



Jobe Program Shares Client Success Story

Clara is a resident of Catholic Charities' Jobe Transitional Living Program (TLP) and majoring in Child Development at Cal State Northridge. She earned a 4.0 GPA in Fall Semester 2023.

Clara attended the National Leadership and Organizational Development Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, which was hosted by her sorority at CSUN, Lambda Theta Nu, in August 2023. The conference focused on professional development and gave Clara the opportunity to network with professionals from various entities such as finance, non-profits and philanthropy. The conference promotes personal development and encourages attendees to get out of their comfort zones by networking and building relationships.

Clara also volunteers with after school programs for disadvantaged students and is currently applying for graduate school to pursue a Master's degree in Education or Student Affairs. With her outstanding academic achievements and commitment to personal development, Clara exemplifies excellence both inside and outside the classroom. ❀

Gala Honored New Auxiliary Bishops



Honored at the annual Catholic Charities' City of Angels Christmas Gala were the Archbishop and Auxiliary Bishops of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles: left to right, Bishop Albert M. Bahthuth; Bishop Slawomir Szredka; Bishop Brian A. Nunes; Archbishop José H. Gomez; Bishop Marc V. Trudeau; and Bishop Matthew G. Elshoff.

The California Club in downtown Los Angeles was, again, the venue for Catholic Charities' annual City of Angels Christmas Gala, which honored the four new Auxiliary Bishops of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Also acknowledged were the 2023 Archdiocese of Los Angeles Investees of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, as well as the members of those Orders, and of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, who passed away in 2023.

Archbishop José H. Gomez gave welcome remarks and reflections before offering a prayer before dinner. Paul D. Tosetti, Esq., President of Catholic Charities' Board of Trustees, was Master of Ceremonies and introduced the

Auxiliary Bishops and Investees. He also recognized Msgr. Paul Montoya for his 50 year Anniversary of Ordination and Msgr. Gregory Cox for his 40 years of service to Catholic Charities. Tosetti and his wife, Cathy, were the Chairs of the event, and he acknowledged the members of the Committee.

Highlights of the evening included a special performance of Christmas music by members of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artists' Program, two singers and a pianist. Attendees enjoyed exquisite food as well as listening and dancing to the wonderful music of the Jay Sterling Orchestra. Proceeds from the annual event will be used to assist the homeless and working poor who are served by the critical case management programs of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. ❀

In This Issue...

Natividad con Obispo with Bishop Brian	page 2
Esperanza Community Appreciation Event	page 3
Good Shepherd Center Christmas Parties	page 3
Esperanza Opportunities for Youth	page 3
Saint Pio Foundation/The People of Hope	page 4

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

Dr. John Coleman was the President of Haverford College in Pennsylvania. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank. He stepped down, for a time, from these distinguished positions because he wanted to experience, again, what it meant to work with his hands and muscles.

He tried his hand at digging ditches, working on a farm, collecting garbage and washing dishes. He found those jobs difficult and tiring. He was fired as a dishwasher. He was unemployed for a time. By actual experience, he found out what many human beings go through. When Dr. Coleman returned to his distinguished positions, he believed his experience of manual labor helped him with his decisions as a college President and as a Director of the Federal Reserve Bank.

Not all of us are able to take the dramatic steps Dr. Coleman took in broadening our appreciation of others' work experiences by stepping away from our responsibilities. Most of us are blessed with the basics of life, like food, clothing, shelter, work and education. Volunteering our time at a shelter, food pantry or visiting the homebound elderly are experiences that would help us to understand the financial and emotional challenges of the homeless and working poor.

Catholic Charities has eight shelters, a residence, and 17 community centers that provide food and other necessities for the poor. These facilities are open to volunteers who want to serve the homeless and working poor. Not only would you provide an invaluable service to those in need, but also you would better appreciate the struggles of those who are working but are barely making ends meet.

Because Dr. Coleman ventured into a new frontier of working with his hands, he felt he was better equipped to make decisions as President of a college and a Director of a Board. May we also have the courage to venture out to work or volunteer with our hands with the homeless and working poor. May the services we provide not only assist those in need, but also enhance our decisions in everyday life. ❀

Navidad Con Obispo with Bishop Brian Nunes

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles' San Gabriel Region held their annual Navidad Con Obispo event on December 16, 2023. Over 100 families were able to eat warm tamales, champurrado and pan dulce and watch Epiphany Parish's Children's Folklorico and Mariachi performances.

San Gabriel Region's new Auxiliary Bishop, Brian Nunes, explained the meaning of Advent and showed the children and families the Advent wreath. The guests received food baskets with ingredients for a nice holiday meal and toys for the children, and even took photos with Bishop Brian Nunes and Santa.

Macy's and Chase worked alongside Catholic Charities by providing toys and a group of helpful volunteers for the event. Thank you to Epiphany Parish for holding the event and to everyone who aided in the success of the party.



San Gabriel Region Advisory Board members and Regional Director join San Gabriel Region's Auxiliary Bishop, Brian Nunes, for the Navidad Con Obispo event at Epiphany Parish in South El Monte.

