



Rotary Club Sponsors El Santo Niño Christmas Event



A Latinos Unidos Rotary Club Santa welcomes a family at El Santo Niño's Christmas party.

Latinos Unidos Rotary Club has sponsored El Santo Niño Community Center's Annual Christmas event since 2016, bringing joy to many children and families. On a Saturday in December, the celebration welcomed 81 families, which included families from the center's Adeste Day Care, My Club Teen Program, Global Refugee HSPRS Program, New Immigrant Services Program, and community residents.

The party gave every child the chance to receive a gift from Santa. Everyone in attendance enjoyed a warm lunch consisting of fried chicken, salad, rice, beans, tamales and pastries. At the end of the event, each family received a box of groceries to take home, extending the Christmas spirit. ❖

Good Shepherd Shelter Specializes in Trauma-Informed Education

When Jazmine arrived with her mom and younger brother at Good Shepherd Shelter (GSS) at age 11, a new chapter opened in their lives. Domestic violence often seriously impacts a child's educational development. As a transitional domestic violence shelter for mothers and children, GSS specializes in trauma-



Jazmine looks forward to continuing her education at Barnard College, Columbia University.

informed education through the on-site elementary school. In the holistic program, students who are performing below grade level are provided with a nurturing academic foundation that they can build upon when they exit the shelter. Jazmine recently reflected, "The education programs at GSS provided a pathway out of a precarious situation for me and my family." During their two school years' time at GSS, her mother completed her GED and pursued higher education in psychology and business, and her little brother skipped a grade.

Jazmine demonstrated her own commitment to education when she began dual enrollment in the local community college while in middle school. She continued taking college courses and volunteering at community organizations like the YWCA, founding a UNICEF club at her high school, and collaborating with government officials

on bills advocating mental health and representation for young people.

Jazmine will continue her educational journey with a scholarship to Barnard College, Columbia University, studying political science with a pre-law concentration. She stated, "My experiences at GSS shaped my commitment to advocacy and social services, and I hope to be a voice for social change and justice wherever I can make a difference." Jazmine's astounding success is a testament to the lifelong impact of GSS. ❖

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

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles has been addressing the issue of homelessness for decades. Our nine shelters provide a safe environment that enables men and women to change their lives. Counseling, job training, housing options and case management are a few of the services that have rebuilt shattered lives into productive and healthy ones.

Reaching out to people on the streets is critical in building trust for the homeless to begin to change their lives, but reaching out before people become homeless is lifesaving. Catholic Charities has developed a few services that prevent homelessness. Jobe Transitional Residence and our community centers are two examples of preventive models.

Jobe is a transitional living program that supports Transition Aged Youth (TAY), ages 18-25 years old. These youth have aged out of the foster care system and have struggled with homelessness. Jobe residents are provided with food, shelter, life skills classes, resume building, mock interviews, and banking and budgeting skills. Jobe has a licensed therapist on-call to assist with mental health needs. The average stay at Jobe is 32 to 48 months. Jobe has an Aftercare Program that supports former residents when they transition out.

CCLA's Community Service Centers (CSC) reach out to the working poor who are one paycheck away from being homeless. CSCs provide case management and social services to empower people to become more self-sufficient and independent, to provide emergency assistance to very low income individuals and families – including food, clothing, temporary shelter, utilities assistance, transportation, public benefits assistance, job training, employment referrals and medical referrals.

Pope Francis began the Holy Year 2025 with the motto, "Pilgrims of Hope." The words "pilgrims" and "hope" are also key themes of Pope Francis' pontificate. A Holy Year is a time of reflection, personal renewal and hope. May our New Year's resolution be to bring opportunity and hope to those we serve at Catholic Charities.

For over 45 years, Catholic Charities has served the homeless. We have worked with those on the streets and those who are about to be on the streets. The Board of Trustees and the staff of Catholic Charities are committed to providing the highest quality of services in order to return hope to those who feel hopeless. ❖

Esperanza Hosts Community Appreciation Event

On an evening in November, over 50 volunteers, pro bono attorneys, law students, and community partners gathered at a brewery in downtown Los Angeles to celebrate Esperanza Immigrant Right Project's (EIRP) 2024 Community Appreciation Day. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on the tremendous impact that pro bono attorneys, interpreters, and volunteers had throughout the year. Esperanza volunteers contribute approximately 400 hours each month to provide vital support to clients.

Former EIRP staff member and current pro bono attorney Anuj Nadadur shared how he discovered Esperanza and explained his ongoing motivation to volunteer, highlighting the satisfaction of providing pro bono legal



Catholic Charities' and Esperanza staff pose during the Community Appreciation Event.

services to those in need within the community.

