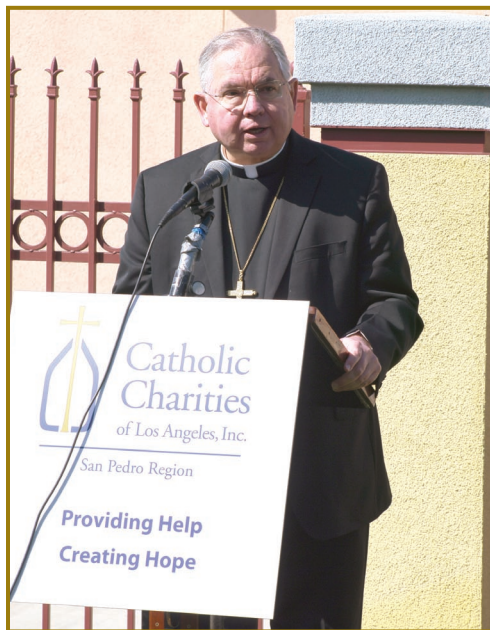




Archbishop Gomez dedicates new Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence

With great fanfare, Most Reverend Jose Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, gave the keynote address at the recent Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence (EASR) grand opening, dedication, and blessing of two new buildings that will accommodate



Archbishop Jose Gomez offers reflections at the opening and dedication of the new Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence. Photo: Scott Hilderbrandt

more families with children, pregnant women, the elderly and the disabled who are homeless. The emergency shelter in Long Beach increases capacity from 40 persons to 56 persons.

The event, organized by the San Pedro Region advisory board, began with a prelude of music by the St. Anthony High School Jazz Ensemble. Over 250 persons were present to hear speeches, a poem read by children who live at the shelter, and the testimony of former

resident and current EASR volunteer, Liz Soesoe.

Bishops Oscar Solis and Alexander Salazar gave the opening and closing prayers. Brian D'Andrea, President of Century Villages at Cabrillo, which led the construction project, recognized the donors who made the expansion possible. The State of California, the County of Los Angeles, the Weingart, Ahmanson, and Dan Murphy foundations, and Century Housing all came together in this project so that even more people who are homeless can be assisted as they achieve stability and self-sufficiency. The Community Development Commission of Los Angeles County, the Vice Mayor of Long Beach, and County Supervisor Don Knabe's Social Services Deputy presented special awards to both Catholic Charities and its collaborative partner, Century Villages at Cabrillo.

Following the dedication speeches, Archbishop Gomez and Monsignor Gregory Cox, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc., were joined by Anna Totta, San Pedro Regional Director, and Vanessa Romain, Director of Programs for the Region, for

the ribbon cutting ceremony and blessing of the new buildings with holy water.



Nick Ippolito, Social Services Deputy with County Supervisor Don Knabe's office, presents a plaque to congratulate Catholic Charities on the EASR grand opening. Photo: Scott Hilderbrandt

Samoan community band Malulelei and dance group Tupulaga provided entertainment while guests socialized and toured the facility. Polynesian refreshments were served in the dining room and Bobbi Lynn Lambert performed at the piano. A large mural, designed by EASR residents and students from California State University at Long Beach, was hung in the community room of the new shelter.

For more information, please call Anna Totta, San Pedro Regional Director, at (562) 591-1641. ❖

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

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, about 40 percent of children being born in this country are out of wedlock. This includes 70 percent of African-American children, 50 percent of Hispanic children and 28 percent of Caucasian children. This growing trend is alarming.

Catholic Charities recently dedicated our new Elizabeth Ann Seton Family Residence on March 19 in the San Pedro Region. This facility will provide a safe haven for children. To assist the increasing numbers of homeless families, the new residence will be able to house 120 families per year. Its purpose is to help them in their transition from being homeless to the stability of long-term housing. The case managers provide family life skills and a plan to be self-sufficient.

Angel's Flight is a program of Catholic Charities that serves runaway youth, ages 10 through 17. This 16-bed facility provides up to 21 days of emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth. They are given food and clothing and are also assigned a counselor or therapist to assist in family reunification. The youth participate in a number of activities while they live in the shelter, including attendance at an accredited school program provided by the Los Angeles Unified School District, music and art therapy.

Parents need support and guidance in raising their children to be good and productive citizens. Some of Catholic Charities' community centers provide training to assist parents in the rearing of their children in our challenging environment. Our children not only need food and shelter but they also need to be loved. The sun shines on a house but it shines in a home. ❖

Senior Volunteer Inspires Staff and Clients at St. Mary's Center

At 86 years of age, Nieves B. Escobar, a faithful volunteer, is a remarkable inspiration to everyone at Catholic Charities' St. Mary's Community Center. Her dedication, loyalty and commitment to the work, which she has generously performed since 2004, are distinguishing qualities that make her stand out at the center.

As the de facto food room manager, Ms. Escobar directs other volunteer workers in preparing grocery bags and meals that are given to the homeless clients. "She comes to work daily, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and never misses a day," according to Marlene Rodriguez, Program Manager at St. Mary's Center.



Nieves Escobar, St. Mary's Center's faithful volunteer, is shown with Hector Briones, Our Lady of the Angels Regional Director.

A native of the Philippines, Ms. Escobar obtained her degree in nursing in 1949. She worked hard to succeed in her profession, starting as staff nurse and becoming Supervisor of Nursing, a position she held before the family migrated to the United States in 1977. They settled in California in 2002, where she remains active in the Private Nursing Association. When asked where she gets all her energy to do the work at St. Mary's Center, Ms. Escobar replies, "I became accustomed to working hard in hospital nursing."

