Kevin Nieto's hard work in high school paid off and he was accepted to California State University at Northridge. But, his father was deported, 18 months ago, when Kevin was just 19 years old. Kevin then became a huge support for his family.

Kevin worked two jobs to support his mother and younger siblings while he attended college. This resulted in him not being able to afford rent for a room or an apartment. He chose to live out of his car as a sacrifice to help support his family during his first two years of college.

Fortunately, a friend of Kevin’s recommended Jobe Transitional Living Program, a program of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. Jobe has a residence in Northridge that provides housing for former foster youth and homeless youth who are struggling. Kevin was immediately accepted into the program.

During Kevin’s tenure at Jobe, he has made the honor roll each semester, has a bed to sleep in every night, a place to shower, and unlimited food. Kevin will graduate with a double major in Criminal Justice and Asian Studies this coming fall. He aspires to earn a Master’s degree in Criminal Justice.

Kevin has never allowed his former homelessness to define him. Kevin is a strong, motivated, successful, driven young man who earned the position of Resident Assistant and is a role model to all the other residents of Jobe. We are proud of Kevin and continue to make sure he is not alone.
Message from the Executive Director,  
Rev. Monsignor Gregory A. Cox

According to government officials, Catholic Charities provides essential services. Our clients, the homeless and the poor, are dependent on our programs. During this health pandemic, we needed to keep in mind two issues: the safety of our staff and service to our clients. Additional policies and procedures have been implemented to maintain the quality of service and the safety of staff. Our ten facilities that house and shelter the homeless are near capacity. Our centers provide food, utility assistance, immigration and job training services. Our homebound elderly are served by our OASIS and Gatekeeper programs with procedures that protect both the elderly and the staff from COVID-19.

During the novel coronavirus crisis, Catholic Charities is also overseeing the transition of two additional programs. Good Shepherd Shelter’s mission is to stop the intergenerational cycle of domestic violence by providing individualized, comprehensive services and shelter to battered women and their children. Jobe’s mission is to provide transitional living for homeless individuals, former foster care youth, in a way designed to facilitate their pursuit of education and entry into the work force.

Catholic Charities is also in the demolition phase of our Union Village project. We are presently seeking the final permits needed to demolish the existing building on the property. The “village” will have two valuable programs that will serve youth in the community: Angel’s Flight Shelter, a program for at-risk youth, ages 10 through 17; and housing for Transitional Age Youth (TAY), young adults, ages 21 through 26, who are aged out of the foster care system.

During the COVID-19 crisis, Catholic Charities continues to provide essential services to the homeless and the poor. I am grateful to our staff who are making sacrifices in their lives to be a source of comfort to others in need.

Patty West, a client of Catholic Charities in Santa Barbara, suffers from PTSD because she was held hostage in a home invasion some years ago. After that trauma, she became homeless and lived in the Santa Barbara area in her vehicle.

Five years ago, a kind person who breeds German Shepherds heard the details of Patty’s story and gave her a puppy. Today, Drago has grown to be a gentle giant, one that is very protective of a woman living alone in her vehicle.

Catholic Charities in Santa Barbara’s Wagging Tails’ pet fund has helped Patty with Drago’s vet bills on multiple occasions, over the years, allowing her to take care of a friend that takes such good care of her.

Patty feels very blessed, having recently been able to move into a trailer on a property where Drago has plenty of room to run. She told us that, when she let him out of the car, he ran straight to the trailer and made himself comfortable.

Patty hesitated to share details of her trauma but, after a moment, said, “You know, there’re a lot of women who have gone through similar situations, and I want them to know they can come out the other side and be okay.”

Catholic Charities is grateful for the support that allows our pet care program to continue to bring hope and safety to our clients.
Long Live Lisette: A Success Story of OASIS

Lisette Borg, an 80 year old Turkish immigrant, walks a half-mile in Ventura, twice a week, to her psychological therapy practice. Most impressive of all is that Lisette does this despite being completely blind.

Lisette lives alone in an apartment and cooks and cleans for herself and occasional guests. She enjoys attending the local symphony's performances.

