
2020 FESTA COORDINATOR ANNUAL REPORT

In January 2019, the Board selected Therese Garces to be a Co-Chairperson to the Festa Coordinator. The Festa Coordinator position is responsible to inform and guide the Festa President(s) as they fulfill the duties, tasks, and vision of their Festa.

In February 2019, Therese Garces was selected to be the Festa Coordinator. At this time, Therese requested Michelle Freitas and Cici Stanley be selected as Co-Chairpersons to the Coordinator. The purpose of this change was to establish a “learning curve” for future Festa Coordinators and to tap into Michelle and Cici’s skills. Michelle Freitas has a strong background in planning and organizing events. She is also very familiar with COVID-19 rules and restrictions. Cici Stanley has extensive knowledge and expertise in fundraising with organizations throughout San Diego. President Ricardo da Rosa agreed to this request/change.

Soon we were meeting often with the 2020 Festa Presidents to plan the remaining months of their Festa. Little did we know everything would change in a few weeks. In April, we met with the Festa Family to discuss the status of the COVID-19 virus and its restrictions. Understandably, this was a devastating blow to the Festa Family, as well as the Hall. We knew we needed to put our heads together and make something work for our community.

With the support and leadership of UPSES President da Rosa and his Executive Board, a plan was created. It was decided to host a “*virtual*” Festa Rosary Week that would end with a Drive-thru Festa Soupas Take Out event on Pentecost Sunday. The community embraced this “outside-the-box” Festa. More than \$12,000 was raised in donations! Also, many other Portuguese communities throughout California heard about our event and created similar events for their Festas.

In June 2020, the 2020 Festa Family agreed to host the 2021 Festa. A revised contract was prepared relieving them of any outstanding debt that could occur due to COVID-19. The new contract was granted and approved by the UPSES Board.

As 2020 and the pandemic continued, we met and/or spoke on the phone with the Festa family at least once a week. Together we worked to understand the new challenges we faced and to create “outside-the-box” fundraising ideas for the 2021 Festa.

- **GOLF TOURNAMENT:** Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the 2021 Festa Golf Tournament could not be held.
- **SANTA’S BRUNCH:**
 - Initially the plan was to offer inside dining (two seatings) following COVID-19 guidelines. But, in early November, San Diego was placed in the Purple Tier which banned all indoor dining. We had to quickly create a PLAN B.

- It was decided to offer a “Drive-thru Santa’s Village & Brunch” with a *virtual* auction. PLAN B was very successful! The auction received 55 bidders and brought in \$7,000. With 40 families participating in the Drive-thru Santa’s Village, we saw a profit of almost \$6,000.
- **CRAB FEAST:** With another COVID-19 surge, the Crab Feast has been postponed to early April. Although the cost of crab has increased and we do not know what to expect from the pandemic, we are keeping our fingers crossed that the Crab Feast can occur in April.
- **FESTA BBQ:** The Festa BBQ is a “go!” It will be “drive-thru” and contain some surprises!

Although the future is unknown and issues are still pending, the 2021 FESTA will happen. We are hoping our community will, once again, embrace our Festa and Hall with their generosity and support. Similar to our 2020 Festa, we expect it will not be “normal.” But, we will celebrate and honor the Holy Spirit and Queen St. Isabel, hold our heads up high, and be the leaders we need to be during these trying and difficult times.

To the 2020 Festa Dutra Family – we know your hearts are filled with sadness and disappointment that you were not able to create and celebrate your vision for Festa 2020. We thank you, however, for all you accomplished before the pandemic. Michelle, Cici, and I will do our best to guide and assist you with Festa 2021.

To the UPSES President, Board, and our entire community - it was humbling and beautiful to see the outpouring of love, support, and leadership we received, and continue to receive, from you during this trying time. We look forward to working with you for Festa 2021.

May the Holy Spirit embrace each of you!

Therese Garces

Therese Garces, Festa Coordinator