



Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

The Sage

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Archdiocesan Youth Employment Utilizes Partnerships and Collaborations

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic Charities' Archdiocesan Youth Employment Program (AYE) adapted and pivoted its delivery of services in order to continue giving support to youth throughout the greater Los Angeles area. AYE has provided youth with virtual job readiness workshops, virtual educational preparation, supportive services, virtual internships, and physical internships with employers, following CDC guidelines. In the 2020-2021 program year, AYE provided 1,510 paid youth internships in both the private and public sectors.

AYE's ability to facilitate internships and employment opportunities for youth is rooted in partnerships and collaborations with companies and organizations that recognize the value of giving youth an opportunity. One of AYE's greatest examples of such a collaboration is the partnership with the GAP Foundation's This Way Onward (TWO) program. Through this unique program, youth engaged in a series of six weeks of work readiness workshops, facilitated by both AYE staff and Old Navy managers. Youth then interviewed at Old Navy stores for an opportunity to intern, which can lead to permanent employment. During FY2020-2021, AYE conducted



Evelyn Castillo learns about retail sales during her AYE internship at Old Navy.

eight virtual recruitment events for Old Navy and assisted 200 youth to apply for internships, with 120 youth being selected for interviews and 100 youth being extended offers of employment.

To learn more about and support the work of AYE please visit the program's website at <https://ayela.org>. ❖



Santa Barbara Region Welcomes Director

Michael T. Lockard has joined Catholic Charities of Los Angeles as the new Regional Director of the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region. Michael shared, "The mission of Catholic Charities and the quality of leadership are what attracted me to the organization. I couldn't be more excited to lead the Santa Barbara and Ventura counties of Catholic Charities, working alongside a talented and devoted team to build trust, deepen our impact and serve those in need."

A California native, Michael earned both his MPA in Nonprofit Management and his BA from Indiana University. He also holds the Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) designation. Michael served as head of development for the Finish Line Youth Foundation, a national children's foundation and philanthropic arm of Finish Line and JD Sports, where he raised funds and developed programs for disadvantaged and special needs youth. He has also held leadership roles with the University of California, Davis, and Indiana University Student Foundation. ❖

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

As the restrictions of COVID-19 are gradually being lifted and people are moving back to normalcy, Catholic Charities is also welcoming back those employees who were working remotely from home. On July 19, we will begin phasing everyone back to our offices.

Catholic Charities' offices were open throughout the pandemic crisis. The homeless shelters provided care to the most vulnerable on our streets. The community centers provided food, utility assistance, rent assistance, immigration and job training services to our clients. Our homebound elderly were served by our OASIS and Gatekeeper programs with procedures that protected them from the virus.

Because of the dedication and sacrifice of our managers, staff and volunteers, Catholic Charities has served over 275,000 individuals during the pandemic. Our funders also need to be recognized for their generous donations made specifically for those impacted by COVID-19. We received over \$3 million to assist those people with food, rent and utilities.

According to the CDC, about 53% of vaccine-eligible Americans are fully vaccinated. About 99% of the US COVID-19 deaths in May 2021 involved people who were not fully vaccinated (AP). There are many challenges ahead of us and Catholic Charities will do our part to assist those still suffering from the consequences of the pandemic.

Aesop once said, "A sensible man never embarks on an enterprise until he can see his way clear to the end of it." At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, Catholic Charities took on the difficult task of assisting our clients through the pandemic. We are committed to them till the "end of it." ❖

St. Robert's Center Boasts Multi-Purpose Back Yard

Catholic Charities' St. Robert's Center did not sit idle during the pandemic. With the Saturday food program shifting into the parking lot to maintain social distancing and to provide "grab and go" lunches, groceries and toiletries in the past year, it was the ideal time to renovate the back yard.

After several successful fundraising events and with generous donations from foundations and supporters, the project was underway in October 2020. Since then, a three-level, wheelchair accessible deck and toddler play area was created to house the Saturday food program and the young families at The Landing, a support program for pregnant and parenting youth.



Unhoused neighbors in Venice help during renovation of the center's back yard.

The 100+ year old Chinese elm tree remains a central highlight of the new back yard. Also included is an outdoor kitchen with grill, succulent gardens, small group seating, cell phone charge stations for unhoused visitors, and a toddler play area that includes a sand box, garden, and a child-friendly, interactive grotto.

