## OUR MISSION

THROUGH AN INTEGRATED HEALING PROGRAM FOR BODY AND MIND THAT TAKES PLACE IN A HOMELIKE ENVIRONMENT, CASA DE LAS AMIGAS HELPS WOMEN WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUG ADDICTION RECOVER BY PROVIDING THEM WITH THE TOOLS NECESSARY TO LEAD PRODUCTIVE, RESPONSIBLE AND SOBER LIVES.

## LEVELS OF CARE

### Onsite Detoxification

**Residential Treatment**  
Primary, transitional and extended in-patient services; family groups; yoga, meditation, relapse prevention

### Day Treatment

Individualized alternative to in-patient care with 30 hours of weekly workshops focused on addiction education, women's empowerment, social support

### Intensive Outpatient

Structured and flexible, high-intensity focus on recovery, relapse prevention and individualized counseling

### Sober Living Facilities

Combined transitional sober living with traditional treatment services to ensure a successful path to permanent sobriety



## Join Us for the

## Colleen Williams 20th Annual Charity Golf Tournament on June 15, 2015

It is that time of the year again. Dust off your golf clubs, find your loudest golf shirt and join Casa de las Amigas at its **Colleen Williams 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Golf Tournament** on June 15, 2015, at the San Gabriel Country Club.

For those who enjoy an afternoon of golfing with friends it will be a relaxing day of fun. For who've got game, however, competition is certain to be fierce as players compete for trophies and bragging rights in the Women's and



David Ripley, Colleen Williams, John Dudley  
and Leah Rodemich

Men's Championships (foursome), Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin and Lowest Gross Score competitions. May the best golfer win!

After the tournament our guests will enjoy an elegant dinner and a live auction. Colleen Williams will be presenting the awards to our golfers.

We hope that you will join us as we enjoy a day of golf, relaxation and fun. All proceeds go directly to Casa de las Amigas for the treatment of women suffering from alcohol and drug dependence.

**For Reservations or More Information  
Please Call Melissa at  
626-792-2770 x 10 or  
Visit our Website  
[www.casadelasamigas.org](http://www.casadelasamigas.org)**

## The Giving of the Ring

A sisterhood develops at Casa de las Amigas as women work together to rebuild their lives and achieve a lifetime of sobriety. Friendships are formed and mentors are found. An important and enduring part of these relationships is the giving of the ring.

In 2005, one of the residents at Casa de las Amigas was given a ring by a loved one during her stay in Residential Treatment. When she was ready to leave Casa, she chose to give the ring to one of her Casa sisters to support and inspire the sister during her recovery. This has inspired a beautiful tradition since then. Dozens of women have received the ring and found comfort and strength in the knowledge that everyone in residence at Casa de las Amigas is with her, supporting and believing in her as she works for her sobriety.

Like the women of Casa, the tradition of the giving of the ring changes with each group of women in the house, but the essential meaning behind the giving of the ring has not changed. The giving of the ring is meant to inspire hope, courage and the knowledge that all the women of Casa are supporting each other in their journey to a new life of sobriety.





**Executive Director**  
**Leah Rodemich**

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## A Message From Our Executive Director

Within each community, family, and organization there exists a culture that is full of traditions that are passed on from one individual to the next. The concept of tradition is a reality for those women who experience their transformation at Casa de las Amigas. The supportive traditions are evident to the women in treatment at Casa de las Amigas when they come through our doors – from the stars that hang on the wall for all the women who have previously completed the treatment programs to the sisterhood that greets each new resident by those residing at Casa.

Another long-standing tradition is the annual charity golf tournament. This is our 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Colleen Williams Charity Golf Tournament and we are proud of both its quality and longevity. Many of you have participated in our tournament every year since its founding, and we can't thank you enough. It is heartwarming to know that our community at Casa de las Amigas is supported so strongly by the community. Without the support of the broader community Casa could not provide effective, low-cost treatment to women suffering from alcohol and drug dependence.

The tradition at Casa that we hold most sacred is our graduation ceremony. Every quarter a ceremony is held to acknowledge the women who have successfully completed our program. At this ceremony, the women who are currently in treatment gift the women graduating with a "Casa Coin" and a flower. This ceremonial passage is powerful and is an important part of moving forward into the next phase of recovery. This month, we will be honored to join with the family and friends of our graduates and witness this important event in our sisters' lives.

