

## Padre of the Month

*Stories of Inspiration and Success from our Parent-Child Education Program*



### Julio Cruz

Julio was sitting on a park bench watching his son, Ethan on the playground when he discovered AVANCE-Austin. He met a mother who told him about a program offering parenting and child education, English classes and community resources. He was immediately inspired.

The classes offered so much to the woman and her child and he wanted the same opportunity to attend. However, he was reluctant to apply since his wife worked during the day and he wasn't sure if the program accepted men. Eventually he called and was surprised when the teacher told him fathers were indeed welcomed and in fact, highly encouraged to attend.

On the first day of the program in September, Julio was nervous to be the only man among a room full of women. He wasn't sure if he belonged, but knew that he wanted the best for Ethan. As he continued to

attend more classes, the fear began to disappear. He realized that being the only father in his class at Perez Elementary could inspire others in his community to become more involved with their children. When another father asked him why he was sewing educational toys for Ethan, Julio told him how important it is for fathers to be involved in their children's learning and that it is best for both mothers and fathers to have an equal role.

"There's always time for TV and going out; but there's also always time for children," he explained about dedicating time. Ethan is now 2 years old and loves learning in his early childhood classroom. "Ethan le gusta jugar afuera en los parques, caminar, explorar. El es muy curioso." *"Ethan likes to play outside at parks; he likes to walk and explore. He is very curious."* Julio describes his son.

After he graduates from AVANCE, he would like to continue inspiring more fathers to help their children succeed and to volunteer for next year's program. For Ethan, he hopes to always continue learning and be as involved throughout school.



### Learning made with love

#### Making toy felt boxes, or "cajitas de franela"

It's a bright and early morning at school and the parents are huddled at their worktables with cigar boxes, pieces of colorful felt material, busy hands, and laughter. This is what AVANCE-Austin's signature Educational Toy-making Class looks like and parents are eager to teach their children with the handmade toys made with love.

In January, Educational Toy-making instructor, Maria, helped parents make felt boxes, or "cajitas de franela" to teach children how to classify clothes, shapes and identify animal sounds.

If you have a cigar box, felt material, colored paper, scissors, and glue on hand, you too can make your own cajita de franela! It's so simple:

1. Outline the inner lid of the cigar box with felt and with colored paper; draw an outline of two bodies with faces to paste onto the lid.
2. Next, divide the box into 3 separate compartments: One for clothes cutouts, the other for animal cutouts, and the third for various shapes made of felt.
3. Last, attach your cutouts to the bodies and around inner lid. Enjoy with your little one!



Gloria is eager to teach son, Juan new words using her felt box.



# Marie's Corner

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not,” says our favorite children's book author, Dr. Seuss . Well, thanks to all of our generous



they graduate in June. Beginning in the fall, we will start our dual-generation parent and child education classes at the Allan Early Childhood Center. Co-locating at the Center are Child Inc., The Literacy Coalition's PALS Program, AISD Parent Support Specialists, and starting in the fall, AISD Pre-k classes for 3 year-olds...with more services to come. We will continue to raise the funds needed to set up stimulating, inspiring, and friendly classrooms for

infants, toddlers, and parents throughout spring and summer.

supporters who care, things are getting done around AVANCE-Austin!

In January, we partnered with AISD and Austin Voices for Education to secure a permanent location for our program. You can now find our administrative and program offices at the former Allan Elementary School in East Austin. After assessing the best way to use the former school, the surrounding community declared the best use to be a center for early childhood development and parenting support.

Speaking of caring a whole awful lot, remember to visit Amplify Austin's website at [www.amplifyatx.org](http://www.amplifyatx.org) and look for AVANCE during this 24-hour period of giving from 6:00 p.m. March 5 to 6:00 p.m. March 6. You will be inspired by the 6 groups of AVANCE parents who have each created teams to spread the word about AVANCE. Visit our website at [www.avance-austin.org](http://www.avance-austin.org) and like our FaceBook page at [www.facebook/AvanceAustin](http://www.facebook/AvanceAustin). Be sure to watch the leaderboard. Go Team AVANCE!

Our current participant families will continue to attend classes in one of our six locations in the community until

## A New Home for AVANCE-Austin



Exciting changes are happening for the 2015 new year! We are happy to announce that our main office has moved to the new Allan Early Childhood Center (formerly Allan Elementary), which will give us the opportunity to expand our program and outreach in the community to serve more Austin families.

Parent-Child Education classes will continue on our current campuses through June 30, 2015 with our new classes beginning at Allan in September 2015.

**Physical Location:** 4900 Gonzales Street, Austin, TX 78702 (East wing; Rooms 110-117)

**Mailing Address:** 745 Mansell Avenue, Austin, TX 78702

**Main telephone:** 512-414-6127

## AVANCE-Austin Board of Directors

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## Thank you for your support!

## AMPLIFY AVANCE-AUSTIN

AVANCE-Austin appreciates gifts from the following supporters from **December 1, 2014** through **January 31, 2015**.

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**March 5th & 6th**  
**Mark your calendars!**

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

On March 5th and 6th, you have the tremendous opportunity to support early childhood and parenting education in your community through Amplify Austin, a city-wide fundraising event where you can give back to the community you love. During 24 hours, AVANCE-Austin hopes to raise \$20,000 to help purchase supplies and furniture for our new location.

### Schedule your donation for AVANCE-Austin today!

1. Check out our Amplify Austin page at [www.amplifyatx.org/AvanceAustin](http://www.amplifyatx.org/AvanceAustin)
  2. Make the gift that is meaningful to you by clicking, "Donate Now"
  3. Tell others and spread the message by sharing on social media: **#AmplifyATX** and **#AmplifyAVANCE**
- Becoming an AVANCE-Austin fundraiser is easy and fun! Contact [dglasgow.aus@avance.org](mailto:dglasgow.aus@avance.org) for more information.
  - Stay tuned for more Amplify info on Facebook and Twitter [@AvanceAustin](https://twitter.com/AvanceAustin).

## A Joyful Holiday Celebration



For more: [www.flickr.com/AvanceAustin](http://www.flickr.com/AvanceAustin) All photos by Vendima Diaries Photography

On December 19, our families celebrated the holidays with our annual Holiday Party at the Family Life Center of the First United Methodist Church. Over 300 children and parents attended to celebrate with entertainment, crafts, a warm meal, and gifts donated from Blue Santa. The children enjoyed face-painting, pictures with Santa Claus, singing along to "Feliz Navidad" and even meeting the clown, Payaso Alam-Brito!

Our deepest gratitude to all our volunteers and the following businesses:

**Black's BBQ Austin**  
**Courtney Morton**  
**Sweetish Hill Bakery**  
Amanda Silva of **Vendima Diaries Photography**

**Payaso Alam-Brito**  
**Panera Bread**



## Volunteer Spotlight



Jennifer King always arrives with enthusiasm and an eagerness to help. In December, she helped with a wide range of activities, including organizing the office, decorating for and helping with the Holiday Party. She contributes greatly with her creativity, dedication and smiles. Mil Gracias, Jennifer!

We are always looking for individual and group volunteers:  
If you are interested, please call Daphne at 512-414-6125.