

# Voices of Hope

SPRING 2023



**Marcus family invests \$3 million in anti-poverty, education initiatives**

**Parish Engagement: Opening of St. Athanasius Community Market**

**Grand opening of Charities Housing's Page Street Apartments**

**Volunteers make an impact: The Chons, Mary McPeck**



# FROM THE CEO

## Calendar

### MAY

20-21 Annual Appeal Weekend

### JUNE

12 39th Annual Catholic Charities Invitational Golf Tournament  
Silver Creek Valley Country Club

30 Last day of the Sobrato Challenge Match

### OCTOBER

5 15th Annual Bocce Tournament  
Campo di Bocce

Visit [ccsc.org/events](http://ccsc.org/events) for more information

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate the season of Easter and enjoy the blessings of Spring, we are so grateful for new life and a spirit of hope. The torrential rains of winter are replenishing reservoirs and ground water while families begin to recover from storms and floods. And while community needs remain high after the pandemic, we are blessed with an abundance of generous donors who have responded to the needs and are making a difference in the lives of thousands of families in Santa Clara valley.



At the same time, we still see thousands of cars lined up every week as people seek to feed their hungry families with groceries at drive-through food distributions at parishes, Family Resource Centers and our neighborhood centers. **The need for food has increased to a level as high as the worst of the pandemic, with over 21,000 being fed each month, due to families facing inflation and the high cost of housing.**

Yet, funding has not kept up with the need. We encourage our faithful donors to step up once again and invest through Catholic Charities so we can feed the hungry in our community. By helping families get through this crisis and back on their feet, your investment will truly change lives for good.

Many blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Gregory R. Kepferle'.

Gregory R. Kepferle, CEO

## May is National Foster Care Month

Learn more about becoming a foster parent for our Refugee Foster Care program

[rfc@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:rfc@catholiccharitiesscc.org)  
(408) 325-5107  
[ccsc.org/refugee-foster-care](http://ccsc.org/refugee-foster-care)



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## *Parish volunteers live out their faith through Catholic Charities*

The opening of the fourth parish-based Community Market in February expands opportunities for both individuals seeking resources and for parishioners living out their faith as volunteers.

“The need has never been higher – including the level of need we saw during the height of the pandemic,” noted Bridget Balajadia, Program Director of Parish Engagement. “We are experiencing peak registration numbers at all of our locations.”

St. Athanasius Church in Mountain View is the fourth site in Santa Clara County where Catholic Charities Parish Engagement Program operates a weekly community outdoor market. Parish volunteers are a key component in the success of the markets that offer food and support to meet critical needs, as well as resources for individuals of all backgrounds to make lasting life changes.

Volunteer opportunities include short-term weekly shifts at the market along with longer-term commitments. Trained “accompaniment volunteers” are paired with specific individuals – most of whom have experienced significant trauma over the course of their lives – to support them on their paths to self-sufficiency over the course of several months.

“As a volunteer in the Parish Engagement Program, it has impacted me tremendously,” according to Lucia Carrillo, an accompaniment volunteer at Our Lady of Refuge and a member of the community for 30 years. “I feel that I am following the Gospel in a closer, more intimate way with others and helping them attain a better way of life. It’s a joy to be here helping our clients, who are our brothers and sisters, in this parish.” ■



At the opening of Catholic Charities Parish Engagement Program’s community market at St. Athanasius in Mountain View, volunteers registered cars in long lines for drive-through free grocery distribution as others lined up in person for food and other community services. Also in attendance to support market visitors were Lidia Gonzalez, Clinical Social Worker/Program Manager for Parish Engagement, and her dog Frida, who is trained to support healing for clients who are recovering from traumas.



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## *Judy and George Marcus give \$3 million to Catholic Charities anti-poverty and education initiatives*

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is excited to announce a \$3 million gift from Judy and George Marcus to expand the agency's anti-poverty and education initiatives. Specifically, the funds will support our newly launched Footsteps Initiative, and CORAL, our established after-school education program. The gift from the Marcus Family Foundation is the largest individual donation in the history of Catholic Charities SCC.

A celebration of the Marcuses' philanthropy was held on March 1 at G.W. Hellyer Elementary School, one of 22 CORAL extended-learning sites operated by Catholic Charities in Santa Clara County. During the event, the Marcuses presented oversized checks to Catholic Charities leaders and Franklin McKinley School District officials. CORAL students proclaimed the day "Mrs. Judy and Mr. George Marcus Appreciation Day" and gave the couple a large handmade thank-you poster with their thumbprints and names.

