Day Break Cares Volunteer is 93 Years Young

John Herman likes to be active wherever he goes. A San Jose resident for the last 40 years, John wanted to give back to the community after retirement. He has been a volunteer at Day Break Cares (DBC) for nearly two years and spends two days a week at the St. Francis of Assisi Parish site in San Jose. As a volunteer, he helps supervise participants and engages them in daily activities, especially the “Morning Discussions.” John is a conversationalist and keeps close company with DBC participants Jack, Flo, and Sylvia, who has limited vision. By the way, John is only 93 years young.

Day Break Cares staff and caregivers think that John is a superstar. Participants appreciate how interesting his conversation topics are. Other volunteers love his sharpness and the fact that he still drives. Nancy Tamburello, Day Break Cares Program Supervisor says, “He makes you want to be John at 93!”

Originally from Hell’s Kitchen, New York, John enrolled in the military during World War II and afterwards worked for a rail train company throughout the U.S. Later, he worked on Alcatraz as an Officer and lived on the island. At one point, John even supervised Robert Stroud, known as “The Bird Man of Alcatraz.” John still volunteers as a Tour Guide and recently led a tour for the Alcatraz 51 year closing anniversary.

“Every other day I come here and help organize the supplies and supervise the participants,” John says. “It’s important to help others and stay active.”

Consultant Nancy Tamburello says, “John is a great example of how to age gracefully and live a fulfilling life.”

GIVING BEGINS WITH COMPASSION

Catholic Charities’ Christmas Appeal asks us to look in our hearts to find compassion for our neighbors in need, and faith that your charitable gifts and deeds will help these individuals and families struggling to get by get back on their feet.

With your donation, Catholic Charities will help more people in our community get what they need to succeed in life, including food, housing, education, and health care. Catholic Charities touches the lives of over 40,000 people every year – people of all cultures, faiths, and beliefs working to turn their lives around. Your donation to Catholic Charities’ annual Christmas Appeal will help us reduce poverty in Santa Clara County by giving those in need the tools they need to overcome the barriers to financial stability with dignity, and the opportunity to improve their lives.

This year your gift is twice as important thanks to a generous Challenge Grant from the Sobrato Family Foundation, allowing you to more than double the value of your contribution to Catholic Charities. The Challenge Grant matches new and increased donations 2:1 up to $200,000. For example, if you give $100 more than you have before, the Sobrato Family Foundation will match that with $200, so your gift will increase to $300. The grant is designed to encourage new donors to give and offer current donors an incentive to increase their annual gifts.

GET INVOLVED

Show your compassion and faith this season by donating to the Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal. Contact Marnie Regen at (408) 325-5248 or donate online at www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Forward 5k/10k Walk/Run
April 18, 2015  –  Mountain View, CA

The 31st Annual Catholic Charities Golf Tournament and Auction
June 12, 2015  –  Cinnabar Hills Golf Club, San Jose

Roll Against Poverty
Catholic Charities of SCC Annual Bocce Tournament
August 13, 2015  –  Campo di Bocce, Los Gatos

CHANGE LIVES FOR GOOD

Catholic Charities’ Greg Kepferle dialogs with community changemakers fighting poverty in Silicon Valley.

Airs on Tuesdays at 9 p.m. on the Silicon Valley Channel, Cable Channel 30 in San Jose and Campbell and streaming on the CreaTV website.

Message From the CEO

GREG KEPFERLE

Dear Friends,

In a small room, a woman weeps quietly and dabs her eyes with a tissue handed to her by a counselor as she is consoled in her grief.

In a separate corridor, an energetic group of young people talk excitedly and laugh with joy as they head to a potluck prepared by volunteers.

In another room, a group of older adult learners lean forward and listen intently to their instructor.

In yet another room, pairs of anxious job seekers practice interview skills.

And in a bright new apartment building, a mother takes out her key and unlocks the door to her family’s modest but clean apartment. She calls out, “I’m home!”

On the first Christmas Eve, two weary strangers, a man and a woman heavy with child, knock on a door and are told, “There is no room at the inn.”

Today, at Catholic Charities our rooms are filled with more than 40,000 people seeking a place to call home, a place to learn, a place to work, a place at the table, a place to be safe, a place to heal, a place to belong. It breaks our hearts when we have to turn people away because we don’t have the resources to help them.

