

Report on MCN's May 8 30th Anniversary Open House
MCN Executive Committee Meeting May 28, 2014
Submitted by Charlotte McCann

MCN kicked off our 30th anniversary May 8 with an Austin Open House, celebrated in typical Austin style. We had a crowd of about 50, including staff, to welcome Marcia Roth, executive director of the Mary Byron Project of Louisville, Kentucky. In a lovely ceremony, she presented a plaque to Adrian Velasquez and Del Garcia honoring MCN with the 2013 Roth Award for our *Hombres Unidos Contra la Violencia Familiar* violence prevention program. Following the award presentation, State Representative Elliott Naishtat read a resolution from the Texas House of Representatives acknowledging MCN for its 30 years as an advocate for health justice. The Texas Senate issued a proclamation signed by state Senator Kirk Watson. Ana DeFrates, the Senator's health policy analyst, represented him.

Clinicians, health advocates, community activists and friends shared in the festivities. They included colleagues from two previous Mary Byron Project award winners – the Texas Council on Family Violence and SafePlace's Expect Respect community outreach program, Congressman Lloyd Doggett's district staff, People's Community Clinic Executive Director Regina Rogoff, staff from the Austin Ventanilla de Salud/Mexican Consulate, and the Workers Defense Project (which made national headlines in The New York Times last year for its success in holding construction companies accountable for paying laborers). Dr. Peta-gay Chen Ledbetter of HOPE Clinic joined us, traveling with her husband from Houston! We were also very happy to welcome former MCN Austin staff members Chris Reynolds, Minden Pletsch and Carmen Retzlaff.

Photojournalist Alan Pogue, whose images document the lives of farmworkers and so many advocates for social justice, documented our celebration with spectacular professional photos. A collage appears on the next page, along with the Texas House resolution and Senate proclamation. We took advantage of Alan's presence to get some great staff head shots as well.

Del's son, Sebastian Garcia, coordinated our beverage table. Tacos & Tequila catered the Open House, offering delicious finger food in the form of quesadillas, grilled steak and roasted veggie skewers; guacamole; salsas; sweet potato, blue corn and regular tortilla chips; and warm artichoke dip with pita slices. (Is your mouth watering yet?)

The Open House was more than a celebration. It was an opportunity to reconnect with allies and colleagues fighting for justice and to strengthen MCN's network with new connections to advance our work.



Photos: (l to r): 1) Health Network Staff: Adrian Velasquez, Yamina Gomez, Ricardo Garay, Diana Villegas, Saul Delgado; 2) Adrian Velasquez and Karen Mountain with Engaging Men “Mis Palabras Pueden Causar Daño A Mi Pareja” poster; 3) Del Garcia, Adrian Velasquez (holding Roth Award), Marcia Roth, Exec. Director of the Mary Byron Project; 4) State Rep. Elliott Naishtat with Karen Mountain holding Texas House Resolution; 5) Austin Office Staff; 6) State Rep. Elliott Naishtat gallantly kissing the hand of Karen Mountain; 7) Del Garcia, Adrian Velasquez, Marcia Roth (presenting Roth Award); Barri Rosenbluth (SafePlace Expect Respect former Mary Byron Project award winner), Charlotte McCann and Marcia Roth. Photos by Alan Pogue.