Volunteers from the Boy Scouts (Eagle Scout), Girl Scouts (Silver Award), Order of Malta, St. Robert's staff, and even the center's unhoused Saturday clients, have all come together, during various times, to lend a hand. The space is a beautiful new addition to St. Robert's Center, especially when outdoor space is safer for gathering in groups. ❖

San Gabriel Region Joins SoCal Gas to Support Families

Brownson House Community Center, San Juan Diego Community Center and Pomona Community Center collaborated with the SoCal Gas Company to carry out three community food distribution events, called Fueling Our Communities, in April and May 2021.

SoCal Gas awarded Catholic Charities San Gabriel Region a \$50,000 grant to provide food supplies and restaurant gift certificates to families affected by COVID-19, residing in El Monte, Rosemead, Irwindale, Duarte and Pomona. The food distribution events were able to assist 295 families who were facing food insecurity.

The Fueling Our Communities events were carried out at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in El Monte, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Irwindale, and St. Madeleine Parish in Pomona. We are grateful to local government officials, participating parishes and the SoCal Gas Company for not only providing funding resources, but also providing volunteers who helped with food bag preparations and distribution. ❀



Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in El Monte collaborated with Catholic Charities' San Gabriel Region and SoCal Gas to distribute food to families.

Guadalupe Center Encourages Healthy Habits

Guadalupe Community Center in Canoga Park offers educational classes and workshops, at no cost, to low-income families in the San Fernando Valley. The center has collaborated with California State University, Northridge (CSUN) staff to provide eight different, in-person nutrition classes throughout the year to parents and individuals in the community, in an effort to encourage the development of healthy habits and active lifestyles.



Two clients of Guadalupe Center hold up their Certificates of Completion.

However, during the past year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, CSUN was only able to offer the courses through Zoom, making it difficult for many participants who lack internet access or have difficulty navigating technology.

In order to continue to provide services to underserved clients,

implement the lesson, and Zumba classes for the participants.

A working mom with two young children shared, "I learned quick and easy, healthy meals to cook at home," something that had seemed nearly impossible for her, after her long days at work. ❀

Guadalupe Center decided to open its doors and allow in-person classes with social distancing, abiding by COVID-19 protocols. This effort has proved to be a success, since many parents who are not computer savvy, and would otherwise not have been able to access the classes, decided to take the in-person courses.

The interactive workshops offer informative lectures on specific nutritional topics, short cooking tutorials on how to

Good Shepherd Shelter Student Overcomes Fear

When families first enter Good Shepherd Shelter (GSS), the children are quite often the most hesitant to join the community and exhibit shy, withdrawn behaviors. Many of the children retain specific fears that impede their transition into the community.

Our trauma-informed staff are trained to work with these children to help them to open up and build their trust and belief that they are safe.

One of the boys who recently entered GSS came in with a strong and distinct fear of water. The timing of his entry coincided with the beginning of summer school, which includes visits to our swimming pool four times per week.

At first, nine-year old "David" hung back and watched the other children swim and play with the teachers. On the third day, he announced that he, not only wanted to get in the water, but that he wanted to learn to swim.

Now, each day, he gets in with determination and a commitment to overcome his fear and achieve his goal of learning to swim on his own. Moreover, he does so with a big smile! ❀



Good Shepherd Shelter School Supervisor, Inair Cowo, helps young "David" learn to swim.

Jobe Resident Becomes American Citizen

Aaron Hofmann, a former foster youth who is a current resident of Jobe, Catholic Charities' Transitional Living Program, obtained his United States citizenship in March 2021. Aaron was born in Germany and brought over to the U.S. at the age of two by his parents.

When Aaron was fifteen years old, he was placed in the foster care system by the courts. He aged out of foster care at the age of eighteen and enrolled at California State University Northridge (CSUN).

During Aaron's freshman year at CSUN, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. He was living in the dorms when they were closed due to the pandemic. Aaron was referred to Jobe Transitional Living Program by his former social worker.

When Aaron was accepted into the Jobe program, he stated, "without Jobe providing stable housing and food, I may have dropped out of school."

During Aaron's tenure at Jobe, he has obtained his driver's license, purchased a used car with cash, been employed as a teaching assistant at CSUN, and earned a 3.77 GPA. He delivers food three to four nights per week. Aaron also loves to cook and offers to teach the other Jobe residents how to cook. Aaron enjoys horses and takes weekly riding lessons.

Keith Weiser, Jobe Program Director, shared, "At Jobe, we advise all of our residents that they define themselves and should not allow circumstances or outside factors to define them. Aaron has never let being a former foster youth define him. He is a resilient, motivated and focused young man. We are all very proud of Aaron." ❖



Aaron celebrates becoming a United States citizen.



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Catholic Charities' Jobe Transitional Living Program provides a safe, stable environment for homeless, former foster youth, ages 18-25, while they pursue their educational goals.



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