That’s why we need your help today. Please help us make sure there is room at Catholic Charities for those who seek our support. This year, thanks to a generous challenge grant from the Sobrato Family Foundation, any new or increased gift will be matched two to one. What an amazing return on an investment in lives changed for good!

As we begin to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, let’s make room in our hearts for the Christ child revealed in all those seeking a place to belong. We thank you for your generosity.

Many blessings,
Greg

Welcoming the New Board President

Mike Blach was recently named the president of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County’s Board of Directors. Mike is president and CEO of Blach Construction. He graduated from Santa Clara University, and received his MBA from CalPoly, San Luis Obispo.

A Catholic Charities board member since 2010, he is also a member of the Executive, Major Gifts, Finance, and Golf Committees. Mike was a May Appeal speaker in 2011, and in 2012, he and his wife Margie were on the Caritas Reception Committee. He and his wife Margie are parishioners at St. Christopher’s in Willow Glen.

Mike learned first-hand about Catholic Charities through hearing about their programs and services during the May Appeals at his parish. His parents had also been Catholic Charities donors, so when he was invited to participate in the Annual Golf Tournament, it gave him the opportunity to learn more. Mike was enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute when Ray Triplett suggested that he consider becoming involved at the board level.

His experience participating on other boards had provided insight about overcoming obstacles and gave him exposure to best practices he felt could benefit Catholic Charities.

‘I’m honored to be able to partner with outstanding and dedicated board members and staff to live out our Gospel values. Educated by the Jesuits, I believe in being men and women for and with others, and Catholic Charities affords me an opportunity to make a positive difference in our community, particularly for those at its margins,” said Mike. The recent recession has been tough on all nonprofit organizations as demand for services have increased while funding has declined. Through this turbulent time, Catholic Charities emerged stronger and more focused than ever. It is a thriving organization working to engage and motivate people in our community to join in the mission of reducing poverty. ‘I am proud to be working with an organization that is highly respected as a thought leader, and seeks innovative solutions to reduce poverty,” said Mike.

New Board Members for Catholic Charities

(L-R): Michael Van Every, President and Managing Partner of Republic Urban Properties; Jim Lyons, Vice President for University Relations at Santa Clara University; Mansoor Safi, CEO and Co-founder of iFlex Electronics and iFixers.com; Mark Mikl, Senior Vice President - Capital Markets and Treasurer at Essex Property Trust. Not pictured: Scott Camp, Director of Silicon Valley Business Banking at Citibank and Minda Cutch, President of Minda Cucher, MBA, Inc.
Congress Participates in Poverty Simulation

This past summer, Congress members had the opportunity to experience a Poverty Simulation organized by Catholic Charities USA and Entergy Corporation. During the simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families, from single parents trying to care for their children, to senior citizens trying to maintain their self-sufficiency while on Social Security. Each family is tasked with providing food, shelter, and other basic necessities while interacting with various community resources.

Lucreda Cobb, Senior Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs at Catholic Charities USA’s Social Policy Department said, “It was a chance for those with the power to fund and shape our country’s social safety-net programs to walk a mile in the shoes of those in poverty—and many were amazed at how burdensome that journey can be.”

The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) experience is one of the key tools that Step Up Silicon Valley (SUSV) uses to raise awareness about local poverty. Step Up Silicon Valley, the movement to cut poverty in Santa Clara County, is a social innovation network whose goal is to reduce poverty and increase economic opportunity in Santa Clara County. Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is SUSV’s backbone organization and launched SUSV in 2007, in response to CCUSA’s call for a national campaign to reduce poverty in America.

“Step Up Silicon Valley is pleased to see CCUSA use the Poverty Simulation tool to educate Congress about the day-to-day realities of poverty in our nation,” said Almaz Negash, Managing Director of Step Up Silicon Valley. “We have had the pleasure of facilitating simulations for CCUSA in the past and are proud to have influenced their utilizing this transformative experience to show Congress the challenges many low-income individuals face across the country.”

GET INVOLVED
If you would like to sponsor or host a Community Action Poverty Simulation at your organization, or if you would like to attend an upcoming simulation, please contact Adelene Ramos at aramos@StepUpSV.org.