The Marcuses, who are lifelong Bay Area residents and raised



Judy Marcus waves to the CORAL students and others in attendance after making remarks during the recognition celebration.

their four children here, are well known for their business successes in restaurant ownership and real estate. Through their family foundation, they are equally well known for their philanthropy and commitment to improving the quality of life in our region through education, the arts and human services. Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is proud to join the many outstanding organizations that have benefited from the Marcuses' generosity.

"Our philanthropic goals fit in well with Catholic Charities because they are able to help the under-resourced. You get more 'bang for your buck' because your donation can go a long way to help those who need it. They are also very progressive in their thinking and make changes when the needs change," said Judy, whose community service and generosity has impacted Cristo Rey High School, the Montalvo Arts Center, Breast Cancer Connections, Avenidas and Community Services Agency in Mountain View, where she served as president.

Both of the Marcuses cite their faith as a basis for their generosity: Judy is a member of St. William & St. Nicholas Catholic Parish in Los Altos; and George is a member of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in San Jose.

She joined the Board of Directors of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County in 2016, serving two terms on the Board as well as serving on the Board's Development Committee. They are 20-year members of Catholic Charities Caritas Society, a network of annual donors who provide foundational



Laiah Cardoso leads her fellow CORAL students at G.W. Hellyer Elementary School in the CORAL Pledge during the Marcus recognition event.

support and are enthusiastic ambassadors of the agency's mission in their communities and their parishes.

Judy and George are very much a team in their endeavors but pursue their individual passions and causes through volunteerism and other service. The couple gives generously of both their treasure and their time. Judy offers wise and pragmatic advice based on her many years of experience in nonprofit operations.

"Things are changing in different communities, and we need to adjust with the change. We sometimes continue programs that have outlived their usefulness," she says. "What was good for the community 30 years ago may not be appropriate today." Two-million dollars of their gift will support Footsteps, a new Catholic Charities initiative launched last year. This scalable initiative builds on the strength of the agency's proven expertise and past successes in anti-poverty solutions. Integrating new technology and increasing community-based services for

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

families, the goal of Footsteps is to promote greater economic mobility as staff and volunteers accompany families on their individual journeys out of poverty.

One motivator of her philanthropy and volunteerism is seeing the impact and real change her investment makes in individuals. “When I see life changes, whether it is economic or educational, I know that the time spent was worthwhile,” Judy says. One million dollars of their gift will support Catholic Charities CORAL Afterschool/ Extended Learning program. CORAL (Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning) serves almost 3,000 high-need students in grades pre-K through 8th. This 20-year-old program emphasizes literacy and CORAL students gain an average of one year in their reading levels on standard literacy assessments. The students also enjoy time with friends in a safe space, learn more about college opportunities, and participate in recreational activities that they would not have access to without CORAL.

Their \$3 million gift makes the Marcuses one of the earliest investors in Catholic Charities Comprehensive Campaign, “Investing to Disrupt Poverty.” Part of the goal of the Campaign is to encourage a greater culture of philanthropy in Silicon Valley – a philosophy shared by Judy, who has publicly encouraged rising



Judy and George Marcus (center) presented their checks totaling \$3 million to Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County (CCSCC). Two-million dollars will support our newly launched Footsteps Initiative, and \$1 million will support CORAL, our established after-school education program. Receiving the checks at the March 1 celebration (left to right) were: Susan Lucas Taylor, CCSCC Chief Development Officer; Lisa Christian, CCSCC Chief Program and Strategy Officer; George Sanchez and Marc Cooper, Franklin-McKinley School District Board Members; George and Judy Marcus; Greg Kepferle, CCSCC Chief Executive Officer; América G. Gomez, CORAL Managing Director; Stephen Sanchez, Franklin-McKinley School Board Member; and Juan Cruz, Superintendent of the Franklin-McKinley School District.

entrepreneurs to give generously and locally.

While they gave the largest gift ever received by their alma mater, San Francisco State University, the couple point out that they both come from humble backgrounds with families who emphasized community service and giving back. In a recent profile of the Marcuses published last year in Palo Alto Online, Judy discussed the roots of her giving back to community:

*“Growing up, my family was always involved with helping others – whether it was during the holidays or other times – reaching out to groups*

*that needed extra help. We didn’t have very much ourselves, but it was always important to give.”*

Catholic Charities CEO Gregory Kepferle, who served as emcee at the Marcuses’ recognition program, emphasized the importance of their gift and investment in the work of the agency. He said, “We deeply appreciate the trust and commitment Judy and George have in Catholic Charities. Their investment through us will enable thousands of children to improve their education and hundreds of families on their path to economic mobility.” ■

## UPDATE ON FOOTSTEPS:

### *An Initiative of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County’s Long-Range Plan*

Almost 700 individuals and their families have accessed multiple services at our Gilroy location since the launch of our Footsteps program there in early 2022.

