Seniors Survive the Streets Thanks to Community Partnerships

Every night, while most of us are tucked away in bed warm and safe, there are nearly 7,000 people in Santa Clara County who are cold, hungry, and living on the streets. Patrick and his wife used to be two of them.

On their 42nd anniversary, the couple found themselves priced out of their home when their $1,300 rent spiked up to $1,850. Seniors living on a fixed income, they couldn’t afford it and ended up homeless in a local park.

Patrick is a Vietnam Veteran, honorably discharged after two tours of duty. He and his wife worked hard all their lives. They had a comfortable apartment in Sunnyvale. Patrick was able to retire early. Things were going well. They never thought that something like this could happen. But it did.

“We used to live in neighborhoods where we didn’t like homeless people coming into our community,” Patrick said. “Then we became homeless and knew how it felt when people would talk about you.”

On the streets, Patrick and his wife learned how to survive. Thanks to local nonprofits like Sunnyvale Community Services, Downtown Streets Team, and Catholic Charities, they were able to access food and resources. They also got help filling out the paperwork to get housing vouchers.

They were always hopeful that things would get better. They befriended social service workers and case managers who treated them with dignity and compassion, and who were determined to help the couple get off the streets.

One of their friends was a police officer. He used to check in on them regularly because he truly cared about them and the other homeless people in the park. From their vantage point in the park, the couple would watch a brand new apartment building being built across the street. The officer would tell them that he believed they could end up living there someday. He was right.

Grandmothers Honored at Special Luncheon

On May 13, the Golden Grandmothers Recognition Luncheon celebrated its 10th year honoring 50 grandmothers who have taken on the responsibility of being full-time parents for their grandchildren. These amazing grandmothers represent a diverse group of women from Santa Clara County and are involved in Catholic Charities’ Kinship Resource Center (KRC) or Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP).

Featured speakers were two grandmothers involved with KRC since 2012.

Mrs. Martinez came to KRC in search of support and guidance for her three young grandchildren’s special needs. Through case management services, she found a support system that understood her needs. She was able to access support for her grandchildren’s education and access to mental health services.

Mrs. Merino first came to KRC with two granddaughters, ages one and 10. Today, she cares for six grandchildren. They share a one-bedroom apartment and try to make ends meet, despite Mrs. Merino’s permanent disability after a car accident in 2010.

At the luncheon, Mrs. Merino’s eldest granddaughter, Camilla (18), shared a beautiful speech honoring her grandmother, saying she could not have gotten this far without her. Camilla is entering the Police Academy this year with the dream of keeping streets safe as a highway patrol officer.

“Catholic Charities is such a blessing,” says Mrs. Merino. “Just when I think I’m at the bottom, God blesses Catholic Charities to do something for me.”

Thank you to 50 special grandmothers who are raising their grandchildren full-time.
Dear Friends,

We hear so many painful stories every day, sometimes it helps to hear good news to renew our hope. In my position as leader of Catholic Charities’ efforts, I hear both painful and good news stories. One day I learn that a young man killed in a shooting was a participant at our Washington United Youth Center. The next day, I learn that two women once on welfare who went through our CalWorks program just got Master’s and Bachelor’s degrees and are dedicating their lives to helping others. One day, I hear staff is struggling with rigid contract requirements and the next day, I hear about an amazing unconditional large gift to help our work.

I find my hope is renewed when I see staff, volunteers and participants in action. I went from a site visit at our Summer Program at Santee School where children strengthened literacy skills using a fun baseball theme to visiting our John XXIII Multiservice Center where seniors were getting delicious hot meals plus extra food through the Brown Bag program. I also experience hope when our advocacy efforts are listened to. After a 15 hour marathon session, San Jose City Council supported both the expansion of days and numbers of homeless clients our churches could serve and our new Charities Housing permanent supportive housing site for the chronically homeless.

