Parents go to school to ready their children for classes.

Food Program Brings Millions into Local Economy

CalFresh is an important anti-poverty program that gives families and individuals a way to get food, freeing up some of their limited resources for other basic needs like housing. It provides a critical safety net to families who are struggling to get back on their feet in the wake of the recent recession.

Federally it is known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), in California as CalFresh, and to most of the general public as food stamps. These programs not only provide families with nutritious food, they also bring millions of dollars into the local economy. Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County has launched an intensive effort to help those who qualify for CalFresh apply for the program.

"Only about half of those who are eligible for CalFresh in Santa Clara County are getting it," says Kenny Moeller, CalFresh Outreach Coordinator for Catholic Charities. "That means local families aren't getting the nutrition they need and the county is losing millions of dollars each year."

Every CalFresh dollar received generates $1.79 in economic activity, according to California Food Policy Advocates. That means the gap between those who receive it is resulting in an estimated $79.5 million in lost benefits and an estimated $142.3 million in lost economic activity each year in Santa Clara County.

“That’s a lot of money we are leaving on the table and it translates into a lot of people who are needlessly going hungry,” Kenny says. "But many people are just too proud to take CalFresh benefits or they don’t know they qualify. We want people to know there is no shame in taking the CalFresh benefits. It’s like unemployment; it’s there for those who need it."

Catholic Charities’ Puertas (Opening Doors) curriculum helps parents build leadership skills and offers tips for getting their children ready to start school. "Many of our parents don’t have much experience dealing with the American educational system," says Charu Aggarwal, Program Supervisor at the Santee Family Resource Center. "We are helping parents learn how to navigate the school system so they can support their children and effectively advocate for them.”

Continued on page 7

New Family Resource Center Opens

Colorful artwork adorns the walls and the play area is filled with toys and books. Catholic Charities’ Santee Family Resource Center is an inviting place where parents can get help preparing their young children for kindergarten. Studies show that when children have the skills they need to do well in kindergarten, they are much more likely to be successful throughout their school years.

The Resource Center opened its doors in March and already is serving more than 70 families from the surrounding neighborhood. Funded through FIRST 5’s Learning Together Initiative, the center is for families with children ages 5 and younger. The core programs and services are focused on early childhood development.

Most of the children served by the center do not have access to preschool, so improving school-readiness skills is critical. Many of the programs and activities are for parents and their children, including early literacy programs as well as art enrichment classes.

There are also classes and workshops just for parents. For example, the 10-session Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors) curriculum helps parents build leadership skills and offers tips for getting their children ready to start school.

"Many of our parents don’t have much experience dealing with the American educational system," says Charu Aggarwal, Program Supervisor at the Santee Family Resource Center. "We are helping parents learn how to navigate the school system so they can support their children and effectively advocate for them."

Continued on page 7

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bocce Tournament "Roll Against Poverty"
August 25, 2011 5:30 – 10:00 p.m.
Annual Gathering & Poverty Summit
September 18 – 21, 2011 Catholic Charities USA Fort Worth, Texas

Caritas Annual Celebration
October 12, 2011 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.  St. Martin of Tours, San Jose

Community Focus

The Housing Trust of Santa Clara County has awarded Catholic Charities an Emergency Homelessness Prevention Grant in the amount of $10,000 for FY11-12. The funds may be used to provide one-time rental and security deposit assistance to income eligible clients served by our “A Roof Over Our Heads Program”.

Catholic Charities CORAL afterschool program received a $20,000 Community Energy Champions Grant award. The award from PG&E will allow CORAL to provide an energy savings classroom enrichment component for our students and their parents.
Dear Friends,

The other day I had the privilege of attending a community meeting in a low-income neighborhood in our county. There was a different buzz in the room that day. While there were many concerned nonprofit experts and supportive government officials at the table, what impressed me most were the women from the community who stood up and told their own stories of success, named challenges they faced, and shared with the group their priorities.

Their priorities will sound familiar to many middle class families: a good education for their children; safety in their neighborhood; and the opportunity to work so they can improve their families’ wellbeing. One of the big challenges mentioned was keeping their kids safe from gangs.