Footsteps is a scalable, hyper-local approach to disrupt poverty. Through this new initiative, we will support even more families with multiple, ongoing services tailored to their individual needs. Footsteps will also empower entire communities and upend the model for Catholic Charities operations and expansion into the future. Over the next five years, we plan to reach 9,250 families in 18 neighborhoods starting with 250 in each neighborhood each year.

For more information on Footsteps and our Long Range Plan, visit [ccsc.org/long-range-plan](https://ccsc.org/long-range-plan) and multiple stories in our Voices of Hope archives from the Fall 2022 edition, [ccsc.org/2022-fall-edition](https://ccsc.org/2022-fall-edition).



# SPOTLIGHT

## *Hyoung Chon and her daughter, Sujin Chon*

**Board Member Hyoung Chon and her daughter, Sujin Chon, are mental health advocates and inspiring volunteer ambassadors for Catholic Charities**

### **What was your initial connection to Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County?**

**Hyoung:** My real estate business is very cyclic. I had very good counseling services at a very high cost until 2010. Then I was not able to pay private counseling due to financial difficulties and was referred to Catholic Charities. Sujin was eligible for the counseling service at Catholic Charities and would not have had a good recovery without it.

Also, we have a family history. I lost my mom due to bipolar mental illness. So, with this family wound, Sujin and I are motivated to help others start their journey to recovery from mental illness. The mental health programs at Catholic Charities will be always very meaningful to both of us. We feel so grateful and thankful.

### **What is your personal mission of giving back?**

**Sujin:** I facilitate mental health recovery workshops for people who have a mental illness or a dual-diagnosis. I want people to know that if they have a mental illness, life can still be good! When I was first diagnosed, I could not accept myself. I thought having a mental illness meant that my life was over and there was no possibility that I can live a happy or meaningful life.

Fortunately, I was able to start my journey to mental health recovery in 2012. I don't need to live alone in the dark anymore with the stigma of my mental illness and have been able to live

a new freedom with recovery. I'd like to pass on the hope and new spirit of recovery to as many people as possible.

### **Why support Catholic Charities?**

**Sujin:** I had the privilege to work as an After-School Instructor for Catholic Charities CORAL Program from 2019-2021. Caring for and tutoring the children, it was one of the most rewarding jobs I have ever had. I saw first-hand what an amazing program it is and parents were always grateful for our help.

**Hyoung:** I want to make sure my donation is really well managed to reach the people in need and without waste. All of the programs at Catholic Charities are run with utmost efficiency and transparency. Also, I want to help people in our community, as this is where I live and these are our immediate neighbors. Even though I cannot help each and every one of my needy neighbors, I can make a difference through supporting Catholic Charities.



To access Catholic Charities behavioral health services, please call the Santa Clara County number: 1 (800) 704-0900  
If you or someone you know is experiencing a behavioral health crisis, call 1 (800)704-0900, press 1 or dial 9-8-8 for local 408, 650, and 669 area codes.

## **MEET OUR AMAZING CLIENTS:**

## *The Duran Family, Seven Trees Family Resource Center*

Miryeda Duran and her six-year-old son, Diego, have been coming regularly to the Seven Trees Family Resource Center since he was an infant. With the Center's emphasis on literacy, parenting support and child development, the mother and son also enjoyed accessing books, music and gardening programs, exercise classes and camaraderie with other parents from the neighborhood.

Today, the family's connection to the Center continues, extending to dad, Miguel, and daughter Brisyeda, age 20. Diego is now thriving in kindergarten, enjoys reading and is able to work

independently on his homework. He also loves being a part of Junior Giants at Seven Trees and Miguel volunteers in the free summer coed baseball program.

Miryeda says: *"I love the place, I love the people, I love the community and I love the staff. Now our family has a greater connection. I'm so thankful. When I see a person in my neighborhood with children, even if I've never met them, I tell them about how helpful the Family Resource Center has been for our family and that they should come and join us. The doors are open to all of us."*



For information on our Family Resource Centers, visit [csc.org/family-resource-centers](https://www.csc.org/family-resource-centers)

# DEVELOPMENT NEWS

## *Catholic Charities 2023 Annual Parish Appeal: May 20–21*

**C**atholic Charities of Santa Clara County, through its initiatives and compassionate outreach, is the social justice arm of the Diocese of San Jose. Our volunteers and staff will share the good news of our work together during Catholic Charities Annual Appeal weekend, May 20–21 in parishes throughout the Diocese.

