

Voices of Hope

WINTER 2023

Artist donates painting in gratitude for support received during a time of need

Parish Engagement: 'A Guiding Light for Communities'

Washington United Youth Center: A Safe and Welcoming Space for All

Catholic Charities, Franklin-McKinley School District Expand Partnership

Ways to Give this Holiday Season

FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

In this time of Thanksgiving and holiday celebrations, I find myself feeling thankful for the blessings we have received this past year at Catholic Charities.

We are thankful for being able to witness the joy of parents and children as they learn and grow in our **Family Resource Centers** and **CORAL after-school programs**. We are thankful for seeing seniors engaged in lively conversations over nutritious meals at our **Senior Centers**. We are grateful that hundreds of families each day go home with a week's worth of groceries from our **parish food distribution centers**. We are grateful that we were able to **break ground on two more apartment buildings** that will house hundreds of families in San Jose. We are thankful that we were able to **find jobs for so many people eager to work**, and that we helped **families access benefits and tax breaks** that made them economically secure. We are grateful that immigrants and refugee foster youth found stability and security through our **Immigration Legal Services** and welcoming families through our **Refugee Foster Care** program. We are thankful that so many individuals struggling with mental illness and trauma have found healing and hope through our **Behavioral Health Services**. We are thankful that we were able to keep family members together through our **Kinship Resource Center**. We are thankful that our youth stayed safe and learned new skills in our **Youth Empowered for Success**. We are grateful for our **partnership with parishes** as we accompany individuals and families on their paths to wholeness. We are grateful for **Footsteps, our new creative initiative of family-centered community change**, as we seek to disrupt poverty one neighborhood, one family at a time.

Making this all possible, we are so grateful for the generous donors, funders, supporters and partners who invest resources to help us change lives for good. On a personal note, I am so thankful for the amazing dedicated, compassionate staff and volunteers who give their lives to others. And I am so thankful for such a loving God who showers us with grace and peace and joy.

I pray that in this season of Thanksgiving you find yourself filled with that unconditional love and peace.

Many blessings,



Gregory R. Kepferle



"We are so grateful for the generous donors, funders, supporters and partners who invest resources to help us change lives for good."

Cover photo: The artist Jeimy Amaya with her painting of Our Lady of Refuge that hangs behind the altar in its namesake parish in San Jose. The painting is one of two that she donated to the parish after receiving help for her and her family through the parish's Community Market, a partnership with Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. Read her story at ccsc.org/jeimy

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Emergency Programs & Housing Services: Jorge's Story

In early October, Jorge Nieto met Daniela Moreno of Catholic Charities Emergency Programs and Housing Services for the first time at his apartment in Campbell. The two had been talking regularly by phone for the past nine months since he sought help in January 2023 to move to a safer apartment. His adult son had passed away and he was living in a high-crime neighborhood—his car was stolen in his apartment parking lot.

Jorge, age 89, is a retired electronics technician who worked in Maryland and Florida before relocating to the San Jose area. He lives self-sufficiently on a fixed income but needed help to make the \$800 deposit on a new apartment. Daniela connected with representatives at The Health Trust who worked together with Catholic Charities to secure Jorge's deposit. Additionally, Daniela provided referrals to public benefits navigation, food distributions and other agencies for additional support during his new home placement. Daniela continued regular phone calls with Jorge to check on his well-being.

"I knew he lived alone since his son passed away and we would talk over the phone about how he was doing," she said. "She's so sweet," Jorge said.

Today, Jorge lives in a safe one-bedroom apartment which he says is "very different" from his previous apartment. "It's very quiet here and I can walk in the neighborhood and to the grocery store. I'm very thankful for the help I received. It's very good." ■



Jorge Nieto talks with Daniela Moreno of Catholic Charities

Youth Empowerment for Success supports teens, young adults

For at-risk teens living in gang-impacted areas of San Jose, Washington United Youth Center is a safe place for all to participate in recreational activities while learning positive life skills and getting support to achieve their goals and dreams.



So'o Poumele with teens at Washington United Youth Center

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County operates a wide range of community outreach at the Center, including the Youth Empowerment for Success (YES) program that for more than 20 years has

specifically worked with gang-impacted youth and young adults. In addition to gang influence, many teens in the YES program struggle with truancy and substance abuse.

So'o Poumele, who has worked with youth in the program for 23 years, has seen hundreds of youth who've turned

their lives around but says it doesn't happen overnight. He points out that teens are typically with the program for several years. "They've become disengaged—we help them connect back to their communities, schools and resources."