Several women spoke of graduating from a micro-enterprise training course and their plans to start small businesses in the neighborhood. Hearing the women speak, I felt honored to be part of this community and proud to represent Catholic Charities.

For you see, the meeting had been organized by Catholic Charities staff as part of the Franklin-Mckinley Children’s Initiative. Our partnership with the Santee neighborhood, the Franklin-Mckinley School District, the City of San Jose, the County Office of Education, First Five, the County Social Services Agency, the Probation Department, Second Harvest Food Bank, and the Women’s Initiative for Self Employment (and many others) is finally bearing fruit. Academic achievement is up. Children are attending Kinder Academies. Parents are speaking up on behalf of their families. And women are learning to start their own businesses.

This community initiative is just one example of Catholic Charities’ role of convening community partners to meet urgent human needs, especially for families affected by poverty. Our three-fold mission of quality service, advocacy for, and self-sufficiency by those families affected by poverty. Our three-focus on meeting financial goals, have helped improve administrative efficiency so more resources can be used for the programs and services that are changing lives.

“We have this overarching goal to eliminate poverty, and every decision we make is based on doing that,” Pat says. “We need to continually look at what levers we need to pull to have the biggest impact on our goal.”

Marybeth Affleck-Nacey recently joined the staff at Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County as the new Director of the Franklin-McKinley Children’s Initiative. Based on the Harlem Children’s Zone, the initiative aims to cut poverty by providing intensive services to families and children living in the 16-block Santee neighborhood.

“The goal is to create a collaborative multi-agency system so children in that neighborhood have all the support services they need from preschool to college,” Marybeth says. “I bring to this my love and knowledge of children and what they need to be successful. It’s really about supporting the entire family and making sure services are right there in the neighborhood so they are easily accessed by local residents.”

Marybeth also brings extensive experience in building programs from the ground up. Prior to joining Catholic Charities, she had been Executive Director of The Role Model Program since 1998, where she nearly tripled the budget and increased the staff from one to six employees.

Before that, she served as Executive Director of United Way Neponset Valley in Massachusetts, where she was responsible for strategic fundraising, marketing and communications, financial management, and community outreach.

Marybeth started her career as a social worker and has master's degrees in both Business Administration and Social Work.

New Director Focused on Cutting Poverty

Marybeth Affleck-Nacey recently joined the staff at Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County as the new Director of the Franklin-McKinley Children’s Initiative. Based on the Harlem Children’s Zone, the initiative aims to cut poverty by providing intensive services to families and children living in the 16-block Santee neighborhood.

“The goal is to create a collaborative multi-agency system so children in that neighborhood have all the support services they need from preschool to college,” Marybeth says. “I bring to this my love and knowledge of children and what they need to be successful. It’s really about supporting the entire family and making sure services are right there in the neighborhood so they are easily accessed by local residents.”

Marybeth also brings extensive experience in building programs from the ground up. Prior to joining Catholic Charities, she had been Executive Director of The Role Model Program since 1998, where she nearly tripled the budget and increased the staff from one to six employees.

Before that, she served as Executive Director of United Way Neponset Valley in Massachusetts, where she was responsible for strategic fundraising, marketing and communications, financial management, and community outreach.

Marybeth started her career as a social worker and has master’s degrees in both Business Administration and Social Work.

GET INVOLVED

You can help children and their families get the tools they need to overcome poverty by donating to Catholic Charities at www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.
One woman hopes to open a restaurant and another one wants to start a tailoring business. These ambitious entrepreneurs are part of the Franklin-McKinley Women's Initiative, an innovative project supported by Catholic Charities and Step Up Silicon Valley. It is designed to help women living in the Santee neighborhood in east San Jose start their own businesses.

“If we want to make true social change, it needs to come from the community,” says Almaz Negash, Director of Step Up Silicon Valley. “The idea for the initiative came from the women who live in the neighborhood, from their desire to create jobs for themselves so they can help to support their families.”

