



Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

The Sage

www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org • ISSN 1551-9112

Santa Maria Center Helps Volunteer

In Santa Barbara County, Elina*, a young El Salvadorian woman, volunteers with the day to day operations of Catholic Charities' Santa Maria office. Elina left El Salvador five years ago hoping to legally work in the United States.

Recently, Elina learned that her 16 year old sister was a victim of rape and kidnap by a group of gang members, which caused her sister and her 20 year old brother to flee the traumatic environment of their home town in El Salvador. Unfortunately, the situation took a more serious turn when they approached the Mexican border of the United States and encountered a gang which kidnapped Elina's siblings. The gang contacted Elina, demanding \$1,500 for release of her brother and sister to cross the border into the United States. Elina managed to give the money to the gang and her siblings were allowed to cross the border. However, after crossing the border, they were detained by U.S. Border Patrol. Elina's brother and sister are currently being held at separate immigration facilities in Texas.

Elina shared her story with Art Alvarez, Catholic Charities' Client Resources Coordinator in Santa Maria, who assists Elina by advocating for her siblings and helping her fill out necessary paperwork, including a 42 page document that had been sent by Texas Immigration authorities. We are hopeful that, through Art's diligence, we will be able to help Elina and her brother and sister reunite soon. ❖

*name changed to protect identity

San Gabriel Region Assists Families with Back to School Events

Maria, a single parent dealing with multiple health issues, is always in need of a little cash to supplement her SSI and CalFresh benefits. She bakes and sells cake pops to get by on a monthly basis. Maria came to Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. (CCLA) three years ago. She was homeless and slept in her car with her children. CCLA was able to assist her family with affordable housing.

The Back-to-School Haircut and Supplies

Day events served 125 children. They were held at the San Juan Diego Center in El Monte and at Brownson House in East Los Angeles. The participants' stories were probably not as harsh Maria's; however, all of them were in need. With a free haircut, backpacks filled with school supplies, water bottles, t-shirts, socks, and a free snack to boot, each child was a "happy camper" that day and definitely ready to start school.

"I have been waiting for this event for so long," Maria said as she greeted the Macy's employee assigned at the registration desk. "I am so grateful to Catholic Charities for holding the back-to-school haircut and school supplies day. I am behind with my rent, and with three school age children

who need things for school, I am afraid I will lose my apartment without this help. With the money I saved today, I can pay my rent."

Mary Romero, San Gabriel Regional

Director, thanks Macy's, St. Denis Church (Diamond Bar) and the Rosemead Adult School for co-sponsoring the San Juan Diego event. She is also grateful for the generous support of Forever XXI for sponsoring the day at Brownson House and to St. Philip the Apostle Church (Pasadena) for the shoes provided through the *Soles for Souls* project. ❖



In This Issue...

- Message from the Executive Director page 2
- Suzanna Guzman to Sing at Christmas Gala page 2
- Volunteer Paints Watercolor of Guadalupe Center page 3
- Vacation Bible School Donates to Food Pantry page 3
- Council on Accreditation (COA) Reaccredits CCLA page 4

Message from the Executive Director, Monsignor Gregory A. Cox

As we enter into the month of November, we begin to think about Thanksgiving and the joy of having family and friends over to enjoy a delicious turkey dinner with all the trimmings. This holiday is special because we don't have to frantically shop for gifts or do anything other than to show up and watch football and reconnect with loved ones.

President George Washington proclaimed the first nation-wide thanksgiving celebration in the United States saying, "I do recommend and assign Thursday, the Twenty-Sixth Day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these states, to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be."

Catholic Charities is thankful for all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. We are grateful for the staff and volunteers that not only reach out to others in need during the holiday season but throughout the entire year. Because of the generosity of our benefactors, we are able to provide food, clothes and shelter to the homeless and working poor during the cold winter months. We thank God for allowing His love to flow to others through us.

