



Catholic Charities
of Los Angeles, Inc.

The Sage

www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org • ISSN 1551-9112

Somalis Fleeing Violence Jailed For Seeking Refuge in the U.S.

Catholic Charities' Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project has successfully represented Somali, Haitian and Iranian asylum seekers in past months. Most recently, Catholic Charities' Somali client, Mohamed Ahmed Kheire, won asylum and was featured in an AP story picked up across the country, including in *The New York Times*.

An excerpt from the AP story: "Kheire's brother was shot in the head in his music store in Mogadishu after refusing to bow to al-Shabab's [an Islamic Militant group] demands that he shutter the shop. A year later, Kheire's sister was beaten with a stick and left bleeding outside a school. That night, Kheire, whose family belongs to a minority clan, was visited by three men who rammed his chest with a rifle butt and debated whether to kill him. Once they left, Kheire decided to leave. His wife and then nearly four-year-old son went to stay with family."

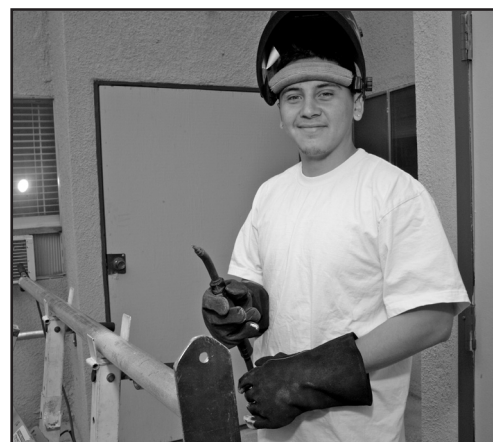
Congress passed a law in 1996 requiring Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain anyone who presents themselves at a point of entry until an Immigration Judge makes a final residency decision in his or her case, a process which can take between six to 18 months. ICE recently changed its policy to set free certain asylum seekers who have family in the U.S. and who present no evidence of dangerousness. This change in policy intends to allow victims of violence to go free instead of being re-traumatized by detention. ❀

Recent Graduate Acquires Marketable Skills through YouthBuild

Los Angeles County's unemployment remained high through December at 12.4% but in areas, such as South Los Angeles, the rate was over 20%.

Last year, Anibal Torres graduated from high school without any employment plans. Already a teenage husband and father, he began searching for a career path that would allow him to provide for his family. But, with limited options, things were not looking good. On top of the economic recession, he was not sure what he wanted in a career and had no role models who could provide guidance. Nevertheless, Anibal began a job search that led to Catholic Charities' Youth Employment Services (AYE) program.

Anibal joined AYE's YouthBuild construction program in which clients receive nine months of classroom instruction and on-site job training. While enrolled in YouthBuild, Anibal acquired a Hazardous Material Management Certificate, learned industry building standards and worked on several construction projects in the community, in addition to earning a pay check.



Anibal receives on-the-job construction training.

The knowledge and skills Anibal acquired in YouthBuild extended beyond trade skills. He was recognized by his peers and staff as an enthusiastic student eager to learn and complete any project. The experience and encouragement he received gave Anibal confidence and self-esteem; in fact, he now has a much more positive outlook on life. In December of 2009, Anibal graduated from AYE's YouthBuild program and landed a full-time job. He is now earning enough money to support his young family. ❀

In This Issue...

- Message from the Executive Director Page 2
- Benefits of Charitable Gift Annuities Page 2
- San Juan Diego Center Helps Disabled Police Officer. Page 2
- Christmas Celebrations Bring Cheer. Page 3
- Brothers Collect Food for Guadalupe Center Page 3
- Woman Turns Her Life Around at Shelter Page 4

Message from the Executive Director,

Rev. Monsignor Gregory A. Cox

As we begin a new decade, our attention is drawn to new beginnings and goals. Our New Year's resolutions might be to have greater patience, to listen better or to accumulate less debt. However, there are many people whose New Year's resolutions are to obtain food, clothing, shelter or a job. Difficult economic times have a way of making us pay attention to the basics.

The State of California's unemployment rate is 12.3%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is far above the national average of 10% and places California, America's most populous state, fourth behind Michigan, Nevada and Rhode Island. In our local Archdiocese we read that the unemployment rate in Los Angeles County is at 12.4%. High unemployment means there are more needs for struggling families.