So, when you get discouraged by larger forces creating economic inequality or by painful stories of those suffering from violence, poverty, homelessness, mental illness, old age, or isolation, I encourage you to visit Catholic Charities where our participants, volunteers and staff never give up. Their hope is contagious. I hope you catch it.

All the best,
Gregory Kepferle, CEO

PS: Thank you to all of our donors and supporters this past year who believed in us and made it possible for us to provide help and create hope for our neighbors in need. I invite you to join them.

New Board President Believes in the Power of Community Partnerships

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is proud to announce the appointment of Khanh Duy Russo as the new President of our Board of Directors. Russo will help Catholic Charities implement the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, which reallocs our resources to more efficiently address poverty alleviation, poverty prevention, and poverty reduction in Santa Clara County.

Russo directs the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Innovation for the City of San José’s Mayor Sam Liccardo. He has been a member of our board since 2012. He has been involved with the Catholic Charities community since he was an infant. Russo and his family were Vietnamese refugees living in a camp in Thailand when Catholic Charities sponsored them and helped them find safe haven and a new home in San Jose. Russo grew up in the Catholic faith and is a dedicated parishioner at Our Lady of La Vang Parish.

“Catholic Charities is blessed with talented, experienced volunteers who serve on our Board and we look forward to Khanh Duy Russo’s leadership,” said Gregory R. Kepferle, CEO of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County.

“Khanh grew up in this area and knows the local community very well. said Gregory R. Kepferle, CEO of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. “Khanh will serve on our Board and we look forward to Khanh Duy Russo’s leadership.” Russo will include the appointment of Khanh Russo as the new President of our Board of Directors. Russo will

His commitment to social justice and dedication to helping our underserved neighbors is an inspiration to our Board and staff.”

From teaching Confirmation to helping with Catholic Charities’ May Appeal, Russo has always been supportive of San José Diocese’s mission to

“...inspire the people of this Valley to live the values taught by Jesus Christ, inspiring them to integrity and action.” Russo’s dedication to his faith and the community is why he invests his professional and his personal life to social justice.

“On behalf of the Board and Catholic Charities, I would like to thank Mike Blach for his leadership as outgoing Chair. I am honored to take on this new role and am excited to continue evangelizing the great work being done to help people in our community living in poverty,” said Russo. “I plan to leverage my ability to create strategic partnerships and support Catholic Charities’ goals to partner with more Silicon Valley companies and leverage our Valley’s technology and innovation to serve the community.” Russo speaks fluent Vietnamese and is conversant in Spanish.

Russo’s commitment to the public and social sector is demonstrated through his philanthropic work with Cisco Systems, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, North Hills Community Outreach, and The Forbes Funds. His work has focused on enhancing the management capacity of health, human service, and community development organizations in the nonprofit sector.
Coral Visits Livermore Labs

What better way to jumpstart the summer fun than by having “Fun with Science?”

The afternoon lecture, held at the Discovery Center of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories, gave students in CORAL (Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning) STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) the chance to experience wild science demos featuring a range of reactive materials, from liquid nitrogen to Tesla coils.

Instructors invited students to participate in the demonstrations, teaching the class about chemical reactions as a part of a full-day field trip dedicated to hands-on science learning.

Sixteen students from 4th to 6th grade of R.F. Kennedy Elementary and Dahl Elementary had the opportunity to visit Livermore Labs in early June as a way to support CORAL STEM students, thanks to the help of a retired engineer. Catholic Charities’ CORAL is an after-school program that helps children improve their academic achievement through improved literacy skills and enrichment activities. CORAL STEM adds a new and innovative component by helping parents and students explore and learn about science, technology, engineering, and math and their related careers through quality instructional time.

The Livermore Labs field trip included “Fun with Science” and an exclusive visit to the National Ignition Facility (NIF). NIF researchers design sun simulations using large, high-powered lasers concentrated at a single point to create an explosion, with the end goal of better understanding nuclear fusion and ways to harness clean and abundant energy. Students toured the facility and watched a live laser demonstration by lab engineers. “We believe this was a great way to have the students connect what they had been learning in class to the real world,” says Aldo Estrada, CORAL STEM coordinator.

