



# La Voz de Esperanza

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## La Voz Mail Collective

...is sheltering at home due to COVID-19 but will return when it is safe. Extra funds are being raised to pay for the folding of La Voz.

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- 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

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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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.



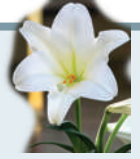
Since pre-Columbian times midwives have assisted mothers in birth.

This month we celebrate *Paseo Por El Westside* on May 6. As usual, articles appeared serendipitously for the May issue of *La Voz de Esperanza* on topics of preservation and cultural practices in the Westside of San Antonio. Lupito Conjunto sent in poems with the theme *Mi Barrio No Se Vende*. Rachel Delgado, a *sabia* of the Westside, sent in her radio script about the effort to drive out birds in Elmendorf Park. We also have an article by Ariban Chagoya on the practice of midwifery, or *How to Pick a Doula*. Interestingly, *parteras* or midwives were common practice in

the Westside of San Antonio. *La Casa de Maternidad* that existed at 315 Matamoros was run by Romana R. Ramos who practiced midwifery in San Antonio in 1911 in el *Barrio Laredito* with other *parteras*. Her daughter took it over for several years more. Antonia Castañeda wrote about this history in *Midwives and Healing Traditions* in the September 2010 issue of *La Voz*. Thanks to all who made this issue possible. Send literary contributions to: lavoz@esperanzacenter.org  
—Gracias, Gloria A. Ramirez, editora of La Voz de Esperanza

## Josephine Merla Martin, presente!

November 28, 1930 – April 1, 2023



“Whenever they paved the streets, we would chew pieces of it like gum. Chapapote. My brother would touch the fuse box and all of us would hold hands and see how long we could hold on. (laughs) We followed the mosquito truck, playing in the cloud of DDT.”

—Still Here, Homenaje al Westside de San Antonio

To look at Josie, one would never guess that her roots were humble and that she grew up poor in the Westside of San Antonio. Elegant, and well-spoken, her eyes were kind and compassionate. When she first came to the Esperanza’s *Casa de Cuentos* she was clear about her mission: she felt that she had deprived her daughter and granddaughter of knowing who they were and where they came from. She met with other elders at *Casa de Cuentos* for pláticas and *cafecitos* sharing memories of the Westside that evolved into the *Corazones de Esperanza* with the specific goal of sharing common cultural practices including recipes of foods they enjoyed as they grew up. Sharing their photos evolved into the project *Fotohistorias del Westside* with photo banners hung throughout the barrio telling the stories of Westside families. Josie was central to it all—she was one of the *sabias* of the group, transmitting and caring for the cultural capital of the Westside. Her only daughter, Cynthia Spielman became a key figure in neighborhood politics and her granddaughter, Katie Merla Watson became an Associate Professor of Mexican American Studies at the *University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*. Josie’s mission to claim her heritage and share it with her family was completed when she was one of the stars of the book and performance of *Still Here: Homenaje al Westside de San Antonio*. Her presence will continue to be felt at Esperanza’s *Paseo Por El Westside* and at the *Peace Market* where she made international friendships. She will be missed but always remembered. Now she has “*un rinconcito en el cielo*” with her beloved ancestors. The Esperanza staff, board and Buena Gente express our gratitude to Josie’s familia and we grieve her passing with them. May she rest in peace/ Que en paz descanse.



Josie and her daughter Cynthia

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VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-voiced 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.