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Our thanks to all!

New leadership is forthcoming in *La Luz Hispana* by early June. Sister Carmen Hernandez, the executive director since its inauguration 5 years ago, was elected president of the Sisters of the Presentation of Dubuque, Iowa. This religious congregation of Catholic Sisters has some 100 members with its motherhouse in Dubuque, Iowa. The congregation has specialized in education at all levels, in the Midwest and various other states and in rural Bolivia.

The office of Sister Carmen and her counsel will be centered in Dubuque but encompasses the 22 countries that make up the International Presentation Association. Sister Maura will be retiring from *La Luz Hispana* and has plans to do a research study of the early Guarani Indians with whom she worked in Bolivia.

The Presentation Sisters of Dubuque during their end-of-year chapter

proceedings, defined their charism as that of radical hospitality in kinship with Earth and all people, this in all relationships, especially with people made poor. It is foreseen that this charism will continue to characterize *La Luz Hispana* as an aggregate of the Presentation Sisters and be adopted by partners and associates in Hampton, aptly known as the heart of Franklin County.

Before inaugurating *La Luz Hispana*, Sister Carmen served as the Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for Mercy Medical Center in Mason City and later in *Caminando Juntos*, a Hispanic service center established by the Aberdeen Presentation Sisters in Sioux Falls, SD. Sister Maura McCarthy joined the mission in its emerging stage as associate director. She had recently returned from over 30 years of missionary service in Bolivia and was eager to put her language and social experience to the service of the Latino immigrants of Northcentral Iowa.

After their arrival in 2012, Sisters Carmen and Maura spent their first months exploring Hampton and the Greater Franklin County area. They visited, not only the Latino families, but also the businesses, agencies and service organizations attending the area.

Lee and Joyce Blum offered their building, a former law chambers, as a site for the new center. Its inauguration took place in March of 2013.

La Luz Hispana began English classes immediately after moving in and, in partnership agencies of Hampton, offered orientation classes for immigrants regarding the educational system, traffic laws, the financial system, renting and owning real-estate, and other topics vital to newcomers.

The Sisters discovered the need for interpretation services for law offices, insurance companies, banks, dentists, law enforcement, social service agencies, the court house and other businesses. Translation services were needed for birth and

marriage certificates, divorce proceedings, church homilies, bulletin notices or columns and notices in public places.

Transportation was often needed for medical and dental appointments, for immigration appointments, visa and citizenship interviews, and law office appointments.

The staff helped negotiate social services, assisting immigrants to fill out applications such as apostilles, passports, medical assistance, permission for citizen children to travel with relatives or friends, and serves as notary publics when required.

One of the great successes of *La Luz Hispana* came as the result of a proposal by Mayor Brook Boehmler to begin citizenship classes for qualifying immigrants. Berry Johnson was inducted as the writer of a successful project to the Franklin County Community Grant for the teaching materials and a dozen Hampton residents volunteered their services in response to the article in the Hampton Chronicle. Some are retired or active teachers or are other professionals, generously donating their expertise and time. To this date, five have successfully passed the 100-question citizenship exam, as well as the writing and speaking quiz and are or will be sworn in as new United States citizens. Congratulations to the students and to their tutors!



The mission of *La Luz Hispana* will continue under the leadership of a new executive director; the search and consequent employment is currently in full process with several promising applicants. Aimee Hanson, the communications and project director, plans to remain in this role so that the efforts of the center will continue without interruption.

Sister Carmen stresses that the relationship of *La Luz Hispana* with the Hampton and Greater Franklin County area is essential to its success. This includes the Latin community, the businesses, law enforcement and the educational community. She states that a prerequisite for the new executive director is a heart for persons on the margins, especially the Latin community. The new director will also need to be an efficacious fund raiser and a creative promotor of successful partnerships in the Greater Franklin County area.

Sister Maura highlighted the delightful response experienced by the staff of *La Luz Hispana* over these years in the Hampton area. The welcoming and accommodating spirit of persons in the banks, law enforcement, businesses, courthouse, post office, educational and other service agencies have made our work satisfying and particularly agreeable, and why not say it, departure painful!

GRAN FESTIVAL:

Please join us this year on June 9, 2018 in Bandshell Park from noon to 10 PM. Gran Festival is an annual fundraiser for La Luz Hispana. www.granfestivalnorthiowa.com.



La Luz Hispana is a 501c3 non-profit organization that relies on donations. If you would like to help keep this initiative alive by donating:

Make checks payable to:

La Luz Hispana
116 First Ave. NW
Hampton, IA 50441

All donations are tax-deductible.
Thank You.

Sister Carmen Hernandez, PBVM

Sister Maura M. Lashby, PBVM

Aimee Hanson

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facebook

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webpage

www.laluzhispana.org

hours of operation

Monday, Wednesday

1:00-7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.