

Charities USA

THE MAGAZINE OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA | WINTER 2019 ■ VOLUME 46 ■ NUMBER 1

A photograph of a man and a young girl looking at each other affectionately. The man is on the left, wearing a white jacket, and the girl is on the right, wearing a blue patterned hoodie. They are both smiling and looking at each other.

Providing a roadmap to citizenship

The Esperanza Center of Catholic Charities of Baltimore

Making people feel at home

Casa Alitas of Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona

Keeping families together

THE MINISTRY OF FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Cover Photo: Jazzmany / Shutterstock.com

Charities USA (ISSN 0364-0760) is published by Catholic Charities USA. Address all correspondence to the Managing Editor. © 2019 Catholic Charities USA, Alexandria, Virginia.

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Catholic Charities USA is the national office for one of the nation's largest social service networks. Member agencies and institutions nationwide provide vital social services to almost 9 million people in need, regardless of their religious, social or economic backgrounds. Catholic Charities USA supports and enhances the work of its members by providing networking opportunities, national advocacy, program development, training and consulting and financial benefits.

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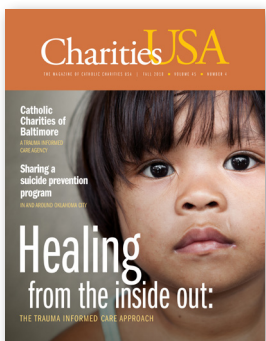
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LAST ISSUE: FALL 2018



EDITOR'S

COLUMN

The Catholic Charities ministry has provided help to unaccompanied children for more than 100 years, from orphanages in the early 20th century to family reunification services today.

The backgrounds and circumstances of the children have changed over the years, but Catholic Charities' commitment to find shelter, clothing, healthy food, education and sponsors has never wavered.

The summer of 2018 was an especially challenging time when many children travelling with their families from the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador) were separated from their parents because of the administration's policy to arrest and separate adults and children who entered the U.S. without authorization.

The administration was court-ordered to cease the separations, and Catholic Charities agencies on the U.S./Mexico border and in the interior of the U.S. responded generously with immediate care and tireless efforts to reunite the families. Even now the work continues. As late as December 2018, nearly 15,000 migrant children, including those separated from their parents, were still housed in more than 100 shelters across the U.S. (Jordan, Miriam. "Thousands of Migrant Children Could Be Released After Sponsor Policy Change." The New York Times Company. 18 Dec 2018. Web).

The feature articles in this issue describe the experiences of the agencies that have been working to reunite unaccompanied children with their families. Some agencies received emergency funds from Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) to help with the crisis, and their reports about how they helped families are also included.

While debates on how best to provide a humane and responsible solution to migrants seeking asylum in our country continue, CCUSA and its member agencies will be part of the conversation, sharing insights gained through direct service to migrants. The main point, made clear in the articles in this issue, is that each human being encountered deserves the care and respect due every child of God.

David Werning, Managing Editor

To comment on this issue, please write to David Werning at dwerning@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org.

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By David Werning, Managing Editor

Photo: Jazzmany / Shutterstock.com



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**“Every stranger that knocks at our door
is an opportunity
to meet Jesus Christ.”**

- Pope Francis

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

- ▶ As the border crisis flared with new intensity this past summer following the administration's policy of separating migrant children from their parents, I had the opportunity to visit the U.S./ Mexico border at McAllen, Texas and, in the same city, the Humanitarian Respite Center of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.

The people I encountered were full of fear and anxiety. Those in Mexico wondered if they would be able to enter the United States in order to begin a life free from gang violence and poverty. Those who made it across the border worried about being separated from each other and being able to survive in this new land.

It was clear to me that these men, women and families were not coming to the United States because they wanted to leave their countries; they were coming here because they were afraid for their lives.

I was happy to see that those who came to Catholic Charities' respite centers received a warm and caring welcome, befitting a beloved friend or relative. They were given access to a shower, clean clothes and food. The children had a play area stocked with toys. Once they had made contact with their relatives, they were given bus tickets to travel to their families' homes and, in many cases, to connect with a Catholic Charities agency at their final destination.

At Catholic Charities we stay focused on the gospel. Pope Francis tweeted on December 18, 2018: "Every stranger that knocks at our door is an opportunity to meet Jesus Christ." His tweet pinpoints how we see the migrants and refugees who come to our country. The articles in this issue show how we at Catholic Charities are welcoming these brothers and sisters into the United States and sharing the journey with them toward a life free from fear and danger.



Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD

President & CEO




A close-up photograph of a man and a young girl. The man, on the left, has a short beard and is looking towards the girl with a gentle expression. The girl, on the right, has curly hair and is looking back at him. They are both wearing light-colored clothing. The background is dark and out of focus.

Keeping families together

THE MINISTRY OF FAMILY REUNIFICATION

By David Werning, Managing Editor



“Whoever
receives one
child such
as this in
my name,
receives me...”

