

Volunteer Brings Joy to Others

James Johnson has been faithfully volunteering at Catholic Charities' Long Beach Community Center for four years, filling grocery bags with food, distributing them to those in need, and cleaning and organizing the pantry, demonstrating positive energy and kindness toward others.

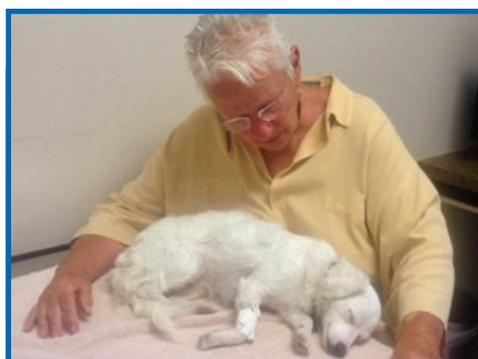
Two years ago, Mr. Johnson received a diagnosis of fourth stage cirrhosis of the liver and also learned that he had early-stage liver cancer. He needed chemo and radiation to contain the cancer and also had to be on a liver transplant list. Mr. Johnson continued to volunteer despite the side effects and the pain of treatment, and brought joy to others as if nothing was wrong.

One year ago, Mr. Johnson finally got good news from his USC transplant team and received his new liver. In three months, Mr. Johnson came back to volunteer every week day at the Community Center. He motivates others dealing with illness to not give up hope and he is now cancer-free. ❖

Pet Program for Seniors With Dogs

The Santa Barbara Community Services Center in Catholic Charities' Santa Barbara Region has a wonderful program designed for seniors with dogs. Ruth Marshall is a recent and grateful recipient of that program.

sitting at her feet. The love between them is clear to any observer. When Star needed veterinary care, Ruth came to Catholic Charities' Santa Barbara Community Services Center for financial assistance with the vet bills. Many seniors with companion animals face hard choices when it comes to



When her dog needed vet care, Ruth went to the Santa Barbara Community Center for help.

Ruth's long and winding road has taken her around the world, as she once lived in Thailand. She was a regular swimmer in Santa Barbara's harbor, but some physical difficulties have made that no longer possible. With her mobility limited, Ruth began using an electric chair to get around. While most people would struggle with accepting this new reality, Ruth had the good fortune of finding Star, her companion animal, or, more correctly, they found each other. Ruth needed Star as much as Star needed Ruth.

They are now a familiar sight, Ruth cruising around on the scooter with Star obediently



Ruth cruises around Santa Barbara on her scooter with her dog at her feet.

their companion animals and mounting healthcare bills. The community center's senior pet program addresses this very situation. Star received care, and Ruth was spared the ill effects of stress and worry.

The senior pet program is supported by the Dr. Hildegard H. Balin Charitable Trust and is designed for seniors with dogs. The dogs that the Santa Barbara Community Services Center is able to help are truly members of the seniors' families, whether they are actual service dogs or simply a source of reciprocal love that nourishes the souls of the seniors. ❖

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

California is no stranger to natural disasters. In 2018, the wildfire season was the most destructive in the history of the State, with a total of 7,983 fires burning an area of 1,824,505 acres. The fires caused more than \$2.9 billion in damages.

On November 8, 2018, strong winds caused destructive fires which included the Woolsey Fire (96,949 acres), Hill Fire (4,531 acres), and the Camp Fire (153,336 acres), burning a combined total of 250,285 acres. Collectively, more than 15,178 homes were destroyed and 20,447 damaged. Eighty-nine people lost their lives. More than 90% of the town of Paradise was destroyed. In Southern California, the residents of Camarillo Springs (Ventura County), Oak Park (Ventura County), Griffith Park (Los Angeles County), and the city of Malibu (Los Angeles County) were also issued evacuation orders. Evacuation orders in Southern California totaled about 250,000.

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles (CCLA) has a history of providing natural disaster social services to low-income, vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities. CCLA has worked with Catholic Charities of California to obtain State funding for a more in-depth disaster response called the Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP). This program will enable CCLA to address short and long term disaster-caused unmet needs. Because of staff's experience and their training in disaster case management, they will have the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully meet the needs of the survivors they will serve. For example, a case manager will develop a disaster recovery plan for the wildfire victim, which will include shelter, food, clothing, housing, information and referrals for insurance, employment, replacement of vital family records and counseling.

Catholic Charities is excited about our new program. Our hope is that it will better facilitate our ability to serve those suffering from local disasters. ❖

Golf Tournament Benefits Poverty Programs



Held at the exclusive Annandale Golf Club in Pasadena on June 17, 2019, the 23rd Annual Catholic Charities Golf Tournament was a big success and benefitted programs to house and assist the poor and homeless who come to the agency for help in Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. The success of this fundraising event was made possible by the support of the **\$10,000 Tournament Sponsors:** Bill and Helen Close Charitable Fund "B" at Catholic Community Foundation; The Ferry Family Charitable Foundation; Kathy and Vincent F. Martin, Jr.; Vera R Campbell Foundation; and William R. and Virginia Hayden Foundation. The **\$5,000 Gold Sponsors:** Deloitte & Touche LLP; The Ferry Family Charitable Foundation (5); Latham and Watkins LLP and Paul D. Tosetti, Esq. (2); Judith and Stephen McDonald; Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP and William M. Wardlaw, Esq.; Mutual of America; St. Brendan Catholic Church / Monsignor Terrance Fleming; Stephanie and Peter Nolan Foundation; The Sage Group, LLC; and UBS Financial Services, Inc. and Thomas E. Podmajersky. The Committee was comprised of: Msgr. Gregory Cox, Chair; Susan and Richard D'Amico; Gary Darnell; Gary Krauss; Vince Martin, Jr.; Michael O'Brien; Paul Tosetti; and Peter Vogelsang. ❖



Msgr. Greg Cox, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, thanks Gary Darnell, a member of Annandale Golf Club who sponsored Catholic Charities at Annandale. Gary is a member of Catholic Charities' Board of Trustees and of Catholic Charities' Golf Tournament Committee.