With parish collaboration a key to our success in “changing lives for good” in our Diocese, we look forward to this annual event when parishioners can learn more about supporting our outreach and ways that they may put their faith into action.

Almost \$150,000 was raised for Catholic Charities programs through the parish collections during the 2022 Annual Appeal. On behalf of those we serve, we are grateful to every family and individual who made donations last year to support our mission. Thank you!

Your support – at every dollar level - makes an impact on disrupting poverty. Last year, more than 100,000 children, adults and seniors accessed critical services through our 90+ sites in Santa Clara County, from Palo Alto to Gilroy.



Learn more about the amazing Sanchez family and their inspiring story. Visit [CCSCC.org/annualappeal](https://ccscc.org/annualappeal).

This year, your generosity will be rewarded two-fold during the Sobrato Challenge Match. Every new or increased dollar you give will be matched by the Sobrato Family Foundation through a \$250,000 Challenge Grant.

To make your gift, please visit [ccscc.org/annualappeal](https://ccscc.org/annualappeal) ■

We welcome your help with the Catholic Charities Appeal. If you can volunteer, please contact Nick Ingoglia at [ningoglia@ccscc.org](mailto:ningoglia@ccscc.org) or 408-325-5250.

## Discover new opportunities to maximize your giving (and reduce your taxes).

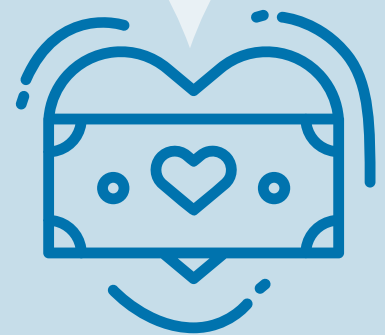
### 1 Maximize the Impact of Your Gift through your Donor Advised Fund, Appreciated Securities or Mutual Funds

You have the flexibility to recommend how much and how often money is granted to CCSCC. By making a gift of your appreciated securities, you can avoid paying capital gains tax that would otherwise be due if you sold these assets. Visit [ccscc.org/stocks-and-securities-gift](https://ccscc.org/stocks-and-securities-gift) to learn more.

### 2 IRA Charitable Rollover or Qualified Charitable Distributio

Whether itemizing or claiming the standard deduction, individuals age 70.5 and older can direct up to \$100,000 per year tax-free from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to help support Catholic Charities. Visit [ccscc.org/ira](https://ccscc.org/ira) to learn more.

To accomplish your rollover gift seamlessly, contact Cecilia Bynum, [cbynum@ccscc.org](mailto:cbynum@ccscc.org) or call her at (408) 694-7379.





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## *Charities Housing continues expansion of properties to support affordable access*

For Charities Housing, 2023 is an eventful year. The organization is celebrating a milestone 30th anniversary, and the opening of and ground-breaking for new affordable housing properties – all with a new executive director at the helm for the first time in more than 15 years.

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County welcomes Mark Mikl as the new Executive Director of Charities Housing. Mikl joined Charities Housing as Deputy Director in 2019 after serving on the Board for nine years prior to joining the organization. With the retirement last year of longtime Executive Director Dan Wu, Mikl was promoted to lead the organization in May 2022.

Mikl brings more than 30 years of professional and leadership experience in the finance and real estate sectors. Prior to joining Charities Housing, he worked as a Senior Vice President for Essex Property Trust. He is a Certified Public Accountant (inactive) and a graduate of San Jose State University. In his new role leading the team at Charities Housing, he will oversee 70 staff members as they manage the organization's current affordable housing sites and develop new properties to meet the tremendous need in our communities.

"As Charities Housing makes plans to celebrate our 30th Anniversary later this year, I'm proud to be a part of continuing this critical work and lead such a great team of professionals who really care about what they do," Mikl said. "This organization is successful due to its long-term focused discipline of being thoughtful, conservative and highly knowledgeable in the area of low income housing in Santa Clara County. Now we can build on this legacy to consider



Cutting the ribbon at the grand opening of Page Street Apartments (L-R): Mark Mikl, Executive Director, Charities Housing; Father Angelbert Chikere, Director for Life Justice & Peace, Diocese of San Jose; Greg Kepferle, CEO, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County; Susan Ellenberg, President, County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors; Matt Mahan, Mayor, City of San Jose; Mike Kasperzak, Board Chair, Charities Housing; Kathy Robinson, Director of Development, Charities Housing; Julie Mahowald, CFO, Housing Trust Silicon Valley; Preston Prince, Executive Director, Santa Clara County Housing Authority; Consuelo Hernandez, Director, Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing; Jacky Morales-Ferrand, Director, City of San Jose Housing Department

expanding housing opportunities and implementing new strategies to enhance our mission."