Mark 9:37

- ▶ The border situation involving migrants – mostly from Central America – seeking asylum in the United States reached crisis proportions during the summer of 2018 when the administration announced a policy of detaining and separating all adults who crossed the border with their children.

After more than a month had passed and over 1,400 families had been separated, federal courts and broader public opinion intervened to call for an end of the practice. When the policy officially ended on June 20, 2018, the reunification of parents and their children began in earnest with Catholic Charities agencies serving as family reunification sites and locations for assisting migrants with their short and long term needs.

Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) and its member agencies have been involved in the process of helping migrants and unaccompanied minors (not to mention refugees) since its founding over a century ago.

Lucas Swanepoel, vice president of social policy for CCUSA, said that the institutional perspective of Catholic Charities highlights a couple of important principles to keep in mind when working with migrants.

“The first thing we have to do is help solve the problems in the home countries,” Swanepoel said. “Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that migrants should have not only the right to migrate when necessary but also the right not to migrate. By investing in economic development and providing greater security for families in their home country, we can give families the option to stay in the communities they have known for centuries. However, until progress is made we have a responsibility to provide a humane and dignified response to families fleeing their countries in need of opportunity and safety. While our programs and our laws can be strengthened to protect families and abuses in the immigration system, we must never lose sight of the reality that for many migrants they are doing the thing that comes most natural to any mom and dad: keeping their children safe.”

Following this introduction are articles outlining the services of four Catholic Charities agencies involved in family reunification not only during last summer but also today: everything from immediate care to transportation to assistance towards naturalization. Following the articles is a section detailing the use of emergency funds given by CCUSA to Catholic Charities agencies that were also reuniting families.

CCUSA and its member agencies are committed to making the United States a welcoming nation to newcomers by being involved not only with policy development but also with direct service. ■



Providing a roadmap to **citizenship**

The Esperanza Center of Catholic Charities of Baltimore

By David Werning, Managing Editor

- ▶ The Esperanza Center of Catholic Charities of Baltimore, located in the historic Fells Point neighborhood, welcomes newcomers to the United States and helps them to become citizens.

At the Esperanza Center, the immigrant community has access to comprehensive services that are provided via six major programs:

1.

Educational Services, including classes in English as a Second Language (ESOL), computer literacy and citizenship;

2.

Client Services, including referrals, resources, help in preparing letters, translations of documents, help with appointments, employment and transportation;

3.

Health Clinic, including medical and dental services offered by volunteer doctors who have liability coverage through the Volunteers in Medicine Alliance;

4.

Immigration Legal Services (ILS), including humanitarian and family-based relief services provided by 10 staff attorneys and nearly 100 volunteer attorneys;

5.

Family Reunification Program (FRP);

6.

Services for Foreign National Victims of Human Trafficking.



“We feel like having access to all of these services in one place where [clients] can find folks who speak their language, who know some of the cultural customs, and who welcome people with open arms, hopefully will help ease some of the burdens during the time they are being assisted here,” said Val Twanmoh, director of Esperanza Center.

The Esperanza Center serves more than 11,000 individuals each year. Clients come from all over the world, but the majority come from Central and South America. They find Esperanza in various ways: many by word of mouth and others – especially those in the FRP – through association with the federal government.

Among the programs, Client Services – which is a kind of catch-all – gets the most use with about 5,000 inquiries annually. ESOL classes, part of Educational Services, is a major draw, too. More than 450 adults and more than 120 children each year participate in the English classes. While the Health Clinic and Services for Victims of Human Trafficking programs focus on the healing of clients, the ILS and FRP concentrate on stabilizing the lives of immigrants in Maryland.

“The way I see it is that once a person steps into the United States and is connected with us, we provide the entire road map for them, from the embrace of a newcomer to naturalization,” said Mikhael Borgonos, managing attorney for ILS. That journey to becoming a citizen takes, at a minimum, five to eight years, according to Borgonos.

Since its inception in 1994, ILS has worked on more than 16,500 cases for individuals from over 150 countries. In and around the Baltimore community, ILS organizes outreach efforts and clinics for naturalization applicants and Temporary Protected Status recipients. ILS also conducts “Know Your Rights” presentations for the immigrant community.

Borgonos is quick to point out that ILS does not work alone. “We have many community partners and stakeholders,” he said. “The Baltimore community has been really supportive of our work, from restaurants doing fundraising, to financial services, to medium to large solo firms that provide pro bono services and attorneys. Without the assistance of the village as a whole, we can do very little.”

The FRP, which is housed at a separate location from the other five programs, unites unaccompanied minors with sponsors. The minors come mostly from the area in Central America called the Northern Triangle, which includes Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. The sponsors, who are usually relatives of the minors, receive help from FRP to meet the requirements of taking custody of the child.

Once the unaccompanied minor is received by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), the child must be handed over within 72 hours to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR will place the child in a shelter and make the effort to contact a potential sponsor.

