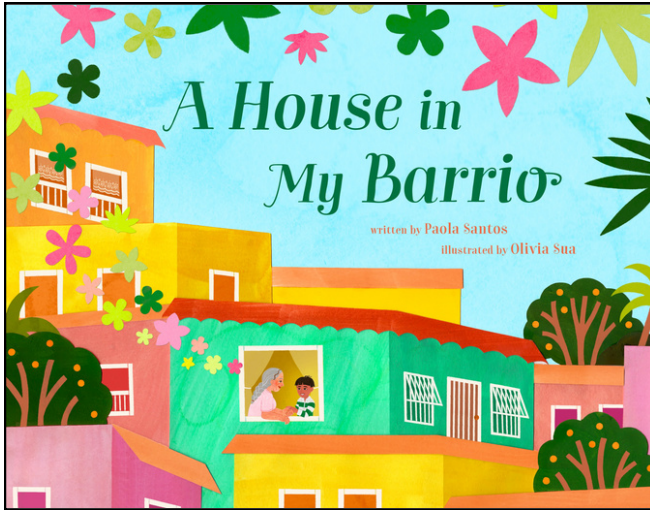


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO *A House in My Barrio*



ISBN: 1250327083 Grades K-3

by **Paola Santos**
illustrated by **Olivia Sua**

"This would make an excellent readaloud... and would pair well with a paper craft and a discussion about people who make their worlds welcoming and bright."
—**Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books**

"This warm and luminous picture book about the power of community and the quiet (and loud) ways people care for one another. ...This story celebrates family, resilience, and the ways in which we brighten each other's lives. Perfect for children to read with an adult or alone, this story shows the power of coming together."
—**Booklist**

About the Book

In this touching picture book about the importance of kindness and lending a hand, a young boy gathers his community to take care of a loved one, perfect for fans of *The Last Stop on Market Street*.

Mamá Elena always knows just what to do when someone needs help. Whether it's by cooking a delicious meal or simply by lending an ear, she keeps her community together. And because of her warmth, her home is Manuel's favorite.

But when Mamá Elena suffers a fall that leaves her bedridden, the barrio changes overnight. Missing Mamá Elena and her house, Manuel is determined to help lift her spirits. In a selfless act of organizing, he gathers his neighborhood so they can give back all the love and support Mamá Elena has shown them.

This picture book includes gentle introductions to the Spanish language with a strong message about caring for others.

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How to Use This Guide

This guide encourages children to observe closely, think deeply, express themselves, and engage with their communities.

You might:

- predict before reading,
- pause during reading to reflect,
- explore one section over several days,
- follow the structure before, during and after the reading,
- or simply choose one meaningful conversation.

This guide is available free of charge for educational use only. It may **NOT** be published or sold.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Language Arts

- Listening Comprehension
- Reading and Interpreting Illustrations
- Vocabulary Development
- Making Connections
- Making and Confirming Predictions
- Figures of Speech—metaphor

Social Studies

- Community
- Cooperation
- Belonging
- Roles and Responsibilities



BEFORE READING



Read aloud the title, author, and illustrator. Then discuss:

- “Is there a word in this title that seems to be in a language other than English?”
Barrio (BAH-ree-oh)
- “What do you think the word barrio means? Let’s see if we can figure it out by looking at the picture. What do you see on the cover?” *Let students share their observations and then explain that barrio means neighbourhood in Spanish.*
- “What do you predict the story is about?” *You may want to draw attention to the two figures in the window and their likely role as main characters. Then, invite students to share their predictions with a partner before asking a few students to share their ideas with the group.*
- *Reread the title to students and say, “Look again at this picture on the cover. What clues might tell us that this house is special?” Discuss the people in the house in the centre of the illustration and the flowers that emerge from the window as a symbol of something special.*
- “Think of a house or home that is special to you. Why is it so special?” *Again, invite students to share in partners before sharing with the group. You may want to discuss the difference between our own homes and other homes that could be special as well, such as grandparents' or friends' houses.*



DURING READING



While reading the book aloud, consider these stopping points to support comprehension:

