Family Harvest Provides Nutritious Food

On the last Saturday of every month, Marlen Monroy goes to Catholic Charities’ Washington United Youth Center to pick up the nutritious food she relies on to feed her family. There is an abundance of fresh produce as well as milk, rice, beans and other protein to help her children – ages 2, 7, and 8 – grow up strong and healthy. The food is provided through Second Harvest Food Bank’s Family Harvest program, a monthly food distribution for families with children.

“Right now I’m not working, so it means my kids will have enough food to eat,” she says. “The fresh produce is really helpful.”

Marlen lives near Washington United Youth Center, located in one of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in San Jose. Like many of her neighbors, she struggles to make ends meet and is grateful for the services offered at the center.

“Family Harvest is an important resource for families in this neighborhood,” says Mark Lopez, Catholic Charities’ Site Manager at Washington United Youth Center. “Up until recently, there was no grocery store nearby, and fresh fruits and vegetables can be very expensive.”

Marlen says recipe tip cards provided by Second Harvest have helped her learn how to cook with some of the vegetables so she can prepare more nutritious dishes for her family.

“My goal is to raise my kids to get an education so they can go to college and be successful in life,” says Marlen, who volunteers at her children’s elementary school. “Eating healthy foods helps them do well in school.”

When her kids are older, she will enroll them in some of the activities at Washington United Youth Center. The center is a safe haven for teens and young adults. It offers recreational opportunities, gang intervention services, youth empowerment programs, tutoring, and much more.

Like others in her community, Marlen sees Washington United Youth Center as a healthy and continue taking care of their loved ones; we provide a fun and safe place for their loved ones to stay,” says Tatiana Colon, Senior Program Director of Catholic Charities’ Older Adult Services.

Clara Bueno, whose mother attends the Day Break Cares center in San Jose’s Evergreen neighborhood, is grateful for the support she gets from the program and the help she receives at home. She is looking forward to Christmas, but often be upsetting for people with dementia. “The change in routine they have come to depend on causes additional stress and anxiety,” says Ginger McClure, Program Supervisor at Catholic Charities’ Day Break Cares in Sunnyvale.

Day Break Cares Adult Day Care centers in Sunnyvale and San Jose gives older adults a place to go and caregivers a much-needed respite so they can work, run errands, or rest. “Caregivers need to take care of themselves in order to stay healthy and continue taking care of their loved ones; we provide a fun and safe place for their loved ones to stay,” says Tatiana Colon, Senior Program Director of Catholic Charities’ Older Adult Services.

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Volunteers from the Tzu Chi Foundation come together every fourth Saturday of the month at Washington United Youth Center to pack and distribute groceries for the families of the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood.

Hope for Caregivers this Holiday Season

Christmas is a joyful time. It’s a time when family and friends gather together to celebrate and count their blessings. But for many families caring for a loved one with dementia or other health issues, it can also be stressful.

Holiday travel, visits with extended family and friends, and the added cold weather can

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Sometimes when I get caught up in the day-to-day challenges of running Catholic Charities, I have to stop and remind myself how much I have to be thankful for. I like to say that to be a director of Catholic Charities, I need to be as compliant as the best government bureaucrat, as entrepreneurial as the best for-profit entrepreneur, and as charitable as Mother Teresa—all at the same time. I am thankful that I have those challenges because it means at Catholic Charities, we seek to be good stewards of resources entrusted to us by donors, taxpayers, and clients. It also means that we use these investments not only efficiently and effectively, but creatively and compassionately to care for the least of our brothers and sisters in the name of Christ...right here at home.

Thanks to the generous and grateful hearts of so many donors, we are able to help 41,000 people move from despair to hope and from poverty to opportunity. Whether it is the child struggling to read English and learn math, the frail elder needing a caregiver, the refugee fleeing violence, the former prisoner looking for work, the parent wanting better parenting skills, the youth wanting safety from gangs, the homeless family seeking affordable housing, the person needing counseling, the senior needing a hot meal, the person with disabilities in need of social support—we are grateful for the gift of each person we meet and for whom we are able to provide help and create hope.

This holiday season, I ask you to be generous in giving to Catholic Charities. The need is urgent. With your help we will truly make a difference.

for the gift of each person we meet and for whom we are able to provide meal, the person with disabilities in need of social support—we are grateful

VOICES OF HOPE PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Catholic Charities recently elected five new members to its Board of Directors, bringing a wide range of skills and knowledge.