FRP helps the sponsor fulfill all requirements, which starts with completing an application packet and any other forms related to the family reunification process. The process involves fingerprint-

“I think there has to be better recognition and more compassion for those coming to the **United States seeking asylum, especially for children being sent by their parents.”**

ing, background checks and, for some families, a home study. The requirements are meant to ensure the safety of the minor.

In FY2017, FRP helped to reunify 932 minors with family members, and since May 2018 the number is 550.

Helany Sinkler, the manager of FRP, hopes that people in the United States understand the severity and scope of the unaccompanied minor situation, despite the negative rhetoric that surrounds the issue.

“I think there has to be better recognition and more compassion for those coming to the United States seeking asylum, especially for children being sent by their parents,” Sinkler said. “The reality is that most of the people are trying to escape the gangs and violence overtaking their local towns and communities. Right now the basis

for asylum doesn’t catch the reality going on, people’s true and real level of unsafety in their home countries.”

Twanmoh thinks that despite the difficulties that often surround the immigration question, the United States will rise to meet the challenge and embrace more newcomers:

“We don’t have a sensible immigration system now that gives us the ability to protect our borders and be the America that we have been for so long, which is a beacon and a welcome to people who are escaping conditions that we can’t even imagine... I hope that once people lose some of the fears generated by misinformation they will come around to seeing that we need better laws and elected officials to pass good laws. It also requires some understanding of, and the ability to be kind to, people who have not been fortunate in being born in a country like ours.” ■



Families just like ours

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio

By J. Antonio Fernandez, President/CEO, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio

► Since 1941 the mission of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio (CCSA) has been to selflessly serve our community under the sign of love. Every day we find ourselves helping others in crisis, and every day “crisis” looks different. One thing I know for sure is that we are called to encounter and accompany all people in need of healing and hope. This is so true of our recent work reuniting families at the border.

Over the course of four weeks this past summer, CCSA was called to reunite families following the “zero-tolerance” policy along the U.S./ Mexico border where parents were incarcerated and children were placed in temporary shelters. And over the course of four weeks, our agency changed forever.

On World Refugee Day, June 20, 2018, I was called to testify to Congress about our experience with immigration. Within a week, we received calls from across our nation asking what we were doing about the plight of families at the border. Before we knew it, our agency was called to take action, ready or not.

We devised a plan to provide humanitarian aid to our sister agency on the border, Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. On the evening of June 10, we called on the San Antonio community to provide monetary, in-kind and food and clothing donations.

Within 24 hours, we were accepting donations curbside, registering volunteers and loading the supplies onto our Mobile Relief Unit, affectionately named Hope by our community. We had just introduced Hope in May 2018, so she took her maiden voyage to McAllen on June 12 to deliver goods and provide fresh, hot meals to newly released and reunited families. Our team worked hard to assist the Rio Grande Valley and to welcome and comfort families. But our role in this crisis magnified on our way home that night.

The federal government released newly reunited families to the care of CCSA. By July 14, we took action to set up a command post of case managers, staff and community volunteers. The volunteers supported CCSA operations by sorting donations, welcoming families and providing safe shelter and transportation to families. I don't

think anyone at our office will ever forget what we saw unfold before us in those two weeks.

As we welcomed our first families, we made a startling observation. The families were clinging to each other. Moms held their children's hands and dads embraced their children like they didn't ever want to let go again. It was such a powerful moment for us. These were families just like ours. Moms and dads and young children torn apart and separated for weeks as they were seeking a safe and productive life in America. These families would do anything to protect their children and we felt like they shouldn't have to do it alone.

For two weeks, staff and volunteers worked 15-hour days, some days even longer, to welcome families with open arms, feed them a fresh hot meal upon arrival, connect them by phone to their home country family and provide basic needs as they traveled to their next destination. Parents took care of business while we played with the children. After all, kids just want to be kids and we wanted to help them be just that.

For two weeks, our community continued to support our work through donations. Families arrived only with the clothes on their backs and a small bag of paperwork. We raised the money we needed to house the families safely in a hotel and provide airfare

to their host families. We were also able to provide them with new clothing and even backpacks with water bottles, toys and Bibles.

I have never been so proud of San Antonio, but support came from outside our archdiocese too. We received hundreds of packages of donations from people around the country. Packages arrived with notes of support and encouragement. The support fueled us during those long two weeks. By July 27, we said goodbye to our last families, but we were most definitely changed forever. While the issue is a controversial one, we saw our calling as one of providing humanitarian aid with love, respect and dignity.

While the families were generally in our care for 24 hours or less, we bonded and hugged and comforted them, so it was difficult to say goodbye. But, as soon as one van left, another van of new families would arrive. Because of the generosity of our community and beyond, we were able to transform lives and change futures together. We see it happen every single day. This is what we do.

Regardless of why a person or family is in crisis, we want to help. We don't care about race, religion or country of origin. It is up to us – together – to lift people out of crisis and to do so with love, respect and dignity. This is the essence of Catholic Charities. We are most certainly better together. ■



Agency Photo

Catholic Charities' Mobile Relief Unit, named Hope, delivered donations and served a fresh, warm meal to newly reunited families with our sister agency, Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.