Prepared for School, Eager to Learn

Starting school means new beginnings, an opportunity to learn, make friends, and build self-confidence. Catholic Charities’ Bridge to Kinder program at the Santee FIRST 5 Family Resource Center (FRC) helps prepare children in the community to enter school ready to learn and explore.

The Santee FRC is a neighborhood-based center staffed by Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. The FRC is open to the Santee community offering programs for child and family enrichment, language and literacy, health and nutrition, school readiness, art enrichment, and parent/caregiver leadership models.

The Family Resource Center program was developed and implemented by a coalition of education leaders, city and county officials, local nonprofit agencies and the community, and is funded by FIRST 5. This was the kind of collaborative effort Marcia Coughran and the Foundation for the Development of Future Leaders, started by her son and his wife Josh and Michelle Coughran, wanted to support. “It was a perfect fit for our Foundation’s philosophy. There is a strong focus on education, while still being about the kids, their families, and the community,” said Marcia.

For three years, Marcia and her family carefully select and fill 50 to 60 colorful, age-appropriate backpacks with pencils, erasers, safe scissors, crayons, markers, notebooks, and water bottles to be distributed to Santee Bridge to Kinder students, so they are ready when school starts. But the generosity doesn’t stop there. They support the Santee FRC art programs by donating painting supplies, and make graduation events special by donating refreshments.

“We are privileged to partner with Catholic Charities and the dedicated Santee staff who work hard to make a difference in this community. It is easy to come back every year, you can see the change in the children, and how excited they are about learning. We believe that is where education begins,” said Marcia.

CREATING A LEGACY WITH A GIFT TO CATHOLIC CHARITIES

You can leave your legacy and support the work of Catholic Charities in the future by leaving a bequest which transfers your assets upon your death. Bequests can take several forms:

• Specific - a designated amount of cash, securities, or property. Gifts of appreciated stock provide estate tax advantages.
• Percentage - a stated percentage of your estate.
• Residual - all or a portion of the remainder of an estate after distribution of specific and general bequests.

Ninety-five percent of all unrestricted bequest proceeds received at Catholic Charities are put into the Catholic Charities unrestricted board designated fund acting as an endowment, providing ongoing financial stability.

We will share other ways to assure your continued support of Catholic Charities in future newsletters.

To learn about planned gifts, or if you need an estate planning attorney recommendation, contact Alison Poetsch at (408) 325-5288 or Sara Johnson at (408) 325-5259.

A Legacy of the Heart – A Gift of Caring for Future Generations

Charitable legacies are the foundation for many good causes, and are vital so the charities we care about can continue their work. Leaving a legacy gift is a powerful force for good in the future, and is a practical way to support Catholic Charities.

When Maggie Williams was ready to make a legacy gift, she chose to make it to Catholic Charities. She started thinking about giving back from a young age. As one of seven children in a low-income family from Barbados, Maggie saw her parents’ personal struggles, and dreamt of being able to give something back to them. She followed that dream, and after college built a successful career in both the private sector and the social sector. For the past seven years, she has been the Chief Administrative and Financial Officer for Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County.

In her role at Catholic Charities, Maggie gives back by ensuring the programs are compliant with government regulations and requirements, so the program staff can provide clients the services they need to become self-reliant, and the agency can continue to deliver outcomes that make a difference. “I also increase my annual giving each year, and it is my mission to do so as long as I am here. Spiritually, I feel it is the right thing,” said Maggie.

When it came time to start estate planning, Maggie created a living trust to ensure her family will be taken care of. With that in place, she considered investing in the future. “I included a legacy gift to Catholic Charities in my estate plan because I know the contribution truly goes back to the programs and serves the clients. Catholic Charities is the organization I selected to receive my legacy gift because of my faith in the vision and commitment of everyone in the organization, starting from the top down,” said Maggie.
Former Gang Member Becomes Peer Mentor for Right Direction Program

In the November 2012 issue of Voices of Hope, we told the story of Jose Sanchez, a former gang member who turned his life around after entering Catholic Charities’ Vocational and Educational Reentry Services (VERS). The VERS program helped high-risk offenders get the tools they need to become productive members of society. Thanks to VERS and Catholic Charities, Jose received the guidance and support that he needed. Now, Jose is employed as a Peer Mentor for the Right Direction Program in Catholic Charities’ Focus For Work Program.

