



Yolanda Vasquez Appointed Regional Director

Yolanda Vasquez, Program Director for Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. in Santa Barbara County, has been promoted to the position of Santa Barbara Regional Director, overseeing both Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

Before coming to Catholic Charities, she worked for the County of Santa Barbara Department of Social Services as a client eligibility worker and in staff development.

Yolanda joined Catholic Charities in 2002 as a Client Resource Coordinator for the Santa Barbara Metro Area. She became Administrative Assistant to the Regional Director in 2016, Regional Development Director in 2017, Program Director in 2018, and Interim Regional Director in 2020-2021.

A first generation Californian, Yolanda was born and raised in Santa Barbara, which has helped her connect with clients, donors and social service agencies county-wide. Yolanda remarked, "I am blessed to have been selected to continue to serve the agency and the region I love". ♣

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Supports Youth Employment Services



Manuel Cerdá, AYE Program Director, meets the Lovers of the Holy Cross community which will provide two Sisters to work on the Career Development Project.

Catholic Charities' Archdiocesan Youth Employment Services (AYES) recently launched the Career Development Project (CDP), a three-year venture funded through a magnificent \$3M grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.

CDP allows AYES services to continue for youth, ages 16 – 24, called Conrad Career Associates. They have completed AYES City and County-funded workforce development services and need additional support to overcome barriers and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Extra supports available to Conrad Career Associates include: a greater variety of training opportunities; extended time to attend vocational skills training and to participate in paid work experience; academic

support; one to one career development and coaching; and limited financial support to address needs such as housing, food, utilities, transportation, work-related expenses, childcare, and behavioral health.

AYES will collaborate with three Catholic Sisters' communities to provide workforce development services over the project period. AYES will also collaborate with the University of Notre Dame's Lab for Economic Opportunities to study program outcomes, with the goal of improving workforce development methods, strategies and best practices.

To learn more about the work of AYES or to make a donation, visit their website at www.ayela.org. ♣

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

Homelessness exists for individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Of the 161,548 homeless people in California, 64,233 live in Los Angeles County. The primary causes for homelessness are substance abuse (32%) and mental health (26%). In regard to ethnic background, the African Americans make up 38% and the Hispanics comprise 33%.

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles operates ten shelters. They house approximately 350 people every evening. They serve homeless children, adults and families. Of the people we serve, we are experiencing an increase in homeless families. Many of these families are homeless because of divorce or separation and domestic violence.

A vulnerable segment of the homeless population is pregnant women and pregnant women who suffer from domestic violence. Catholic Charities reaches out by providing safe shelter, mental health services, employment opportunities and housing. We provide emotional support and guidance throughout their pregnancies.

Catholic Charities has a program in Venice called The Landing. It is a no-cost, daytime wellness and respite drop-in center for pregnant and parenting youth, ages 14 to 24, and their children. We provide a safe, trauma-informed, home-like environment supporting positive parent/child attachments, purposeful parenting skills, living and lifestyle choices featuring life's basic essentials, counseling, baby and children's necessities.

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles is committed to serving the most vulnerable in the counties of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura. We are forever grateful to our supporters who enable us to change people's lives. ♣

Baby Makes Unusual Entrance

Cherish Alena Johnson, a.k.a. "Little Civic," made quite an unusual entrance into the world on July 31, 2021. Initially, her mother was sent home from Long Beach Memorial Hospital at 2:00 a.m. that day because Cherish wasn't yet ready to arrive. By noon the same day, sweet Cherish had plans of her own! Dad and Mom (Jordan and LeeLee) jumped back into the car at 11:45 a.m. for a quick, 13 minute return to the hospital.

With Dad driving and only a block away from the Emergency Room, he heard a scream and a push and looked over his shoulder into the backseat of his Honda Civic to see LeeLee holding their new baby daughter, who arrived smiling!

Jordan reported that the hospital staff were as surprised as he and LeeLee were when they pulled up to the ER



The Johnsons are some of the favorite guests at The Landing.

door just minutes later. When Cherish's birth certificate arrived in the mail, it appropriately read "Place of Birth: In the car."

Jordan, LeeLee, Cherish, and big brother Ariyan, three-years-old, are frequent guests at The Landing at St. Robert's Center in Venice. Opened in July 2019, The Landing is a no-cost, one-of-a-kind, daytime wellness and respite drop-in center for pregnant and parenting youth and their children. The Landing provides a safe, trauma-informed, low-barrier, home-like

environment that supports positive parent/child attachments, purposeful parenting skills, and healthy living and lifestyle choices.

