For 20 years the East Central Ministries’ community has lived, prayed, worked, loved, cried, and celebrated in our International District neighborhood. You are a part of our community! Come connect, remember, and celebrate 20 years of being together!

On Saturday, November 9 from 1:00-4:00pm we will hold an open house with food, pictures, and neighborhood stories. Please bring your pictures and stories!

A reflection from a young leader in our ECM community after the tragic mass shooting in El Paso, TX that targeted our Mexican neighbors and deeply affected our community.

**sometimes we forget** how privileged we are
migrant families fear for their lives due to the recent ICE raids
children being kept in cages away from their families and friends
all due to wanting to have the American dream
but what is the American dream?
what does America stand for?
what was America built on?
as citizens we must realize the struggle and hardship people go through to have a better life
to live the American dream
crossing rivers and oceans to have freedom
but how sad is it that instead of being greeted with open arms they are greeted by guns and racism
how sad is it that even American citizens have to fear for their lives because of the so many mass shootings we’ve had over the past three years
but the bigger question is,
how do we fix it?
how do we truly make America good for all?
what can we do as a community to change?

—Danielle Pedigo
“Todos somos amiguitos nos vamos a cuidar y a respetar”

“We are here to be friends, care for each other, and respect one another.” This is the preschool co-op’s theme— the kids recite it together at the beginning of each day.

In the **pre-school co-op**, parents are an active part of the program, which runs four mornings a week. The parents set schedules so one or two parents are there each day to assist and help Itzel Ceballos, ECM’s youth manager. The parents also learn how to carry on their child’s education at home. Itzel reflects, “The parents are very involved and united—I’m challenged and encouraged at how they care for and support one another. They are quick to give their time, money, and help, and we have celebrations for every event and holiday! The parents see how much the kids are learning; they play, but they also learn— two kiddos will go to Kindergarten this fall knowing how to read and write! They learn the days and the months and how to sound out words, but they also learn how to be friends, care for and respect each other.” May we all learn from and model this wise and simple dicho (saying): todos somos amiguitos nos vamos a cuidar y a respetar!

**ECM’s preschool co-op is a free program:** many thanks to the parents for contributing their time and energy, and to our thrift store, The Common Good, for helping raise support!

At East Central Ministries, we use the word co-op a lot: we have a food co-op, a housing co-op, and now a pre-school co-op. **Co-op = cooperative = working together.** “Owned and run jointly by members, who share the profits or benefits” is Webster’s second definition of cooperative. Well organized co-ops are a tangible way to work together with our community, learn from each other, and practice justice and compassion in our neighborhood.
The words “thank you” often don’t seem sufficient, but we are very grateful for Becky Johnson’s dedication to ECM and our community. She has been on staff since 2007—listening to, supporting, guiding, mentoring, and showing up for families, kids of all ages, and young adults. She will remain in Albuquerque, living in the International District, and will be beginning new adventures and ministry involving martial arts and mindfulness. We look forward to partnering in the future. Thank you, Becky, and blessings on your journey!

The Durans and Becky. Paulina and Ivette ran our summer youth program. All the Durans have been a part of ECM’s youth programs for many years and now are part of determining what the future looks like for ECM’s youth program.

The summer youth program helped plant a medicinal herb garden at the La Mesa Garden Park. The kids received informal training on medicinal/native plants, as well as participated in an impromptu needle pick-up. Much was learned and practiced.

Growing Awareness Urban Farm

ECM’s urban farm continues to grow steadily each year. Most of what the farm does is grow seedlings and flower baskets that are sold in the spring to generate income for the ministry; this year we grossed $39,000!

But it’s not just about the money. Growing Awareness is an important part of ECM’s mission—living out justice and compassion in our neighborhood—as we help create green spaces, demonstrate how to care for trees, collect rain water, cultivate pollinators, and plant edible and healing landscaping. We work together with others in our neighborhood and city growing food, planting trees, and teaching and practicing food justice.

For information about food justice, check out Project Feed the Food, a part of the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP). These folks are doing great work. This season we gave them some seedlings for their garden (right), and as a thank you they helped us weed the La Mesa Garden Park (left)!
Thanks also to the church groups that sold plants through their fundraisers! Groups pay us a wholesale price, sell at retail cost, raise money for their group, and have a partnership with ECM!

*Catholic Worker House * La Mesa Presbyterian * 1st Presbyterian * Grace * Albuquerque Mennonite * All Saints Lutheran * Immanuel Lutheran * St Marks Episcopal * First Congregational United Church of Christ * Christ Lutheran * First Unitarian * New Covenant * Heights Cumberland Presbyterian * ABQ Christian School * Foothills Fellowship * St. Stephens United Methodist * Sandia Presbyterian * St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal *

Albuquerque Nurseries that sell our plants: *Rehms * Plants of the Southwest * Jackalope * Jericho * Osuna *

A special thanks to Rehms and Plants of the Southwest—they especially value and promote our locally grown seedlings!

A huge well done and thank you to Josiah Kelley who completed his Eagle Merit Badge at ECM with the help of his boy scout troop. Josiah led the efforts with many volunteers to install gutters and then capture the water off our warehouse roof into two 1500 gallon donated water tanks. This harvested rain water will help provide consistent irrigation for ECM’s front yard edible landscape and future medicinal herb garden between the clinic and warehouse. Thank you Josiah (and parents Matt and Kristen)!

ECM has been collaborating with Tree New Mexico and other neighborhood partners to plant trees in the International District. With a city grant facilitated by Councilman Pat Davis, we helped plant 100 trees and gave away 100 more trees in the South San Pedro side of our community on April 27. On September 14, we will plant 100 trees in our Trumbull Village corridor and give away 100 more. ECM’s greenhouse property turns into an instant forest for one night as 200 trees are staged there before teams of volunteers help plant them in their new homes. If you are interested in volunteering to help plant trees on the 14th, contact Betta at beisenberg@treenm.com.

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