



Circle
de Luz

2023-2024

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

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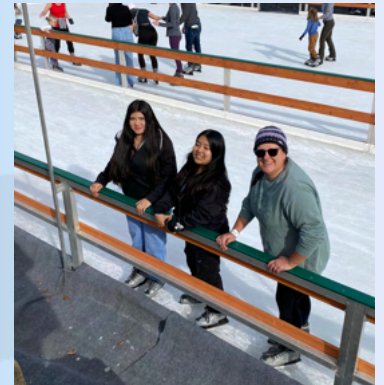
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18

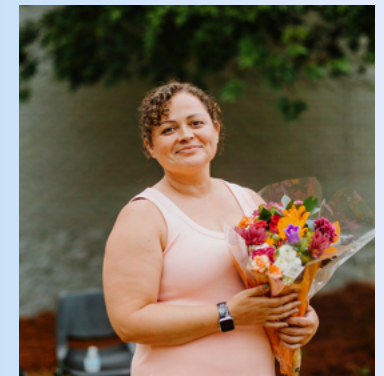
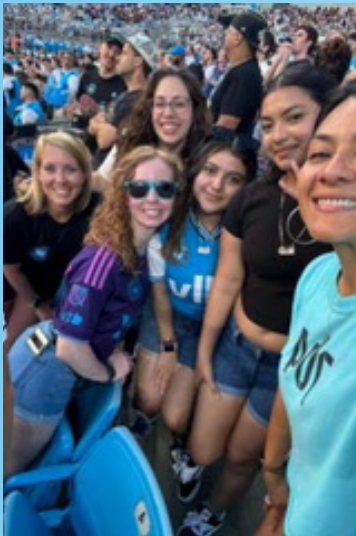
Stories & Contact

Published October 2024



OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2023-2024 school year was eventful for Circle de Luz! We kicked off the year by welcoming a new cohort and commemorating 15 years of service to the Charlotte Latinx community with our Luna Llena Gala. This year, our team had the honor of working with 30 students and over 175 family members. We conducted over 70 programs across four cohorts and traveled more than 1,000 miles to engage with students and families at their homes and schools. As the year came to a close, we proudly saw 100% of our Class of 2024 students graduate from high school and pursue diverse post-secondary educational paths with the support of the Circle de Luz scholarship. We also celebrated the outstanding work of our Case Manager, Xiomara Butler, and welcomed our new Case Manager, Carmen Aguilera. We express our deep gratitude to the exceptional students, families, volunteers, board members, donors, and partners who form the Circle de Luz community. We appreciate everyone who has generously contributed their time and effort to this initiative.



Con cariño,
Circle de Luz



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024

MARY KATHRYN ELKINS | BOARD CO-CHAIR
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COURTNEY MCCREARY | BOARD MEMBER
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XIOMARA BUTLER | CASE MANAGER
CORRIN ZUMBADO CAMPBELL | PROGRAM & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
DEBORAH OSORIO-MATUL | UNCC SOCIAL WORK INTERN
AMANDA MELTON | UNCC SOCIAL WORK INTERN

VOLUNTEERS



CLASS CAPTAINS

BETSY HAUER | CLASS OF 2024
EURALIS FIGUEROA | CLASS OF 2024
ERIKA CARRASCO | CLASS OF 2024
GABRIELA ANDRADE | CLASS OF 2024

ELKA CEDENO | CLASS OF 2025
FRIEDA IBARRA | CLASS OF 2025
JESSICA ROJAS | CLASS OF 2025
KENIA MEDRANO | CLASS OF 2025

MARION PULSE | CLASS OF 2028
KATHRYN MELTON | CLASS OF 2028
STEPHANIE HARDWICK | CLASS OF 2028
YESENIA HERNANDEZ | CLASS OF 2028

KAREN LEGGIO | CLASS OF 2029
LESLEY CHAVEZ | CLASS OF 2029
LUPITA MENDOZA | CLASS OF 2029
MAURA CHAVEZ | CLASS OF 2029



ADELANTE: COLLEGE & CAREER PATHWAYS MENTORS

AMANDA MARTINEZ | 2024
AMANDA MELTON | 2024
BRITTNEY DORR | 2024
DEBORAH OSORIO-MATUL | 2024
FRIEDA IBARRA | 2024
LAURA PEPPER | 2024
MAURA CHAVEZ | 2024
NANCY GALIMI | 2024

ANGELICA CABRERA PAULINO | 2025
ANNALIE GARCIA | 2025
CAMILA CASTRO | 2025
EMILY FERNANDEZ | 2025
LESLIE REYES | 2025
LUZ SOLANO-FLORES | 2025
PRISCILLA MORALES | 2025

MISSION

&

VISION

Circle de Luz radically empowers young Latinas through extensive mentoring, holistic programming, and scholarship funds for further education.