Prior to the trip, the students had spent approximately ten weeks learning about energy and creating their own solar powered cars. University students from the Youth STEM Network at San Jose State University visited weekly to provide hands-on lessons.

To learn more about Catholic Charities’ CORAL STEM program, please contact América G. Gomez, Program Director at aaguzire@catholiccharitiesssc.org.

Volunteers Raise Awareness About Focus for Work

“Thank you SCU student consultants for a great awareness video about mental health and hiring!”

Catholic Charities’ Focus for Work seeks to bridge the gap between Santa Clara County residents with mental illness and local employers through job placement assistance services such as resume writing, job applications, and practice interviews. Focus for Work actively seeks out employers and strives to challenge the stigmas revolving around mental illness to create opportunities for those with mental disabilities.

Dedicated staff members develop partnerships by coordinating in-person visits to introduce and educate employers on the program. New Leaf Consulting’s video provides a creative alternative that can expedite the process by providing employers with a visual overview of the program and alleviate the need to schedule multiple visits.

Thank you to Santa Clara University students Adrian Patino, Charlene Shiao, Joyce Tse, Christopher Wong, and Vicky Yoo for using your time and talent to educate our community on mental health and hiring by bringing awareness to Focus for Work.

Like and share the video at https://www.catholiccharitiesssc.org/focus-work-program. To learn more about Focus for Work, please contact Eila Latif, Deputy Division Director at elia@catholiccharitiesssc.org.

Caregiving and the Sandwich Generation

If you find yourself raising your children, taking care of your aging parents, and working a full-time job all at the same time then you are a part of the Sandwich Generation. This growing generation faces increasing responsibilities of children and parents.

According to a 2012 nationwide Pew Research Center survey, “Almost half of adults (47%) in their 40s and 50s have a parent age 65 or older and are either raising a young child or financially supporting a grown child (age 18 or older)…about 1 in 7 middle-aged adults (15%) is providing financial support to both an aging parent and a child.”

Hien is a Sandwich Generation caregiver. She cares for her older parents who have chronic illnesses and also helps take care of her two young nephews. Shuffling her time between work, appointments, pick-ups and drop-offs, Hien tries to spend as much quality time as she can with all family members.

“I’ve been taking care of my aging parents for so long now; I feel like I’ve got it down to a science,” said Hien Nguyen, Program Supervisor at Catholic Charities’ Day Break Cares Senior Activities Centers. “But that doesn’t mean that it is easy to be sandwiched between both generations. I feel obligated to my parents and want them to live out their golden years with dignity and as comfortably as possible. My nephews also need me.”

It can be very stressful to take care of everyone. Caregivers in the Sandwich Generation also have to make time for themselves. To help navigate the complicated landscape of how to access resources to help aging parents with unique needs, there are support groups, websites, even a supportive circle of friends can help you de-stress.

As part of Catholic Charities’ Aging University, Hien was the keynote speaker for a May 19 event called, “Caregiving and the Sandwich Generation.” She shared her experiences, provided tips on how to optimize your time and resources, and gave advice to those who needed it.

“My message to Sandwich Generation caregivers is that you are not alone and if you feel overwhelmed or need help, you can get it. What you do is an incredible act of love and it is not unappreciated.”

Catholic Charities offers Caregiver Support Groups, Adult Day Care Centers, and In-home Care Services to those who need it. Visit www.daybreakcares.org to learn more.
Caritas members and their guests were treated to a wonderful evening in Saratoga at the home of Don and Joanne Prolo. We greatly appreciate the Prolos’ generosity that provided our donors the opportunity to learn about our important work helping low income people deal with the health crisis – especially inadequate mental health services.

Catholic Charities has a new mental health specialty clinic in downtown San Jose as part of the John XXIII Center, a unique comprehensive wellness hub. The Clinic specializes in treating the mental health needs of the most disadvantaged poor people in the region, including the homeless, veterans, refugees, and ex-offenders.