Diana L. Bautista has a strong background in public policy. She is currently Public Policy Associate for the San Mateo Economic Development Association and Government Relations Manager for the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce. She is very active in the community, having served on a number of boards and commissions over the last 16 years. Her focus is on education and job training. Diana decided to serve on Catholic Charities’ board because the agency “gets to the heart of what impacts so many individuals. By providing the services that allow everyone access to self-sufficiency and overcoming barriers, we can impact one person who then impacts the greater community”.

After serving as the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Dubby Laboratories in San Francisco, Murray J. Demo now sits on four corporate boards, including Citrix Systems, Atlassian, Eze Software Group, and Xoom. His major area of interest is homelessness. He says, “I’d like to learn more about the causes of chronic homelessness, especially in one of the world’s most affluent areas, and which approaches have been most successful at helping clients realize long term housing security.” Murray joined the board because he wanted to support Catholic Charities’ mission beyond providing financial support.

Veronica W. Duluk has more than 25 years experience in investment management. She has been with Wells Fargo Bank since 2000 and currently serves as Strategic Planning Manager for Wells Fargo Bank’s Investment and Fiduciary Services. Her focus is on long-range planning and social impact investing. “I joined Catholic Charities’ Board of Directors because I want to help the agency continue to serve those in need,” she says. “My passion is in planning for the long-range sustainability of the services Catholic Charities provides.”

Darcie Green is the South Bay Public Affairs, Community, and Government Relations Manager for Kaiser Permanente, where she has been since 2009. Before her work at Kaiser, Darcie was a Field Representative for the Office of California Assembly Member Joe Coto in San Jose. She also serves as a Santa Clara Board of Education Trustee. “I joined the board of Catholic Charities because I am committed to social justice, eliminating poverty, and increasing social and economic opportunity for families,” she says.

Sandra Sepulveda-Bromley is an attorney at Berliner-Cohen, where she advises clients, many of whom are international, in estate planning. Before that, she worked in the Santa Clara County Superior Court of California as a Judicial Clerk for Hon. Margaret Johnson. She first got involved with Catholic Charities through the annual Bocce Tournament and currently serves on the Fundraising Committee. Sandra says she believes education is important, but seniors tug at her heart strings. “I’ve discovered the secret to happiness and it’s helping others. This is one way I can do that. I am so impressed with how well Catholic Charities works. It’s a very effective organization,” she says.
Blessings Bring Obligations

Linda Poncetta feels very blessed. With four grown children and seven grandchildren, she is enjoying her life. She loves to travel and spend time with family and friends. She is active in her church and likes to get together with a group of women from her parish. Owning a successful pharmacy and home healthcare business for many years with her husband left her in a good position to give back.

“Where much is given, much is required,” is a phrase I have carried throughout my life and one I live by,” says Linda, who is a longtime member of Catholic Charities’ Circle of Hope. “I have been very blessed, but with those blessings is the obligation to help others who are not so fortunate.”

When she and her husband Stan sold their businesses in 1994, they set up a charitable remainder trust and named Catholic Charities as one of the beneficiaries. Her hope is that this gift will give local families and individuals the opportunity to overcome poverty and turn their lives around for years to come.

Instead of giving to a number of charitable organizations, Linda and Stan decided to focus on just a few so they could make a significant difference. They saw their investment in Catholic Charities as a way to do that.

“I have been a member of the Caritas Society for years and have attended many of their events,” she says. “I have always been impressed by the clients who talk about how they were helped. Catholic Charities offers such a wide range of services. There is help available no matter where you are in life.”

GET INVOLVED

Consider leaving a legacy by joining our Circle of Hope, which honors individuals and families who have named Catholic Charities as a beneficiary in their estate plans. For more information, contact Magi Young at (408) 325-5225 or myoung@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

CORAL 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Run for Their Lives 5K/10K
Change Lives for Good

April 5, 2014 | Shoreline Park, Mountain View

Calling all runners, walkers, and interested volunteers!

Great news! Catholic Charities’ inaugural race will be Saturday, April 5, 2014, at Shoreline. It will include a 10K, a 5K, and a kids run.

Anyone interested in helping secure sponsors, recruit runners, walkers, and volunteers, contact Magi Young at myoung@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org
Volunteer Helps Kinship Families Gain Stability

Josephine Poole understands how important it is for grandparents who are the sole caregivers of their grandchildren to become legal guardians. She raised her grandson and now volunteers for Catholic Charities’ Kinship Resource Center helping grandparents and other caregivers complete the documents to secure legal guardianship of the children in their care.

