



DIGNITY

Catholic Charities



Future home of Catholic Charities' Casa de Corazon

A Lesson in Solidarity | Kayla

After a summer of work with the Center for Refugee Resettlement and Support at Catholic Charities, I will return to college this fall wondering if a young Afghani girl I worked with is making friends in the third grade or if one Iraqi woman's work permit has arrived. These are the small things that matter when it comes to resettlement. Whether I was filling backpacks with school supplies for refugee kids or helping a refugee submit a job application, I reminded myself that I was participating in an act of foreign service, no matter how small.

During an early morning ESL class, the teacher explained to students that I would not receive a paycheck. Immediately, a woman from Iraq asked why I would spend my summer volunteering instead of working a paid job. The answer would have been simple if I had not been sitting among refugees; if I had told them that I was "interested in working with refugees," they may have felt I viewed them as specimen, the same way someone might say they wanted to "work with endangered wildlife." In my head, every possible explanation sounded condescending. Finally I told her, I'm interested in your lives and

your journeys and I want to use my Spanish." The teacher added, based on a discussion we'd had earlier, that I wanted "a job in foreign service." It felt strange, though, to explain to a class of very capable foreigners that I wanted to serve them. I was afraid of appearing to imply that they were helpless or referring to anyone as a "refugee" instead of calling them by name. It is easy to forget that "refugee" is a blanket term describing millions of distinct human beings. A single word cannot do justice to their multiplicity.

Those who engage in localized work with refugees must know how to relate with well-informed humility to each person seeking assistance. I had never worked closely with people affected by government policies of this nature nor had I directly witnessed their implementation. Whether it was in ESL class, employment workshops, or through stories told by Catholic Charities staff, I became familiar on a personal level with some of the most frustrating realities and commendable endeavors within the U.S. refugee resettlement program.

To be truly interested in international relations, it is necessary to appreciate the

Continued on page 2 ▶

CORE VALUES

The principles that guide us and constitute what we believe

FAITH

Being an inter-faith community
Hoping for the things unseen
Believing with strong conviction

LOVE

A sense of underlying oneness
Manifesting charity

CARING

Compassion for all
Empathy for all

RESPECT

Dignity of others
The individuality of others
The uniqueness of others

INTEGRITY

Honesty
Transparency
Trustworthiness
Fairness

INCLUSIVITY

Openness
Diversity
Reconciliation of differences

COLLABORATION

Partnering with others
Seeking others with the abilities to find solutions



EL CORREO

(The Mail)

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◀ *Continued from page 1*

work done at the local level to grasp the ways in which larger entities can affect change. The foundation for work within individual communities is human interaction. It was a challenge but a valuable lesson to explain my career interests to refugees. To be taken seriously I had to earn clients' trust, but in doing so I was privileged enough to hear

dozens of stories of journeys to the United States. Throughout my time at Catholic Charities, I was aware that there were boundaries between clients and staff members or volunteers. Yet at times, after sharing a sense of accomplishment with those I assisted, I could not avoid the happy feeling that perhaps the clients had become my friends.

Pope Francis: a Papal Voice of Mercy:

With Pope Francis' recent announcements and messages to us, the underlying theme of mercy and forgiveness is paramount. In the coming Holy Year, he has made clear even the most grievous of our sins cannot stand when mercy's shadow is cast upon it. This is good news for so many of us who carry the guilt of past wrongs within our souls.

Obviously much of the news stories written or spoken about since the Pope's announcements have focused on abortion, referring to it as the ultimate sin in the Church. I am not a theologian or scholar of canon law; rather, I am a simple pew warmer. But I do not think there is one ultimate sin; rather, the gravest class of sin is the dismissal or minimization of the dignity of life. Abortion certainly is such a sin.

I carry such a sin in my heart. It is some 30 plus years old. It even has a name, "Julie". Julie was a young woman who I knew when I was starting in my professional path of working with persons with significant disabilities. Julie was a young woman with cerebral palsy, whom I saw frequently, perhaps even daily. Julie attended a classroom setting which was sometimes referred to in professional slang as the "uneducable/untrainable" class. Students did not have a formal lesson plan, but we enriched their lives through creating an environment of soft music, exposure to Jazz, rock and roll, brightly colored and seasonally decorated walls. Activities included reading "classics" and sometimes juvenile books to students in their late teens and early twenties.