- *After reading the first two spreads, ask, "Is Mamá Elena's house in the middle of a jungle or in a neighbourhood?" Flip between the two spreads so students can see the difference. Let students share their ideas before explaining that the illustrator used the jungle as a symbol to show Mamá Elena's house being tiny but feeling big—"but it seems to have no walls."*
- *Continue reading. After reading the page where Mamá Elena is sewing, discuss: "Why is Mamá Elena so important in her barrio? Why does everyone seek her advice?" Discuss the many ways Mamá Elena supports her community.*
- *After reading the page that says, "But yesterday was a different day," ask, "What do you think happened? Why might yesterday have been different?" Discuss as appropriate. You may want to point out that this page only has one sentence, as compared to all of the other pages with more text. Explain that this is another way that the author and illustrator are showing us that something has changed.*
- *After reading the page where Mami asks Manuel "How can we be there for her?", ask, "What do you think Manuel is going to do? How might the community help Mamá Elena?" Let students share their ideas. Then make the connection beyond the book: all of us can contribute to the well-being of our communities.*



AFTER READING



- “Why do you think Manuel says, “welcome, welcome” at the end of the book?” *He has learned from Mamá Elena. He will carry on the tradition and care that she has always shown the community. Her kindness had a ripple effect... inspiring others to be kind.*
- “A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two things without using like or as. It helps readers understand ideas and feelings.” Turn to the third spread and say, “There is a metaphor on this page—Days with color will come again. What do you think this means?” *Let students share ideas. If necessary, explain that in this sentence color represents love, happiness, and joy so Mamá Elena means that the days will get happier.*
- “How is your neighbourhood the same as Manuel's and Mamá Elena's? How is your neighbourhood different?” *Discuss as appropriate.*
- “How do you think you can help your community?” *Discuss various ways we can all contribute to our communities. You may want to introduce (or review) the idea of roles and responsibilities.*

Bonus Extension Activity: Helping Hands

1. Provide students with colored paper and invite them to trace one of their hands.
2. Inside their hand, they can write or draw one act of care (from the story or from their own experience).
3. Ask students to cut out their hand when their writing/drawing is complete.
4. Display the hands on a bulletin board or your classroom door.



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Spanish Words and Phrases from the Book

Barrio: (bah-REE-oh) Neighborhood.

Mami: (MAH-mee) Mommy.

Mamá: (mah-MAH) Mom or Mother. It can also be a loving name for someone who, like a mother, cares for others. In this story, *Mamá Elena* is like a mother helping and caring for everyone around her.

Muchachos: (moo-CHAH-chos) Kids or young people. A warm way to call a group of children or young friends.

Un postrecito: (oon pos-treh-SEE-toh) A little dessert. The ending -ito adds a feeling of affection and care.

Corre y juega: (KOH-rreh ee HWEH-gah) Run and play.

Arepas: (ah-REH-pahs) A popular meal found in many Latin American countries. They are round cornmeal cakes that are often filled with cheese, meat, or other delicious ingredients.

Tequeños: (teh-KEHN-yos) A favourite Venezuelan snack made with cheese wrapped in dough and fried until golden and crispy. Often enjoyed during celebrations and special moments.

Empanadas: (em-pah-NAH-dahs) Delicious pastries made with dough and filled with ingredients like cheese, meat, chicken, or beans.

Dulcitos: (dool-SEE-tos) Little sweets.

Ayer: (ah-YEHR) Yesterday.

Hoy: (OY) Today.

Mañana: (mah-NYAH-nah) Tomorrow.

Juntos: (HOON-tos) Together.

¡Vamos todos!: (BAH-mohs TOH-dohs) Let's all go!

Sorpresas: (sor-PREH-sahs) Surprises.

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About the Creators

The author - Paola Santos

Paola Santos is a children's book author born and raised in Venezuela. After moving to Canada, she found the courage to share the words and stories that had long been enclosed in her imagination. Her stories are now woven with her culture, experience in a new country, hope, happiness, and diversity. Paola holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in Literature and Children's Literature and Reading Promotion. She is the author of *How to Eat a Mango / Cómo se come un mango* (Neal Porter Books / Holiday House), 2024.



CONNECT WITH HER



paolasantos.com



[@pgsantosb](https://www.instagram.com/pgsantosb)

The illustrator - Olivia Sua

Olivia Sua is an artist who creates elaborate works of painted cut paper. She was born in Washington State and currently resides in the Snoqualmie Valley. Olivia graduated from Pacific Northwest College of Art with a BFA in illustration. When she's not illustrating, Olivia likes to go backpacking, spend time with her loved ones, and do anything creative. www.oliviasua.com