

## Home Star Inc.: Laura A. Mustari, CEO.

San Diego Business Journal • March 24, 2008 • NONPROFIT profile

### ORGANIZATION

Mission of organization: To ensure the well-being of children by strengthening families and communities.

Telephone: (619) 692-0727. - Web site: [www.home-start.org](http://www.home-start.org) - Founded: 1972.

Milestone: More than 6,000 families served countywide - Annual income: \$6 million.

Board chair: Bryan Lee.

Board members: Evelyn Wiggins, Juniper Sanderson Wiggins LLP; Lynne Fruehling, Red Lizard Creation; Miranda Klassen, Sunrise Bank of San Diego; Paul Davis, Vistage International; Robert M. Traylor, Seltzer, Caplan, McMahon; Evelyn F. Heidelberg, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP; Fiona Mackin-Jha; Nicole DeBerg; Judy Crippen, Blum and Clark, CPA; Anthony Bollotta, Bollotta Entertainment; and Dave Carns, Jobing.com.

Employees: 80.

Volunteers: 50-plus.

Events: Spring gala and fall event: Adopt-a-family/holiday drive.

Wish list: Nonperishable food, children's furniture, toys, disposable diapers, baby care products, children's and adult clothing, gift cards and cash donations.

### OFFICE ISSUES

Recent challenge: The rising costs and recession impacts on fund raising.

Measures of success: That our outcomes meet and succeed objectives for reducing symptoms of trauma in abused children and increasing family safety and stability.

Smartest move: Recruiting four new board members since my arrival at Home Start.

Missed opportunity: Not having enough time in the day to seek all the opportunities that exist to tell our story.

Misconception: Most people are probably not aware that San Diego has the second highest child abuse rate in California.

### PROFESSIONAL INSIGHTS

Personal path to nonprofit work: It has been a lifelong journey for me. At the age of 16, while living in New York, I saw some of my friends taking the wrong path in life. I felt compelled to go into the helping profession in order to make a difference in young people's lives at a critical turning point.

Toughest aspect: Hearing the stories about the trauma and abuse that so many San Diego children are experiencing.

Most surprising aspect: That I continue to learn new things. I am never bored!

Biggest pain: We know how to help children and families, but we don't have enough funding to reach the need that exists.

Greatest pleasure: Nothing feels better than knowing we had a part in healing and improving the life of a disadvantaged child or family.

## INTROSPECTIONS

Best recent moment: Being chosen as the CEO of Home Start last year.

Worst recent moment: Not receiving a 2007 federal grant to fund a housing program for young women and their children. We know the need for this is great.

Downtime: I love to spend time with friends and family enjoying this great city and all it has to offer. Surfing, hiking, beach time and, of course, food related celebrations!

Causes: I am passionate about children's well-being, homelessness, and any oppressed groups or individuals.

Most like to meet: Mother Teresa, for her compassion; Warren Buffett, for his generosity; and SpongeBob, because my 7-year-old loves him!