“You have to be able to show court documents giving you the authority to enroll them in school or make medical decisions,” she explains. “Without legal guardianship, the biological parents have legal rights. You don’t have the authority to advocate on the child’s behalf. Legal guardianship provides stability for the children.”

She found herself in that position in 2001 when her daughter could no longer care for her grandson. She filed the court documents herself, but it was difficult, even with her legal background.

Josephine spent 16 years working in the Santa Clara County Public Guardians Office, which handles adult conservator cases, before retiring in 2004. She learned how the court system works and gained experience interpreting legal documents and preparing the necessary paperwork. She is also a certified paralegal and is in the process of becoming a certified legal document assistant.

“I wanted to use my skills to help people,” she says. “The Superior Court has a Self-Help Center where you can get the necessary documents and obtain help filing the paperwork, but it’s very difficult to do it on your own. It’s such an emotional time for these families and the paperwork is quite extensive and complicated, and hiring legal help is expensive.”

Josephine is a valued part of the team at the Kinship Resource Center, which provides case management, classes, support groups, and other services to relative caregivers. She works closely with case managers, who gather the information from caregivers so she can complete the documents.

“We are so grateful to Josephine for the work she does,” says Sunny Ochoa, Kinship Services Program Director. “Before she joined the team, we weren’t able to help many of our caregivers file for legal guardianship. The process takes most people too long. But she is doing about two a month. We like to talk about changing lives for good, and she is doing that.”

GET INVOLVED
You can make a difference by volunteering for Catholic Charities. To learn about the wide range of volunteer opportunities available, visit www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

A Day in the Life

You can see our powerful work in action by participating in Catholic Charities’ upcoming Agency Tours on November 13 and January 23. The November tour begins at Catholic Charities’ Zanker office, where participants will hear about the center’s services and successes, as well as additional programs that are helping to promote early learning. Participants will hear about Catholic Charities’ Zanker office.

The second tour will be held at the Santee Family Resource Center, which is funded by FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and provides a wide range of services to children and families that promote early learning. Participants will hear about the center’s services and successes, as well as additional programs that are helping to improve academic achievement for our children.

GET INVOLVED
Experience a day in the life at Catholic Charities by joining the upcoming Agency Tours. To reserve a spot, contact Linda Pippin (408) 325-5125 or lpippin@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

Community Steps Up to Save El Toro

With continued cuts to government funding, Catholic Charities’ Lori Escobar El Toro Youth Center in Morgan Hill was facing the prospect of closing its doors earlier this year. The center that so many children and teens have come to rely on was in desperate need of funding. Today the youth center is still up and running thanks to the generous support of the El Toro Community Advisory Board, known as Los Amigos El Toro, and community members who were willing to invest in the center.

The center provides quality educational, recreational and social services to low-income youth and their families. While the goal is to ensure academic success, the center also gives youth a safe place to go after school.

“El Toro Youth Center is a critical resource for local families,” says Morgan Hill Mayor Steve Tate, who is a member of Los Amigos. “The community and parents really stepped up to help us save the center. But the fact is we need to come up with a sustainable source of income so we aren’t in this position every year.”

GET INVOLVED
Los Amigos El Toro is looking for members who can help El Toro Youth Center develop a sustainability plan. To learn more, contact Melissa Santos at (408) 283-6151 or Melissa@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.
Bocce enthusiasts came together to roll against poverty last August during Catholic Charities’ Annual Bocce Tournament, which raised more than $40,000 for programs and services that are helping local families and individuals become more self-reliant. More than 200 guests – including 11 new teams representing companies such as Blach Construction, SVB Foundation, BNBuilders, and Devcon Construction – joined the fun at Campo di Bocce along with new title sponsor Thermo, Inc. The event included fabulous food, such as hand-tossed pizzas and other hearty appetizers, as well as the very popular wine bar. The sold-out event also featured a prize-packaged donation drawing. Back by popular demand was the dream vacation drawing, which included a choice of airfare and accommodations to New York, Costa Rica, or Churchill Downs, Kentucky. Thirty-two teams competed in the tournament, with “St. Simon and Jude’s Dudes” winning the championship. The team included Duke Powers, David Lipscomb, Murray Demo, and Katie Boennighausen. Second place went to last year’s champions, “Lina’s Pallinas,” which included Ken Dickens, Brittni Winkelman, Ben Winkelman, and Aldo Giordano. A very special thanks to new title sponsor Thermo as well as all the other sponsors and volunteers who made the Bocce Tournament possible, especially first time Bocce Tournament Committee Chair Mike Denzel. “The Bocce tournament was a great evening to catch up with friends, and to introduce Catholic Charities to a new audience. It remains one of the most popular events of the year,” Mike says. For more information about next year’s Bocce Tournament, contact Kathleen Burroughs at kburroughs@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org or (408) 325-5250.
Caritas Society members and their guests enjoyed a lovely October evening at St. William Parish in Los Altos during Catholic Charities’ Caritas Celebration. The annual event honors Caritas Society members’ generous support of Catholic Charities while providing a great opportunity for old and new friends to connect. “The Caritas Celebration gives our members a chance to stop and reflect on the impact their donations have on their own community. It’s also nice to have an evening to celebrate the great gains our clients make every day,” says Anne Cashman, who chairs the Caritas Celebration Committee. The evening started in the church with a concelebrated Mass presided by Bishop Patrick J. McGrath. There were a number of inspiring presentations, including a testimonial by George Nelson, who was able to turn his life around thanks to Catholic Charities and Caritas Society members who support our work. The evening ended with a beautiful reception in the Parish Hall that featured an assortment of food from around the world.