The staff's approach is holistic, combining recreational and social with support services in a safe space including

- "Street outreach," going into gang hot spots and hosting social events, like cookouts, and inviting youth to participate at WUYC
- Late night gym hours on Tuesday and Thursday evenings with transportation provided
- Life Skills and Substance Abuse groups in schools
- Case Management to help teens and their families navigate the resources available through the Center as well as at Catholic Charities and other community programs

"Our teens use the word 'coexist' to describe what happens at the Center," said James McCaskill, Senior Director, Catholic Charities Community Advocacy & Family Supports. "It's a place of peace, transformation and envisioning a world beyond the neighborhoods they live in." ■

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Parish Engagement Program 'A Guiding Light for Communities in Need'

By The Rev. Hugo Rojas, Pastor of Our Lady of Refuge Parish

Four years after the opening of the Catholic Charities Parish Engagement Program in Our Lady of Refuge Parish, I can gratefully say that the most valuable part of our partnership is the rediscovering in our community of one of the essential aspects of the gospel, the service and love to the little ones. They are simply in the heart and mind of Jesus Christ as precious gifts from his Father, and this is beautifully described by Jesus in the memorable teaching called "The Beatitudes."

"Through love, compassion, social justice, and unwavering faith, Catholic Charities not only provides practical support but also nurtures the human spirit, embodying the teachings of Jesus Christ and becoming a guiding light for communities in need."

Catholic Charities—through the weekly community market it offers to more than 400 families in our midst and other remarkable services to immigrants, homeless people and those who need medical assistance—embodies the core of the gospel and is a living expression of the heart of Jesus.

In the heart of charitable efforts, Catholic Charities finds its guiding light in the profound teachings of Jesus Christ found in the Gospel and particularly, in the transformative words of the Beatitudes. These sacred teachings encapsulate the essence of love, compassion, and social justice—principles that resonate deeply with the mission and work of Catholic Charities.

Parish Engagement Program was from the beginning in the fall of 2019 an inspiration to many of our parishioners to become more involved in social ministries, not only providing food, but also:

- becoming active in our mission of creating transformational change for our global human family,
- addressing the systemic causes of global poverty through advocacy, and
- developing relationships with their members of Congress, visiting their members' offices and writing letters to them raising the profile of pivotal issues like forced migration and malnutrition.



Fr. Hugo Rojas has served as pastor of Our Lady of Refuge since 2017. Pictured behind him is an oil painting of Our Lady of Refuge donated by the artist Jeimy Amaya in gratitude for the support her family received.

In essence, the parish engagement program of Catholic Charities is a living testament to the Gospel and the Beatitudes. Through love, compassion, social justice, and unwavering faith, the organization not only provides practical support but also nurtures the human spirit, embodying the teachings of Jesus Christ and becoming a guiding light for communities in need.

Finally, I would like to share with you something that deeply touched my heart. One of the people who was supported and received services through the community market is an oil painting artist, Jeimy Amaya. As an expression of gratitude for the help she received for her and her family when they most needed it in the middle of the pandemic, she donated to our parish two oil paintings that now decorate the sanctuary of our church: one of the oil paintings is the image of Our Lady of Refuge and the other one is the Divine Mercy image. For me it is a tremendous act of gratitude and a powerful sign of appreciation to the church for positively impacting her life. ■

To volunteer, visit ccsc.org/volunteer and click on Parish Engagement: Food Distribution, Accompaniment, Advocacy.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Catholic Charities, Franklin-McKinley School District expand collaborations with \$6.4 million Community Schools Partnership Grant

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and the Franklin-McKinley School District have worked together for more than 25 years to improve the futures of children, youth and families living in some of the most distressed communities of San Jose.

Our ongoing successful partnerships include the Franklin-McKinley Children's Initiative; CORAL Expanded Learning programming at 16 District schools; and Behavioral Health services with prevention and early intervention to recognize early signs of mental illness.

All of these initiatives pave the way for our latest collaboration with the District: A \$6.4 million, five-year grant from the Community Schools Partnership Program of the California Department of Education. With Catholic Charities as its partnering agency, the Franklin-McKinley School District is beginning implementation this school year (2023-2024).

This Community Schools Partnership focuses on the success of the whole child, whole family and whole community, with education at the core and insulated by comprehensive, integrated family-centered health and social services and neighborhood economic development.

"We are excited to expand and leverage our collaboration and have an even greater positive impact on the futures of children and families," said Greg Kepferle, CEO of Catholic Charities. "The Community Schools Partnership is a neighborhood-based collaborative service model similar to other initiatives we've deployed successfully in the past such as the Franklin-McKinley Children's Initiative, and 'Footsteps: Pathways to Self Sufficiency' launched in Gilroy last year."