Step Up Silicon Valley, a community coalition launched by Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, is working to cut poverty in half by 2020. In addition to the Women’s Initiative, the Franklin-McKinley Children’s Initiative was also created to provide intensive services to Santee neighborhood children and families so they can gain the tools they need for self-reliance.

“Last October, I met with Dr. John Porter, Superintendent of the Franklin-McKinley School District, and asked him what he wishes Step Up Silicon Valley would do to help,” Almaz says. “He suggested helping the mothers of the children who are part of the Children’s Initiative get access to a bigger kitchen where they could cook and sell food. The idea came from the mothers themselves. Some of them are great cooks, others sew, some can do hair and nails, and a few would like to provide childcare services. They just need to gain some of the skills required to run their own businesses.”

Thanks to a partnership with the Women’s Initiative for Self-Employment, these future entrepreneurs are participating in an 11-week course designed to help low-income women in the Santee neighborhood start their own microenterprises. They learn how to write a business plan and market their services. Already 20 women have graduated from the program.

“Since I was little, I have had a dream to start my own restaurant,” says Olivia Carrera, a recent graduate. “It takes a great deal of bravery to start a business.”

The goal is to have 100 women graduate from the program by the end of the year.

“In order to cut poverty, we need to create wealth rather than redistribute it,” says Greg Kepferle, CEO for Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. “That’s what we hope to accomplish with the Franklin-McKinley Women’s Initiative.”

GET INVOLVED
If you would like to become a mentor, contact Almaz Negash at (408) 325-5128 or anegash@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

Women’s Initiative Works to Create Wealth

Caritas Receptions

Caritas Society’s 25th Anniversary

For additional information contact Karen McQuade
(408) 325-5250 kmcquade@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org

Wednesday, October 12, 2011 - Saint Martin of Tours, San Jose

Celebrate

Bishop Patrick J. McGrath, Gail and Greg Staszko

Bishop Patrick J. McGrath, Tracey and Gene Enfantino, Greg Kepferle
Catholic Charities Celebrates Its Stars

More than 250 volunteers were honored for their dedicated service to Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County at its First Annual Volunteer Recognition Breakfast in April. The salute to these shining stars was held at David’s Restaurant in Santa Clara.

“It was a remarkable event and an opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to the many volunteers who make our work possible,” says Terrie Iacino, Community Development, Advocacy and Special Projects Director for Catholic Charities. “At any given time, we have about 1,000 volunteers working for the agency, and about half of those are long-term volunteers who continue to serve year after year.”

Terrie welcomed volunteers to the breakfast and then handed the microphone to Greg Kepferle, CEO for Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. He thanked volunteers for their efforts and presented each one with a certificate and a pin with the words “Make a Difference” and a star on it. The program was translated into Vietnamese and Mandarin.

“We are blessed with volunteers from many cultures, which is important because we serve people of all cultures and beliefs,” Terrie says.

Volunteers provide more than 90,000 hours of work each year to Catholic Charities. The event program listed the name of every long-term volunteer and highlighted a few from each department with a description of their contributions.

Marcos and Denise Herrera were recognized for their long-term commitment to Catholic Charities’ Handicapables program. The couple has volunteered for the program for more than 30 years.

Mary Kay Raftery is the longest-serving volunteer for the Ombudsman program, which requires a significant commitment of time. More than 300

Volunteer Gives Frail Seniors a Lift

Three years into his retirement, Robert Ray was looking for something meaningful to do when he saw a notice on his church’s bulletin board asking for volunteers to drive frail seniors to their appointments. Sixteen years and more than 1,000 rides later, he has wonderful tales to tell about the people he has met over the years as a volunteer driver for Catholic Charities’ Day Break Escorted Transportation program.

“My very first rider was a Holocaust survivor,” he says. “I arrived early and she invited me in for a cup of tea.”

The program provides rides to homebound seniors who don’t have any other way to get to medical or dental appointments or take care of important errands like banking, grocery shopping, or going to the pharmacy. The rides are provided by dedicated volunteers and the service is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

“Another one of my riders survived the 1906 earthquake,” Robert says. “She was 99 and had outlived six husbands. I’ve met some fascinating people over the years, and it’s brought me a lot of satisfaction. I’ve driven retired firefighters, doctors, teachers, housewives…you name it.”