Casa de las Amigas separates itself from the various other treatment programs by continuing to focus on its mission of assisting women suffering from addiction.

Thank you for your continued support of our programs, traditions, and our culture of family.

Leah Rodemich  
Executive Director

### ***Welcome***

We are happy to announce that Ava Alexandar has joined us as our new Director of Development. Ava comes to us with extensive experience in the non-profit arena. She brings to us professionalism and an unstoppable drive to raise funds to support Casa's programs. We are thrilled to have her join us and welcome her to our Casa family.



## Casa Welcomes Caroline Heldman, PhD



David Ripley, Dr. Caroline Heldman and Leah Rodemich

At Casa de las Amigas, we believe it is important to serve the whole woman as she struggles with her addiction. Each week, we invite speakers to our **Women's Empowerment** sessions to share with the women of Casa their research, experience and expertise.

Recently, Casa de las Amigas welcomed Dr. Caroline Heldman, and participants learned about her new book ***The Sexy Lie*** to be released in early 2016. ***The Sexy Lie*** focuses on how the objectification of women in the media affects all of us.

Dr. Heldman is an Associate Professor of Politics at Occidental College and specializes in the presidency, media, gender and race.

Dr. Heldman shared with the women that it is a myth that being a sex object is somehow empowering to women. She went on to explain that research has shown that the objectification of women not only isn't empowering—it is actually damaging. Further, the enormous increase in the objectification of women in advertising, movies, and pornography results in higher rates of depression in women, lowers academic achievement (including GPAs) and self-esteem, and leads to habitual body monitoring and sexual dysfunction.

She encouraged women to develop their own identities, value systems and set goals to live a happy life.

The Casa de las Amigas weekly **Women's Empowerment** sessions are just one of the many ways that we provide the women of Casa with timely services, information and opportunities to learn.

Casa supplements its program with services, such as signing up for the CalFresh Program (food stamps), accessing low-cost mental health services and dental care. Since some of the participants lack professional skills, Casa has also partnered with Goodwill of Southern California to assist the women in resume writing and interview workshops.

## Counselor's Corner



### Traditions

By Cynthia Schick

I kept closely to Jewish tradition when my son was growing up and every time he'd ask why we were doing one thing or another for the Sabbath or a holiday, I'd borrow a line from Topol in Fiddler on the Roof and answer "Tradition!" Some of our traditions would probably look bizarre to someone not familiar with them the same way the Pamplona Bull Run looks crazy to me, but they were ours and we kept them. They provide touchstones, rhythm to the calendar, meaning to our lives. They reinforce our identity and keep us connected to one another and to others who observed them.

Recovery traditions sometimes look a little strange to those new to it. It's been observed that when we applaud or give a birthday cake for sobriety milestones, we are applauding ourselves for doing the equivalent of running out of a burning building.

We laugh. We understand how it must seem—especially to

those who wanted so badly to pull us from the fire.

If you look closely, you'll see that recovery traditions often have a purpose. Celebrating sobriety milestones such as 30, 60, 90 days sober with chips or keytags and the annual sobriety anniversary with a cake increases our investment in the day we began a new life. Standing up at a twelve-step meeting and "taking a chip" helps others begin to know us and friendships begin to form.

Most would agree that the most revered tradition in recovery is the mandate to "pay it forward," or help others. It's a tradition pulled from before there were any such things as treatment centers or twelve-step programs, going back to spiritual and religious organizations from the early 1900s, and likely before that.

But AA's immediate predecessors made a connection that went beyond the character-building aspect of being of service. They concluded that alcoholics and addicts could *ensure their own sobriety* by helping others stay sober. This revolutionary idea has since become the cornerstone of sobriety efforts around the world. It seems to translate into any approach to recovery and any culture and, wherever it's put into practice, it thrives and thus becomes—tradition.

## Transformations



Carmen started finishing off her mother's beer when she was just 5 years old. "Mom was a party-girl" who worked hard Monday-Friday and then played hard all weekend. By the time Carmen was a teen she was drinking heavily and taking drugs. She would continue this downward cycle for almost 25 more years. By the time she hit bottom, she had been living on the streets for 8 years and was freebasing crack cocaine and drinking daily.