I would regularly visit Julie's class and saw that the physical care that was given to the students was exceptional and full of compassion and caring, the teacher and aides would position and reposition folks in various engineered brace systems based upon the recommendations of physicians and occupational therapists to stretch muscles and bone structure. Julie lived her day in a very well-designed wheelchair that had padded braces that were molded to her body, countering the spasms and jerking motions. She could not verbalize her thoughts and without a means of communication was assumed to be "uneducable".

Well, those who work with me now know I have stories to tell, opinions to share, and that was also true back then. Often I would share a serious or humorous story with the staff, and in particular, the teacher (Patricia), a very wonderful, young, new teacher whose compassion and concern for her



Executive Director, Jim Gannon



Ground Breaking

On August 4, 2015 Archbishop John C. Wester and Archbishop Emeritus Michael J. Sheehan donned hard hats and golden shovels to break ground for Catholic Charities' new Casa de Corazon. Joining in on the fun were Bernalillo County Commissioner Art De La Cruz, Catholic Charities board members and leaders and more than 300 community members. Casa de Corazon will be able to assist more of those in need with greater efficiency. Refugees escaping brutal conditions in their homelands, adults striving to learn English and further their education and job opportunities, families with basic housing needs and assistance in becoming self-sufficient, immigrants in need of services and assistance to unify families, victims of domestic violence, and seniors in need of transportation are all provided help through the services at Catholic Charities.

Community Partners

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students was always genuine and sincere. Julie's location in the class put her in very close proximity to Patricia's desk and often I saw in Julie's eyes and facial gestures, ever so briefly, while Patricia often did not get my jokes, Julie did. I don't say this in lightness or insincerity; I carry in my soul the belief that a mind, a personality was connecting with me. Now, I am also haunted by the realization that Julie might have seen in my eyes and facial gestures the fact that she had connected with me.

I recognize I was not fulfilling my obligation to the dignity of Julie. I was not being a facilitator of her participation and contribution to our society. My failure to act was a grave sin of a magnitude that is neither easy to seek forgiveness for, nor for being forgiven. My inaction kept Julie in a cloister of one; an observer but not a participant in society. Perhaps in this next Holy Year of our Church, I can reconcile my inaction of those many years ago with my conscience and with God.

When we as Catholics stand up and say we are pro-life, we are stating our obligation not only to the baby in the womb, but also to the child born, to the child as they mature, to the adult they become, to the elderly person who needs assistance with respect. We are saying we will do what it takes to ensure that a child does not experience hunger, that a child will be educated, that they will live a meaningful life and that they will have left a legacy to the next generation.

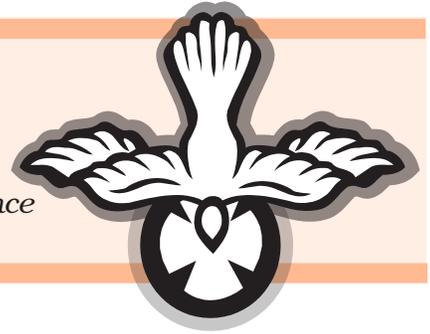
We cannot rally against the frequency of abortion alone in our stance against the loss of innocent lives. We have to recognize that no child can be abused/exploited, feel hunger, shiver on cold winter nights, nor should a parent not be in the position to provide for their family, nor any older person feel alone and isolated, and no persons should be excluded. The Dignity of Life and its respect requires nothing less.

Over the years I have come to understand my sin. I hope I have in part atoned for my failure to act. I take solace at times in the comfort of my other actions, since my sin against Julie, that I have done the right thing, such as pushing and shoving a bureaucratic system to supply the assistive technology needed for a young man to continue his education. In spite of a body similarly challenged by cerebral palsy, he was able to go to the University. I have played a small role many times in numerous individuals' lives to ensure their dignity is respected. Perhaps someone else acted when she left school and attended an adult day program? I was surely not the only one? I can never fully atone for my sin against life. God and Julie can forgive me, but it cannot be reversed, the scar cannot become invisible. Nor truly should it, and I am not sure the pain should go away entirely.