For more information about the support provided by The Landing, email TheLanding@CCharities.org or call (213) 318-5762. ♣

Jobe Resident Achieves Benchmarks

Destiny is a 23-year-old former foster youth who joined Catholic Charities' Jobe Transitional Living Program in August 2019. She was referred to Jobe because she was approaching the age limit for her prior housing program and needed stable housing and support. Unfortunately, most transitional living programs only provide services to former foster youth until they are 21-years-old, leaving them without resources or support.

During Destiny's tenure at Jobe, she has reached numerous benchmarks, which include building her personal savings, purchasing a more reliable car, and earning valuable work experience. Destiny currently works at a local restaurant, which has helped her develop transferrable skills such as being a team player and providing excellent customer service. She also works as a caregiver for a home healthcare company. This allows Destiny to use her innate sense of compassion to help others while also preparing her for her long-term goal of working in the medical field.

Destiny recently graduated from College of the Canyons with an associate's degree in Public Health. She is a first-generation college student who is resilient and determined to be successful. Destiny has overcome adversity and will continue to utilize her strengths to reach her goals and accomplish her dreams. Jobe is proud to support her along the way. ♡



Destiny's next goals include becoming a licensed phlebotomist and getting accepted into a nursing program.

McGill House Promotes Positive Change

Victoria, a 31-year-old single mother, is a recent graduate of the McGill Transitional House Shelter Program. Two and one-half years ago, she was without a job and, with her three children, living with and completely depending upon an abusive partner.

When Victoria found the courage to leave her abuser, she was homeless, most of the time couch surfing with her children. She sought work through the GAIN countywide welfare to work program. Victoria worked at Habitat for Humanity as a communications' coordinator but was unable to keep a stable job schedule due to her homeless situation.

Fortunately, her employer connected her to Catholic Charities' McGill House. While there, Victoria took advantage of the program's parenting, money management, and nutrition classes. Now that she has completed the McGill program, Victoria feels equipped with new parenting skills.

Participating in the program allowed Victoria to gain access to the Emergency Housing Voucher program and she obtained subsidized permanent housing. Victoria is thankful to the McGill staff for supporting her through her struggles and for not allowing her to give up. She related, "My experience at McGill was so life-changing, I learned so much and grew as a person. Because of the staff support, I am actually a thriving adult!" ♡



Victoria and her children have a beautiful apartment to call home.

CYO Director Describes Nonprofit Sports Management

In June, James McGoldrick, Catholic Charities' Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Director for the past 10 years, guest lectured at the Ohio University School of Sports Management's annual San Diego Sports Consulting Project.

James spoke about nonprofit sports management, a little known segment within the sports industry, and provided an overview of CYO's history, organizational framework, challenges, opportunities and scope of services. CYO currently offers 11 sports for student-athletes at 190 Catholic elementary schools throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA), facilitating sporting events to over 20,000 student-athletes annually.

James also talked about the many challenges of running a sports program in a large and diverse service area, as is ADLA, and emphasized that, despite challenges, in the end, connections made on the athletic field tend to carry into the future, as former CYO athletes reconnect in high school and beyond. By sharing his CYO story, James hopes a new generation of sports management professionals will be inspired to use their talents to impact youth.

To learn more about CYO or to make a donation, please visit the website at www.cyola.org. ♡



James McGoldrick is Catholic Charities' CYO Director.

Path Found Serving Others

Last year, 17-year-old Stephanie was referred to Guadalupe Community Center by a partner agency, which services survivors of domestic violence. She was a shy teen who rarely spoke up and was unsure of what she wanted to do with her future.

Stephanie was assigned to the summer camp program to create and lead a weekly activity for the children. This was a daunting task for her, especially because she hated speaking to groups, even if they were elementary school-age children.

Stephanie met with the program staff to brainstorm an activity to do with the children. They discovered her passion for gardening and the environment and suggested she teach a gardening class to the children in the center's outdoor garden.

She taught them about sustainability and the importance of environmentally friendly practices, as well as gardening



Stephanie has a passion for gardening and the environment.

techniques. Stephanie thrived during these classes. Her confidence and mental health improved significantly, as she taught the camp students something about which she is deeply passionate.

Stephanie is now interested in pursuing a career in environmental science and will enroll in a four-year university, something that she had not previously considered. With the help and support of CCLA staff, she applied and has been accepted at numerous four-year universities including CSUN, UCSB and, the school of her dreams, UCSD.

She reassured staff at Guadalupe Community Center that she will visit them during school breaks and shared how "happy" she is to "be a part of an

organization that cares!" In turn, the center's staff feel honored and blessed to be part of such a wonderfully smart, loving, caring young woman's life. ♣



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



Catholic Charities' CYO program focuses on the competitive and developmental skills of boys and girls to foster their self-confidence, responsibility, teamwork and good sportsmanship.



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