Things slowly started to change for Carmen in the most remarkable of places - jail. Someone had slipped a bible into her cell and as she read it she realized she wanted to be different.

Soon she found her way Casa de las Amigas and began her recovery. At Casa she learned the 12 steps and the 12 traditions, life skills, and attended group sessions

with rest of the sisters. One of these sessions ended up being the worst day of her life and the turning point in her recovery. It was there that she told the secret that she had kept for more than two decades —she had been molested at the age of nine and lost her virginity to a family member by the time she was 14. After the session a Casa staff member told her, "Carmen, you have a choice. You can hold onto that pain or you can let it go." It made all the difference. "I didn't know how to release that pain, but it was the first time I ever realized I had a choice."

Her struggle for sobriety wasn't easy. One day when she had a breaking pointing and was ready to walk out of treatment, a staff member hugged her and held her saying, "I don't think you really want to leave." Carmen didn't want to leave. She completed her 90 day Residential Treatment and then spent another year at Casa in Sober Living.

Carmen has been sober for 20 years. Today she has a wonderful life and family and is about to begin a credentialing program to become an alcohol and drug counselor. Her story of survival and redemption is truly inspirational.

# The Big Sisters Walk for Recovery



Clockwise: Heather Wall, David Ripley, Cynthia Schick and Myriah Rogers.

The big sisters of Las Estrellitas raised \$2,000 for the residents of Casa de las Amigas through their Walk-for-Recovery on Saturday, March 14, 2015.

The Las Estrellitas members, Casa sober living participants, residents, alumni, family members and staff all joined together for the 3.5 mile walk around the Rose Bowl to support the residents of Casa. Casa treated everyone to t-shirts, donuts, coffee and pizza to celebrate the Walk.

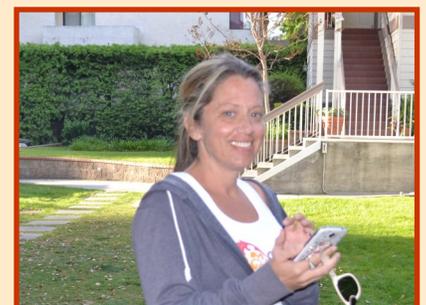
All of the proceeds from the Walk-for-Recovery will be used to provide the women of Casa with entertainment and relaxation, which helps them to bond, form friendships and find support.

Las Estrellitas means “little stars” in Spanish and the star that shined most brightly during the Walk-for-Recovery was Casa’s IOP Program Manager, Cynthia Schick. Cynthia secretly

sponsored every resident in the house contributing \$500 to support their journey to sobriety!

Las Estrellitas is more than 500 women strong—all alumni of Casa de las Amigas. Throughout the year, these big sisters join together to raise funds to provide the women of Casa with entertainment, such as movie nights, games, and even resume classes to assist them when they leave Casa. The next big event they are planning is a bar-b-que picnic and games for the Spring Fling.

While the events planned and organized by Las Estrellitas are meant to provide opportunities for recreation, some of the women of Las Estrellitas believe they benefit from organizing to support Casa’s participants. Tina Fox explained it this way, “giving back what was so freely given to you can help to build confidence, self-esteem and a sense of worth.”





NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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## Casa de las Amigas

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## Planned Giving

Spring is here and that means filing your taxes, spring cleaning and getting your personal papers in order. You have probably heard that that your will is the most important document that you will ever create, but did you ever wonder why? Did you know that without a will state laws will determine who will receive your assets?

Here are several important reasons that you should keep your will up to date.

1. If you have young children, you can designate the guardian for their future care.
2. You can designate how, when and to whom your assets and properties are distributed. Without a will the state will make those decisions for you.
3. You can reduce (or maybe even eliminate) future estate taxes.
4. You can designate beneficiaries for your personal belongings, such as real estate, family heirlooms, jewelry and art.
5. You can create trusts to provide for your children, spouse and others.
6. You can support Casa de las Amigas and any other charitable cause through a gift in your will, which is simple, flexible and revocable at any time.
7. You can name an executor to manage and settle your estate.

The situations in our lives are constantly changing – keeping your will up-to-date can provide for your loved ones and charitable causes that are most important to you.

If you would like to leave Casa de las Amigas a gift, we can help provide gift planning information to you and your professional advisors at no cost or obligation. Please call Ava Alexandar at 626-792-2770 x 12 for more information.