Robert has logged more than 31,000 miles since he started helping local seniors get to where they need to go. He averages about a ride a week, but in the early years he did as many as three.

“People ask why I do it, and it’s because I see the need,” he says. “I put myself in their position, not being able to drive.”

Robert has lived in Santa Clara County most of his life and spent much of his career at Lockheed. He credits his wife for making his volunteer work possible because she took responsibility for grandchildren in their care while he was volunteering for Catholic Charities.

“It’s been a great experience,” Robert says. “Every ride I’ve given, the person has been truly grateful. I’m hoping to do this for as long as I can. With our aging population, the need is going to continue to grow.”

GET INVOLVED
You can be part of this dedicated group by volunteering for Catholic Charities. Visit www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org to find volunteer opportunities that match your interests or contact us at volunteer@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

Generous May Appeal Donors Help to Cut Poverty

Thanks to your generosity during Catholic Charities’ May Appeal, thousands of local families and individuals will get the help they need to overcome poverty. We asked what you will do about poverty and you answered the call by donating more than (ACTUAL NUMBER AVAILABLE AFTER 6/30) to this year’s May Appeal.

Too many people in our community are struggling just to get by, particularly in the wake of the recent recession. While the economy may be turning around, people are still suffering.

Your contributions will help Catholic Charities provide the kind of services and support local people need to get back on their feet and become more self-reliant.

Because of you, children are getting the knowledge and skills they need to do well in school and life and adults are getting the tools they need to find jobs and start small businesses. With more than 40 programs out in the community and your support, we are doing something about poverty.

Catholic Charities depends on your generosity during the May Appeal, and we couldn’t do it without the support of all the pastors who welcomed us in and the volunteers who spoke about the lives you are changing. We are truly blessed and grateful.

GET INVOLVED
Your help is needed all year long. Catholic Charities offers a number of ways to support the programs and services that are changing lives every day. To learn more, visit our website at www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.
This year’s Catholic Charities Golf Tournament attracted the largest number of participants and raised the most money in the tournament’s history. More than 250 people enjoyed the golf, dinner and auction at Cinnabar Hills Golf Club. The tournament raised $240,348.

All proceeds from the tournament help support the work Catholic Charities does in cutting poverty in Santa Clara County. We thank everyone who played, participated and volunteered at this year’s tournament. Special thanks to Heritage Bank of Commerce for their 12th year as our title sponsor.

NBC Bay Area meteorologist Christina Loren announced the start of the tournament. Loren even played a few holes with the foursome of Paul Normandin, Todd Courtney, Mark Normandin, and Carlos Azevedo.

In the end, the lowest scores were carded by Pam Hedblad, Jan Hoover and Roxanne Vane in the women’s division and by Carlos Arelleno, Dave Mackin, Shane Salazar and Matt Vaughan in the men’s division.

During the dinner and auction, emceed by KBAY radio’s Sam Van Zandt and John Aiassa, more than $56,000 was raised to benefit Catholic Charities’ Supportive Housing programs. These funds can be matched 10:1 by HUD to further expand the assistance the agency provides to homeless families and individuals.

We hope to see you on June 11, 2012 for next year’s tournament.
While many of us remember the carefree days of our youth, the fact is many children face enormous pressures today. Homework, peer pressure, test anxiety, bullying, and family issues can all take their toll on our children. To help ease the burden, Catholic Charities offers counseling to children and families through its Community Counseling Services, directed by Eric FitzMedrud, Ph.D. Currently, the service is being provided at Most Holy Trinity and Saint Cyprian schools.

“A lot of children are dealing with big issues,” says Kris Dessau, a licensed marriage and family therapist at Catholic Charities who counsels students at the two schools. “Some of these issues are imposed on them due to family circumstances and others are related to the challenges they face at school.”