The Community Schools Partnership builds a formal collaborative of stakeholders representing:

- The District and five participating schools: Bridges Academy, Capt. Jason M. Dahl Elementary, McKinley Elementary, Los Arboles Literacy + Technology Academy, George S. Shirakawa Sr. School
- Catholic Charities staff and programs
- Parents and caregivers
- Community organizations

This model—with all stakeholders regularly convening and working together to improve outcomes for students, families, and neighborhoods—is developed from the Franklin-McKinley Children's Initiative, a place-based collaborative anchored in the Santee neighborhood and co-led by the District and Catholic Charities since 2009. Community voice has been a consistent priority and informs how both organizations serve the community.

A key feature of the Community Schools Partnership model is School Linked Services Specialists. These staff will serve as liaisons working with the schools, stakeholders, and Catholic Charities and ensure project oversight, accountability and ongoing monitoring. They also make certain that a collaborative process is maintained, and focused on the delivery of programs and services.

"We believe this Community Schools Partnership aligns with our mission to ensure that our students have the ability to pursue a program preparing them for university and/or careers and lifelong learning," said Superintendent Juan Cruz. "Our schools are located in some of Santa Clara County's neighborhoods that had a disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on their lives, and related issues that impact their capacity to thrive. Grants like this one awarded can provide much needed assistance to improve lives in the community." ■



Students pictured are participating in the CORAL Expanded Learning Program at McKinley Elementary, located in the Franklin-McKinley School District. It is one of 16 schools in the District where Catholic Charities operates a CORAL program supporting students and their families with after-school learning, STEAM and recreation. It is one of five schools that are part of the new Community Schools Partnership grant, a five-year initiative started this academic year with the Franklin-McKinley School District and Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County.

SPOTLIGHT

Foundation Spotlight: Bella Vista Foundation



For more than 20 years, the Bella Vista Foundation has supported Catholic Charities work with families and children through grants for our Baby Steps and New Beginnings programs.

The Bella Vista Foundation was founded by Jean Gerlinger Kirkwood and Georgiana Gerlinger Stevens. Jean was the mother of the late Bob Kirkwood, who was a major donor and Lifetime Benefactor to Catholic Charities. The Foundation focuses on environmental restoration and building resilient families, with an emphasis on pre-3 support. Bob served as president of Bella Vista's board until his passing in 2017; he was extremely knowledgeable and passionate about early learning and the importance of parent-child bonding, as well as support, skill-building and stress reduction for parents.

These goals live on through two popular Catholic Charities programs for children ages 0-3 and their

parents and caregivers. Baby Steps provides home visitation support and "Just Us" parenting/playgroups. New Beginnings includes Raising a Reader, which provides free bookbags and reading activities to support language acquisition and literacy development; plus Infant Music and Movement and Zumbini®, which offer guided exploration of music, instruments, songs, rhythm and movement to support social-emotional and cognitive development for little ones.

"It helped me better understand how to read to my kids at home and showed me how important it is to read because it helps them learn new vocabulary."

- Parent participating in New Beginnings

"The Bella Vista Foundation is proud to support Catholic Charities' vital work with young children and their parents," shares Co-Executive Director Stefani Willis.

Thanks to the Bella Vista Foundation, Catholic Charities continues to expand opportunities for supporting healthy families in our community. ■



Fun and learning at New Beginnings classes, supported by the Bella Vista Foundation



Did you know?

Charity Navigator



+ FOUR-STAR +

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County has been awarded a four-star rating from Charity Navigator. Four stars is the highest ranking designated by Charity Navigator, an online charity assessment organization that evaluates thousands of U.S. charitable organizations.

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Legacy IRA Act Provides New Gift Planning Opportunities

A new charitable tax law offers a gift-planning opportunity that provides income for life while donating to charity.

In light of the SECURE Act 2.0 passed in December 2022, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is excited to announce its expanded partnership with Catholic Charities USA, introducing Charitable Gift Annuities (CGAs).

A few details about the new Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) opportunity:

- It qualifies toward the required minimum distribution (RMD).
- Spouses can each contribute \$50,000 from separate IRAs to establish a CGA.
- CGA payments are fully taxable—this is not typical.

- The CGA payout rate for an 80-year-old is 7.6%, and for a 75-year-old it is 6.6% (based on February 2023 rates).

Other changes for regular IRA QCD gifts to charity under the Legacy IRA Act:

- The current \$100,000 annual limit (\$200,000 for couples) is indexed for inflation beginning in 2024.
- The age for RMDs has increased from 72 to 73 in 2023 and is moving to age 75 by 2033.

Rising interest rates make CGAs even more attractive due to the increased payout rate (based on the age of the beneficiary and other factors).