Immigration Reform Will Cut Poverty

Immigration reform—including its role in helping to cut poverty—was the topic of a recent Social Policy Breakfast Forum held by Catholic Charities at its Eastside Neighborhood Center. Catholic Charities convened a panel of immigration reform experts and advocates to discuss comprehensive immigration reform legislation approved by the U.S. Senate in June. Speakers included Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, who provided an insider’s view of immigration reform.

“House Leaders must listen to the calls of our moral and faith leaders to act in a bipartisan manner to fix our country’s broken immigration system,” says Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-San Jose, Calif.), the top Democrat on the House Judiciary Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee. “Ultimately we need a fair and humane system that reflects our values, keeps our country safe, and lets immigrants aspire to become Americans so our culture and economy prospers. It can be done if we are allowed to work together.”

Immigration reform could help thousands of local residents get the opportunity to legally work and be productive members of society. The bill (S. 744) addresses all aspects of the immigration process from border and enforcement issues to legal immigration reforms, including legal status for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

“We wanted to bring together different sectors of our community who have a stake in immigration reform, including nonprofit service providers, government, the corporate sector, philanthropy and faith-based organizations,” says Greg Keuperle, CEO of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County.

About 70 people attended the breakfast, which opened with a blessing by Bishop Patrick J. McGrath followed by a welcome from Greg and testimonial from Karla De La Torre, a young immigrant beneficiary of Deferred Action. Candy S. Hill, Executive Vice President of Social Policy and External Affairs at Catholic Charities USA, provided an update on Catholic Charities’ innovative anti-poverty strategies.

The panel included Jack Holmgren with Catholic Legal Immigration Network; Jonathan Noble, Government Affairs Manager at Microsoft; Manuel Santamaria from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation; Teresa Castellanos with the Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations; and Robert Yabes, Program Director for Catholic Charities’ Immigration Legal Services.

Robert encourages families not to wait for immigration reform to take action. His talk covered what immigration legal service providers and their clients should focus on now to gain legal status.

“Right now many young people who came to this country as children can apply for Deferred Action, which would allow them to get a work permit,” he says. “Other provisions that allow U.S. citizens to immigrate family members would change under the current bill, so you need to get started on that process now.”
Family Harvest Provides Nutritious Food

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neighborhood community center. She attends Zumba and aerobics fitness classes there.

“There is always something going on,” Mark says. “There are always people here who are welcome to come and do their homework, conduct research, or work on resumes and job applications. The center is a neighborhood hub.”

Mark says the only way Washington United Youth Center has been able to maintain services like music and computer classes is through the help of volunteers. Cuts to city funding over the last few years have meant fewer resources to run the center.

“The services are desperately needed by the community,” Mark says. “More funding to help provide these services is critical.”

GET INVOLVED
Help ensure that teens and youth have a safe place to go by donating to Catholic Charities. Visit www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org to give online.

From War-Torn Sudan to America

Martha Gatkuoch can trace her ancestry back 12 generations. These stories were passed down to her when she was young and unaware of the turmoil that gripped her native Sudan. But then the violence descended on her village. Her poignant tale of horror and inner strength is told in “It Feels Like a Burning Hut,” the book she wrote with her adoptive father Brett Bymaster.