Poverty, domestic violence, and substance abuse are family issues that can have a serious effect on children, she says. The recent recession has had a significant impact on many local families.

“I really appreciate the kind help I’ve received from Catholic Charities and the friends I’ve made here,” Mansoor says. “America really is the land of opportunity.”

Parents stood on the sidelines cheering as they excitedly watched the soccer tournament. Children dressed in colorful jerseys ran up and down the field with big smiles on their faces. This scene would not be possible for many of these children, who can’t afford the cost of participating in traditional organized soccer leagues. But thanks to Catholic Charities’ CORAL soccer program, these children and their parents can be part of the fun and teamwork that are central to a positive soccer experience.

Parents are stretched and worried, and support and encouragement from their peers, or issues with their parents or siblings;” she says. “Occasionally I find undiagnosed learning disabilities and children are frustrated, that’s why they are acting out.”

Students are referred to Kris by a parent, teacher, or school administrator. No child receives counseling without their parents’ permission. She is at each school once a week and sees about five to six students a week.

“I offer a safe place where children can talk about their issues and concerns without fear of being reprimanded,” Kris says. “The teachers are very supportive. Everyone works together in the best interest of the child.”

If you would like Catholic Charities to provide counseling services to children and families at your school, contact Eric FitzMedrud, Ph.D., PSY23669, at (408) 325-5116 or efitzmedr@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

Mansoor Safi had thought about starting his own business since he was 12 years old. Born in Afghanistan and living as a refugee in Pakistan at the time, he had no idea his business would be located in Silicon Valley and he would be a proud participant in the American dream.

Thanks to the financial help he received through Catholic Charities’ Economic Development Services and a lot of determination, Mansoor opened iFixers last year, a computer and cell phone repair business. He received matching funds through an Individual Development Account with Catholic Charities, which helps people with low incomes build assets.

“I knew I wanted to start the business, but I didn’t have the capital,” he says. “I heard about the IDA program and decided that was just what he needed to start iFixers.”

He arrived in the United States in 2009 with his mother. His father was already living in San Jose after spending years in Russia. The family left Afghanistan in 1995 during the civil war because it was unsafe for his father, who had worked for the government. They were separated for several years after his father had to leave Pakistan due to safety concerns.

When he arrived in the U.S., Mansoor received help settling into his new home from Catholic Charities’ Refugee Resettlement program. He heard about the IDA program and decided that was just what he needed to start iFixers.

Mansoor found a storefront for rent on Stevens Creek Boulevard in San Jose that he could afford and created a website for his business. He learned how to develop websites while living in Pakistan.

“It was a way to pass the time,” he said. “I would develop different websites for fun and then just delete them.”

His business is going strong and he’s been able to support his family on the money he earns. He also attends West Valley College and plans to transfer to a university in a few years, where he hopes to earn a degree in civil engineering.

“I really appreciate the kind help I’ve received from Catholic Charities and the friends I’ve made here,” Mansoor says. “America really is the land of opportunity.”
you when you need it. And we also want people to understand they are actually helping the local economy by taking food stamps."

The local outreach effort is funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. The goal is to have 2,800 residents signed up by the end of September.

Outreach workers are going out into the community and connecting with clients served by other Catholic Charities’ programs. For example, they have signed up hundreds of people at Catholic Charities’ Family Resource Centers, Eastside Neighborhood Center, Gilroy Senior Center, and other sites throughout the county.

“We have laptops and scanners, so we can go to where the people are,” Kenny says. “We have been reaching out to the clients Catholic Charities already serves because these are the people most in need of food stamps and they trust us.”

Many who are often marginalized in the community, such as recent immigrants, are fearful of government programs like CalFresh. There are also a number of barriers to getting and keeping food benefits. For example, California is one of only a handful of states that requires proving they are still eligible.

Catholic Charities’ outreach workers start the process and then applicants must complete an interview with an eligibility worker from the county’s Social Services Agency. Outreach workers help to streamline the process by making sure applicants know what documents they will need and how the process works.