Immersed in an experiential culture of learning, Latinas served by Circle de Luz exhibit resilience, confidence, and authenticity as they complete high school and pursue postsecondary education.



GUIDING BELIEFS & COMMITMENTS

- Every child deserves access to education and the opportunity to pursue her potential.
- Latinas face numerous unique challenges that deserve our community's attention.
- Education is fundamental to personal success.
- Compassionate mentoring facilitates possibility and empowerment.
- Exposure to opportunity matters.
- Cultivating a community of leadership and service creates engaged citizens of the world.
- Supporting our students means embracing and being accessible to their families.
- Measuring impact and evaluating our processes is essential to our success.

2023-2024

BY THE NUMBERS

30
Households



100% of
our Class
of 2024
Students
Graduated!



32
Volunteers

10
College & Career
Workshops



70+
Programs

7
New
Students

14
Study Group
Sessions

6
Family
Programs



32
Programming
Partners

From bonding while baking holiday cookies to learning about mindfulness, healthy daily habits, and conflict resolution, our students had an action-packed year. Students gave back to the community by volunteering with partners like the Latin American Coalition and the Humane Society of Charlotte; attended Broadway performances thanks to Blumenthal's Arts for All Scholarship Program; learned about personal finances and money management through Bank of America's Better Money Habits program; honed their self-defense and situational awareness skills with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department and Martial Arts University; practiced challenging subjects through biweekly study sessions generously facilitated by Progress XChange; and dreamed about their futures through learning experiences with collegiate partners like CPCC, UNCC, and Davidson College.

120

Support requests completed, including referrals and tailored interventions to address gaps in essential needs and services for our students and families

The most requested services:



Mental Health Referrals & Interventions

28



Food Referrals

18



Healthcare Referrals

17

175+
Individuals
Served



We commend the vital family-focused work of Circle de Luz. The way Circle de Luz surrounds families with helpful support and meaningful encouragement stands out among our partners. I cannot say enough how highly I value and appreciate their work in our community. They are moving families toward sustainability in truly holistic ways.

Mark Landon,
Project 658

25
Community
Partners

Our Year in Memories



The programs we participated in have helped us to prepare for college, with the most memorable programs being the UNCC and Queen's campus tours. I have also enjoyed our study groups, which have helped me to improve my knowledge on subjects I didn't understand... I want to thank all the girls from the 2025 class for making me feel safe and allowing me to be myself.

Maria, Class of 2025

RAIN OR SHINE



WE DREAM BIG

#1

overall
favorite
student
program

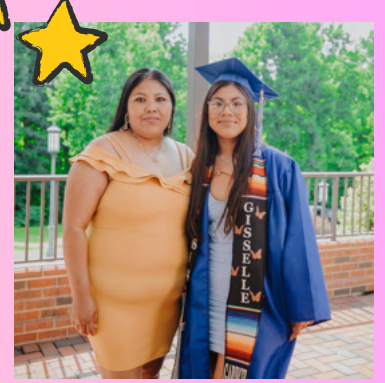


Our annual Run Big Dream Big programming series means more than preparing for a race together; it's a metaphor for the care, community, and support our students engage with as they work toward their big dreams. For the second year in a row, we participated in the Teal Diva 5K for Ovarian and Other Gynecological Cancers in May, earning the award of 2nd Largest Team. Together, we ran and walked to honor the strong women in our lives facing gynecologic cancer battles.

Thank You, Jessica!

Class Captain Jessica Rojas experienced a full-circle moment this year when she ran the 2024 Boston Marathon with Team Bank of America. Jessica ran her first 5K in May 2022 as part of our annual Run Big Dream Big programming series. As a former non-believer in running, Run Big Dream Big helped her find her stride. Through her journey, Jessica aims to inspire others to believe in themselves and their abilities. We are honored that Jessica chose to fundraise for Circle de Luz as part of this incredible journey! Jessica raised \$5,675, which directly supported our Run Big Dream Big program this spring.



