



Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

The Sage

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CYO Develops Champions in Life

Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), a program of Catholic Charities, fosters the moral and character development of youth by guiding them in investigating and acquiring core values of hard work, sportsmanship, hope and faith.



A softball player grows in character while having fun.

A comprehensive youth sports program must involve parents and coaches. CYO educates parents and coaches with the help of the "Play Like a Champion Today" workshop created by the Center for Ethical Education at the University of Notre Dame. The workshop is designed to train coaches to effectively nurture and integrate physical, mental and spiritual strength in youth. The workshop also helps parents learn the essential skills of being positive and supportive to both coaches and players.

CYO works hand-in-hand with Catholic elementary schools; in fact, CYO coaches and referees are actually volunteers of the schools. With a range of sports that includes basketball, track and field, soccer, golf, volleyball, flag football, softball, cheer and song, and bowling, good coaching is essential. In an age of diverse influences, CYO is bringing together the schools, coaches, parents, adults and youth to promote strong character, all around. ❖

Esperanza Program Wins Asylum for "M"

Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, a program of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, recently celebrated a victory in the case of an asylum seeker, "M", who was persecuted in Iran on account of his religious faith.



"M" celebrates his political asylum with Esperanza attorneys Diana Fakhrai and James Duff Lyall.

of Hezbollah. His captors even put a bag over "M's" head, held a gun to it, and threatened to kill him. His family was able to sneak him out of the country so that he could make his way to freedom in the U.S. Since

In recent years, many people of "M's" religious persuasion have been attacked, arrested, tortured and killed, while many others have been forced to flee the country. Like many asylum seekers who escape to the United States, "M" was detained at the U.S. border by the federal government, who wanted to immediately deport him. "M" remained in detention, not permitted to leave, while fighting for asylum.

In Iran, because "M" belongs to a minority religious group, he was arrested, interrogated and beaten by members

that time, members of Hezbollah have returned to "M's" house several times looking for him.

An immigration judge recently granted "M" asylum after an Esperanza attorney assiduously prepared the case, which included finding an expert witness to donate his time in order to testify about Iran's treatment of people of "M's" faith. After being detained for eight months, "M" has since been released from immigration detention, pending resolution of his case. ❖

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“The Year for Priests,” Message from the Executive Director Monsignor Gregory A. Cox

Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed this year as “The Year for Priests.” The Holy Father has invited all priests to deepen their commitment to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and clearer witness to the Gospel in our world. Catholic Charities of Los Angeles is grateful for those priests who have worked in or with Catholic Charities since its inception.

In the Pope’s letter to all the priests around the world he said, “The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus,” the saintly Cure of Ars, St. John Mary Vianney, would often say. This touching expression makes us reflect, first of all, with heartfelt gratitude on the immense gift which priests represent, not only for the Church, but also for humanity itself. I think of all those priests who quietly present Christ’s words and actions each day to the faithful and the whole world, striving to be one with the Lord in their thoughts and their will, their sentiments and their style of life. How can I not pay tribute to their apostolic labors, their tireless and hidden service, their universal charity? And how can I not praise the courageous fidelity of so many priests who, even amid difficulties and incomprehension, remain faithful to their vocation as ‘friends of Christ,’ whom he has called by name, chosen and sent?”

Because Catholic Charities has benefited from the many priests who have quietly lived out their priesthood in service of the poorest of the poor in this Archdiocese, we would like to thank and recognize them this year. Priests have served in many capacities in Catholic Charities over the years. Whether in administration or in programs, the priests have worked closely with the other religious and lay people in providing service in the spirit of the Gospels. Priests like Monsignor William Barry, Monsignor John Languille, Monsignor Patrick O’Brien, Monsignor Martin Slaught, Monsignor Robert Stein, Monsignor Padraic Loftus, and Monsignor Stephen Downes have unselfishly given of themselves to the service of the poor.

The Holy Father has called all of us to pray and recognize priests for their service within our communities. Catholic Charities of Los Angeles is grateful for the priests who have served us in the parishes or special ministries of our Archdiocese. May our Lord grant eternal rest upon those who have died and eternal joy to those who are still serving. ❀

Lancaster Community Shelter Helps Family Affected by Home Foreclosure

Imagine if the next knock at the door isn’t the mailman or a friend visiting but a representative from the bank with an eviction notice. For many people renting property across Southern California, the prevalence of home foreclosures means that there is a real possibility that the bank could come knocking at any time. Often without warning, and at no fault of their own, families find hardship on their doorstep and must scramble to avoid homelessness.



Such was the case in the Lancaster area for Anita, her husband, and their two children, who encountered a series of problematic rental housing situations. One home became uninhabitable when an obstinate tree disrupted the plumbing and eventually grew through the floor. Their next rental went into foreclosure, which they discovered only when someone from the bank knocked on their door and asked them to leave.

With no one to take them in, Anita and her husband sought the help of Lancaster Community Shelter, which is operated by Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. The shelter serves men, women, and families with a 30-day emergency shelter, a transitional program where 30 people can stay for six months or more, 30 additional overnight beds for winter, and 16 long-term apartments for families. The program also offers case management and referrals to other sources of support to encourage economic independence.

Throughout Anita’s family’s intermittent homelessness, Lancaster Community Shelter has provided lodging, food, and clothing. It has also provided hope. Amidst the home foreclosure crisis, Catholic Charities is helping working families with limited income, like Anita’s, to move past that knock at the door toward more stable futures. ❀

JOIN US!

Friday, December 4, 2009

City of Angels Christmas Gala

The California Club

For more information,
call (213) 251-3495.