A broad array of services help individuals get and stay well so that they can lift themselves out of poverty. In addition to psychotherapy and psychiatry, Clinic services include health insurance enrollment, substance abuse counseling, wellness education, service coordination, and social services such as job placement.

Our comprehensive services model is being recognized as a promising approach to address our community’s mental health crisis. The Clinic is part of a pilot program with Santa Clara County’s Behavioral Health Services Division to test how severely mental ill clients can benefit from cost effective, insurance-supported community care, like ours. Also, Kaiser Permanente acknowledged our approach with a grant for the Clinic.

Guests were encouraged to take a tour of the Clinic and make an investment in this holistic model of mental health services. Donations are needed to help meet non-reimbursable, yet essential clinic costs.

To make a donation, contact Sara Johnson, Major Gifts Manager, at (408) 325-5259 or go online www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org/how-to-donate.

To schedule a visit to John XXIII Wellness Center, contact Alison Poetsch, Individual Giving Manager, at (408) 325-5288 or apoetsch@catholiccharitiessc.org.

### Spring Forward – Racing to Reduce Poverty

The third annual Spring Forward 5K/10K Run-Walk on April 16 was a huge success! The event attracted more than 1,600 runners and walkers, and hundreds of spectators. It was inspiring to see families and friends come out to support Catholic Charities’ goal to alleviate, prevent, and reduce poverty in Santa Clara County.

The event raised more than $168,000 in funds that support programs and services provided by Catholic Charities.

Thank you to all of our generous sponsors, including Title and Host sponsor, SanDisk; Gold sponsor, KLA-Tencor; Silver sponsors, IntelliCorp, CitiBank and Nvidia; Bronze sponsors, SAP and Joseph J. Albanese; and our Media sponsors, San Jose Mercury News, NBC Bay Area, and Silicon Valley Business Journal.

### A FITTING TRIBUTE FOR BELOVED SON, HUSBAND, PARISHIONER, AND RUNNER

Joseph Harold La Scola, former parishioner of Sacred Heart Church and graduate of Sacred Heart School in Saratoga, was honored on Saturday, April 16, 2016 at Catholic Charities’ third Annual Spring Forward 5K/10K Run-Walk. The event was held in Joseph Harold’s honor as a tribute to his love of running and his love for the Church.

Joseph Harold’s parents, Joseph and Emily, wanted to honor him in very special way. Participating in Spring Forward was a fitting tribute. The La Scola family and many friends gathered as “Team Joseph” and wore t-shirts imprinted with a photo of Joseph Harold.

Joseph Harold was an active member of the Catholic community and was a friendly familiar face both locally and in Phoenix, Arizona, where he lived with the love of his life, his wife Angelika. He died of a fatal brain aneurysm on his 50th birthday, September 23, 2015.

We are humbled and thankful to the La Scola family for honoring Joseph Harold at our event.
Caritas Member Invests in the Most Vulnerable in Our Community

Barbara White has always been one to help others around the community. She and her husband, Jim, raised five children in Los Gatos where they were very active in the school and parish life at St. Mary’s.

Barbara and Jim were married for 39 years before he passed away at age 73. Barbara says that he was a very compassionate man. They had been raised in stable families and had been given wonderful educational and career opportunities. They felt blessed that they could do the same for their children. “We both agreed that once our five children were grown and on their way in life, we wanted to do more to help those who didn’t have our privileges,” she said.

In 2006, Barbara became more active in Catholic Charities as a donor and volunteer. While attending Caritas receptions, she heard first-hand stories from clients. She was touched to hear how they had overcome challenges thanks to Catholic Charities’ offerings such as financial literacy, job readiness, parenting skills, and other supportive services. Barbara was impressed that Catholic Charities helped them become more self-sufficient.