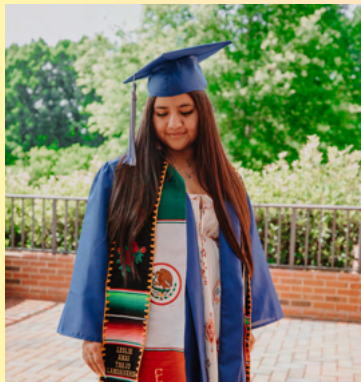


happy graduation

2024



This group consists of eight bright young women, each with their own unique aspirations and dreams for the future. Leslie and Valeria are gearing up to start their Medical Sonography degrees at South Piedmont Community College this fall. Rocio is pursuing studies in nursing and American Sign Language at Central Piedmont Community College. Bridget is set to kick off her Architectural Technology studies at CPCC before transferring to UNCC, while Heidi will be heading to Wingate University for a Bachelor of Science in Public Health. Albany is ready to begin her medical assisting studies at CPCC, Gisselle is heading to the Dental Assistant Academy of North Carolina, and Sayen is considering art school, showcasing her talent through comics on TikTok. We are immensely proud of these exceptional young women and are excited to reconnect with them as alumnae. Although we will miss them dearly, they can always count on their Circle de Luz family for support.



9.7

on a scale of 1-10, how instrumental graduates reported Circle has been in helping them achieve their long-term goals

100%

of graduates achieved a high school diploma or equivalent

88%

of graduates are starting a post-secondary education program in summer or fall 2024

100%

of graduates reported Circle de Luz provided them with a safe adult in their lives



I got called into the office thinking I was in trouble because I had no explanation on why I had to go there. But it turns out I was given the best opportunity any 12-year-old girl could get.

I joined this program back in middle school; it has been a guiding light in my life ever since. From the moment I became part of this group, I felt embraced by a community that truly believed in me and my potential. This program offered me great mentors, new friendships, and countless opportunities to grow. Each experience and each connection I made during these years has played a big role in shaping the person I am today.

Valeria
Class of 2024



CELEBRATING OUR MIJAS CLASS OF 2024

DIANA ALVEAR
GABRIELA ANDRADE
JEN BAND
ALISON BRADLEY
AMY BRITTAIN
MICHELLE BROWNE
LUCY CAMINITI
DAVID CARRASCO
ROXANA I. CARRASCO
ERIKA CARRASCO
AMANDA DEISENROTH
EVAN DUNNAGAN
MARY KATHRYN ELKINS
ANNA FREULER
MARA GLATZEL
ALMA GUZMAN
BETSY HAUER
CAROL S. HAUER
JODI HELMER
MARGARET HENRY
TAMMY HERRMANN
WISTY HOLLEMAN
ALEXANDRA KAVAL
ELLEN KIRBY
MISSY KUYKENDALL

MALONE LOCKABY
MAGDALENA MAIZ-PENA
VANESSA MARTINEZ
JANE AND HUGH MCCOLL
JEREMIAH MCCRORY
NIKKI MOORE
DANIEL MERCADO
JOCELYN NEGRON-RIOS
JEANNE NEUMANN
SHANNON O'GEEN
LAURA HENRY OWANESIAN
ROBIN PRIEGO
LORENA PRIEGO
FRIDA PIANKA
ANGIE PHILLIPS
SANDRA RETTIS
IRENE REYES
MANDY SALLACH
MEG SAWICKI
KATHI STANLEY
COURTNEY STALLMANN
STEPHANIE LEON-SANTIAGO
LISSETTE TORRES
CRYSTAL TROTTER
CYNTHIA SANTANA VERGARA
JULIE AGUIRRE WHITTED
ALLISON REEVE WILSON
REA WRIGHT

Thank You!

We would like to express our profound thanks to the Class of 2024 Mijas who have believed in the mission of Circle de Luz since the early days. Your commitment provided a \$5,000 scholarship and a one-time \$500 stipend for each Class of 2024 Hija! We are so grateful to our donors from all over the world who believe in empowerment and partner with us in this important work.

A special thank you to the Class of 2024 Captains and the Adelante: College and Career Pathways Mentors. Your thoughtful guidance and relentless support of our Hijas and their families has had a long-lasting impact in many lives.