“We’ve seen individuals eager to diversify their retirement portfolio and make an impact,” according to

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

How It Works



- 1 You instruct your IRA custodian to make a direct transfer of your gift amount to Catholic Charities.
- 2 Catholic Charities pays you, or you and your spouse fixed income for life.
- 3 The remaining funds pass to Catholic Charities when the contract ends.

Cecilia Bynum, Senior Director of Planned Giving at CCSCC. “The IRA to CGA conversion is popular as it seamlessly addresses these needs.”

Questions? Contact Cecilia at cbynum@ccsc.org or 408-325-5248. For more on charitable giving, visit our website: ccsclegacy.org. Please remember to consult with a professional advisor for guidance specific to your situation. ■

Caritas Society Member Spotlight: Stephen and Cathleen Lencioni

“Participating in Caritas has been a great way to support Catholic Charities’ mission and live the gospel call to serve others. As Caritas members, we’ve enjoyed the opportunity to volunteer with our children and family friends over several years at a variety of Catholic Charities Supportive Housing sites, preparing and serving a holiday meal to the residents. It was a meaningful way as a family to put our faith into action. Through Caritas, we’ve also met a lot of exceptional people along the way.”



Stephen and Cathleen Lencioni, pictured with their sons on a 2019 vacation, have supported Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County for 20 years, 12 of those years as members of our Caritas Society.

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is excited to announce its selection by the *Mercury News* to be one of the local non-profits featured in their 2023 Wish Book. Last year, community donations to all of the Wish Book grantees totaled more than \$930,000. To learn more, please visit ccsc.org/wishbook.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Five Ways to Support Catholic Charities this Christmas and Holiday Season

1 Join the Caritas Society

Caritas Society Members, who make an annual donation of \$1,000 or more, provide the foundational support for the work of Catholic Charities throughout Santa Clara County. With our current LaScola Challenge, your Caritas Society Membership can make an even greater impact. Visit ccscc.org/caritas-society to learn more.



2 Donate Gift Cards for Season of Sharing

Donations of gift cards make the holidays brighter for Catholic Charities clients. We recommend Target, Walmart or Visa gift cards. For information, email Nick Ingoglia, ningoglia@catholiccharitiesscc.org or call (408) 325-5250.



3 Consider a Gift Through Your Donor Advised Fund

Simplify your philanthropy and maximize your impact. Unleash the potential of your DAF in just a few clicks. Explore our hassle-free "Make a Gift from My DAF" tool at ccscc.org/DAFS.



4 Donate a Car or Boat

We accept working or non-working vehicles with free towing of your donated vehicle. For information, please visit ccscc.org/car-donations or call 408-209-1924.



5 Support our Neighbors in Need

During the holidays and throughout the year, Catholic Charities provides support for families and individuals on their journeys to self-sufficiency. Our integrated services meet families' multiple needs—food, housing, mental and physical health, employment and education—to ensure economic mobility. Please visit ccscc.org/donate to make your gift today.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

15th Annual Bocce Tournament 'Roll Against Poverty' raises \$100,000

Thank you to the amazing sponsors, teams and volunteers who made our 15th Annual "Roll Against Poverty" Bocce Tournament in October a great success! With the support of our Presenting Sponsor Republic Urban Properties and our Bocce Committee, the tournament raised \$100,000 to support our neighbors in need in our community. Congratulations to all of our winners of the tournament, the Santa Cruz vacation raffle, and the silent auction.

Our winning Bocce teams this year were:

First Place: Roy Moses, Scott Holt, Ken Dickens and Duino Giordano of the "Amici di Aldo" team sponsored by The Party Helpers

Second Place: Michael Gachina, Dan Wolf, Lauren Galanes and Kai Qian of the "REAL" Green Giant team sponsored by Gachina Landscape

Lisa Kloppenberg, winner of the vacation raffle, will enjoy three nights in a Santa Cruz home, walking distance from the beach and a variety of gift cards for local experiences.

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities for Catholic Charities' events, please contact Deanna Sisneros, dsisneros@ccscc.org, 408-325-5191. ■



2023 Bocce Tournament Sponsors



Address Service Requested

 [facebook.com/WorkingToEndPoverty](https://www.facebook.com/WorkingToEndPoverty)

 @catholiccharitiesscc

 [linkedin.com/company/89298](https://www.linkedin.com/company/89298)

 @CatholicCharSCC
@GregKepferle

Family fun and learning together at Educare



The Family Resource Center (FRC) at Educare California at Silicon Valley is funded by FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and operated by Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. The FRC is a place in the Santee community where children, parents, and caregivers can learn and grow together. Family Resource Center volunteers and staff support families and help ensure that children are happy, healthy, and prepared for school and life. Catholic Charities operates 12 Family Resource Centers in the County.