Recently, Barbara decided that Catholic Charities was one organization she wanted to invest in for the long haul. Barbara decided to pledge a generous bequest to Catholic Charities. Taking care of family came first, but considering those in real need was also important.

Barbara said, “I value your services that give opportunities to those less fortunate. I feel confident that Jim would approve of my decision. My husband worked very hard his whole life and he would respect the hard work that your clients put in to make their lives better.”

We are grateful to Barbara for having the confidence in Catholic Charities to carry on her values of caring for others. Barbara can rest assured in knowing that she was able to provide something for her family, as well as for those most vulnerable for generations to come.
Imagine a family of four, working full-time to support their two children, making $24,000 a year in Silicon Valley. How do you make ends meet? Just think about that for a minute…

This is what Silicon Valley is like for the working poor. In Santa Clara County, one in five people cannot afford basic necessities each month without financial assistance, according to the Supplemental Poverty Measure. One in five people cannot put a meal on the table for their family, or take their children to the doctor when they are ill. These families are not only struggling to make ends meet but also to gain dignity and stability that they have lost along the way.

The number only continues to grow as the seeds of poverty are planted for the next generation.

This is why Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County founded Step Up Silicon Valley in 2009 as a community collaborative to reduce poverty and increase economic opportunity in Santa Clara County. Since its inception, Step Up has transformed from a series of task forces tackling various issue areas of poverty into a social innovation network and anti-poverty laboratory that ignites ideas and turns them into action.

We are best known in the community as a systems change incubator and catalyst of disruptive social innovations. Since our launch, Step Up has incubated several social innovative strategies. Among these are Pay for Success, which resulted in County approval to develop programs focused on chronic homelessness and chronic mental health; Franklin McKinley Children’s Initiative; Franklin-McKinley Women's Initiative; 1,000 Out of Poverty; and College Savings Circle.

Step Up Silicon Valley offers multiple ways for the community to become aware and engaged to take action against poverty. Sign up to host a Community Action Poverty Simulation, volunteer with one of our network partners, and learn more about our poverty initiatives and how you can contribute to the movement against poverty in Silicon Valley.

To learn more about Step Up Silicon Valley, contact Almaz Negash, Senior Managing Director at anegash@stepupsv.org.

Step Up Silicon Valley Ignites Community-Driven Change

POVERTY IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

- 2,100 people in Santa Clara County experience persistent homelessness and are the most frequent users of public services in a given year.
- The Bay Area has one of the highest median household incomes in the US, but also has a widening gap between high and low earners.
- Only 19% of residents can afford to buy a median-priced home.
- 26.3% of Santa Clara County residents with some college education live in poverty.
- 823 million meals are required daily to feed low-income families, but due to lack of availability and costs, 204 million meals are still needed.

Reuniting Father and Daughter Through Kindred Souls

When Ariel was in kindergarten, her mother passed away from cancer. Ryan had to raise Ariel as a single parent, but he was also a workaholic. He owned and ran a small business, juggling work while raising a child. When his stress mounted into physical abuse, Ariel was removed from their home. She was placed in foster care before beginning therapeutic visitation sessions with her father through Catholic Charities’ Kindred Souls program.

Kindred Souls provided a safe space where they became comfortable visiting and communicating with one another without judgment of their past.

At first, Ariel would often break down and cry. Their social worker helped them to discuss difficult issues in a gentle and supportive way. Over time, Ariel felt safer during visits and began to open up about her feelings. To her surprise, her father did not get mad and was supportive. She was finally able to tell him her biggest fear -- she was afraid that he didn’t want her to go back home with him. They were both finally able to express that they really did want to reunify.

Ariel and her dad began sharing their favorite country songs with each other, playing Jenga and Connect 4, and reminiscing about Ariel’s mother. Ryan also became supportive of her foster mom and was able to develop a collaborative relationship with her. When they met in the lobby for the first time, Ryan said, “Thank you so much for what you are doing for my daughter.” Like co-parents, they navigated some of the issues that came up during visits to better support Ariel.