MIJAS

Our Mijas support an individual Circle de Luz class by making an annual donation towards their scholarship fund for each year that the class is in the program. Because of their generosity, each Hija will receive a scholarship of \$5,000 and a one-time \$500 stipend when she completes high school and pursues further education.

Class of 2025

LILIANA ANGEL
JOANNA AVANT
KATE COMPTON BARR
CLARISA BEST
LAUREN BLAISING
MELISSA BROKAW
BLAKE BROOKSHIRE
ELKA CEDENO
MAURA ELGUERA CHAVEZ
SUZANNE CHOMICZEWSKI
CARLA CLEMENTS
ANN MARIE COSTA

DEBBIE DARDEN
MISTY DAVIS
LACEY DELLINGER
PAMELA DYKSTRA
SILVIA ESPINOZA
REBECCA FALLON
KATHARINE FLORES
LUCIA GRIFFITH-ZAPATA
BETSY HAUER
JODI HELMER
MICHELE MILLER HOUCK
LEIGH HUTHER

JENNIFER DE LA JARA
LISA KONSTANDT
HARRIET KESSLER
WENDY MATTHEWS
KENIA MEDRANO
KAY NORRIS
SHANNON O'GEEN
ANDREA OLIVER
JULIA ORLANDO
MAGDALENA MAIZ-PEÑA
YARA QUEZADA
RENEE ROBERSON

JESSICA ROJAS
CLAIRE SCHMIDT
MICHELE SHAUL
COLLEEN THRAILKILL
DANA VANSICKLE
THANH VU
MARY WARE
ANDREA WASH
SALLY WATSON
ANNA WHEELER

Class of 2028

ALLIE ACKERMAN
CORRIN CAMPBELL
LUIS COLLAZO
CHRISTA CONNER NASH-
WEBBER
AMY DIAMOND
ANGELICA DIAZ
EMILY EASON
MARY KATHRYN ELKINS
EURALIS FIGUEROA
ADAH FITZGERALD
MEREDITH FITZPATRICK

TABITHA GARCIA
HEIDI GIFFIN
CLAIRE GREGORY
OXYGEN GROUP
SUZIE GUMM
CARA HACKETT
ASHLEY HARDEE
STEPHANIE HARDWICK
SHANNON HOFF DUARTE
WILLIAM HOUP
ANSLE HUDSON
VIRGINIA JONES

ROSEMARY KLEIN
JULIET KUEHNLE
SUSAN LEATH
CARYN LEE
PATRICE LESLIE
MEGHAN MACIAG
MAGDALENA MAIZ-PENA
CAROLE MARTIN
JOY MELTON
KATHRYN MELTON
ROSIE MOLINARY
LAUREN NEELY

LAURA PEPPER
DZ PRO REALTY
ANA REY
SONYA RITCHFIELD
MEGAN SALVIA
CRISTINA SHAUL
NANCY THIESSEN
BRENT TOLLISON
BRITTANY
WRIGHTENBERRY

Class of 2029

ALEIGH ACERNI
KATHERINE ARRINGTON
JENNIFER ATKIN
CAITLIN BARNES
JEAN STEWERT BERG
ALISIA BERGSMAN
SARAH BOBMAN
ALEXIS BOYCE
WILLIAM BUTLER
LAURA CAPUTO
JENNIFER CARDENAS
YANIRA CASTRO
ENLACE CHARLOTTE
LESLEY CHAVEZ
LORENA CHAVEZ
LEIDA CISNEROS

LUIS COLLAZO
ROSY CRUMPTON
GINA DEL CID
AMY DIAMOND
FAMILY ELGUERA
SANDY ERWIN
NICOLE FORTOSO
JENNIFER FOWLER
BARBARA FREDA
NANCY GALIMI
ANNALIE GARCIA
REBECCA GLAVIN
ANGELICA GLOVER
JUSTINE GRADILLAS
LUCIA GRIFFITH
SANDRA GUERRA

BRENDA HALI
STEPHANIE HARDWICK
JODI HELMER
SHARISSE JOHNSON
TONI JOHNSON
MARY KATHRYN ELKINS
MARIANA KEELAGHAN
ANNA KENNINGTON
HARRIET KESSLER
ROSEMARY KLEIN
SUSAN LEATH
BLAKE LONG
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MICHELLE SERRANO
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CRYSTAL TROTTER
EVANGELIA TSIFTSI
LINA VARELA-GONZALEZ
KARINA VOGEL
JESSICA WEINER
SAYRE WEIR
MARY WILSON
NORMA ZUNIGA

2023-2024 Grant Roll Call

¡Muchas
GRACIAS!