As a Peer Mentor, Jose is able to use his experience to help people coming out of jail or prison. He helps them prepare their resumes, guides them through mock interviews, and continues to coach them for 90 days after they start employment. “I try to get them to break the barriers that prevent them from being positive, productive members of society,” says Jose. “I also do a lot of aftercare with them and try to instill hope that life will get better.”

Jose is motivated to help his clients because he has been where they are, and he loves helping others with their life struggles. Now that he has accomplished his goals when he himself was a client, Jose plans to attend San Jose State University and become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Eila Latif, Program Director for Focus for Work says, “Jose is doing a wonderful job engaging clients in outreach and enrolling them into the program. He is in constant learning mode, developing and expanding his skills. He is very much a team player and is always willing to go the extra mile for the good of the client. We all appreciate his perseverance in attaining his goals.”

“I always give words of advice to my clients,” says Jose. “I tell them, ‘I did what I knew to do. Now that I know better, I do better.’

To learn more about Focus for Work’s Reentry Employment Services, please contact Eila Latif at elial@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

Reducing the Stigma of Mental Health Issues In Our Community

More than two million adults—about 3 out of 10—are affected by potentially disabling mental illnesses in California. Meeting the needs of people with mental illness in our community can be challenging. Often people suffering from these conditions feel stigmatized because of it, making it difficult to connect with faithful communities. The voter approved Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) is addressing these issues and provides funding to expand community mental health services to provide integrated mental health and support services to those whose needs are not met through other sources.

The Journey Together in Faith workshop series, that was funded by MHSA, was developed to provide practical training for clergy and pastoral leaders working with parishioners and others with mental illness, and to provide information about reducing the stigma of mental illness in our community. The workshop series included six workshops led by mental health care professionals, faith leaders, and a team of Santa Clara County Mental Health panelists. “We need to provide more support to people in our community with mental illness. Though we are not trained professionals, we can help people find the resources and get the help they need, and we can walk alongside them during the journey,” said John Rinaldo, Director of Parish Partnerships.

The workshop series was developed as a collaborative effort between Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, the Cathedral Basilica of St. Joseph, the Diocese of San Jose, CalMHSA, the Recovery Café, Each Mind Matters, and the Bridges of Hope Re-Entry Center. The free event included a keynote address from Chaplain Javier Stauring, Co-Director of the Office of Restorative Justice of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, a complimentary lunch, and a prayer service with Bishop Patrick McGrath of the Diocese of San Jose.

GET INVOLVED
To learn more about reducing the stigma of mental illness in our faith community, contact John Rinaldo, Director of Parish Partnerships at 408-325-5196 or at jrinaldo@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

They Are The Lucky Ones

More than 700 homeless veterans live in Santa Clara County. For nearly five years, Catholic Charities’ Mission Rebuild program has served 120 chronically homeless veterans with mental health disorders. Over 75% of the program participants are vets between the ages of 45-64. The veterans served by Mission Rebuild are changing their lives for the better with the support of program staff and services.

The vets in the program benefit from a variety of services including case management, mental health counseling, employment assistance, housing referral, and additional support services. The Mission Rebuild program has been a five-year program grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program is on target to reach the grant goal of helping 140 veterans by the end of the grant period in 2015.

Older vets, mostly Vietnam vets, are disillusioned because they were not recognized as veterans of a war. Even those honorably discharged have found it hard to access Veterans Administration services. Working with Mission Rebuild has helped Vietnam vets address some of that anger, and move forward. The program accepts a broad population of applicants, including honorable, conditional, and dishonorable discharges from all services, including the Reserve and National Guard.

Paul B., a Vietnam vet, came to the Mission Rebuild program six months ago. Living on the streets for nearly six years with an undiagnosed mental disorder, Paul found it hard to get along with people. He was moving from shelter to shelter, to homeless encampments, until he listened to his sister when she urged him to contact Catholic Charities.

“I don’t know where I would be if it wasn’t for Mission Rebuild and Catholic Charities,” says Paul. “The program has truly helped me turn my life around. I was able to find an apartment with the help of my case manager. I am now going to counseling and receiving the medication that I need. I am much happier and appreciate how lucky I am to have benefited from this program.”