The month of November is a reminder to us of the goodness of God "who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be." May our Thanksgiving prayer before dinner be not only about our gratitude for the blessings on the table but also for our blessings around the table. ❖



Please support the annual Christmas Parties hosted by Catholic Charities' community centers to benefit needy children and families in the most impoverished neighborhoods of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

Please check **"Christmas Parties"** on the enclosed remit envelope and include your contribution, if you would like to support the parties.

Your kindness will positively impact the lives of the children who have so little. Thank you!



Suzanna Guzman to Give Vocal Performance at Christmas Gala

Catholic Charities' annual City of Angels Christmas Gala will be held on Friday, December 5, 2014 at The California Club in downtown Los Angeles.

Highlights of the evening will include a special vocal performance by Grammy-nominated East Los Angeles native Suzanna Guzman, accomplished mezzo-soprano and host of Open Call on KCET.

Proceeds will benefit the poor children and families served by the community centers of Catholic Charities. For more information about the Christmas Gala, please call (213) 251-3495. ❖



DONATE THAT OLD CAR! IT CAN WORK MIRACLES!

It's Easy! Catholic Charities will arrange to sell your car and the proceeds will help those in need.

Call toll free: (855) 370-4483 or visit www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org and click on the car icon on the Home Page.

Volunteer Paints Watercolor of Guadalupe Center

Margaret Pontius, San Fernando Region Program Director, reports that Dwight Williams is an award-winning artist from Thousand Oaks, CA. He and his wife, Jean, are long-time supporters of Catholic Charities' Guadalupe Center in Canoga Park. Jean has volunteered at the Center's Thrift Store for approximately 12 years. For many years, Dwight has been donating his paintings to Guadalupe Center, to auction at the center's annual Mary Logan Orcutt Dinner. Dwight was a Navy fighter pilot and is a retired TWA pilot. He and Jean are members of St. Jude the Apostle Church, Westlake Village. ❖



Vacation Bible School Donates to Ventura Food Pantry

The children who attended the week-long Vacation Bible School of Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Ventura collected pennies and nickels all that week to help buy food for Catholic Charities' food pantry in the Ventura Community Services Center. The group leaders, including Jenny Elliott and Noelle Granillo, in the photo at left, counted over \$800. The food pantry serves between 400 and 500 households per month, reports Pat Esseff, Ventura County Program Director. ❖

The CCLA Annual Report and Facebook Page

Catholic Charities' 2013-2014 Annual Report is now available online:

www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org

Please, like us on the CCLA Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Catholic.Charities.LA>



Council on Accreditation (COA) Reaccredits Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.



The simple statement "we are COA-accredited" tells you a great deal about who we are and what we stand for. It means that we have met rigorous, internationally recognized standards of excellence for the quality of our services and management. COA views accreditation as an important catalyst for change that builds on an organization's strengths and helps it to achieve new levels of excellence.

COA is an independent, not-for-profit organization that establishes and upholds internationally recognized best-practice standards for social work service and behavioral health care. COA currently accredits more than 2,000 public and private organizations that serve more than seven million individuals and families in the United States, Canada, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and other countries.

The COA accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of an organization's administrative functions and service delivery practices. These standards of best practice emphasize services that are accessible, appropriate, community-based, coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based, individualized, outcomes-oriented, provided by a skilled and supportive workforce, respectful of individual rights, strengths-based, child and family focused, and that treat all people with dignity. Stakeholders, as a result, have confidence in the credibility, integrity and achievements of the organization and its programs.

Catholic Charities has been accredited by COA for 32 years, undergoing reaccreditation every four years. Organizations are required to maintain their accreditation every year by implementing quality improvement initiatives. The most recent initiative was to redesign and strengthen the Employee Development and Training Program and to create an online Training Library for all staff.♣



Catholic
Charities

of Los Angeles, Inc.

1531 James M. Wood Blvd.

Post Office Box 15095

Los Angeles, CA 90015-0095

www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org

Address Service Requested



*"We make a living by what we get.
We make a life by what we give."*

– Winston Churchill