The foursome of Tournament Sponsor William R. and Virginia Hayden Foundation won the First Place Low Gross trophies. Left to right, the players are Willy Marsh, Greg Chapman, Bill Hayden and Josh Drake.

“Read 2 Succeed” Helps Youth at Guadalupe Center

In order to complete her Girl Scout Gold Award, Sarah Benjamin partnered with Catholic Charities’ Guadalupe Community Center in Canoga Park. As a volunteer with Catholic Charities, Sarah discovered that many local children needed assistance with reading. A book-lover herself, Sarah wanted to find an innovative way to share her passion for reading with the boys and girls at the center.

After a bit of research, Sarah learned that audio books can be a useful tool for engaging young readers, especially when English is not the student’s first language. She proposed the idea to Guadalupe Center staff and the Los Angeles Girl Scout Council of supplying MP3 players stocked with audio books. When both parties agreed that this would enhance the Catholic Charities’ tutoring program, “Read 2 Succeed” was born.

To raise funds for the project, Sarah held a garage sale and collected donations from friends and family in her community. With these gifts, she was able to provide the Guadalupe Center with a

shelving unit to hold the books, MP3 players and headphones, and also a rug and pillows to create a comfortable reading area for the children. She then recruited members of her community to record 100 books onto MP3 files.

For the final step, Sarah trained the children on how to use and listen to the books. Both the students and parents are ecstatic about this new opportunity and have been enjoying the recordings. Read 2 Succeed has already begun to improve the skills of Catholic Charities’ students, which will help them excel throughout their academic career. Maybe one day they will follow in Sarah’s footsteps as book-lovers. ❖



“Read 2 Succeed” is a popular supplement to the tutoring program at Guadalupe Community Center in Catholic Charities’ San Fernando Region.

Immigration and Refugee Services Hosts Citizenship Application Workshops

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles’ (CCLA) Immigration and Refugee Resettlement program (IRR) recently hosted a free Citizenship Application Assistance workshop for immigrants and refugees near CCLA’s Glendale office.

Among the many attending the event was an asylee family of four. The family arrived to the United States from Egypt in 2014, and resettled in Los Angeles through IRR’s Match Grant Refugee Resettlement Program. Although the family had since moved to Corona in Riverside County, they traveled all the way to Glendale to apply for citizenship through CCLA, due to their confidence and trust in IRR staff.

IRR staff member Sona Yaghazarian assisted the family with financial and emotional support as well as employment services, helping Magad and Nashwa Markos navigate the job market using their bachelor degrees to find employment. Their two young children, Youland and Mina, successfully enrolled in and attended public schools upon their arrival. Youland is currently attending San Diego State College, while Mina recently graduated from UC San Diego with a major in Political Science.

Nashwa has been successfully working as a store manager for the past four years and Magad is a sales associate at the same company. The Markos family represents many of the success stories of the IRR program, which has served over 100,000 refugees and asylees since the end of World War II. IRR was pleased and honored to support these returning clients in applying for citizenship, and is with them every step of the way! ❖



A Catholic Charities’ Immigration and Refugee Services’ staff member assists former Egyptian asylee, Magad, at a Glendale Citizen Workshop.



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SNAP Program Helps Clients at Brownson House

After Rocio was introduced to Catholic Charities' Brownson House Community Center in East Los Angeles, to help her provide for her family, Rocio was given fresh fruits and vegetables, utilities assistance, clothes and Christmas toys for her children. Subsequently being diagnosed with borderline diabetes, Rocio began participating in the center's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP, the federal program working to fight hunger in America, commonly referred to as Food Stamps.

At the time when she began the SNAP Nutrition Education Classes, Rocio struggled with controlling her diet and high blood sugar levels. Maria Cervantes, the Nutrition Educator at Brownson House, convinced Rocio that, through nutrition education, Rocio could manage some of her health challenges. Rocio welcomed this idea, and wanted "to change bad habits and to eat healthy."

Within the third session of attending the nutrition class, Rocio successfully lowered her blood sugar by four points and reported losing some weight. Rocio continued on her path to developing a healthy lifestyle by also joining the Brownson House walking club and developing healthier ways of cooking, including reducing her sugar intake and choosing



The walking club at Brownson House Community Center in Catholic Charities' San Gabriel Region is part of the SNAP program.

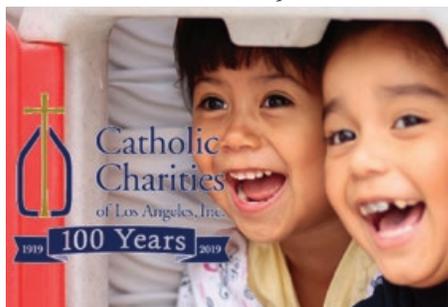
to eat sweet bread only once a month as a reward for making progress on her health goals.

Though she finds it very challenging to work in a restaurant and eat healthily, she reports to her Nutrition Educator and to her class that she tries not to forget all the things that she learns in class. Rocio says she is "practicing different ways to cook healthy food, looking on the website eatfresh.org, and using the recipe book that Maria Cervantez gave out in a nutrition class. I can only say, 'Thank you Catholic Charities for all services and support that I received.'" ❀



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