Making people feel at home

CASA ALITAS OF CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

By Marguerite Harmon, Chief Executive Officer, and Teresa Cavendish, Director of Operations

- ▶ *My 10-year-old son Carlos and his godfather were in the banana fields harvesting when we heard the shots. They were shot by gang members. I knew that in Oaxaca it is dangerous to have no money for the “mordida,” the bribe, to give to the gang when they demand it. They thought my son and his godfather were dead, but with the protection of the Virgin they survived. When they were just well enough to travel, they and my sister and I gathered what we could and with the other children we fled for the safety of the home of my family in the United States.*

I asked myself, “What would a mother do to save the life of her unborn child?” Life in Guatemala had become too much to bear. I was 8 months pregnant when I knew I had to escape the abuse and death threats of my gang member husband. My family had so little money. They knew if I did not leave, my baby and I may not survive. My father said, “Here Anna, take what we have and go, go now.” I began my journey to safety by walking, accepting rides from strangers and traveling atop La Bestia, the most dangerous train in all of Mexico, to find safety in America. The pain of the birth waited until I was in a safe place, Casa Alitas, where God blessed me with my son. I baptized my baby Jefferson, in honor of America, my new home.

“The human tragedy of forced migration is a global phenomenon... This crisis can be measured in numbers and statistics; we want instead to measure with names, stories and families.”

— Pope Francis

Agency Photo



Over the past four years, volunteers at Casa Alitas – a safehouse for migrants run by Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona – have heard almost 5,000 stories such as these from asylum seekers released from Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the Tucson Sector.

Casa Alitas is not one place, one organization or one person. It is a community of people of many faiths and many organizations who have joined together to offer food, water, shelter, clothing, welcome and care to those who would not survive if they remained in their home country.

With partners such as the Inn Project of the First United Methodist Church, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, the West Coast Mennonite Central Committee, Catholic Charities USA, parishes, religious communities, synagogues, local and national nonprofit partners too numerous to give formal mention, Casa Alitas has opened the doors of kindness and healing to people who arrive with abundant hope and few possessions.

Through its partners, Casa Alitas can provide overnight accommodations to about 100 people per day in settings that serve between 20 and 40 at one time. Most of the guests leave via bus to join their U.S. sponsors within one to two days of arriving.

In the month of October 2018, the level of releases increased rapidly and included not only

Tucson but also Yuma, 240 miles away at the far western edge of the diocese. Bus service problems and severe weather at East Coast destinations sometimes stranded people in these cities.

At one point during October almost 800 people needed assistance. Parishes and faith communities opened their doors to about 200 people, and national organizations funded charter busses and rented rooms in low-cost motels in Tucson and Yuma that could house almost 300 people. Catholic Charities partners in Dallas, Houston and San Antonio helped with people already on the road. Food, clothing, diapers, formula, water and backpacks arrived along with volunteers to cook, serve, and assist the migrants. Within seven days most of the additional people were able to move on and Casa Alitas returned to helping people within its capacity.

Casa Alitas expects that in early 2019, the number of entrants in the Tucson sector will grow, so it needs to prepare with its partners to receive possibly 100 people a day. Some of the people to arrive will be from one of the caravans of migrants who travelled through Mexico during the last three months of 2018. Others will be travelling alone.

Casa Alitas will be ready to greet and receive those people fleeing violence and unrest in their home countries. All will find at Casa Alitas welcome and a community willing to share their journey if only for a short time. ■

Restoring human dignity

AFTER FAMILY SEPARATION:

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley

By Sister Norma Pimentel, Executive Director, and Staff

► In the summer of 2014, Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley (CCRGV), under the leadership of Sister Norma Pimentel, established a Humanitarian Respite Center as a response to the substantial increase in families seeking asylum at the U.S./Mexico border. Since then, more than 150,000 individuals, including separated and reunified families, have been welcomed at the center by volunteers from all over the United States.

Over the past summer, a federal district court ordered the administration to reunite the estimated 2,600 families separated during the “zero-tolerance policy.” This reunification occurred in two phases during July 2018, with children under age 5 being reunified with their parents during “Phase 1” and children ages 5-17 being reunified with their parents during “Phase 2.” CCRGV – with the support of the local Catholic Church, the local community and numerous groups of volunteers from other Catholic Charities agencies – had the privilege of assisting, on a charitable basis, the families reunified and released during Phase 2. In fact, CCRGV and its partners served the largest number of reunified and released families.

Because of the sensitivity of the cases, CCRGV received these families at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valley. Upon arrival, the families were welcomed and given a hot meal, clothes, a warm

shower, a room in which to rest, and assistance with travel coordination to their final destinations in the U.S. In addition, CCRGV provided each family with a cell phone in order to assist with post-departure case management. CCRGV is thankful it could provide assistance and comfort to these families.