The San Gabriel Region of Catholic Charities serves the vulnerable residents of the communities that extend from East Los Angeles to the Pomona Valley, bordering the San Bernardino County line. ❀

Esperanza Hosts Community Appreciation Event

On the evening of December 7, 2023, Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project held a Community Appreciation Event at the Mercado La Paloma. The event honored and recognized the program's volunteers and community partners, while fostering community and connection. Representatives of community partners, law firms, UCLA medical school and other volunteers attended the special evening of food, community, and celebration.

Eight community members, including attorney and Community Leadership Committee member, Mariela Camisassa, received special recognition from Esperanza program managers for their outstanding dedication to vulnerable immigrants. David Marquez, Director at Casey Family Programs, spoke at the event, highlighting the importance of community partnerships to overcome the immense needs migrant youth face.

Volunteers contributed almost 4,800 hours to Esperanza in 2023. Sixty volunteers regularly perform pro bono interpretation and translation for clients. Sixty-five unaccompanied minors, including 40 youth who are survivors of abuse, abandonment or neglect, are represented by pro bono attorneys. To get involved, please contact Heidy Pineda, Hpineda@ccharities.org. ❀



Mariela Camisassa, Pro Bono Attorney and Esperanza Community Leadership Committee member, second from right, with Esperanza Program Director Kimberley Plotnik, middle, and others from Mariela's law firm, were recognized at the event.

Good Shepherd Center Residents Enjoy Christmas Events

Good Shepherd Center for Homeless Women and Children (GSC) hosted several Christmas parties for the resident women and children during the holiday season.

GSC's 29th Annual "A Better Christmas," on December 13, took place through the generosity of the United States Secret Service, the California Highway Patrol, Solid Rock Church, and GSC's Advisory and Auxiliary Boards. Participants enjoyed gifts and pictures with Santa, as well as a delicious dinner catered by Olive Garden. This heartwarming event created a festive and joyful atmosphere for the residents and spread Christmas cheer throughout the Center.

On December 20, Highly Favored, A Blessing to Others, in collaboration with the United Nurses Association of California/Union of Healthcare Professionals, hosted their Third Annual Christmas party for mothers and children living at Good Shepherd Center. Residents enjoyed a delightful brunch catered by Marie Callender's, a hot chocolate station, a Santa photo booth, arts and crafts, bingo, gifts and beautiful decorations. The efforts of all of the volunteers brought joy and warmth to GSC residents. ❀



A GSC Farley House resident receives gifts for her children at a party hosted by Highly Favored, A Blessing to Others.

Esperanza's Opportunities For Youth December Donation Drive

Esperanza's holistic support program for unaccompanied children, the Opportunities For Youth program (OFY), hosted its first December Donation Drive on December 16, 2023, to support migrant youth in Los Angeles and foster a sense of community. Children from 60 households were invited to the event at which fresh produce, clothing, hygiene items, books, and toys were available for them. Families lined up in anticipation, and all received a tote bag and information resources on arrival.

During the event, attendees filled up their bags with culturally significant foods, including Maseca (corn flour), banana leaves, cornhusks and other fresh ingredients, and children selected toys and books to brighten their holidays. Families were also able to gather essential items, such as toothpaste, shampoo, soap and winter jackets of all sizes.

The event would not have been possible without the generosity and compassion of supporters, partners and volunteers. If you are interested in donating to Esperanza's OFY program for vulnerable, immigrant children, please contact Vanessa Cecena, Vcecena@ccharities.org. ❀



A family enjoys Esperanza's December Donation Drive



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Catholic Charities' food pantry programs provide a variety of nutritious groceries to many underserved residents in the Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.



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<https://www.facebook.com/Catholic.Charities.LA>

Saint Pio Foundation/The People of Hope and Catholic Charities of Los Angeles Present “Pizza for a Smile”

Saint Pio Foundation (aka The People of Hope), in collaboration with Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc., presented the “Pizza for a Smile” initiative at a press conference on November 1, 2023, which aired on Good Day LA Morning News, KTTV Fox 11. The initiative intends to provide pizza for those who experience the daily alienation so common to living a life of poverty in a materialistic world. The goal is to establish several “Pizza for a Smile” initiatives across the United States, enlisting a variety of mission-driven pizzeria and restaurant owners to pledge a minimum monthly donation of 100 pizzas for their local communities.

Supporters of the initiative and present at the event were: Monsignor Cox (Executive Director, Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.); Luciano Lamonarca, Acclaimed Italian Tenor, Founder and CEO of the Saint Pio Foundation; Joe Mantegna, American film, theater, and television personality;



Chris Bianco, James Beard Award Winning Chef, Restaurateur and Spokesperson; and local pizzeria and restaurant owners.

The children and families served at Catholic Charities' El Santo Niño Community Center were the first recipients of 100, 12” pizzas on November 2 from Pizzeria Bianco, owned by Chris Bianco. On November 6, children and families

assisted at Catholic Charities' St. Margaret's Community Center received 100 pizzas from Fresh Brothers, generously donated by Scott Goldberg, Owner.

Luciano Lamonarca said that he started Saint Pio Foundation in 2014 because he and his wife had been trying to have a child since 2010. They had many obstacles. Luciano prayed to Padre Pio, asking for his intercession, His wife finally got pregnant in 2014 and they had a son Sebastian, in 2015. Luciano is from the same region in Italy as Padre Pio was. ❀