



Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

# The Sage

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## C.A.R.E. 4 PAW's and Santa Barbara Join Forces for Pet Services for Seniors

C.A.R.E. 4 PAWS and Catholic Charities in Santa Barbara County teamed-up to develop a more efficient and compatible service delivery for low-income older adult clients (age 60+) in need of pet services. Now, both agencies are cross-referring suitable clients for immediate help.



Catholic Charities partners with White's Pet Hospital for the "Wagging Dog Tales" project. Pictured are, left to right, Jean Cheesman and Dr. Kelly Doria with one of "man's best friends."

A new arrangement with C.A.R.E. 4 PAWS will allow Catholic Charities to provide qualified clients in Lompoc and Santa Maria with no-cost pet food. The food pantries at both community centers will coordinate distribution on site.

Under newly secured funding from the Hildegard H. Balin Trust, the Santa Barbara County *Wagging Dog Tales* project can continue to provide financial assistance to qualifying low-income senior (age 60+) residents of Santa Barbara County in need of dog-only emergency medical veterinary assistance. Catholic Charities partners with White's Pet Hospital and other local vets to better coordinate these services on a case-by-case basis. ❖

## Veona Gibson: a Life of Service

by Monsignor Gregory A. Cox, Executive Director

Every year, Catholic Charities has a staff appreciation day. This June, we met at Knott's Berry Farm for lunch, entertainment and staff recognition. We give a gift to employees for their years of service to Catholic Charities. The gathering provided an opportunity for staff, from the three counties of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura, to be together and enjoy each other's company.



Hector Briones, Our Lady of the Angels Regional Director, and Monsignor Gregory Cox, Executive Director, present Veona Gibson with awards for her 45 years of service to Catholic Charities.

Veona Gibson was given the top award for 45 years of service to Catholic Charities. We celebrated not only the quantity but also the quality of her service to the poor and disadvantaged in Los Angeles. She was always advocating with city officials on behalf of her clients. El Santo Nino, her community center, provides numerous services, such as child care, case management and a youth intervention program, for the families in

that neighborhood. Veona's energy and dedication to those in need was a source of inspiration to all of us who worked with her during her 45 years of service.

Tragically, three days after Veona received her award, she was called home to God. Her sudden death was not only a shock to her family but also to her "family" at Catholic Charities. She will be sorely missed. May she rest in peace. ❖

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## Message from the Executive Director, Monsignor Gregory A. Cox

On May 16, I, along with three other members of the statewide organization of Catholic Charities, met with Governor Jerry Brown in Sacramento to discuss the budget and religious liberty in the state of California.

We shared with Governor Brown the unique role that the Catholic Church has played in the state. There are over 10 million Catholics in California. The Church is the largest private provider of healthcare, social services and education in California. There are 43 Catholic hospitals, which annually assist 4.6 million patients; 13 Catholic colleges and universities, which enroll more than 42,000 students; 114 Catholic high schools, which serve 73,000 students; 594 Catholic elementary schools, which enroll 170,000 children; and 12 diocesan Catholic Charities' agencies.

During these economically difficult times, we asked the Governor to limit his financial cuts to the services for the poor in the state. The elderly, mentally ill, and homeless children are a few examples of those most vulnerable during a financial crisis. The plea was not for more money, but rather to maintain the level of funding for those populations.

Religious liberty was the other topic that we discussed with Governor Brown. We shared with him a bill that went into effect on January 1, 2000 in California concerning health care coverage. The bill allowed religious organizations to be exempt if they met the state's definition of a religious



Solomon Belette, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the East Bay, Monsignor Gregory Cox, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, California Governor Jerry Brown, Kenneth Sawa, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of San Bernardino/Riverside, and Shannon Lahey, Executive Director, Catholic Charities of California, met recently to discuss the California State budget and religious liberty.

employer. One of the four requirements to qualify as a religious employer is that "the entity serves primarily persons who share the religious tenet of the entity." Because Catholic Charities serves all people, we were not exempted from the bill. We believe the State's definition of religious organizations is too narrow and requested that the Governor consider a broader meaning in the future.

Catholic Charities was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Governor Brown. It provided a time to review relevant issues that impact the State and lay the ground work for forthcoming discussions. ❖

## Sixteenth Annual Golf Tournament Benefits Catholic Charities' Poverty Programs

Held at the exclusive Oakmont Country Club in Glendale on June 18, 2012, the Sixteenth Annual Catholic Charities' Golf Tournament will benefit the agency's poverty programs, which provide food, clothing and shelter for people in need.



Individual Lowest Gross Winner, Bill Hayden, second from right, was one in a foursome which won First Place Lowest Gross Team, left to right, Willy Marsh, Murray Marsh, and David Hayden.

The success of the fundraising event was made possible by the generosity of the Sponsors and the support of the Golf Tournament Committee, which was comprised of Monsignor Gregory Cox, Susan and Richard D'Amico, Harold Greene, Gary Krauss, Vincent F. Martin, Jr., Michael D. O'Brien, Paul D. Tosetti, Esq., and Diane and Peter Vogelsang, M.D.