“On the first night we welcomed families, I recall walking a mother and daughter to their room,” Sister Pimentel said. “The little girl, who was about 7-years-old, turned around and told me: ‘Hoy no voy a llorar’ (Tonight I am not going to cry). ‘Why?’ I asked. She said: ‘I have been crying every night for the past month, but tonight I sleep with mom.’”

While critical and deeply rewarding, the work serving the separated families was not without its challenges. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) contractors dropped families off at the Basilica during all hours, including during the night. This contributed to parents and children being disoriented and fearful of being separated once again, and the trauma these families had suffered was substantial. After being separated, the majority of the children had been placed in Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) shelter facilities or foster homes in a different state than where their parents were detained by other agencies. In one case, a father was de-

tained by DHS at the Port Isabel Detention Facility in Texas, while his 8-year-old son was placed into ORR foster care in New York. The father said: “I felt like I was never going to see him again, like I couldn’t keep living without him.”

It is important to remember that not all families who were separated have been reunited. DHS had already deported a significant number of parents prior to the court order requiring reunification. As a result, some children remain in ORR care as their deported parents have expressed a desire for them to continue to seek protection in the U.S.

Having seen the trauma and distress families faced as a result of the zero-tolerance policy, CCRGV supports the recommenda-

tions made by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in its report “Serving Separated and Reunited Families: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward to Promote Family Unity.” In addition to halting the practice of family separation, the recommendations include suggestions to prioritize the unity and safety of families in future immigration policies and operation, as well as using post-release services as an alternative to family detention.

While Phase 2 of the family reunification process formally ended on July 30, 2018, a large number of families continue to be welcomed at the Humanitarian Respite Center daily. If you would like to support this effort, please visit our website at: www.respitecenter.org. ■



“‘Hoy no voy a llorar’

(Tonight I am not going to cry)

...tonight I sleep with mom.’”



CCUSA provides emergency funds

to help reunite families at US/Mexico border

- ▶ Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) provided emergency funds to a number of Catholic Charities agencies that are helping to reunite families who were separated at the U.S./Mexico border in the summer of 2018. Included here is a sampling of brief reports demonstrating the care these agencies provided – and continue to provide – to these men, women and children.

Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico

By Kenneth J. Ferrone, Executive Director

Our agency was contacted by a Guatemalan asylum seeker being detained in a detention facility in southern New Mexico. The man was distraught and suicidal because his 7-year old daughter had been separated from him when they were incarcerated after crossing the U.S./Mexico border. He was told that his daughter was some place in New York, but he was given no other information.

To assist the father we immediately contacted U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, our local representatives and U.S. senators for assistance in finding the young girl. Because the father's mental state was deteriorating quickly, we also reached out to Catholic Charities of the

Archdiocese of New York (CCNY) to see if they could assist us. We could provide the agency with only the girl's name and birth date.

Within two days CCNY's attorney, Mario Russell, informed us that they had found the girl in a Bronx, New York, detention facility. The young girl had been visited by Catholic Charities social workers and attorneys. She was traumatized by her ordeal, but she was in good overall health.

The girl was permitted to phone her mother in Guatemala once a week, but because the father was detained in New Mexico his wife could not convey to him any information about their daughter.

Our attorney relayed information about the girl's condition and whereabouts to the father in the Otero County Detention Facility. He was overwhelmed with joy and relief that we had found his daughter

and that she was all right. It was particularly important to him that Catholic Charities was there to comfort his daughter since he has no family in New York and was over 1,000 miles away from her. We referred the father to the ACLU, who interviewed him for possible inclusion in their class action lawsuit regarding the separation of children from their parents at the border.

Catholic Charities Atlanta

By Courtney McDaniel, Program Coordinator

For almost 20 years I have been a social worker for unaccompanied minors. The work is very rewarding, but there are frustrations and concerns as well. Often our clients have needs that we cannot meet due to lack of funds or access to services.

Recently, through a privately-funded program, I had the opportunity to provide case management services to immigrant families who had been separated at our southwest border by the Department of Homeland Security and then released from detention.

Serving as a social worker for this program was different from anything I had done before and, in many ways, much more rewarding.

Witnessing the many barriers and adjustments parents face as they come to a new country was eye-opening.

Private-funding allowed us to help families more freely and to feel unencumbered by limitations of a federal grant. We were able to meet many basic needs, such as clothing, beds, school and household supplies.

Providing these items to families helped develop trust and gave me a sense that I was aiding my clients in a tangible way. Often the help we offer is not visible, and sometimes the benefits are reaped after a case is closed and we are never fully aware of them. With this program, I could see immediately that help was given, and I felt the gratitude of families who had nowhere to sleep until our donations were received by them. The gifts, in the way they influenced lives, were very powerful not only for the families but also for me as a social worker.

The privately-funded program also gave more than just the physical comfort of having a bed; it also welcomed new arrivals with dignity. I made sure to tell each family that I was glad they were here and to welcome them to the United States.