Today, Ariel is back home with her dad.

Kindred Souls offers therapeutic visitations as families work towards reunification. To learn more about our Kindred Souls program, please contact Jennifer Solomon, Clinical Supervisor at jsolomon@catholiccharitiesscc.org.

A Little Bit of Empathy and a Lot of Understanding

Sunli has only been with the Thompson family for a few months, but from day one, when she came off the plane and met Mia Thompson, she called her “Mama.” Mia felt confident in the supportive structure of Catholic Charities’ Refugee Foster Care program. As an African-American mother to a teen from Asia, Mia wanted her daughter to feel comfortable in the United States and feel like a part of the family. One of the biggest challenges was that Sunli did not speak English, similar to many refugee youth, and could not express herself. With a bit of patience, Mia and Sunli began to communicate with gestures and hugs during the first few weeks. They began to cultivate a better understanding of one another and their love and trust as a family grew.

“What we have learned is that no matter where you bring these kids from, no matter their cultural or ethnic background, with a little bit of empathy and a lot of understanding, you can live together as a family,” Mia said. “You have absolutely nothing to lose, but so much to gain from this experience.” The Refugee Foster Care program provides a home to youth who have lost their family, culture, and country. We match our youth with loving families and provide several channels of support to help them thrive in the US. To learn more about our Refugee Foster Care program, please contact Angela Albright, Division Director, at aalbright@catholiccharitiesscc.org.
Prevention and Early Intervention Lifts Family Out of Homelessness

Taylor and his family looked forward to new beginnings. His father just bought a house for their family of five, with a baby on the way in a few months. But after his father lost his job, Taylor and his family were on edge. They began to dip into their savings to pay the bills and hired a lawyer who promised to help keep their home. Later, when Taylor and his family lost their new home, they discovered that the lawyer never submitted any paperwork on their behalf.

At 10 years old, Taylor was homeless. Day by day, he and his family would rent a hotel room to stay together, but costs became too high to afford. With his mother six months pregnant, his father was the only source of income. Food, clothes, and rent expenses were a constant source of stress for the family. Taylor and his siblings struggled to do well in school. Their mother couldn’t take them to the library to do homework without a car, and bus tickets required time and money they didn’t have. As his academic performance slipped, Taylor and his family began to receive the help they needed through Catholic Charities’ Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) program.

PEI supports families with community resources for basic needs, such as food, clothing, and housing. The PEI program connected Taylor’s parents with affordable housing options and they found a home through one of those referrals. Taylor’s parents wrote requests to their lawyer for an update of their case with the coaching of PEI staff. With no response, PEI assisted in filing a complaint against their lawyer for malpractice and fraud. As a result, the California State Bar took disciplinary action and removed his license to practice law in California.

Now the family has a roof over their heads. Taylor and his siblings take turns on a donated computer to do homework. With donations of supplies for the baby and school supplies for the coming year, Taylor and his family are once again looking forward to new beginnings.

In addition to case management, PEI also provides individual and family therapy, and counseling. To learn more, please contact Consuelo Collard, Program Manager, at ccollard@catholiccharitiesscc.org.

Taylor and his family were able to move into Parkside Studios, a brand new affordable housing complex built and operated by Charities Housing Development Corporation. The complex is unique because it offers wrap-around services provided by Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County via an Onsite Service Coordinator who helps the low-income residents access resources and find the assistance they may need to thrive.

“"We are so grateful for the assistance of these community organizations and the compassionate people who helped us while we were homeless and continue to help us today, now that we have a home," said Patrick. “I know that all my neighbors here at Parkside feel the same way.”

To learn more about Catholic Charities’ Supportive Housing Services, contact Consuelo Collard, Program Manager, at ccollard@catholiccharitiesscc.org.

Senior Couple Survives Living on the Streets Thanks to Community Partnerships

After many years on the streets, Patrick and his wife were able to move into Parkside Studios, a brand new affordable housing complex built and operated by Charities Housing Development Corporation. The complex is unique because it offers wrap-around services provided by Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County via an Onsite Service Coordinator who helps the low-income residents access resources and find the assistance they may need to thrive.