Local programs of Catholic Charities have increased their services by 35% without the benefit of additional funds. This was accomplished because of the dedication of our Board of Trustees, management and staff, as well as the numerous volunteer hours provided by parishioners from the local Regions. The Church, historically, has a rich tradition of addressing the pressing issues of our Country. The Church, presently, continues to reach out to all those in need no matter what may be their religious, political or philosophical beliefs. ❀

San Juan Diego Center Helps Disabled Police Officer Keep His Home

More than 15 years ago, a young man named "David" went against his family's disapproval to become a police officer. Consequently, his relationship with his family became strained and distant. But David followed his dream and joined the force with enthusiasm and devotion.



Case worker Anne Wrotniewski skillfully negotiated funding.

Ten years later, David was injured in the line of duty, resulting in complications that dramatically affected his vision and heart. He began the process of obtaining disability benefits, but there was a long period of time between applying for benefits and receiving them. It was also unclear whether or not he would receive any benefits at all. The police force did not help him and he did not know what to do when his savings ran out.

Knowing of no other options, David called Sacred Heart Church, which was close to his home in Covina. The church was able to collaborate with Catholic Charities' San Juan Diego Center in El Monte to offer financial assistance. Anne Wrotniewski, his case worker, negotiated with David's landlord so that David could keep his home until the requisite funds became available. Anne then leveraged support from a foundation to obtain funding for the the sum of David's overdue rent, which kept him afloat until his disability insurance arrived.

David is now stable, maintaining his medical care and beginning the next chapter in his life. ❀

MAKE A GIFT – AND RECEIVE PAYMENTS YOU CAN COUNT ON FOR LIFE

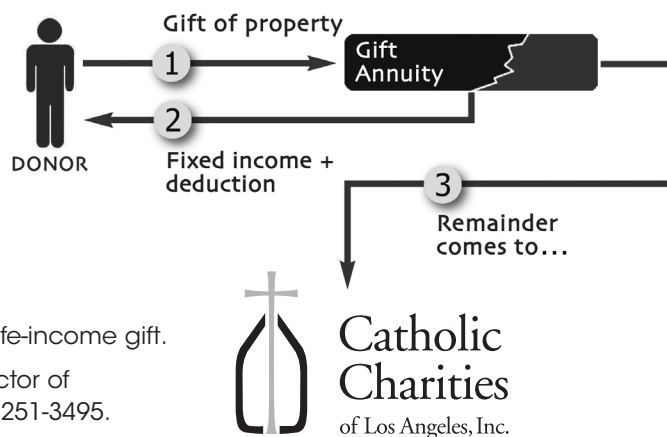
A gift that pays you? Yes – it's Catholic Charities' Charitable Gift Annuity, and here are just some of the benefits it offers you:

- The security of lifetime annuity payments (one or two lives);
- High rates of return;
- Immediate income tax deduction;
- Capital-gains tax savings if you donate appreciated assets;
- Tax-advantaged income;
- Choice of immediate payments or larger payments deferred to a future date (such as post-retirement) when you may need additional income.

Let us show you why Charitable Gift Annuities are our most popular life-income gift.

For more information, please contact Alexandria (Sandi) Arnold, Director of Resource Development, at sarnold@CatholicCharitiesLA.org or (213) 251-3495.

For more information on making significant gifts that don't affect your cashflow now, visit our easy-to-use site at www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org/plannedgiving.



Graphic © Virtual Giving

Not intended as legal, tax or investment advice.

Christmas Celebrations Bring Cheer in the Midst of Economic Uncertainty

This past December, Catholic Charities proved that Christmas is still the most wonderful time of the year, no matter how difficult the preceding months might have been. Despite the poor economy and high unemployment in 2009, the agency's community centers brought cheer and relief to low-income families through some special Christmas activities.

St. Mary Medical Center in Long Beach sponsored a party for clients served by Catholic Charities' San Pedro Region. Santa even flew in for the event, thanks to special help from Deacon Roger Flaubert from Our Lady of Refuge Church. The day included face painting, coloring, balloon animals and snacks. Santa distributed toys donated by community members and each family received a \$50 food certificate from St. Mary's. In total, the San Pedro Region helped 1,000 families at Christmastime.



Fifty children from low-income families in East Los Angeles gather around Santa Claus at the Brownson House Christmas Party.

In East Los Angeles, Macy's employees collaborated with Catholic Charities to host a party at Brownson House for 50 children from low-income families. Boys and girls had time for crafts, food, a visit with Santa and gifts that they might have otherwise missed, due to family hardships.