Photo: Vic Hinterlang / Shutterstock.com



Having watched the family separations play out on TV and feeling helpless to do anything about it was difficult. Being involved in this program soothed the hurt of feeling helpless. Being able to welcome these families, to show them that Americans do care about them, was very meaningful to me and I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to do it. While I cannot repair our broken immigration system or the lack of protection and the trauma they experienced back home, I like to think that our small role in welcoming these families and providing some basic needs was healing for them and for me.

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

By María Pardo Huete, Director of Institutional Advancement

Since August 2018, we have been working with a father and his 13-year-old son who had fled persecution in Honduras earlier in the summer. They were separated and detained at the border for more than 72 days without any communication between them.

In August the father and son were reunited in the greater New Orleans area. They were fearful and nervous about talking to anyone regarding their traumatic experiences in Honduras, during their flight and in detention. While detained, the father suffered from a medical issue that was unaddressed.

Once in New Orleans, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (CCANO) accompanied the father and son, helping them to obtain food donations and to enroll the boy in school. The father was referred to medical services, and he obtained the medication he needed to heal. CCANO also found a home for the family and the nonprofit organization, Together and Free, which provides services for immigrant families, paid the first month's rent. Meanwhile, the father acclimated to his new life in the U.S.

CCANO arranged for a legal consultation and signed retainers to provide immigration legal representation for the family. Father and son were referred to Spanish-speaking counseling services, and the son has been attending regular trauma-based therapy sessions that have improved his ability to overcome anxiety, find per-



sonal strengths and trust in others. The boy was incredibly shy and anxious when first enrolling in school, and now has made many friends, is receiving excellent grades, and has picked up writing as a means of expressing and processing his experiences.

Both father and son have been warmly welcomed and have become involved with local community groups. The father joined an organizing group that has offered support and donated needed household furnishings. CCANO conducted an orientation to the greater New Orleans area for the father and son via public transportation with the goal of reducing their isolation and strengthening their integration into the city. On the tour the family learned about New Orleans' culture and how to access important resources such as the library, pharmacy and nearby parks and supermarkets.

The CCANO staff have been inspired by the resilience and optimism shown by the father and son to learn about and become part of our community. After a few short months of mutual community care they have engaged with many lives, have become self-sufficient, and are already giving back to New Orleans!

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

By Moises Carrillo, Director of Intra-Agency Programs

The families that we are helping are primarily from Honduras and Guatemala, and a few are from El Salvador with school-aged children. The families were assisted with case management services by Angel's Flight, a youth-oriented housing program operated by Catholic Charities of Los Angeles (CCLA).

Angel's Flight was able to refer many of the families to another CCLA program: Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project. For example, a Guatemalan family had a credible fear review hearing scheduled two days from when the referral was made. Esperanza attorneys were able to take the case immediately, appear in court, and get the immigration judge to overturn the negative credible fear determination. This family will now be able to fight for asylum in the immigration court with the assistance of Esperanza attorneys.

Catholic Charities of San Diego

By Kristan Schlichte, Senior Director of Membership, CCUSA

In addition to sharing dollars with Catholic Charities agencies on the border, CCUSA also facilitated the sharing of staff from member agencies throughout the United States. Tennesseans from Memphis and Nashville; Texans from Austin, Dallas and Fort Worth; and folks from Bridgeport, Columbus, Dubuque, Joliet, San Jose, Kansas City, Missouri, and Portland, Oregon, sent staff to Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley to help at the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas. San Antonio volunteers helped at the Annunciation House in El Paso.

News of a "migrant caravan" of thousands heading for Tijuana sent shockwaves through Catholic Charities of San Diego (CCSD), which has been a prominent provider of immigration services along the California-Mexico border for years. A community coalition was formed and CCSD asked CCUSA member agencies for assistance with arranging transportation to destination cities for those migrants who demonstrated a "credible fear" and were allowed entrance into the U.S. Folks from Oklahoma City were first to respond followed by Portland, Oregon; Orange County; Gary; Columbus and San Jose. The national office also shared staff in McAllen, Tucson and San Diego. ■





Photos: Elias Kontogiannis

The Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence

► Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence (AIDE 2018) completed a successful training in Colorado Springs, Dec. 3-7, 2018. With support from Walmart and the Westfield Insurance Foundation we hosted 225 attendees from 60 agencies across the Catholic Charities membership, as well as entities and organizations that support the work of Catholic Charities at the time of disaster. In addition to Catholic Charities leadership and staff, attendees included: the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), county offices of emergency management, FEMA, nonprofits such as the Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Lutheran Disaster Services, Catholic Health Association, St. Vincent de Paul, Knights of Columbus, Order of Malta and parishioners from local Catholic parishes. More than 30 workshops were provided to

attendees focusing on disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. Plenary speakers from NOAA, Center for Mind/Body Medicine, Fair Share Housing Center, American Red Cross, NORAD/NORTHCOM and the National Academy of Science were broadcast as a “live stream” and provided attendees with valuable information as they develop plans to meet the needs of disaster survivors in their local communities.