ALLY FINANCIAL \$15,000

ALLY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION \$50,000 (*MULTI-YEAR)

THE CAROLINA PANTHERS \$5,000

CHRIST CHURCH EPISCOPAL CHARLOTTE \$3,773

HISPANIC FEDERATION \$24,000 (*MULTI-YEAR)

MYERS PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH \$10,000

MYERS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH \$1,000

ST PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH \$5,000

TD BANK \$5,000

WOMEN'S IMPACT FUND 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY GRANT \$20,000

INVESTING IN THE MAKERS OF TOMORROW



\$138,773

RECEIVED IN
GRANTS FOR
PROGRAMS,
WRAPAROUND
SERVICES AND
OPERATIONS



\$54,616

RECEIVED FROM
ONE-TIME AND
RECURRING CIRCLE
DE POSIBILIDAD
DONATIONS



\$33,500

GRANTED IN
STUDENT
SCHOLARSHIPS
AND STIPENDS



\$2,000+

INVESTED IN
EACH STUDENT'S
2023-2024 EXPERIENCE
(\$60,000+ TOTAL)

CIRCLE DE POSIBILIDAD & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our Circle de Posibilidad donors and Community Partners support our programming, wraparound services, and operations. Your generosity makes the unique Circle de Luz journey possible for our students and their families every year!

CARMEN ABREU
TIMOTHY ANDERSON
ANDREA AREVALO
VALERIE ARIAS
MARLINA ARRIAGA
WANDA ASHWORTH VALENCIA
LIZ HOLMES BAXTER
PAIGE BIEDERWOLF
JAMIE BLACK
PHILIP BLAISING
JENNIFER BOLES
ALISON BORY
MARIA BOTELLO
DIANA BUSTOS
FAATIMA CAMPBELL
ERIKA CARRASCO
JENNIE CLIFTON
JUAN CONTRERAS JUAREZ
JUAN JOSE CORONA
KENIA CORTES
NANCY COVINGTON
KAT CRAMER
KATHRYN CRAMER
DJ CUTHBERTSON
JENNIFER DANIEL
ASHLEY DEAL
DERRICK DEESE
JORDAN DOLLARD
LISA DUDZIK
MEREDITH EMMETT
PAOLA ESCALONA
ALTON EUBANKS
LOUIS EUBANKS
CARA EVANSON
DELAUREN EVERETT
HOLLIE FELICE
CESAR FERNANDEZ
GELLMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION
ASHLEY FOWLER
BILLY FOWLER
CAROL FOWLER
SHAUN A FRALIN
LUCIA FRANCO
REBECCA GALLARDO
FRANCISCO J GARCIA C
MARIA T GARCÍA CARRERA
DIANA PAZ GARCIA
HECTOR GARCIA
JOSE GARCIA
C G HAMILTON GENSON

KAREN GERMAN
JENNIFER GEYER
MARIA TERESA GONZALEZ GARCIA
DANIELA GONZALEZ
MARGARET GOODE
BARRY GUY
NANCY HELFRICH
JENNIFER AND LOGAN HENDERSON
CHELSEA HIDALGO
PATRICIA MASSEY HOKE
JAMIE HOLADAY
JONATHAN HOLADAY
FRIEDA R IBARRA
RAVIYA H. ISMAIL
LESLIE JOHNSON
HANNAH KAHN
MARIANA UTY KEELAGHAN
EILEEN KEELEY
KENDRA SCOTT
AMY KILBY
JENNIFER KINNEY
SARA KRAMER
NANCY KUYKENDALL
CHRIS LAU
KAREN LEGGIO
RACHEL LEWIS
ARIADNA LOPEZ
MARGIE LUGIBIHL
PAMELA MAHONY
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MANDA MAXWELL
COURTNEY MCCREARY
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KEVIN MEEGAN
ANNIE MERRILL
HOLLY MILANESE
SAGE MILTON
AMY MOFFATT
PRISCILLA MORALES
J DIANE MOWREY
KATHIE MOYER
KELSEY MURRELL
LISA MURPHY NEAL
AARON NEGRON
TERRY OHR
GEORJIMAR ORDONEZ
JESSICA PERIANZA
STEPHEN PHILIPSON
GAZALÉ POORSOLTAN