Mission Rebuild staff visits local Homeless Veteran Emergency Housing resource.
Everyone was on a roll at Catholic Charities’ Annual Bocce Tournament last August, raising a record $61,587 for programs and services. “We are thrilled with the record results to support Catholic Charities. Special thanks to our committee members and volunteers who continue to improve on this year after year,” said Bocce Tournament Committee Chair Mike Denzel.

Alumni teams welcomed 11 new teams to enjoy an evening of fun at Campo di Bocce in Los Gatos to Roll Against Poverty. This year included a chance to win a premium bottle of wine or spirits in the “Wine and Spirits Toss” by tossing a ring on it.

The sold-out event featured a dream vacation drawing to win one of three dream destinations: the ESPY Awards in Los Angeles, five days in Los Cabos, Mexico or a long weekend in New York City. This year’s winners chose Los Cabos. The silent auction bidding was fast and furious for items like a cooking class and dinner for 16 at the La Rusticana Estate, two tickets to the 49ers vs. Chargers football game, use of a Beshoff Motorcars Mercedes Benz for a day, and a $100 gift certificate to Evvia Restaurant.

Thirty-two teams competed in the tournament, with “Dogs of War” winning the championship. The team included Nick Dolci, Chris Albanese, Bob Rogers, and Dan McHale.

For information about next year’s Bocce Tournament, contact Kathleen Burroughs at (408) 325-5250 or kburroughs@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

SPRING FORWARD 5K/10K WALK/RUN

BOCCE TOURNAMENT BENEFITING CATHOLIC CHARITIES SETS NEW RECORD

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Join Our Run Committee!
www.SpringForward5k10k.com
Family Dinners Establish Permanent Connections

Food is a rich part of our cultural background. Sharing a meal brings family and friends together. Family dinners are a tradition for the Refugee Foster Care (RFC) families, who join together once a month for a family dinner, to share information, and to build lasting connections for the children, providing a place to talk and play with other children from the same ethnic background. It is also a place for foster care parents to share successes and information they have learned with other families.

Refugee Foster Care families love the opportunity to get together, network, and support each other. After sharing a meal, the children (ranging from elementary age to teens) and parents break into groups to learn about various topics such as independent living classes, support groups exploring self-esteem and conflict management, promoting emotional health, and tips about foster care parenting. Outside guest speakers also come to share information. Recently, a police officer came to talk to parents and children about Internet safety.

Each month, between 50 and 75 RFC parents and children attend the family dinner giving the kids rich social interaction which they cherish, where parents and children can talk freely with other families who fully understand the trials and triumphs of a foster care family. “A key goal of the family dinners is to establish a support system and develop permanent connections for the foster children. Once they exit the program, we want to ensure they have connections to the community that they can build on,” said Yvonne Kung, Refugee Foster Care Program Manager.

GET INVOLVED
If your parish would be interested in sponsoring one of the monthly Refugee Foster Care dinners, please contact Yvonne Kung at ykung@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org or (408) 325-5170.
Celebrating Washington United Youth Center’s Quinceañera

The Washington United Youth Center (WUYC) celebrates it’s 15th year of programs and services in the Washington community. Since 1999, WUYC provides youth and their families with the support needed to be successful in school, employment, and in their community. Programs target youth ages 12 to 17, while providing support services for their parents and other adults. WUYC facilities include a gymnasium, multi-purpose room, classroom, counseling room, conference room, game room, music room, and administrative offices.

Services and programs include: information and referrals for families; sports programs such as soccer, volleyball, football, handball, and basketball; game room activities such as pool, foosball, and ping-pong; an exercise room providing Zumba, martial arts, and aerobics; cultural programming with events that have focused on Folklorico dance and music; as well as a Homework Club. All are available to youth between the ages 12-17 years old, with some programs for parents and adults. Membership fees are $25 a year for youth, and $30 a year for adults.

WUYC OUTCOMES:

◆ The WUYC Zumba program has close to 400 participants, while Zumba parties attract over 100 people each event.
◆ The annual Posada de la Comunidad attracts over 800 Washington residents.
◆ Late Night Rec Sessions attract an average of 80-100 youth every Tuesday and Thursday nights.
◆ An average of 140 families from the neighborhood receive food twice a month from the Family Harvest Program.
◆ Nancy Lopez, volunteer Mexican folkloric dance instructor from the Brenda Lopez Folklorico Group, has donated her time every Saturday since 2000.
◆ The WUYC Music Program, Martial Arts, and Homework Club are run entirely by volunteers.

