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FEATURED

Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center holds birthday fundraiser

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Executive Director Matthew Peters, right, and Estela Ramirez, assistant director, outside the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center's building at Street in Easton. The nonprofit is holding a special birthday fundraiser.

PHOTO BY BRAD DRESS

EASTON — The Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center is hosting a special fundraiser to raise at least \$10,000 to renovate its property, expand community services and pay operating costs.

The Easton-based community organization, which has served more than 4,000 immigrants and non-English speakers since its inception in 2012, announced the fundraiser ahead of its eight-year anniversary on Aug. 23.

The fundraiser will run until Sept. 23, and anyone interested in contributing should donate online at <https://fundly.com/chesmrc-s-8th-anniversay>.

ChesMRC had raised \$4,018 from 24 contributors as of Aug. 28, and will receive a matching donation of \$5,000 from another donor once donations reach that level.



Lorelly Solano, advancement manager in charge of the fundraiser, said she expects to surpass the \$10,000 initial goal, as “the love always comes at the end.”

“We have received an outpouring of support already,” Solano said. “When people see the need, they are always very generous and in ways that leave us pleasantly surprised.”

The center has expanded its services during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many employees working overtime to assist immigrants across the Eastern Shore — leaving the organization with little time or money for its own operating costs. The special fundraiser is a crucial step to raise much-needed additional money as it celebrates its birthday, she said.

The extra funds will primarily assist the nonprofit in paying for its mortgage, “the bulk of which is unpaid,” according to the fundraising website. The nonprofit moved into its current home at 331 Dover Street in 2019.

Donations have poured in from across the state.

George Whitehead, a retired sociology professor at Salisbury, said he first met the organization when an AmeriCorps program he founded at the university partnered with ChesMRC. He was amazed at its work in the community and decided to donate \$25 to the fundraiser.

“I had a really good experience with them, and thought I’d return the goodwill,” he said. “I support community efforts, and I think it’s good for them to have a permanent home.”

With the raised money, ChesMRC will also expand storage room, create a virtual learning center and grow an outside garden.

The virtual center will assist the immigrant community significantly, since children are learning online and adults have increased remote meetings and online work because of COVID, said Matthew Peters, executive director.



“We always talked about getting these families internet — now we don’t have a choice,” Peters said. “We are in a technological age, where we need to set up meetings (online) with attorneys and doctors. This isn’t going to go away, even if COVID does.”

ChesMRC is the largest immigrant-serving organization on the Eastern Shore. In just eight years, it has grown from a one-man operation in a small room at the Oasis Easton church to nine staff members and a full board of directors.

Because of its influence, the organization is assisting county governments with contact tracing for immigrant communities during the pandemic, in addition to helping immigrants with daily needs, such as obtaining citizenship and finding employment.

Still, ChesMRC gets most of its funding from individuals, friends and board members, making fundraisers vital to its growth and survival. The organization holds two fundraisers every year, in the winter and spring.

For Peters, the organization has come a long way in eight years. He said they were in need of a celebration.

“If you come and see what we are doing daily, and what we’ve achieved in eight short years, it’s to commemorate that,” he said. “It’s celebrating the work we’ve done and ensuring that this work continues.”

