



Good Shepherd Shelter Family Celebrates



“Wow, they helped us a lot”

Struggling, like so many, due to COVID-19, Nancy Ramirez and her family turned to Catholic Charities’ San Gabriel Region for assistance. Nancy was affected by COVID-19 and was struggling to pay rent and utilities. When she learned about Catholic Charities San Gabriel Region’s services, she reached out to the Brownson House Community Center and received case management and resource support.

After completing their intake application, the Ramirez family was able to catch up on two months of past-due rent along with the utility bills. But, Nancy shared that it was the boxes of food, including meat, dairy, eggs, and fruits and vegetables, that were the most helpful.

“Everything to put a good meal on the table,” said this mom of six, adding that the Ramirez family sends “millions of thanks” for all of the help they received. ❖



Lety and her children are grateful for their time at Good Shepherd Shelter.

Former Good Shepherd Shelter (GSS) resident, Lety, and her children arrived at GSS with little belongings and plagued with trauma. Referred by an emergency shelter, they were not sure that they could withstand another move.

However, when they entered the shelter and saw the chapel, the playground, and their apartment unit, stocked with household necessities, they expressed relief. Lety stated, “I ran into the unit the Sisters offered to me and my children and I opened every cabinet and drawer. We saw that there was nothing missing. Everything that my children and I needed was already there. There were appliances, dishes, towels, beautiful furniture; anything and everything that we had left behind was right in front of us.”

The family stayed at GSS for about a year

before moving into permanent housing. They state that their time at the shelter helped them to heal, rebuild their strength and renew their hope for the future.

When Lety came to the U.S. from Mexico as a young mother, she dreamed of one day becoming a U.S. citizen. The Good Shepherd Sisters at GSS encouraged Lety to pursue her goal and, last month, she celebrated her U.S. citizenship. Her children have received multiple scholarships and they credit their attendance at the shelter’s elementary school as a time that instilled a love of education that they carry with them today.

The Good Shepherd Sisters and staff at GSS congratulate Lety and her children on all that they have achieved and are so gratified to see them happy, healthy and moving forward. ❖

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

Charles Dickens was an English novelist of the nineteenth century. Dickens was keen observer of life and had the ability to express his observations in his novels, which resulted in some of the most famous characters in literature. Many of the events of his own life are portrayed in his books.

Mr. Dickens had a passion for reforming the world. He attacked public wrongdoing and private sin. He wrote about the wretched lives led by the poor. He wrote often and with great compassion of the miserable existence of orphans and workhouse children. He cheered virtue whenever he found it. In all of his writings, Dickens' heart was in the right place.

Charles Dickens believed that the first external revelations of the dry rot in a person are: a tendency to lurk and lounge; to be at street corners without intelligible reason; to be going anywhere when met; to be about many places rather than any; to do nothing tangible but to have an intention of performing a number of tangible duties tomorrow or the day after.

Over 150 years later, we still observe people who lurk and lounge on street corners with no place to go. Catholic Charities' shelters and community centers reach out to the unreachable to give them hope and purpose in their lives. Charles Dickens' novels brought an awareness of the plight of the poor, Catholic Charities' staff and volunteers bring solutions to the plight of the homeless.

Charles Dickens said, "Charity begins at home, and justice begins next door." As family members, let us be grateful for our blessings by sharing them with those who are standing on our "street corners." ❀

Good Shepherd Center Moves Client Into Housing

In the November 2017 issue of *The Sage*, the story of "Lupe" was included because of her successful transition from being homeless to being at Good Shepherd Center's (GSC) Hawkes Residence. She had not slept in a bed in 25 years and had to "adjust" to having a key to her new room.

During her over three year stay at GSC, Lupe thrived on community living and became well loved for her volunteer skills in the Hawkes' kitchen, where she learned how to handle food safely, prepare meals and shop for groceries. She also worked hard at her goal to obtain permanent housing, despite significant roadblocks, such as her citizenship status and fragile physical and mental health.

Today, GSC shares that Lupe, who recently turned 60 years old, has transitioned once again. Although her barriers made finding permanent housing difficult, staff at GSC never gave up. They allowed Lupe to remain sheltered there, enrolled her in the Rapid Re-Housing program through the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and helped her locate appropriate permanent housing.

The landlords were so touched by Lupe and her story, they not only welcomed her into their available tri-plex, but also were open to housing two other GSC clients as well. The unaccompanied women, who previously had experienced homelessness, now live together in their own small community, sharing a kitchen and living space but having their own bedrooms, bathrooms and patios. They continue to be supported with weekly visits from a GSC case manager who ensures they are on track with goals and supports them as other needs arise. ❀



Lupe is happy to live in permanent housing with two other Good Shepherd Center alums.