Recently, Catholic Charities in Ventura County's Older Adult Services and Intervention System (OASIS) received a referral from the local police after officers had responded to a desperate call from Lisette. Her power had been out for days, the pantry and fridge were nearly empty, and Lisette was confused and scared. OASIS staff quickly turned on Lisette's power, restocked her pantry and fridge, and enrolled her in auto-pay for her various bills because, without anyone to read her bills to her, she was unable to make payments.

OASIS volunteers continue to visit Lisette once a week to read her important documents, help around the house, and ensure she is able to live independently and continue doing what she loves, helping others in her psychology practice. Currently, OASIS serves over 500 clients and the need is ever growing. OASIS Program Manager is Lisa Nagy, lnagy@ccharities.org or (805) 987-2083.

San Fernando Region Continues Services During COVID-19 Pandemic

For the past 17 years, CCLA San Fernando Region has been reaching senior citizens in the West San Fernando Valley through the OASIS (Older Adult Support Intervention System) Program. OASIS operates currently on a generous three-year grant from the Archstone Foundation, enabling the region in its mission to reduce food insecurity and increase access to health services for older adults.

Community volunteers offer delivery of groceries from the Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry and provide occasional transportation to supermarkets and health-related appointments. In the midst of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the OASIS Program helped reduced exposure of the virus for seniors by limiting their home visits to emergency food drop-offs only, on an as-needed basis.

“During this time of crisis and limited operation for the program, our team is making a priority of reaching older adults by phone to ensure that anyone in need of food deliveries can still have their needs met...” stated Sandra Yanez, San Fernando Regional Director.

To find out more about becoming an OASIS volunteer in the San Fernando Valley, or to sign-up an older adult, please email OASIS@ccharities.org or call (213) 251-3566.

Access to Healthy Food is Crucial

San Gabriel Region’s nutrition program at Brownson House in East Los Angeles, based on The CalFresh Healthy Living Program, helps educate over 350 clients each year on making healthier food choices and changing their lifestyles.

Aleticia, her husband, Jose, her son, Angel, Aleticia’s caregiver, Maria, and her neighbor, Guadalupe, joined the class and took the challenge to lose at least 5% of their total weight in six weeks.

Angel, only 19 years old, had been diagnosed with high cholesterol and pre-diabetes. Angel’s diet consisted of one liter bottle coke a day, five slices of pizza and junk food. His doctor recommended that Angel take nutrition classes and change his eating habits. It was a change in lifestyle that the entire family had to make to help Angel reach goal.

Angel and Jose started walking for one hour every day and incorporated more fresh fruits and vegetables from the Brownson House food pantry in their diet. At the end of the six classes: Angel had lost 16 pounds; Jose, five; Aleticia, two; Maria, eight; and Guadalupe, five.

Catholic Charities’ food pantries remain open to the public for access to healthy food during this time of crisis due to COVID-19.
San Pedro Region Distributes Food During Crisis

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Catholic Charities’ San Pedro Region distributes food to low-income families and individuals. However, the demographic of individuals receiving food has shifted. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many more seniors have been coming to get food from the Long Beach Community Services Center and the Pico Rivera Resource Center.

Despite threatening their health by not adhering to the stay-at-home order, some seniors say they know they are taking a risk, but they are running out of options.

A 67-year-old grandmother came to the Long Beach Community Services Center to get some vegetables after hearing about the center from a friend. She admitted that she was endangering her health to stand in line to receive food, but says, “it’s worth the wait because many grocery stores are limiting items you can receive and every grocery store you go to is practically empty.”

Another senior, a 65-year-old man, was also taking advantage of the free food giveaway. He had been homeless for 6 years before moving into a low-income apartment. He expressed, “I am grateful for Catholic Charities, they have never let me down, even when I was living at the park. I am thankful and blessed by the services they have given me.”

Catholic Charities’ employees are in danger of exposure to COVID-19 by interacting with clients but they are taking precautions to be safe. They believe that the value of giving to those in need is worth the risk.

Catholic Charities’ OASIS program enables our senior clients to maximize their independence through food delivery, utility and transportation assistance, friendly visits and case management.

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