



# The Rotations

Jan 22, 2014

SANTA ANA NORTH ROTARY 1959

SANTAANANORTHROTARYCLUB.ORG

## Nati's House

### PRESIDENT'S REMARKS.

Today our speaker was Nati Alvarado, executive director of Nati's House.

Nati's House, a shelter for young adults under the age of 22, opened in January 2014 in Santa Ana with the support of Alvarado's church and in collaboration with Orangewood Children's Home, an emergency shelter for neglected and abused children.

He was assisted by his son, also Nati Alvarado (III). Nati's House is the most recent of Nati's community service undertakings.



### COMMITTEE UPDATES

#### Fundraiser – Lisa

Assistance League of Santa Ana inquired if Rotary would like to team up with them in doing Taste of Santa Ana. Lisa and Ali met with Assistance League and shared the outcome of the meeting. Overall, the partnership sounds promising, but additional discussions to occur week of Jan 20.

#### Membership - Ali

Club social/mixer will occur Feb 19 in lieu of lunch meeting at Antonello starting at 5:30pm. Punchbowl invite will go out this week.



Wednesdays 12:15 PM  
Antonello Ristorante  
3800 S Plaza Drive, Santa Ana, CA

### UPCOMING SPEAKERS

- Jan 29, Children of Nations Community Service Event @ Century HS, 12:15 – 2:00pm
- Feb 5, Tony Rakaucs, District Attorney
- Feb 12, Matt, Craft Talk
- Feb 19, DARK; Club Mixer @ 5:30pm
- Feb 26, Vocal Competition @ Elks Club

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan 20, President's Meeting
- Jan 22, Board Meeting
- Mar 1, District Assembly
- May, District Assembly - Temecula

## Nati's House

Fourteen years ago, the pastor of his church asked Nati to take over for six months or so so he (the pastor at the time) could take a break following the death of his wife. He never returned, and Nati has led the church (in Santa Ana) ever since.

About a year and a half ago, Nati felt led to take over a Santa Ana boxing club, long a community fixture, which had essentially fallen apart following a crime that was committed there. Nati has worked to rebuild the community of the boxing club and recently held a grand re-opening, with strong community support. (They have girls boxing as well as boys, and one of the boys may be on the verge of going pro.)

Nati shared his personal history of drug use, incarceration, recovery program, and education to help us understand why he felt led to take on the challenge of the boxing club and, more recently, felt called to open Nati's House. In the video we saw of youths at the boxing center the recurring themes from the kids' statements were that being there keeps them away from gang activity and helps them learn discipline, persistence, and respect. The boxing club is well established as a place that does not allow any gang activity, affiliation, etc.

Nati has worked with the OC Juvenile detention system, as well as various foster care organizations such as Orangewood. Due to his personal history, he is well positioned to talk with the kids who are most likely to end up "in the system" – the kids who don't go to Kidworks, or Boys and Girls Clubs, or other after-school programs.

### Statistics

- > – Santa Ana has a 60% high school graduation rate. 41% of the parents are not educated beyond 8th grade and less than 10% of the parents hold a bachelor's degree or higher.
- > – In one year in Orange County there are over 36,400 reports of child abuse / neglect / abandonment. The most serious 10% end up at Orangewood. OC has 12,800 children in dependent care
- > – In California, 50% of children in foster care over 24 months have more than 3 placements (and a significant percentage have over 5 placements – meaning, they are moved more than once a year to a different foster home)
- > – 46% of children in foster care do not attain a high school diploma (vs. less than 10% nationwide who do not)
- > – 10% of children in foster care make it to college – and of that 10% ONLY 2% (that is, 0.2% of the total foster population) complete a bachelor's degree.
- > – Upon emancipation (aka "ageing out" of the foster care system at 18th birthday) 65% are homeless – they have nowhere to go. 50% are unemployed within 2-4 years after emancipation.
- > – And in California, 70% of those who serve time in prison have spent time in foster care.

Having had some challenges in his own youth, Nati feels very strongly that these youths need extra care, nurturing, guidance, parenting, in order to have a shot at a successful life. As he put it, they know how to live with rules and structure. To get by in life, they need to know how to impose their own rules and structure, and how to do things independently – like go to the grocery store and back without getting into some kind of trouble along the way.

All that led to the recent establishment of Nati's House, a group home for boys aged out of the foster care system. They have rented a six bedroom house in Santa Ana near 17th x Flower. There is a live-in licensed therapist and will also be another adult "monitor". House rules require the boys to part-time work and/or part-time school. They will have chores and will also receive life skills training. If the program goes well, the landlord is also willing to let Nati rent the two houses on either side of this one (also 6 bedrooms each).

Nati's House has no government funding and will require each resident to pay \$120/week. Recently passed AB12 provides some benefits for those emancipated from foster care. If they remain in a recognized program (Orangewood is supporting Nati's efforts in this area) they receive a stipend as well as financial support for college.

Nati's House has a bare-bones budget of \$3500/month (most of which is the house rent) and welcomes financial support and possibly job opportunities for the residents. Meanwhile they're working diligently and have secured in-kind contributions of some home furnishings as well as materials from Home Depot to do the fix-up work required on the house. Nati, and his friends and parishioners, will supply the labor.

**Their one immediate need is 5 single beds to allow for full occupancy. They don't want bunk beds and if possible would prefer new beds. If you have a contact to contribute those, or you wish to fund one or more, or you know someone who can provide them at a huge discount, please contact Nati, 714-267-7747 or Natis\_house@aol.com**

Nati's son (Nati III) who was also with us, attended Orange Lutheran High School and graduated from a bible college in Puyallup, WA and is led to work with his father.

The  
Rotations

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