Long Beach Center Assists Malnourished Client

Cristobel had walked five miles to the Long Beach Community Center to receive food. She was very frail and had not eaten for several days. After receiving the food, she was filled with so much joy that she nearly fainted, due to her malnourished state.

After Cristobel explained her situation to the center's staff, that she had no one to help or take care of her, two Catholic Charities' (CCLA) staff, Veronique Johnson, and Jazmin Burgos, gave the client taxi vouchers and personally took several bags of groceries to her home. When they opened the cabinets and refrigerator, all were empty, with not even a box of crackers. Shocked and amazed that Cristobel was able to survive without any food in her house, Ms. Johnson set-up food deliveries from the center so the client could receive groceries twice a week.

After two months, Cristobel returned to the center, but this time she wasn't frail and thin; she was at a healthy weight and almost unrecognizable. The client wanted to receive more food and also to thank CCLA staff for saving her life. Cristobel exclaimed, "Thank you, Lord! Thank you for Catholic Charities!" ❀



Cristobel is healthy two months after receiving food twice a week from Long Beach Community Center.

Guadalupe Center Provides Children With Creative Projects

Guadalupe Community Center in Canoga Park is grateful for the talents and generosity of a high school volunteer, Rachel, who offers art classes to the elementary school-aged youth served at the center.

When COVID-19 safety regulations restricted in-person visits to Rachel's classes, as well as in-person learning at school, she was determined to continue offering children an outlet for their creativity and a way to stay occupied at home with healthy, positive pursuits.

Rachel purchases supplies and constructs art project kits for the boys and girls, which Guadalupe Community Center distributes every other week. The kits provide instruction and supplies for a variety of activities. So far, the center has distributed over two hundred kits!

Rachel's art kits have enabled hours of hands-on art projects for the youth, as well as time away from the computers at which they have been attending school during the pandemic. One of the children, Sandra, reports that the last kit she brought home allowed her to make both key chains and hair clips. "They are the coolest things I have ever made!" Sandra exclaimed, adding that, even though she loved what she had made, she is sharing the hair clips with her little sister. ❀



Sandra enjoys the at-home art project kits.

Esperanza Helps Immigrants Facing Deportation

Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, a program of Catholic Charities, assists many families new to the U.S., including families that were separated under the "Zero Tolerance" policy.

One client, Ms. S, fled from Mexico with her children, seeking asylum in the U.S. due to horrific domestic violence. Esperanza helped prepare her asylum application, compiled evidence on her case, and prepared her to present her claim to the immigration judge. Ms. S was granted asylum, and she and her children may now safely remain in the U.S.

Esperanza also assists immigrants with strong ties to the U.S., such as Ms. T, who was a child when her mother brought her to the U.S. from Belize. She grew up here and has children and grandchildren in the U.S. As a young woman, Ms. T was convicted of several petty crimes and, although she served her short sentences decades earlier, the government initiated legal proceedings to deport her to Belize, a country she had not seen in almost 50 years. Esperanza staff listened to her story with compassion and helped her apply for a Green Card. Ms. T had made many positive changes in her life since her convictions years earlier and the immigration judge approved her application for a Green Card. ❀



Due to the help received from Esperanza, Ms. T. is able to remain in the U.S. with her family.

Jobe Enables Former Foster Youth To Thrive

Jobe Transitional Living Program, a program of Catholic Charities, serves one of the most underserved populations in society: homeless youth/former foster youth, 18-25 years old, who aged out of the foster care system on their eighteenth birthday.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's 2019 Youth Homelessness Briefing shows that 50% of former foster youth have experienced homelessness. Most of the youth have no resources for housing, are limited to little or no work experience and are unaware of the services available to them.

Jobe is located in Northridge near the California State University. There are two separate programs within Jobe: the men's program, for nine young men, is housed in a big, beautiful home that is supervised 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by a dedicated team of staff; the women's program, for



Jobe residents experience a real sense of family.

four young women, is located in a safe, secure apartment supervised by a live-in counselor.

One of the main goals of Jobe is to end the cycle of poverty for former foster youth. In addition to safe and stable housing, Jobe provides food, clothing assistance, counseling, life skills classes, educational guidance, job leads, mentoring, interviewing skills and many other resources.

Another of Jobe's goals is to create a real sense of family and belonging. During the holidays, many former residents return to visit the staff and the newer residents. Jobe also celebrates residents' birthdays. Most residents have never had a birthday cake or celebration until joining the Jobe program.

Keith Wieser, Jobe Program Director, shared, "Jobe is a 'first choice' for many organizations to place youth." ❀



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Catholic Charities' Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project serves the community by ensuring that immigrants have access to knowledge, resources and justice.



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