GET INVOLVED

Catholic Charities’ BEST program could benefit from volunteers, donations, and resources that complement the program’s goals. To learn how you can help, please contact So'o Poumele at spoumele@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

Day Break Cares Volunteer is 93 Years Young

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“I think the Day Break Cares program is essential for seniors because they access much needed socialization. I am proud to serve them!”

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County operates two Day Break Cares Adult Day Care Centers, one in San Jose and one in Sunnyvale. Senior participants include those who simply need to socialize, as well as those who require a structured, protective environment because of Alzheimer’s Disease, related dementia, or other conditions. Our Centers offer caregivers much needed respite so they can work, take care of personal business, or rest. If you would like to enroll a loved one in a DBC Center, or if you would like to volunteer at one, please contact Milton Cadena at mcadena@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

Sharing A Warm Meal with Friends

As people age, their diets may need to change, especially if their diets are not well-balanced. A well-balanced diet for elders consists of a variety of fruits, vegetables, protein, and whole grains to maintain and improve overall health.

The senior nutrition program at the Eastside Neighborhood Center (ENC) serves hot nutritious meals to seniors in the community five days a week, serving more than 675 meals a week. Meals prepared by the center staff include a variety of healthy dishes that appeal to the culturally diverse seniors that visit the center. For many of them, this is the main meal of the day, so it is very important that it be nutritious and delicious.

Margaret Marrujo, Site Manager, prepares the center meal plans every six months in five week cycles. Each plan is reviewed and approved by the County to ensure it meets with nutrition guidelines. The ENC works with local vendors to get the fresh produce, dairy, and other items needed to prepare the meals each day and stay within the budget defined by the County. There is also a network of nonprofit agencies and local businesses that help stretch the budget, such as the Salvation Army, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Safeway stores.

Once the meal plan is approved, Margaret posts menus at the center so seniors can plan ahead for their favorite meals such as meatloaf, tacos, enchiladas, and pancit noodles. As the weather changes and gets colder, the menu will shift to include hearty soups and stews as well. The menus list the dance and light exercise classes, as well as other center activities such as bingo and brain games.

Often seniors will come in before lunch to enjoy coffee and conversation, then stay most of the day enjoying the activities after their meal. The staff is close to the seniors who visit the center regularly, and will check in on them if they haven’t seen someone for a few days. “I love the program at the center, and feel very lucky to have a job I enjoy so much,” said Margaret.

Bringing Everyone’s Strengths Together

The Washington United Youth Center (WUYC) is a place where the community can safely come together for cultural celebrations, recreation, and resources. The programming at the WUYC helps unify the youth in the community and empowers them onto a path towards a better life. The BEST program provides the structure that many youth need to learn how to make healthy decisions and to be able to work in a supportive group setting. Often the youth return when they become older and become peer educators, staff members, or volunteers.

“Some participants have become community activists, even successful elected officials,” says So'o Poumele, BEST Program Manager. “Many of these successes could have become tragedies, and fallen victims of the harsh conditions that extreme poverty, gangs, and a lack of resources can foster.” The program helps youth build on their core values and gives them a positive role in their community and at home.

According to So'o, who has been involved with the BEST program for over 20 years, Catholic Charities is well known and respected for the work we do in Santa Clara County with at-risk, high-risk, gang-impacted youth and adults.

“The future of our BEST program carries the dreams of countless people who, given hope and opportunity, will become future leaders in the community,” says So'o.

GET INVOLVED

Catholic Charities’ BEST program could benefit from volunteers, donations, and resources that complement the program’s goals. To learn how you can help, please contact So'o Poumele at spoumele@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.
SANTEE SCHOOL BEAUTIFICATION DAY

Community volunteers come together to help beautify Santee School.

On Saturday, September 13, 49 community volunteers spent the day weeding, planting, and deep in mulch. Thank you to the volunteers and generous donors helping Franklin McKinley Children’s Initiative: Office of Vice Mayor Madison Nguyen, Kelly Moore Paints, Home Depot, Downtown Streets Team, Jennifer Cater, Lynne Brown, Evergreen Supply, Compost Services, and Bayscape Landscape Management.