Catholic Charities established the Division of Housing Development and Services in 1990 and formed Charities Housing Development Corporation of Santa Clara County (Charities Housing) in 1993 to address the lack of safe and affordable housing opportunities in the community. Current residents of Charities Housing's approximate 1,500 units include low-income families, single adults and seniors, those with disabilities and other special needs.

The organization has in excess of 2,000 additional apartment homes which will be delivered over the next few years. In March, the newest Charities Housing property opened: Page Studios with 82 units serving

low-income families and individuals. This summer will be the grand opening of Blossom Valley Senior Apartments on Blossom Hill Road in San Jose and groundbreaking for two large family affordable communities, 1860 Alum Rock Ave., a 60-apartment home community and The Charles, a 99-apartment home community at 551 Keyes St. both in San Jose.

Mikl said: "This is an exciting time. With the alignment of political will and the related focus by public and private sources, this is allowing us to really lean into our mission to produce and operate much needed affordable apartment homes serving the lowest tranches of affordability where the housing is most desperately needed." ■

For more information, visit [charitieshousing.org](https://charitieshousing.org).



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## *Congratulations to Volunteer Mary McPeek*

Mary McPeek, Volunteer Coordinator of Catholic Charities weekly drive-through food distribution at Saint Lucy Parish in Campbell, recently received a Distinguished Volunteer Fundraiser Award to honor her work. Mary – nominated by the agency’s Disaster Relief and Food Distribution Program – was one of several volunteers honored during the Association of Fundraising Professionals Silicon Valley Philanthropy Day held late last year. Her work not only helps families who are struggling with food insecurity, but also elevates the program’s visibility in the community and supports the agency’s fundraising initiatives.



Saint Lucy’s weekly food distribution relies on 25-30 volunteers who support serving almost 800 families



Mary McPeek

with free groceries. As the site Volunteer Coordinator since April of 2020, Mary helps in recruiting, training, and coordinating the volunteers who manage traffic street flow, parking lot management, touchless loading of groceries, handing out community resource flyers, and responding to volunteers and client questions.

“Mary goes above and beyond in making sure all aspects of the food distribution run smoothly. And she makes everyone that participates feel welcome,” said Araceli Gonzales, Division Director of Emergency Programs and Housing Services for Catholic Charities.

Having an efficient operation is essential to relieve stress among client families. Mary is committed to making sure that volunteers and clients are always treated with respect. Since our client families come from many cultures, she recruits Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and English-speaking volunteers and places them at the walk-in station.

Catholic Charities is able to continue this daily grocery distribution thanks to the generous public support and the incredible dedication of volunteers, like Mary. ■

To volunteer for Catholic Charities food distribution, visit [csc.org/volunteer](https://csc.org/volunteer) and click on the link to “Parish Engagement: Food Distribution, Accompaniment, Advocacy.”

## 39th Annual Catholic Charities Invitational Golf Tournament

Monday, June 12, 2023

Silver Creek Valley Golf Club

Don’t miss this premium golf experience!  
Enter the drawing to win a chance to play in the Lexus Champions for Charity Golf Tournament at Pebble Beach.  
Learn more and register at [csc.org/golf-tournament](https://csc.org/golf-tournament)



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## *From CORAL Student to CORAL Site Manager*

For Gabriela Fuentes, the CORAL after-school, extended-learning program has been a part of her life for more than 18 years.

Her CORAL journey began as a kindergartener at Daniel Lairon School and then continued in middle school at Sylvandale's CORAL program. In 2018, Gabriela was hired to be a CORAL After-School Instructor (CASI) at her former elementary school, Daniel Lairon. In 2021, because of her leadership, she became the CORAL Site Manager there.

At CORAL, Gabriela received help with reading and homework and also had opportunities to participate in many other enrichment and recreational activities. Her academics improved along with her self-esteem. And these experiences influenced



**CORAL Site Manager Gabriela Fuentes with CORAL students at Daniel Lairon School.**

her future career. Currently a student at San Jose State University, Gabriela plans to receive her education credentials and come back to teach at Daniel Lairon.

Gabriela says: "It is very rewarding to do a full circle within my community.

I am super thankful for the opportunities CORAL has given me. I love passing my positive experiences on to our current CORAL students." ■

**To learn more about CORAL  
employment opportunities, visit:  
[ccscc.org/careers](http://ccscc.org/careers) or email  
[jobs@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:jobs@catholiccharitiesscc.org).**