



# La Voz de Esperanza

June 2016  
vol. 29 Issue 5

**Editor** Gloria A. Ramírez  
**Design** Elizandro Carrington

### Contributors

Mario Bravo, Meredith Clark, Deena González, Sarah Gould, Donna Guerra, Araceli Herrera, Lydia Otero, Jo Reyes-Boitel, Randi Romo, Hunter Sosby

### La Voz Mail Collective

Alicia Arredondo, Sara DeTurk, Pauline Enriquez, Mary Esperiqueta, Araceli Herrera, Heather Gayle Holdridge, Blanca Hurley, Beatriz Llamas, Gloria Lozano, Christian Martínez, Rachel Martínez, Ray McDonald, Lucy & Ray Pérez, María Reed, Blanca Rivera, Blanquita Rodríguez, Bernard Sánchez, Daniel Sánchez, Guadalupe Segura, Roger Singler, Elva Treviño, Helen Villarreal

### Esperanza Director

Graciela I. Sánchez

### Esperanza Staff

Imelda Arismendez, Elizandro Carrington, Elisa Pérez, Gianna Rendón, René Saenz, Susana Segura, Amelia Valdez

### Interns

Anastasia Christilles, Elena López, Paz García, Natalie Rodríguez, Hunter Sosby

### Conjunto de Nepantleras

#### -Esperanza Board of Directors-

Rachel Jennings, Amy Kastely, Jan Olsen, Ana Lucía Ramírez, Gloria A. Ramírez, Rudy Rosales, Tiffany Ross, Lilliana Saldaña, Nadine Saliba, Graciela I. Sánchez, Lillian Stevens

- We advocate for a wide variety of social, economic & environmental justice issues.
- Opinions expressed in La Voz are not necessarily those of the Esperanza Center.

### La Voz de Esperanza

is a publication of

**Esperanza Peace & Justice Center**  
922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212  
210.228.0201 • fax 1.877.327.5902

[www.esperanzacenter.org](http://www.esperanzacenter.org)

Inquiries/Articles can be sent to:  
[lavoz@esperanzacenter.org](mailto:lavoz@esperanzacenter.org)  
Articles due by the 8th of each month

### Policy Statements

\* We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.

\* All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

## Todos Somos Orlando

Sólo le pido a Dios  
que el dolor no me sea indiferente,  
que la reseca muerte no me encuentre  
vacío y solo, sin haber hecho lo suficiente.

—León Geico

All I ask of God  
is that the pain not make me indifferent  
that a desiccated death not find me  
empty and alone, without having done  
enough...

As we approach our 30th anniversary, I question myself: *Is the work we do at Esperanza to promote peace and social justice, to respect cultures and the environment, and to empower disenfranchised communities enough? Do we as a peace community, social justice community, environmental justice community do enough? Will we ever achieve our dream—of a world where everyone has civil rights and economic justice, where the environment is cared for, where cultures are honored and communities are safe?*

The massacre of 49 people at the Pulse LGBTQ night club in Orlando by a “lone gunman” reminds me of so many killings in recent years: On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik, bombed government buildings in Oslo killing 8 people and took a ferry dressed as a policeman to Utøya island, the site of a camp for Worker’s Youth League where he shot and killed 69 people, mostly youth. He was motivated by a deep-seated hatred of Islam and anti-immigrant sentiments. In 2016 Breivik had converted to Nazism while in prison.

The Orlando killer’s motives were homegrown in the U.S. seemingly motivated by extremist Muslim groups including ISIS. However, he targeted a gay club, specifically on a Latino-themed night. The victims have been described as mostly Latinos and all LGBTQ, however that is wrong. The victims were mostly but not all queer and mostly of Caribbean origin — Dominicans, Cubanos and mostly Puertorriqueños. There were Mexican nationals also but all victims were termed “American citizens”. Some of the victims were black, but not all black Latinos. Finally, the victims are never referred to as “queer people of color” Even in tragedy, our peoples’ identities become erased.

When I attended the vigil in San Antonio, I was struck by references to Orlando being “an attack on America”— creating an us (or U.S.) vs. them dichotomy. Earlier, the speaker who uttered these words had declared solidarity with the Muslim community decrying Islamophobia. The LGBTQ community in every tribute wrapped itself in the American flag, albeit the rainbow U.S. flag. It is this nationalism that consciously or unconsciously keeps us in collusion with xenophobic sentiments though we may not think so.

We must stretch our minds beyond our own self-xenophobia and as Susan Guerra, a founder of Esperanza who had lived in Norway for nearly 30 years said: *The Norwegian word for xenophobia, fremmedfrykt, translates to stranger fear or foreign fear... It is part of our psyche as biological and social beings. This unknown, this strangeness, this foreign is what threatens us as human beings; irrational as it may seem in certain circumstances...*

Finally, as the Audre Lorde Project states: “ *We recognize that terrorism is not imported, it is home grown in a culture that is deeply anti-Black, anti-immigrant and anti-queer. It is of a culture where the Christian Right has attempted to pass over 200 pieces of anti-LGBT legislation across the country... “In order to do justice to the victims of Orlando we have to address these problems at their root causes, not their symptoms. While the daily violences of settler colonialism (the continued occupation of indigenous land), of Christian supremacy, of anti-Black policing, of Islamophobia, of criminalization of gender non conformity, of immigrant detention and deportation are never elevated to the status of national tragedy, we must commit ourselves to abolishing these systems if we want to prevent Orlando from ever happening again.”* —Gloria A. Ramirez, editor of La Voz de Esperanza

**ATTENTION VOZ READERS:** If you have a mailing address correction please send it to [lavoz@esperanzacenter.org](mailto:lavoz@esperanzacenter.org). If you want to be removed from the La Voz mailing list, for whatever reason, please let us know. La Voz is provided as a courtesy to people on the mailing list of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. **The subscription rate is \$35 per year (\$100 for institutions).** The cost of producing and mailing La Voz has substantially increased and we need your help to keep it afloat. To help, send in your subscriptions, sign up as a monthly donor, or send in a donation to the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Thank you. -GAR

**VOZ VISION STATEMENT:** La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.