She was placed with Brett and his wife Angie through Catholic Charities’ Refugee Foster Care program. After her village was attacked, Martha and her three younger brothers were separated from their parents. They fled the village on foot and walked for more than a month before reaching a refugee camp in Uganda.

Two of Martha’s brothers were placed with the Bymasters four years ago and then two years later Martha joined them. After making the decision to write the book, Martha suddenly woke up one night and felt compelled to get it on paper.

“Reading Martha’s story compelled Brett to learn more about the history of Sudan and the politics behind the violence. The second part of the book, which is available online at Amazon, provides that context,” Brett says. “We have been blessed with Martha and her brothers. But in an ideal world, they shouldn’t be with us. They should be living peacefully back in their village.”

Martha is now looking forward to a bright future. “It just all came into my mind and I had to write it down right then,” she says. “I wanted to share my experience. I want people to see that if I was able to get through a difficult time, they can too. It is life.”

Up until that point, Brett and Angie did not know any details about what Martha and her brothers had endured.

“My wife and I read it and we all had a good cry,” Brett says. “We have been blessed with Martha and her brothers. But in an ideal world, they shouldn’t be with us. They should be living peacefully back in their village.”

Santee Mother Gets Involved in Her Community

Cristina Hernandez used to feel isolated and alone in her Santee neighborhood. The stay-at-home mother of two knew very few people in the community. But thanks to Catholic Charities’ Santee Family Resource Center, she is actively involved in her children’s school and has developed relationships with other parents in the neighborhood. She volunteers at the center and this summer her husband helped with Catholic Charities’ Jr. Giants baseball program.

“I have friends in the neighborhood now and people I know who I can go to for help,” Cristina says. “I feel part of the community.”

She first learned of the Santee Family Resource Center, funded by FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, when her son attended Catholic Charities’ Bridge to Kinder program last year. The program helps children who have never attended preschool get ready for kindergarten.

Her son was experiencing delayed speech and received an Ages and Stages evaluation of his developmental skills through the program. It was determined he had a hearing impairment and was connected to speech therapy services at his school.

“I will always be grateful to Catholic Charities for helping us find out our son couldn’t hear in one ear,” Cristina says. “Now he is getting the help he needs.”

She took parenting classes at Catholic Charities’ Santee Family Resource Center, which she says improved her parenting skills and helped her learn to navigate the public school system with confidence so she can be a better advocate for her children.

When Cristina’s youngest child started kindergarten, she had more free time. That’s when she decided to volunteer at the center.

Cristina Hernandez participates in developmental activities with young children at Santee Family Resource Center.

For about six months, Cristina went to the center every day, facilitating art enrichment classes and helping out where she could. Then in April she was hired by Catholic Charities to provide child care at the center for parents who are attending classes there.

“Getting involved has been such a great experience,” Cristina says. “I’m so glad I found out about Catholic Charities and the Santee Family Resource Center. Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services even helped me renew my green card, which was a big relief because I didn’t know where to turn. It’s good to know I have a network of support right here in my own neighborhood.”

Hope for Caregivers this Holiday Season

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does wonder how her mother will handle the long drive to Modesto to be with family.

“It’s getting harder and harder to take mom,” says Clara, whose 90-year-old mother has lived with her and her husband for the last 25 years. Her mother began showing signs of dementia in 2007.

Clara says she is fortunate that she gets help from her family. She learned how to ask at the monthly support group she attends at Day Break cares.

“Caregivers who can’t get other family members to help is a common thread in the group,” Clara adds. “I get help and mom is well cared for. She likes going to Day Break and they take such good care of her there.”

GET INVOLVED
Catholic Charities’ Day Break Cares offers in-home support in addition to the Adult Day Care centers. The social enterprise program uses an innovative model that employs former clients who attend a special vocational program to become in-home care professionals. For more information, contact Tatiana Colon at (408) 325-5176 or tcolon@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.
DID YOU KNOW?

According to a 2013 estimate, there are 330,000 families in Santa Clara County living in poverty. The child poverty rate is 12.6%, which is a 26.9% rise since 2006. (Supplemental Poverty Measure)

ACT IT OUT!

CORAL students at Ramblewood Elementary recite their lines during their weekly drama club practice.

The CORAL after-school program at Ramblewood Elementary not only provides students with amazing literacy and reading lessons, but also an opportunity for students to express themselves through acting. Many elementary schools have eliminated performing arts and drama, but the CORAL after-school program now offers these creative opportunities to its students. The CORAL Drama Club helps to develop confidence, self-expression, and speaking skills.