Guadalupe Community Center hosted over 1,700 people at its Christmas party in Canoga Park. Children of all ages received toys including Barbie dolls, books, trucks and balls. Through a generous donation from St. Mel and St. Bernardine parishes, each attendee also took home \$30 worth of scrip certificates that can be used like cash at participating locations to purchase clothing, food and toys.

For those who needed more extensive help because of unemployment, overwhelming bills or disability, Adopt-A-Family programs provided clothing, gift cards, toiletries and toys. At St. Jude Catholic Church in Westlake Village, parishioners collected items for several adopted families from Catholic Charities' community centers in Moorpark, Oxnard, Thousand Oaks and Ventura.

These efforts would not have been possible without the compassion, dedication, and generosity of community members. Their support allowed Catholic Charities to make Christmas a joyful time for families who were in need at the end of a challenging year. ❀

Brothers Collect Two Tons of Food for Guadalupe Center

In the San Fernando Valley, two boys managed to feed hundreds of families this past fall. How did they do it? Brothers, Andrew and Thomas Bromley, orchestrated a large-scale canned food drive to stock the shelves of the Loaves and Fishes food pantry at Catholic Charities' Guadalupe Community Center in Canoga Park.



Andrew and Thomas Bromley show off some of the food they collected for Guadalupe Community Center. Photo: Andy Holzman/Daily News Staff Photographer

To collect donations, the Bromley brothers collaborated with their schools, their church, Wendy's, Albertsons, Pavilions and Ralphs. Community members were invited to drop off nonperishable food at these locations and received a free Wendy's Frosty for their participation.

"The boys, their parents, siblings and friends delivered about two tons of food to the center," explained Margaret Pontius, Program Manager at Guadalupe Center.

The Bromleys' donation couldn't have come at a better time. "The number of families needing this food has risen almost 75%," said Skip Wrightson, outreach coordinator at Guadalupe Center. "We used to see 40 families every three days, on average, and now it's almost 70."

The boys' efforts coincided with National Make a Difference Day in October. For low-income families who depended upon the Loaves and Fishes food pantry, Andrew and Thomas Bromley made a difference by nourishing both their bodies and their spirits. ❀



Fourteenth Annual
Catholic Charities Golf Tournament

Monday June 14, 2010



Register Today!
(213) 251-3495

Woman Turns Her Life Around at Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence

“Amy” and her boyfriend of eight years came to Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence (EASR), a Catholic Charities’ homeless shelter in Long Beach, in the midst of a long cycle of homelessness. Amy was emotionally dependent on her boyfriend, a man whose great love was alcohol.

The couple had been bouncing from one shelter to the next, with no long-term plans in place, and the constant stress of uprooting had left her exhausted. Upon entering EASR, Amy knew that she wanted to make a change in her life. She wanted some level of permanency, even though she had no idea how to obtain it and she didn’t feel that she had the strength, intelligence or good fortune to create any kind of serious change.

Amy, however, was much more committed to changing her life than her boyfriend was, and she knew it. Rather than going along with his agenda of giving up and staying mired in their misery, as she always had, Amy courageously put herself and her needs first. When the boyfriend continued to drink and instigate negative incidents at the shelter, he was asked to leave. This time, however, Amy released her unhealthy attachment to him and let him go, while she stayed.

She worked with a case manager at EASR, enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant training course, staying up on most nights after “lights out” to finish her homework, and successfully completed training. Feeling confident and clear about her future goals, Amy moved on to transitional housing, with plans to further her nursing education and secure permanent housing for herself and her grandchildren, who were also bouncing from shelter to shelter with their own mother.

With the love, dignity and positive role modeling she experienced at EASR, Amy was able to completely turn her life around. ❀

**DONATE THAT OLD CAR!
IT CAN WORK MIRACLES!**

**Help Catholic Charities
to end hunger and
homelessness.**

IT’S EASY!



Call us and we’ll arrange to sell your car. You get a tax benefit for your contribution and your gift will help us in caring for thousands of needy people.

**VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM
(213) 251-3494**



**Catholic
Charities**

of Los Angeles, Inc.

1531 James M. Wood Blvd.

Post Office Box 15095

Los Angeles, CA 90015-0095

www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org

Address Service Requested



Christmas parties were held at Catholic Charities’ community centers to bring joy and hope to families in need.



Member Agency
United Way



Catholic
Charities
USA®