CHRISTY POPE
ERIKA PRATT
MARION PULSE
TERESA QUESADA
NESTOR RAMIREZ
RAQUEL REICHARD
MANUEL REY
DEBORAH REYNOLDS
SARAH RICHARDSON
FEDERICO RIOS
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ANNA SCOCCIMARO
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STAR SHOENER
FELIZA SKAGGS
LUZ SOLANO
MARY SOTILE
CHARLA SPAIN
BRIONNA SPELLS
ROBERT SPENCER
ELIZABETH STEWART
HANNAH STRACK
JASON STRAUS
CAMILLA STRAZANAC
ELIZABETH STURGILL
LAURA LEE STURM
JUNE TAYLOR
PHILIP TROTTER
JESSICA VARELA
JUAN VARELA
TAMARA VASQUEZ
KIMBERLY WELLS
APRIL WHITLOCK
ROGELIO WILLIAMS
JENNIFER WILLIS
JAMES WORK
DANAAN YO
DANIEL ZAMBRANO
ANNE ZAPPAS

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YANIRA CASTRO
JUAN CONTRERAS
TATIANA AUSTIN COSTELLO
MAURA CHAVEZ
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THOMAS AND JENNY KINNEY
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CARLOS SANCHEZ

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A RECURRING DONOR?

Our Circle de Posibilidad is made up of donors who make a recurring unrestricted gift monthly, quarterly or yearly in support of our mission. The amount is of your choosing but your commitment allows us to plan our finances and allocate resources in the most thoughtful way possible. Use the QR code to sign-up today! Or visit:

www.givebutter.com/supportcircle



Our 15th Anniversary Gala by the Numbers

3
SILVER
SPONSORS



5
BRONZE
SPONSORS



FUNDED BY
OUR SPONSORS



100%

EVENT
PARTNERS

20+
MADRINAS &
PADRINOS

\$88,385.12

TOTAL
FUNDRAISED



260

MEALS SERVED BACK
TO THE CHARLOTTE
COMMUNITY THROUGH
PROJECT658'S 1 TO 1
OUTREACH FEEDING
PROGRAM

400+
HANDCRAFTED
DECORATIONS



23

CIRCLE DE LUZ
STUDENTS



60+
SILENT
AUCTION
ITEMS



250
DULCE
DREAMS
CONCHAS



500+
BALLOONS



ONE
DANCE
PARTY

15TH ANNIVERSARY LUNA LLENA GALA





Our Year in Stories

In The Media



[Circle De Luz paving the path for success for young Latinas](#)

Written by Michelle Boudin
Published by WCNC Charlotte



[College wasn't the plan for this CMS student. Circle de Luz helped her change that.](#)

By Kayla Young
Published by WFAE



[Latina de Carolina del Norte transporta la antorcha ante los próximos Juegos Olímpicos](#)

Written by Jonathan Hernández
Published by La Noticia



[Organización sin fines de lucro celebra 15 años empoderando a jóvenes latinas en Charlotte](#)

Written by Redacción La Noticia
Published by La Noticia

Contact Us



www.circledeluz.org



contact@circledeluz.org

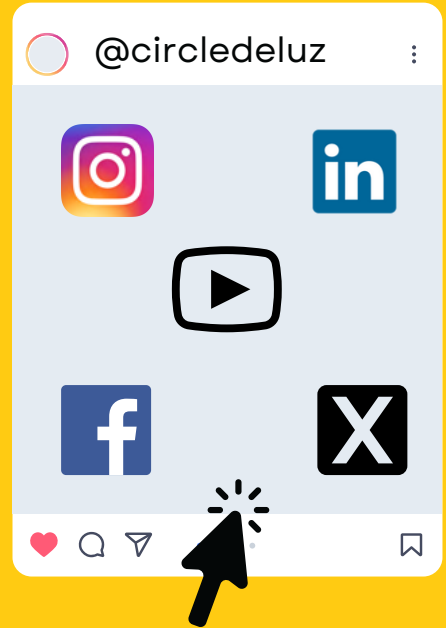


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CREATIVO POTENCIO

Circle
de Luz

Mil
Gracias!