“"We are so grateful for the assistance of these community organizations and the compassionate people who helped us while we were homeless and continue to help us today, now that we have a home," said Patrick. “I know that all my neighbors here at Parkside feel the same way.”

To learn more about Charities Housing Development Corporation, please visit http://charitieshousing.org.

To learn about Catholic Charities’ Supportive Housing Services, contact Consuelo Collard, Program Manager, at ccollard@catholiccharitiesscc.org.

Grandmothers Honored at Special Luncheon

Through the KRC and its many partners, these children have been able to access donations of annual new shoes, new backpacks, and even new school clothes. These donations came graciously from St. Simons School and Parish and the nonprofit organization, My New Red Shoes. The families have also participated in fun and affordable recreational activities such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Alcatraz Island, thanks to supporting agencies such as Community Access Ticket Services (CATS) and Source Wise.

To learn more about next year’s Golden Grandmothers Luncheon, visit www.buildingpeacefulfamilies.org.

To learn more about Catholic Charities’ Kinship Resource Center, visit www.catholiccharitiesscc.org/kinship-resource-center-program.

Ombudsmen Advocate for Elderly Residents

If you were living in a nursing home and being mistreated, do you know where to go for help? You would talk to the Ombudsman for your facility. What is an Ombudsman? They are citizen advocates who speak up for frail, elderly, chronically ill, isolated, disabled, or at-risk long-term care residents.

Since 1981, Catholic Charities has been operating the only Long Term Care Ombudsman program in Santa Clara County. The program promotes the rights and well-being of residents in long-term care facilities, ensuring that they are treated as human beings. They provide residents with a means by which their complaints can be heard and resolved.

“I am the eyes, the ears, and the nose for the older adults we support in the nursing homes,” said Ombudsman Tony Nespole. “When I walk into a facility, I scan for things out of place that may result in injury. I listen for cries for help or stories that indicate inappropriate care, and I am attentive for smells that would result from unsanitary circumstances.”

Last year, Ombudsmen advocated for 12,400 people throughout the County. They accomplished this with only three full-time field Ombudsmen and nearly 40 volunteers. No fee is ever charged.

“Our Ombudsmen are very dedicated to making sure residents are treated with dignity,” said Wanda Hale, Program Manager of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. “We have to stay up to date on all the regulations in order to make sure that the facility does their job.”

The services that the Long Term Care Ombudsman program provide include: complaint investigation and advocacy, receipt of and response to elder and dependent adult abuse reports for residents of elderly adult residential facilities, witnessing of Advance Health Care Directives for residents, and providing information to the public about long-term care facilities.

“We volunteer to do this work because we know that we are making a difference for elderly residents who may not know how to advocate for themselves,” said Ombudsman Maureen Hogan.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman program needs funding and volunteers so that they can continue to provide this important service. To learn how you can help, contact Wanda Hale, Program Manager, at whale@catholiccharitiesscc.org.
DID YOU KNOW?

This year, our Ombudsman program advocated for 12,400 people in nursing and residential care homes throughout Santa Clara County, with the help of three full-time field Ombudsmen and nearly 40 volunteer Ombudsmen. No fee is ever charged for this service.

Handicapables Goes All Out Every Time They Get Together

Catholic Charities’ Handicapables program provides engaging opportunities for adults and older adults with disabilities to socialize and engage in spiritual activities with peers who share common interests. Participants enjoy bi-monthly gatherings that may include lunch, group discussions, entertainment, speakers, cultural events, educational programs, and an optional Mass at a Parish within the Diocese of San José. With 90 members and counting, participants are not only a resource for each other during times of need, they think of each other as family and lifelong friends. To learn more about Handicapables, please email Saida Nagpurwala, Program Coordinator at snagpurwala@catholiccharitiesscc.org or call (408) 325-5257.