

# Lottery Winners Focus on Latino Philanthropy

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Six months after they won \$53 million in the California lottery, San Jose residents Alcario and Carmen Castellano have created the Castellano Family Foundation to promote Latino arts, culture, and leadership, the *San Jose Mercury News* reports.

The Castellanos endowed their foundation — one of the few Latino family foundations in the country — with \$5 million in 2001 and have been deeply involved in its activities as it has awarded more than \$700,000 to more than fifty local and national organizations. A working class couple until their windfall, the Castellanos are "the founders, the financial backers, the directors, the personnel" of the organization, says Carmen Castellano. "We decide everything, usually in the kitchen."

Latinos are the largest minority group in the country, accounting for roughly 13 percent of the population. But according to San Francisco-based [Hispanics in Philanthropy](#), private philanthropies award less than 1.5 percent of their discretionary funds to Latino nonprofits. With their strategic giving, the Castellanos are doing their part to change that equation.

The couple, which started supporting Latino nonprofits years before they won the lottery, has been active in community affairs: Carmen Castellano has served on a number of nonprofit boards, including Los Lupenos Folkloric Dance Company, while Al sits on the board of directors of the [Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley](#). "With our volunteer work of around thirty-five years, we know which Latino groups are credible," said Mrs. Castellano. "We don't solicit proposals. We initiate contact with the organizations that we want to help."