Twelve photos of tournament winners can be viewed on the agency website at [www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org/News and Events](http://www.CatholicCharitiesLA.org/News%20and%20Events); click on golf tournament logo. ❖

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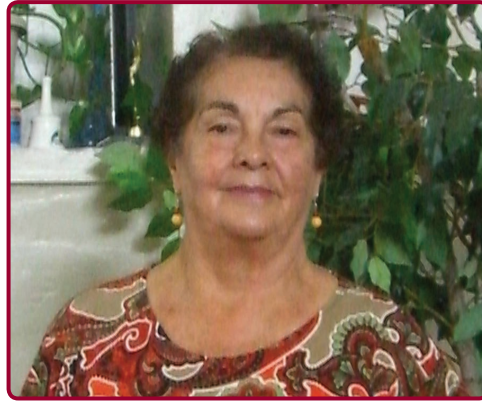
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## Brownson House Client Gives Testimony

“My name is Maria Teresa Erazo. I was born in Guatemala 79 years ago. I stepped foot in Brownson House for the first time in February 2011. I had passed by the center many times but didn't actually know what they offered there. One day while I was passing, I saw a lot of women leaving the Zumba class. I approached and met Maria Cervantes, who informed me about all of the services and programs offered there.



*Maria Teresa “Tere” Erazo made progress in her health through knitting and exercise classes given at Brownson House in the San Gabriel Region of Catholic Charities.*

For me, it was like an answer from Heaven because I had been sick and needed physical and mental health activities that would help me to improve my health. I suffer from high blood pressure, blood clotting, arthritis, and had recently had an operation on my shoulder and the toes on my left foot.

I began to attend the women's support group, including the knitting classes and exercise classes. I even attended an extra exercise class because I had noticed such an improvement in my health; I went three times a week, along with the one knitting class. [After participating in these programs for about a year,] My knees don't hurt me anymore, my blood pressure is now under control, and I am very happy and very satisfied with the help that Brownson House gives to the community.

I want to continue making progress in my health and I hope that Catholic Charities never stops providing these services, which are such a huge help to the community. With my testimony, I want to thank Catholic Charities for your programs; may God bless you.” ❀



## SAVE THE DATE!

Catholic Charities' annual **City of Angels Christmas Gala** will be held on Friday, December 7, 2012 at The California Club in downtown Los Angeles. The Gala will honor the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Investees of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, and the Order of St. Gregory the Great. Highlights of the evening will include a special vocal performance by the Norbertine Fathers of St. Michael's Abbey. Proceeds will benefit the poor children and families served by the community centers of Catholic Charities. For more information about the Gala, please call **(213) 251-3495**.



*The mural covers one side of Mahar House*

## New Mural Dedicated at Mahar House

A dynamic mural now covers the front of Mahar House in Wilmington, one of Catholic Charities' oldest sites to provide services to the community.

“We asked Urban Arts Partnership to create a unique mural for Mahar House that reflected our religious history, our dedication to learning and success, and the remembering of great role models,” said Nelly Coronel, Client Resources Coordinator for the San Pedro Region of Catholic Charities. “It was amazing to me because it took a number of different drawings before we were satisfied, but the youth painted it in two days!”

Although many youth were involved in the painting, three young artists from the Wilmington community designed the mural: Ben Avila, Juan Gonzalez, and Bobby Rodriguez.

“The only thing that separates an underprivileged kid from a privileged kid is opportunity,” stated Rosie Perez, Chair of Urban Arts Partnership in Los Angeles.

The mural was organized by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce Leadership Group 2011, which consisted of Antonio Prieto, Naydali Haro, Julio Acevedo, and Alex Montoya. ❀



*Father Francisco Vitela, Pastor of Holy Family Church in Wilmington, blessed the mural at the dedication ceremony.*

# Youth Employment Services Program Encourages Career Plans

Belmont High School, located in the Westlake community of Los Angeles, has a graduation rate of 30%, which makes it one of the lowest performing schools in the Los Angeles district. Despite the odds, one of Catholic Charities' AYE youth employment services' participants, Ruth Mateos, graduated in June with high honors and a full scholarship to attend the University of California, Irvine (UCI) in the fall.

Ruth is the first in her family to attend college. She attributes her success to the Federal TRIO program (TRIO) at her high school, and also to AYE's career discovery program.

The TRIO program assists low-income and first-generation college students' progress from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs. Ruth credits her TRIO counselor helping her with college applications, telling her which courses to complete, and providing motivation, especially since Ruth's family is not familiar with the college admissions process.



*Ruth Mateos, AYE participant, is shown with Sharlene Post, Director of Volunteer Services at St. Vincent's Medical Center.*

AYE helped Ruth discover her career pathway. Since Ruth had an interest in the health field, one of AYE's Coordinators, Ripsime Oganyan, set Ruth up with an internship at St. Vincent's Medical Center. Ruth was able to work in different departments at St. Vincent's. During one of her rotations, the Cardiology department caught Ruth's attention. Ruth now plans to obtain her Bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences and go on to medical school to study to be a Cardiologist.

Although attending college will be the first time Ruth will be away from her family, she is looking forward to new experiences and also to becoming involved on campus. Ruth's participation in AYE's Youth Community

Development Council has encouraged her to join student organizations when she begins school at UCI. Now, as Ruth begins her undergraduate studies, she hopes to find ways to help others succeed and follow their dreams, as TRIO and AYE have done for her. ❀



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*Computer classes and employment skills development are offered at many of Catholic Charities' 22 community centers.*