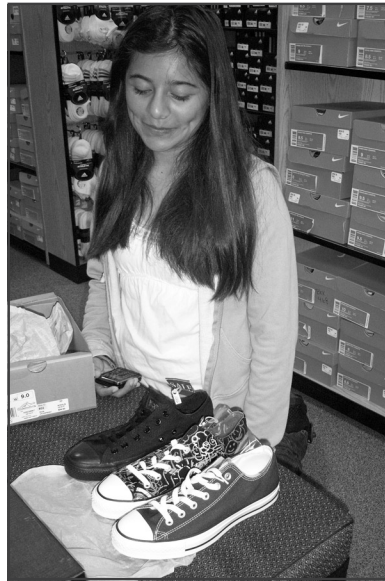
Community Pitches in to Help Children Start School Year

Collaborative efforts in the Ventura Region this fall showed that the old adage is true: it takes a village to raise a child. With the help of local parishes and companies, Catholic Charities helped to prepare children in the community for a successful school year.

To enable students to put their best foot forward, 85 children from low-income families were invited to the Kohl's department store in Moorpark to select a pair of new shoes to wear to school this fall. The effort was made possible through individual donations of \$3,300 in Kohl's Gift Cards. In addition, the store offered a 15% discount on all shoes.

Meanwhile, the Loaves and Fishes Program of St. Jude's Parish in Westlake Village generously donated \$20,000 in backpacks and school supplies. At Catholic Charities' community centers in Moorpark, Oxnard, Thousand Oaks and Ventura, students received all the pens, crayons, folders, binders and notebooks they'll need for school.

Similar projects occurred elsewhere throughout Catholic Charities this fall, demonstrating the dedication of community members to support families who have fallen on hard times. ❖



A teenager decides between three different pairs of shoes at the Ventura Region's back-to-school shoe day.

Parenting Program Focuses on Violence Prevention

Safe communities begin with strong families. To build a secure and cohesive environment in the city of Pomona, Catholic Charities' Strengthening Families and Multi-Ethnic Communities program focuses on violence prevention for self, family and community. Designed to engage and empower parents, the 78-hour parenting workshop takes place over 26 weeks and explores ethnic and cultural roots, parent-child relationships, positive discipline and social competence.



Facilitator Sister Mary Rose Anita Ramirez, RN, MFT, gathers with 14 students who recently completed a culturally-focused parenting class in Pomona.

Santa Barbara Region's Homeless Programs Benefit from Stimulus Funding

In partnership with other local nonprofit agencies, the Santa Barbara Region of Catholic Charities has been the beneficiary of new funding under the State of California Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HRRP) Program.

Under separate three-year contracts with the County of Santa Barbara, the City of Santa Barbara and the City of Santa Maria, Santa Barbara Region's combined total funding is approximately \$649,000.

This money will be used to provide financial assistance to help low-income and homeless residents to pay for security deposits, rent, utility and other costs related to obtaining rental housing. Those eligible must be homeless, or at imminent risk, and must fall below the 50% of the area medium income.

Over the lifetime of these grant awards, the Santa Barbara Region anticipates being able to directly help some 1,400 new clients, making a difference for families now affected by the economic downturn to keep a stable home rather than being forced to live in a shelter or on the streets. ❖



Many families in the San Gabriel Valley are confronted with issues such as domestic violence, gangs and alcohol and/or drug use. Through this special program, participants learn new skills to strengthen their family and community relationships so they can overcome these hardships and evaluate parent-child interactions in their homes. Since over 70% of Pomona's population is Latino, the curriculum is pertinent to immigrants. Participants explore the impact of culture and values on their own childhoods and on their current child rearing attitudes and behaviors.

The workshop sessions are facilitated by Sister Mary Rose Anita Ramirez, RN, MFT, and are offered in conjunction with the bilingual counseling services offered at *Clinica de Salud-Sagrada Familia*. For more information, please call the San Gabriel Region's Counseling Services program at (909) 622-2824.

A 50 Year-Old Promise Comes Full Circle

In the 1950s, a young teenage girl named Jeanne volunteered with Catholic Charities' Brownson House Community Center in East Los Angeles. The program was then, as it is now, fueled by a communal spirit. The youth in the program shared the responsibility, each week, of bringing Kool-Aid to have with their snack. Neither the children nor the program ever seemed to have enough money to buy sugar, which was supposed to be added to the drink mix. Jeanne felt bad that the children's drinks lacked sweetness and vowed that, should she ever have any extra money, she would buy sugar for the children.

Over the five decades that have passed since Jeanne volunteered at Brownson House, much has changed. Today, the children at Brownson House often participate in the Adeste program, which provides affordable, nurturing, high-quality after-school care for elementary school children. The parents of these youth may access food, basic necessities and even parenting classes at Brownson House.

Jeanne went on to live a full life, but she never forgot about the children who touched her heart years ago. When Jeanne recently became executor of her late mother's estate, she remembered her promise of sugar. Taking an emotional journey back in time, Jeanne found and contacted Brownson House and made a generous donation, knowing that even though the funds would be used for Adeste scholarships, rather than sugar, clients and staff of Brownson House today will know how "sweet" it is to be remembered by an old friend. ❀



Jeanne, with San Gabriel Regional Director, Mary Romero, and Brownson House staff member, Roberto Ramirez, fulfills an old promise.

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Helping immigrants from around the globe to become self-reliant, so that they can give back to society, is the goal of Catholic Charities' Immigration and Refugee programs. Ninety percent of Immigration program staff members speak more than one language.

