

STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
**County of Luna**

**Joe “Oleo” Milo, Jr.**  
Chairman, District 1

**Linda Smrkovsky**  
Commissioner, District 2



**R. Javier Diaz**  
Commissioner, District 3

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### **Media Release**

With strong community and volunteer support, staff and clients at Luna County’s Healing House have been hard at work beautifying their facility and making the grounds more comfortable in a project known as Project Green.

The Healing House is a domestic violence shelter operated by Luna County. In addition to providing shelter to domestic violence survivors, the program can also assist clients with petitioning for protection orders through local courts. Beginning in March, volunteers and staff have diligently worked to paint walls, trim and hardware while transforming bare soil into gardens.

“Businesses and community members really stepped forward to help us create an environment more conducive of healing,” Irene Trejo, program director, said. “With their help and generosity, we have created a caring environment that feels more like a home than a domestic violence shelter.”

Gamboa Landscaping, Foxworth-Galbraith, Sun Valley and the Cell Phone Repair Shop all stepped forward with generous business donations totaling approximately \$1,150. The Friends of the Healing House – a volunteer board with its mission to support the Healing House – contributed \$500 toward landscaping. Several individuals also made generous contributions totaling \$300 and staff held a yard sale to raise another \$300.

“Once again, our community has stepped up to support an important program that is unfortunately needed,” Charles “Tink” Jackson, Luna County manager, said. “Luna County is the only local governmental agency funding this important program, so in these times of tightening budgets, all of the extra support from the community is greatly appreciated.”

Aside from financial support, over 450 volunteer hours were provided by 16 volunteers. Yolanda Barajas alone provided 350 volunteer hours from March to July. She took on the task of going to the Healing House every day to water, weed and fertilize the new garden.

“Luna County is happy to support this much-needed program, and I encourage future administrations to continue supporting it,” Commission Chairman Joe “Oleo” Milo, Jr., said. “I am extremely proud of our staff and community for finding ways to improve the facility’s appearance.”

The shelter now grows jalapenos, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, summer squash, peaches, apples and plums. A survivor tree was also planted to honor the strength and resilience of families that stay at the shelter and to symbolize their ability to flourish after hard times.

“Our garden went from all weeds to growing a plentiful variety of beautiful fruits and vegetables,” Trejo added. “We also have six different kinds of flowers and grass growing so the children of our clients can play outside instead of being inside all day.”

The shelter is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services are available for men and women. For more information, contact the Healing House at (575) 546-6539.

#### PHOTO CAPTION

Yolanda Barajas is shown proudly standing alongside the new garden at Luna County Healing House. She put in 350 volunteer hours for Project Green.

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