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## East Bay Senior Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday at Center for Elders' Independence

**Oakland, CA, June 20, 2011** – What Augustina Torres lacks in size she makes up for in longevity. The petite woman with sparkling eyes and modest demeanor beamed during the festive celebration marking her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at the **Center for Elders' Independence (CEI)** recently as a roomful of 75 fellow seniors, family members and staff sang and recited poems in her native Spanish and danced to a steel drum band from Trinidad.

Born in Puerto Rico in 1911, Torres married at age 16 and had nine children before divorcing and moving to New York City in 1953. Thirty years ago, she joined a daughter in the Bay Area. Remarkably, with the supportive services of CEI's **Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)**, Torres still lives alone and independently in her Oakland apartment at age 100.

"She cooks and cares for herself," says her CEI Social Worker Diana Manzano, who speaks with Torres in Spanish and interprets for her when she visits the PACE Center three days each week. (Though she understands some English, Torres is more comfortable and expressive in Spanish.) CEI employs interpreters and bilingual staff to accommodate the varied languages used by its PACE participants to ensure good communication with care providers. Torres takes part in numerous Center activities and though she uses a walker for safety, "she loves to dance!" says Manzano.

Torres first enrolled in CEI's comprehensive health care program over eleven years ago and she still clearly enjoys the regular live music performances and the company of friends at the PACE Center. She receives coordinated health care from an interdisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, social workers, physical/occupational therapists, dietitians and geriatric aides who work together with Torres and her family to develop and manage her individual care plan. A CEI bus driver picks her up at home and brings her to the Center and any off-site medical appointments. Torres is so pleased with CEI's services that she has "referred several friends to the program," says Manzano.

Feted with lavender balloons, bouquets, cards and a huge cake, Torres reigned over the festivities in a floral birthday tiara and a glowing smile. In one of the day's highlights, she danced with her son, who traveled from Virginia to celebrate with her. Four generations of her extended family from New York also attended.

The Caribbean music of Basil "Flash" Martin (whose mother is also a CEI participant) and his ensemble at Torres' birthday party is but one example of the varied cultural experiences and activities offered regularly at CEI's four PACE Centers in Oakland and Berkeley.

The PACE Centers provide comprehensive, community-based health care and social services for frail East Bay seniors from Hayward to El Sobrante. The program includes medical care, home care, rehabilitative therapies, medications, transportation, recreational activities and nutritious hot meals at the day centers so that seniors can continue living in their communities instead of moving to nursing homes when they begin to need help with the tasks of daily life.

For information about CEI and PACE, call (510) 433-1150 or visit [www.cei.elders.org](http://www.cei.elders.org).

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