Other noteworthy volunteers who received special recognition included Steven Gordon, a retiree who assists with the Legal Orientation Program for Detained Adults, and law students Maricela Murillo and Jennifer Alvarez, who began volunteering after their first summers in law school and returned

later in their academic careers to continue contributing.

A heartfelt thank you to the many volunteers and community members who attended the celebration and continue to support Esperanza's mission.

For more information about EIRP, please contact Kimberley Plotnik, Director, at kplotnik@esperanza-la.org. ❖

San Gabriel Region Celebrates Navidad Con Obispo

The Christmas giving season got off to a festive start in Catholic Charities' San Gabriel Region with the annual "Navidad Con Obispo" event on December 14. Over 150 families from 13 nearby parishes were treated to tamales, pan dulce and champurrado at Santa Isabel Parish in Boyle Heights. Bishop Brian Nunes spoke and blessed the families before they headed off to take pictures with Santa and pick up their bags of food and toys for Christmas. The occasion was extra special with performances from Santa Isabel School Children's Choir and the Mayfield Senior School Choir who performed throughout the entire party.

San Gabriel Region's second Christmas event for clients took place later that day at Catholic Charities' San Juan Diego Center in El Monte. A hard-working group of community and Chase Bank volunteers supported the center by handing out food bags and toys to an additional 150 families.

The day's festivities were directed by San Gabriel Region Advisory Board members Luis Chacon and Benny Sanchez who, along with community partners from the Salesian Family Youth Center, Macy's, and Chase Bank, made these celebrations possible for the region's parish families. ❀



San Gabriel Pastoral Region Auxiliary Bishop Brian Nunes shared the story of Christmas with families at Santa Isabel School in Boyle Heights.

Jobe Joins "Day of Service" for Community

Once a year, the residents and staff of Jobe Transitional Residence volunteer at the Sisters of the Sacred Heart's "Sacred Oaks Ranch" located in Chatsworth. It is a community event named "Day of Service" with many community partners volunteering to beautify the Sisters' ranch.

Jobe residents have been actively participating at the annual event for over a decade, painting fences, raking leaves, moving rocks etc. It is an excellent opportunity for Jobe residents and staff to bond over the common goal of beautifying the ranch. The satisfying experience builds community bonds and reinforces the spirit of "giving back" and cooperation among Jobe residents, staff and community partners.

The mission of Jobe Transitional Living Program is to create a trauma-informed, culturally aware, and safe environment for Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) former foster youth/homeless youth to utilize their individual strengths to end the cycle of poverty and become pillars of the community.

The Jobe program owns a house in Northridge, which houses 10 TAY young men. Five TAY young women reside in an apartment building nearby. ❀



Jobe residents and staff give back to their community

Employment Support Program Treats Families Over the Holidays

In the past holiday season, the Employment Support Partnership (ESP) program went above and beyond to bring joy to participants in need. ESP partnered with local businesses to create 30 gift boxes filled with essentials and holiday treats for families facing financial hardships. Each box was thoughtfully curated to bring a sense of hope and festivity to ESP clients. One recipient shared, "This box means so much to my family. It's more than just the items inside; it's a reminder that people care."

The success of this initiative highlights the power of collaboration and the impact of coming together to support the community. ESP is deeply grateful to local business partners and donors for their kindness and generosity, which made this giveaway possible. Generous donations poured in from businesses such as Trader Joe's, Porto's Bakery, and the 99 Cent Store.

The ESP program remains committed to helping participants achieve stability with housing assistance, job readiness workshops, job placement services, human trafficking education and screening, and individual coaching.

For more information about the work of Employment Support Partnership, please contact Mania Shabandari at mshabindari@ccharities.org. ❀



ESP clients feel hope and joy at receiving a holiday gift box.

Ventura Community Center Spreads Christmas Cheer

Steven Lloyd is a regular visitor to the Ventura Community Center Food Pantry. This past Christmas, he was able to provide gifts for his four children, ages 14, 12, eight and four, through the center's Christmas gift program, in partnership with the generous donors of St. Jude Parish in Westlake Village. "I am an unemployed, single dad with a disability. Giving something to my children, thanks to Catholic Charities' gift program, made the holiday that much more special for us."

For two years in a row, staff and volunteers at the Ventura Community Center have witnessed Lloyd strap a bag of donated gifts to the back of his electric bicycle to bring the joy of the season to his family. "My four year-old son and 12 year-old autistic daughter especially enjoy their presents. We are grateful for the work that you guys do to make a difference in our community." ❀



Ventura Community Center Volunteer Linda Chaparro (left) greets Steven and Arteaze Lloyd (right).



Lloyd straps bags of gifts to his electric bicycle to take to his family.



Catholic Charities

of Los Angeles, Inc.

1531 James M. Wood Blvd.
Post Office Box 15095
Los Angeles, CA 90015-0095
www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org

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