

# PUENTE *Today*



I want you to know how grateful I am for your support of PUENTE. As the COVID-19 crisis persists, PUENTE has remained laser-focused on continuing to build bridges to education for our students and their families. The way our services are delivered may have changed for now, but our mission remains the same.

PUENTE began the 2020-21 school year with high-quality distance learning and wrap-around services for children, youth, and adults. At the same time, we are preparing for opening our doors again, as soon as it's safe.

Meanwhile, during this 35th anniversary year for PUENTE, our facility renovation is underway, which will seismically upgrade the building and ensure that it is secure, modern, and welcoming for the next 35 years and beyond.

Looking ahead to post-pandemic, data show that low-income communities of color will disproportionately suffer the health and economic consequences of COVID-19. Our high-quality education and support services will be especially needed as we enter into the phases of recovery.

Your continued compassion is more important than ever. Education remains the most powerful tool we have to bring about change. Together, we can move forward into a hopeful future, free of COVID-19 and with equal opportunity for all.

Jerome Greening  
CEO





## Leadership Announcements



PUENTE has announced the appointments of Jerome Greening as CEO and Chun Wong as Board Chair.

Jerome Greening was named CEO in March 2020 after serving as Interim CEO since October 2018. Chun Wong became Board Chair in July 2020 after previously serving as Board Vice-Chair and Board Finance Committee Chair. "Working with my fellow Board members and all of

PUENTE's stakeholders, I am confident that we will position our organization to continue building bridges to education for the next 35 years," said Chun.

*"PUENTE has continued to strengthen its leadership with both of these recent appointments. I know Chun and Jerome will build on PUENTE's 35-year history of offering academic services to children, youth, and adults."*

*— Albert Reyes  
Past Board Chair*



## Student Spotlight: Nelly Escalante



*"Without PUENTE, I would not be as self-reliant as I am now, in terms of moving away from home for college and even choosing a career in medicine."*

*— Nelly Escalante  
College Success Student*

During our summer session, College Success students found resilience during COVID-19. When Nelly Escalante had her summer internship canceled due to the pandemic, PUENTE helped her find meaningful

volunteer work with the American Red Cross as a Blood Donor Ambassador. Nelly has now started her academic year at UC Davis, and her career goal is to become an epidemiologist. "I found a support system at PUENTE in the mentors and the other students. Because of PUENTE's workshops, I feel more confident in my choices," said Nelly.

## Food Distribution

*"The weekly box of food has made such a difference in my family's life. Times are hard right now, and anything helps."*

*— Maria Gonzalez  
Career Skills Student*



Over the summer, PUENTE distributed more than 8,000 pounds of fresh produce to help families stay food-secure. This academic year, we are continuing to distribute groceries every Monday, free of charge. Thank you to our partner Adventist Health White Memorial for your robust support of this program.

## Program Updates

PUENTE Preschool began its first school year as a site in the California State Preschool Program, with expanded capacity to bring early education intervention to neighborhood children. In August, we welcomed our inaugural class of third graders at PUENTE Elementary School, which will continue to add one grade per year until 2022-23, when the school will serve 350 students in grades TK-5. With the support of our hard-working teachers and staff, PUENTE Elementary had a 98% attendance rate for the start of this academic year, even during this time of distance learning.

PUENTE College and Career is delivering weekly workshops for over 200 high school students and monthly workshops for over 50 college students. PUENTE Adult Education is adding offerings to meet community demand, with new courses such as The Family Success Initiative – Parenting and ESL.







## PUENTE Named 2020 Top-Rated Nonprofit

This designation, awarded by GreatNonprofits, is based on the rating and number of reviews that PUENTE received from volunteers, donors, students, and family members.

The GreatNonprofits Top-Rated Awards are the only awards for nonprofits determined by those who have direct experience with the charities – as donors, volunteers and recipients of aid.



*"I am a parent and student at this school, and I am so happy for the services. I can drop off my son at school and go upstairs to my computer class. My child is learning and growing, and I am too. There is no other school like this in East LA. Thank you PUENTE. I don't know what I would do without you." -Mgarcia11486*



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