



San Juan Diego Center Keeps Family Afloat

Martha, faced with many challenges, struggled to get her family into the spirit of the Christmas season. The difficulties began in mid 2014, when her husband, Jose, was unexpectedly diagnosed with multiple health problems including advanced stages of cancer. There was nothing more that Martha wanted than to be able to be present and care for her ailing husband. He was in and out of the hospital for treatments and was in constant pain when at home.

With two young children to care for and bills to pay, Martha had no time for self pity. The meager savings that they had from the earnings of her husband were soon depleted. Before long, there were insufficient funds to pay for rent. Catholic Charities' San Juan Diego Community Services Center in El Monte provided rental assistance as well as subsidies for their gas and electricity bills. Martha was very grateful for the financial help as well as for the time that Elena Guzman, Client Resource Coordinator of San Juan Diego Center, took to visit her home and listen to her story.

Today, Martha is employed as a house cleaner and welcomes all the work hours that are given to her to enable her family to maintain a roof over their heads. ❖



Macy's "adopted" four families, who are clients of San Juan Diego Center, donating wonderful Christmas gifts to each family.

Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence More Than a Place to Sleep

The situation of John and Angela Wilson, a young married couple with two small children, looked bleak one year ago, when the couple suddenly found themselves without jobs due to the failing economy. Within months, their rent became unaffordable, and the family began to move between motel rooms and family members' homes.

Last fall, completely out of savings and still without success in their search for employment, the Wilsons sought out Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.'s (CCLA) Long Beach Community Center for assistance with locating a shelter. They entered CCLA's Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence shortly thereafter, eager to find not only a place to rest their head, but also a place to grow as a family.

Immediately after the family's first visit with their case manager at the shelter, John signed up for GED classes at the Oasis Center in the Cabrillo Villages, where he finished within two weeks and moved on to attend GED classes at Long Beach School for Adults. Meanwhile, Angela, a deeply determined woman, enrolled her young daughter in school, and continuously submitted applications for employment.



At each opportunity, John and Angela went the extra mile to accomplish their goals. Angela was blessed to gain employment through the TSE (transitional subsidized employment) program. John completed his GED classes. The Wilsons have moved into permanent housing and plan to use the fundamentals learned in the shelter in their everyday lives. John wrote in his letter to CCLA: "My wife likes to say that Catholic Charities is not a Family Shelter, it is a Family Helper." Though the barriers to their success once seemed overwhelming, this family's story is a testament to the tremendous power of hope and Catholic Charities' exceptional program at Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence. ❖

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Message from the Executive Director, Rev. Monsignor Gregory A. Cox

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles is a multi-service organization that supplied over 917,000 services to more than 112,000 clients this past year. We are committed to manifesting Christ's spirit through collaboration with diverse communities, by providing services to the poor and vulnerable, by promoting human dignity, and by advocating for social justice. We reach out to serve those who are suffering in our society.

A critical component to the success of Catholic Charities is our volunteer service program. Catholic Charities not only gives services to our clients but we also afford an education for our volunteers. It is one thing to read about poverty in the newspapers or drive through poor areas on our way to work, but it is another thing to touch poverty through our programs. It is an education to feed a homeless family coming in to one of our shelters on a cold night and to give them hot cups of coffee and nutritious meals before escorting them to their warm and safe room.

Volunteers are invited to touch the poverty of people in their own communities. The more they experience the 25% of homeless persons who are mentally ill, the more they will want to provide them a life of dignity.

Last year, approximately 8,000 volunteers contributed 160,750 hours of service to Catholic Charities' programs in the three counties of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura. These dedicated individuals not only delivered services to the poor but they were also educated by our clients. Volunteers frequently share with me that they receive more than they give. They develop a better appreciation for their own blessings and the importance of sharing them with people who are in need. Catholic Charities is more Catholic and more charitable because of our volunteers. ❖

For Second Consecutive Year, Catholic Charities of Los Angeles Receives Highest Rating from Charity Navigator



For the second consecutive year, Charity Navigator, the leading charity evaluator in America, has awarded Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. an "exceptional" ranking of four stars out of a possible four, demonstrating the agency's adherence to good governance and fiscal responsibility.