“The funds are provided as a debit card, so it’s not like the old days where you had a book of actual stamps,” Kenny says. “That helps to remove some of the stigma. And more and more farmers’ markets are accepting them, so families can have access to fresh, local produce. CalFresh is a critical resource for people in need and it also benefits our local economy.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

New Family Resource Center Opens

Charu and her experienced team of Community Workers who staff the Resource Center also help parents determine whether their young children are on track developmentally and what they can do to help. A lactose consultant is available to help new mothers breastfeed successfully. Studies have shown that breastfed babies are more likely to have better health and are less likely to become overweight or obese.

The center is staffed by two full-time and one part-time Catholic Charities’ employees, but support of volunteers from the neighborhood is critical to the center’s success. These parent volunteers help to run the programs and reach out to other parents in the community.

The Santee site is one of four Family Resource Centers operated by Catholic Charities in partnership with FIRST 5. The Resource Center is open Monday through Thursday. It is located at Santee Elementary School in the heart of the Franklin-McKinley Children’s Initiative, a collaborative effort to provide intensive services to families living in the surrounding neighborhood, which is challenged by high poverty rates and crime, including gang activity.

“I am truly amazed by this community,” Charu says. “There is so much need and yet people feel a strong sense of community. They have really welcomed us here and the parents want to be involved.”

GET INVOLVED
You can help by volunteering to teach English as a second language at the Santee Family Resource Center. Contact Charu Aggarwal at caggarwal@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Corporate Executives Learn About Poverty

Poverty Simulation. “The exercise is great because it makes you aware of how difficult it is navigating the system. I would definitely advocate for having services all in one place.”

Seventy people participated in the Poverty Simulation, a key tool in helping community members understand what life is like for those living in poverty. 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 on Social Security. Some of the families are homeless while others have jobs.

Participants are seated in family clusters and community resources are located at tables around the perimeter of the room. “Family” members are given cards explaining their circumstances and a small amount of “money”. The task for each family is to provide for food, shelter and other basic necessities while interacting with various community resources.

“I really saw how hard it is for families who are living in difficult situations to pay bills and get by,” says Celeste Ford, CEO of Stellar Solutions. “It’s a logistical nightmare. I felt like I was hanging on by my fingernails.”

Randy Pond, Executive Vice President of Operations at Cisco, agrees: “The nightmare is unbelievable. Everything is difficult. I had a lot of trouble navigating the system.”

The Poverty Simulation at Cisco was an ALF Common Good Collaborative project suggested by Greg Kepferle, CEO for Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and a member of ALF Class XXII.

“I thought this would be a good way to engage the corporate sector in an issue they might not ordinarily be focused on,” Greg says. “We need to get more companies involved in this issue.”

The effort is being supported by Applied Materials, which gave Step Up Silicon Valley a grant to engage more companies. Silicon Valley Community Foundation provided funding for the Cisco event.

“We live in a community where people who are successful have no idea what it’s like for people who can’t make ends meet,” says Emmett D. Carson, CEO and President of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. “This simulation gives people empathy for what it’s like.”

GET INVOLVED
Help raise awareness about the effects of poverty by hosting a Poverty Simulation at your company. Contact Almaz Negash (408) 325-5128 or anegash@CatholicCharitiesSCC.org.
DID YOU KNOW?

Your online sales can benefit Catholic Charities.

You can help support Catholic Charities’ mission when you sell items online using eBay Giving Works. Giving Works is the program that helps sellers list items on eBay to benefit nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit listings receive additional visibility through specialized search functionality, a special icon and agency descriptions.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES’ SOCCER LEAGUE PROMOTES TEAMWORK

After a pre-game talk by Catholic Charities’ CORAL coaches, the team from Los Arboles Elementary School shows its unity before taking the field. Students at each of the schools CORAL serves in the Franklin-McKinley School District have the chance to play in Catholic Charities’ after-school soccer league. The goal of the league is to encourage the students’ academic achievements by using sports to build character and confidence. The league stresses sportsmanship, teamwork and teaches the girls and boys to take care of themselves physically and mentally in preparation for success in life on and off the playing fields.