For more information about volunteer work at St. Mary's Community Center, please contact Hector Briones, Catholic Charities' Our Lady of the Angels Regional Director, at (310) 392-8701. ❖

Make your gift to Catholic Charities go further

Many companies have a gift-matching program for their employees. Some companies even match gifts made by the board of directors, retired employees, and spouses of employees.

Please check with your Human Resources representative to see if your company has a gift-matching program. Some companies may double or triple your gift. If your company participates in a gift-matching program, please ask for the minimum donation requirement, complete a matching gift form, and mail the form with your gift to: Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc., Attn: Alexandria Arnold, Chief Development and Communications Officer, 1531 James M. Wood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015, or fax it to (213) 251-3497. ❖

Will your company match your gift?



Double the impact of your gift to Catholic Charities through a gift-matching program.



"The Miracle is Sharing," a new mural at Catholic Charities' Loaves and Fishes program, inspires clients with its message of hope. Photo: Los Angeles Daily News

Loaves and Fishes' New Mural Symbolizes Hope and Change

One tree stands bare, bereft, and gnarled. The other, lush and bountiful as it radiates its beauty in the sun. Holding hands, people walk toward the radiance. What a tale this picture tells.

The new mural at Catholic Charities' Loaves and Fishes food pantry in Van Nuys, titled "The Miracle is Sharing," and painted by Loaves and Fishes' volunteer Raina Van Otteren, 18, symbolizes the transition that many of the pantry's clients are making. People who come to Loaves and Fishes, some as often as three times per week, struggle to feed their families and pay rent. By providing food, toiletries and clothing, the volunteers who operate the center help to alleviate some of the anxiety experienced by those whose very survival dangles by a thread. The center's volunteers also refer clients to Catholic Charities' Guadalupe Community Center, in Canoga Park, where clients can

access information about services, such as adult education and job training, as well as other opportunities to improve their lives.

For 23 years, Barbara Ausburn, a volunteer, has overseen the center, which is entirely run by a host of other volunteers who range from young teens to retirees. "People started to ask me about the mural," Ausburn says. "They thought it was beautiful. When I told them the meaning behind what Raina was painting, they understood." The belief is that "The Miracle is Sharing" mural will serve as a regular reminder to clients that seasons do, in fact, change. Difficult times do not last forever. As the artist herself says of the people who visit Loaves and Fishes, "I just want them to have some hope." For more information, contact Moeed Khan, San Fernando Regional Director, at (818) 883-6015, ext. 32. ❖

Do you know of the good work of Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project?

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.'s Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project is unique in Southern California for its focus on providing legal assistance and education to detained immigrant adults, children, and their families. With a team of eight attorneys, two Board of Immigration Appeals Accredited Representatives, and two Paralegals, Esperanza provided services to approximately 8,500 individuals in 2011.

Esperanza is the only organization in Los Angeles, and one of only a handful nationwide, that offers legal education and services to detained immigrants on a daily basis, in multiple types of detention facilities. Without Esperanza, these immigrants would otherwise never have access to this valuable information.

Many do not realize that individuals in immigration



proceedings, even if they are detained, do not get counsel provided to them by the government. As a result, well over 80 percent of individuals are forced to navigate this legal system, second only to the tax code in complexity, completely alone.

Esperanza staff provide these much-needed services through its six core programs:

Adult Legal Orientation Program; Unaccompanied Minors Program at Crittenton Shelter and Foster Care in Fullerton; Legal Orientation Program for Custodians of Children; Criminal Detention Program; Kids in Need of Defense (KIND); and the Individual Representation Program.

For more information about Esperanza, contact Caitlin Williams, Esq., Program Director, at (213) 251-2535. ❖

Homeless Mother Becomes Role Model at McGill House

When Ovilia, a single mother in her late 40s, and her 6 year old daughter, Sasha, came to Catholic Charities' McGill House, they were in dire need of shelter, after bravely managing to escape the place that caused Ovilia extreme anxiety, shame and guilt. They were homeless and had no support from family or friends.

Through various collaboratives in East Los Angeles, she was fortunate to be referred to Catholic Charities' San Gabriel Region's McGill Transitional Program. Because of their immediate needs, Ovilia and her daughter were admitted to the program. Due to her previous experiences prior to becoming homeless, Ovilia was always quiet and withdrawn and unable to advocate for herself.

Mending the scars required the support of the Psychiatric Tech Program at a nearby community college. Sasha's needs, such as clothing, a school uniform and school supplies, were arranged by the case manager at McGill House, through linkage with the Homeless School Liaison.

While at the shelter, Ovilia worked hard to learn many skills, including money management, structure, parenting and other life skills. She started to regain her self-esteem and, soon after, earned her GED. Ovilia continues to pursue her educational and career goals.

Ovilia managed to turn her life around and to give her daughter a secure future with the help of Catholic Charities. They have moved into stable, permanent housing and are well on the road to independence. "Ovilia is a role-model to many at McGill House today," states Mary Romero, Catholic Charities' San Gabriel Regional Director. For more information, please contact Mrs. Romero at (323) 266-3130. ❖



Ovilia and daughter, Sasha, obtained stable housing with the assistance of Catholic Charities.



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Address Service Requested



Raina Van Otteren stands by the new mural, symbolizing hope and change, that she painted for Catholic Charities' Loaves and Fishes food pantry in Van Nuys. Photo: Los Angeles Daily News