To view the entire 2018 AIDE photo album please visit: www.flickr.com/photos/catholiccharitiesusa/albums/72157674417466117

AIDE 2019 will be held in Jacksonville, Fla., Dec. 2-6, 2019.

Mapping Immigration and Refugee Services

By Ashley Rininger, Capacity and Resource Development Associate, AmeriCorps VISTA

- ▶ Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) is creating an “asset map” that will detail the expanse of both refugee- and immigrant-specific programs within the Catholic Charities network. More general programs serving large numbers of migrant or Spanish-speaking populations will also be included.

The map will include shelters, senior centers, Hispanic family centers, food pantries and dental and medical clinics. Services to be mapped include financial literacy, mental health, youth mentoring, adoption and pregnancy support, substance abuse services, workforce development and resources for formerly trafficked women and children.

Once complete, this data visualization tool will provide a more comprehensive picture of the impact of refugee and immigrant programs within the Catholic Charities network, making it easier and more efficient for agencies and staff to respond when an emergency arises.

From the initial data collection, it was found that the Catholic Charities ministry includes 408 programs serving migrant populations, 51 programs providing refugee resettlement services, 100

providing immigration legal services and 392 providing other integration services. The numbers continue to grow as more services for newcomers are identified.

As the data suggest, the scope of services being offered to newcomer populations is much broader than standard placement and legal services. Over 30 percent of the programs have a primary aim of creating new life opportunities to immigrants and refugees. In other words, they provide essential services such as life skills education, counseling and mental health services, family tracing and reunification, and transportation.

Other programs that have been identified offer translation and interpretation services and social enterprise opportunities. Social enterprises help employ refugee and immigrant populations while allowing them to expand their skill set and increase their competitiveness in the employment market.

CCUSA expects to complete supplemental data collection and development of the interactive data visualization tool by early 2019. ■





Actor shares encouraging message*

Photo: Jim Caviezel and Bishop Emeritus Joseph Latino

▶ Jim Caviezel wanted to play in the NBA and later become a fighter pilot. God had other plans, however, which is good news for the American movie industry and Caviezel's three children.

The actor spoke recently about his life, his career and his faith at a fundraising gala for Catholic Charities Jackson, Miss., which focuses on adoption counseling, immigration integration and other services, according to its website.

At a time when so many people in Hollywood are reluctant to talk about God,

it's refreshing to hear from a celebrity who is eager to discuss the Creator's impact on his life.

Caviezel, best known for his portrayal of Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ*, told the gala assembly that the "Plan A's" for our lives don't often work out, but if we embrace God's plans, the results can be wonderful.

Caviezel's life is a case-in-point.

Had the Washington-state native gone his own way, he might have been the next

Michael Jordan. An admirable goal. But if he had achieved that goal, he might not have landed the title role in the 2002 movie *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and he might not have played Jesus in the *Passion*.

And he might not have adopted his three children.

According to Caviezel, two "clarifying moments" in his life revealed God's plans for him.

The first was at a movie theater in Washington. After an injury sidelined his

dreams of basketball and flight training, he realized that God wanted him to be an actor.

The second moment was a powerful feeling that God wanted him and his wife Kerri to adopt a five-year-old boy from China – a child with a brain tumor. The couple later adopted a daughter, also from China and also with a brain tumor. A third child, suffering sarcoma, soon followed.

“If we had three or four (of our own children), we wouldn’t be open to adopting,” he told listeners at the fundraiser.

Caviezel urged his audience to embrace the callings that God had for them, but he admitted that doing so can be tough.

For Caviezel as a father, embracing God’s plan meant standing by his first child during numerous surgeries to remove the tumor. As an actor, it meant agreeing to take on a role that could have ended his Hollywood career.

Mel Gibson, who produced *Passion*, told Caviezel that taking the role might mean not working in Hollywood again. As it turned out the movie was one of

the top-grossing films of the year, and Caviezel’s career has continued to thrive.

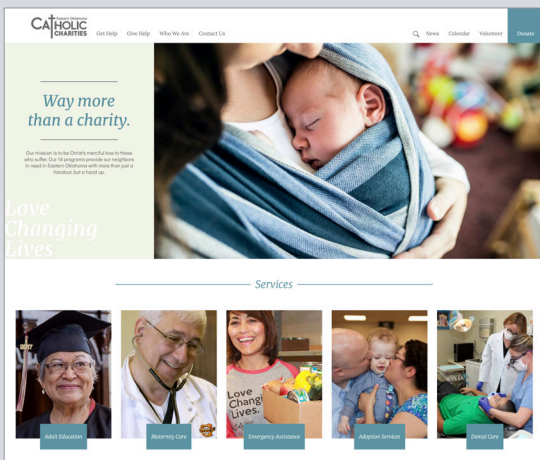
“Callings are stressful, but if you have the courage they can be wonderful,” Caviezel told the crowd. It’s a positive message and one that Christians should take to heart. Not all are called to be actors or to adopt children, but all can be open to God’s plans. ■

**By Anthony Warren, Staff Writer, Northside Sun (Jackson MS). Originally published by Sunland Publishing Co., September 23, 2018.*



Heather Reynolds named LEO’s inaugural managing director

The Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) at the University of Notre Dame welcomes Heather Reynolds, a nonprofit leader with extensive expertise in poverty alleviation, as its new managing director. For the past 14 years, Reynolds has successfully served as president of Catholic Charities Fort Worth, an important partner with whom LEO works closely. Reynolds will begin her work at LEO in January of 2019.



Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma

Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma (Tulsa) is now a member of the Catholic Charities USA network. Deacon Kevin Sartorius is Chief Executive Officer. Learn more about Eastern Oklahoma’s agency on its website: www.cceok.org/. With the addition of Tulsa, CCUSA now has 167 member agencies. ■

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

By David Werning, Managing Editor



► “I.T. is here. I.T. is here to fix your problem.”

That’s the greeting staff members receive at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington (CCADW) when Joseph Jackson arrives at their work stations.

Jackson, who was diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome at age 3 (he’s 28 now), is one of CCADW’s I.T. technicians, and his typical workday is busy with responding to the staff’s technology woes.

“Here’s the rundown of what I do,” Jackson said. “My job is basically helping employees whenever they have problems with their computers, also their phones and printers. Like, for example, they can’t log in or their computers are running slow, they can’t print, or they need a voicemail password reset, and so forth.”

Jackson loves his job at CCADW, and although he understands that having Asperger’s Syndrome brings attention his way, he does not seek it out. “People like to see me as a special kind of being,” Jackson said, “but me, I just want to be an average man with an average job and an average life. I don’t want to be too special; just a normal guy. Nothing else.”

Monsignor John Enzler, president and CEO of CCADW, sees Jackson’s contribution to the agency in the wider context of the Catholic faith. While he appreciates

Jackson’s wish to be a normal guy, the truth is that Jackson and every other employee at CCADW has a special God-given gift to offer the world.

“All of us have different abilities,” Enzler said. “Recognizing that can be a kind of leaven that reminds us that the job is important, but the most important thing is how we work together and make a difference for others.”

As a Catholic organization, CCADW is motivated by the gospel message of Jesus and guided by Catholic social and moral teaching. While not everyone who works at the agency is Catholic, everyone is expected to be faithful to all the things Jesus taught. This means receiving anyone – Catholic or not – who comes for help as one would receive Jesus, and it includes treating fellow workers with the same respect.

Hiring Jackson and being open to the special gifts he can share is right in line with Catholic values, and Enzler encourages other employers to consider the talents and abilities of each individual seeking a job: “If people are willing to take a look, to see what possible skill, what possible value, what possible assistance someone who has developmental differences can add, then they’ll find that there are a lot of things individuals can do if they just give them a chance.”

Jackson has been accepted by the entire staff at CCADW, and he sees himself as part of the team and working to fulfill CCADW’s mission.

“He is loved throughout the whole agency,” Enzler said, “because he’s funny and he’s good and he’s competent and he’s got a wonderful personality, and he really is a value added for us. And I think he knows that what he does is making the work of Catholic Charities move more smoothly. And he understands, I think, that if you have a little bit of a difference in development or whatever, it doesn’t stop you from participating and helping others. And he does that so well.”

And it turns out that Jackson knows a lot more than how he fits in with the agency. When asked what Catholic Charities means to him, Jackson said:

“It means that we’re giving people a lot of hope in their lives: all those people who are homeless, lacking in money and all that other stuff, facing big life problems. We’re placing a light of hope inside their hearts. That’s what I believe Catholic Charities is about.”

That’s pretty special. ■

Joseph Jackson is the son of Ron Jackson, senior director of government affairs at Catholic Charities USA.

2019-2020 UPCOMING TRAINING & EVENTS

February 25 -27, 2019

New Diocesan Directors Institute

Alexandria, Va.

Kristan Schlichte

kschlichte@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

April 8-10, 2019

Diocesan Directors Spring Gathering & Hill Day

Alexandria, Va.

Kristan Schlichte

kschlichte@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

May 13-17, 2019

O'Grady Leadership Institutes, Bethany Center

Lutz, Fla.

Scott Hurd

shurd@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

September 25 -27, 2019

Annual Gathering

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Jean Beil

events@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

December 2-6, 2019

Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence (AIDE)

Jacksonville, Fla.

Disaster Operations

disasteroperations@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

October 28-30, 2020

Annual Gathering

Cleveland, Ohio

Jean Beil

jbeil@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org



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Catholic Charities USA thanks our sponsors, exhibitors, and more than 500 attendees for taking part in the 2018 Annual Gathering in Buffalo. We especially thank our local hosts—Catholic Charities of Buffalo—for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Visit www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org to learn more about the 2019 gathering in Albuquerque.