Charity Navigator, America's premier charity evaluator, provides essential information that gives donors greater confidence in the charitable choices they make. Receiving four stars indicates that Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. is respected by its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust. Under Charity Navigator's formula: for Accountability and Transparency, Catholic Charities received a score of 100 out of a possible 100; for Financial, a score of 91.5 out of a possible 100; and an overall score of 94 out of a possible 100.

"Receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that your organization adheres to good governance and other best practices that minimize the chance of unethical activities and consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way. Only 19% of the charities we rate have received at least two consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Catholic Charities of Los Angeles outperforms most other charities in America. This 'exceptional' designation from Charity Navigator differentiates Catholic Charities of Los Angeles from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust," stated Ken Berger, President and Chief Executive Officer of Charity Navigator.

Charity Navigator's favorable review of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles' sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency can be seen on Charity Navigator's website, www.charitynavigator.org. ❖

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Catholic Charities' City of Angels Christmas Gala Honors Investees of Orders

The California Club in downtown Los Angeles was, again, the venue for the annual City of Angels Christmas Gala which honored the 2014 Archdiocese of Los Angeles Investees of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (Equestrian Order) and the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta (Order of Malta) and acknowledged the Order of St. Gregory the Great. There were 12 Archdiocese of Los Angeles Investees of the Equestrian Order and one Diocese of Orange Investee of the Order of Malta in attendance at the elegant and festive Gala.

Archbishop José H. Gomez gave welcome remarks and offered a prayer before dinner. Paul D. Tosetti, Esq., President of Catholic Charities' Board of Trustees, was Master of Ceremonies and introduced the Investees.

Highlights of the evening included a special vocal performance of Christmas music by Grammy-nominated East Los Angeles native Suzanna Guzmán, accomplished mezzo-soprano and host of Open Call on KCET. Attendees enjoyed exquisite



Performers of uplifting Christmas music at the Gala included, left to right, Douglas Sumi, Maggie Edmonson, Chris Hunter, Suzanna Guzmán, Maddy Parks, Shannon O'Hara and Stanton Hunter. All Gala photos are by Tom Wilmshurst.

food as well as listening and dancing to the wonderful music of the Jay Sterling Orchestra. Proceeds from the annual event are used to help the poor children and families served by the critical case management programs of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. ❀



Archbishop Gomez welcomes Equestrian Order Investees Lady Geraldine Misch and Sir David R. Misch.



Sir Robert P. Barbarowicz, Equestrian Order Investee, pays his respects to Archbishop Gomez.



Archbishop Gomez greets Equestrian Order Investee Sir Daniel Francisco De La Pava Perdomo.



Rev. Sir Lawrence Seyer, Equestrian Order Investee, meets Archbishop Gomez before the dinner.



Archbishop Gomez congratulates Nancy Raney, Diocese of Orange Investee of the Order of Malta.

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Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project Helps Nine Minors Receive Asylum

Recently, the Legal Orientation Program for Custodians (LOPC) of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.'s (CCLA) Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project celebrated some momentous successes in their Pro Se Asylum workshops. The workshops were developed to help those minors who were identified at CCLA's legal orientations and intake clinics as persons who could potentially represent themselves in front of an Asylum officer to plea their cases. This could be the last resource for most of these minors who have to fight their immigration deportation. The main goals of these workshops are to explain and make all of the legal terminology and laws easier to understand and help prepare the minors for their Asylum interview.

Part of the emphasis of the second workshop is to make them understand the importance of the chronology of their story and what information the Asylum officer would be seeking.

Since its inception in April 2014, 15 minors have been interviewed and nine of them have been granted Asylum. This



Esperanza's staff conducted workshops for recent Asylum grantees and made their first Christmas in the U.S. special.

is a huge success, considering how difficult it can be to get Asylum granted. The LOPC team created a third installment of the workshop which is celebratory and informational. A local legal provider explains to recently granted refugees the benefits for which the minors qualify and what happens next.

In the spirit of the holidays, the LOPC team made the minors' first Christmas in the U.S. a special one by securing gift cards from The Ralphs/Food For Less Foundation and, launching a mini-donation campaign for CCLA staff to help sponsor a minor by either donating gifts or money. Each minor received a parting gift package with a jacket, a soccer ball and other donated items. ❖



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Address Service Requested



Catholic Charities' Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence offers shelter to families, pregnant women, and disabled and elderly persons who are homeless.