I pray that when Julie passed, or will pass to the next life, she will be greeted by Christ with the full respect and dignity I failed to extend. I pray that her soul can take solace that my failure to advocate for her contributed to a passion within me to redress this lapse of action by being of help to many others. Certainly, Christ will recognize and explain to Julie that, like St. Bernadette, the waters were not for her. With Bernadette I pray, "Blessed Mary, Mother of God, pray for me! A poor sinner, a poor sinner".

MATTHEW 25 GIVING SOCIETY Hands of the Holy Spirit Awards

On Thursday, September 17th, Catholic Charities honored individuals and organizations who partner with us to make a difference in the lives of thousands of individuals every year.



Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, Inc. DMRS – El Paso, TX

Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, Inc. (DMRS) is the largest provider of free and low cost immigration legal services in West Texas and New Mexico. They provide a comprehensive range of immigration legal services including representation in family-based immigration matters, Citizenship/Naturalization matters, matters related to benefits for survivors of domestic violence and other crimes, removal proceedings before the Immigration Courts, refugee resettlement services, and services for adults and unaccompanied immigrant children detained in the local immigration detention centers and shelters.



Catholic Charities team members and DMRS who worked together during the 2014 Children's Border Crisis.

DMRS opened its doors in 1986 in collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to assist Central and South America refugees fleeing their war-torn countries and undocumented migrants needing legal assistance resulting from the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. In 1990 DMRS became an independent non-profit organization.

The Unaccompanied Minors unit of DMRS serves children who arrive in the United States without a parent or guardian. In the summer of 2014, the border saw a dramatic increase in the number of children that were entering the United States unaccompanied. This surge overwhelmed the resources in the United States, including those at DMRS. Catholic Charities sent four staff members per week to help handle the influx of

children. Along with the volunteers, DMRS was able to provide services to the children that passed through the four shelters located in El Paso. The kindness, compassion and respect shown to these children in their time of need was God's work and an extraordinary example of the Hands of the Holy Spirit.

John A. Menicucci – Berger Briggs Real Estate and Insurance, Inc. / Catholic Charities' Board Member

All of his life, John Menicucci has embraced the spirit of helping others, helping to make life easier for those less fortunate. His first introduction of the work of the Hands of the Holy Spirit was as an altar boy at Our Lady of Fatima Parish. At the core of his childhood was the foundation of his Catholic belief. While attending St. Pius High School, John spent volunteer hours working on socially grounded student projects. John has worked for Berger Briggs Real Estate and Insurance, Inc. for 39 years, during which time he has given his time, talent and treasure to civic organizations as well as non-profit boards. During his tenure of 8 years on the Catholic Charities' Board of Directors, John has selflessly responded to every call to action. Whether offering office space for business meetings, soliciting financial support from peers, advocating for helping those less fortunate or helping build the leadership of Catholic Charities, John is always ready to do God's work. He is the perfect example of a mortal vessel for the Hands of the Holy Spirit.



Accepting for John were son Joseph, daughter-in-law Nina and granddaughter Natalia Menicucci.



2015 Matthew 25 Awards Reception September 17, 2015

~ 2015 Simon of Cyrene Awardees ~

Center for Education Opportunity – Adult Education Program - Michael D. Heim (Not Shown)

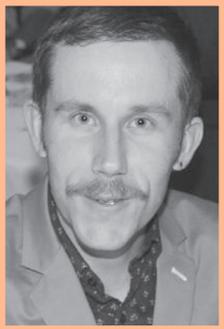
Michael is the Director of the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), a federally funded program that serves the migrant and seasonal farm working community. UNM HEP has been successful in fulfilling its mission through its partnerships and collaborations with community partners. This is especially true for the partnership with Catholic Charities. Michael fell in love with the Land of Enchantment and moved to New Mexico to attend graduate school and stayed to pursue a PhD at the University of New Mexico (UNM). He considers himself to be a migrating education worker having served students at Washington State University, as well as The University of New Mexico for the past 12 years. Any success he has accomplished in life is possible through the support of his wife, Chioma, who helps raise their two children, Soleil and Desmond.

Center for Education Opportunity – Children's Learning Center

Wesley Morton - T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood - New Mexico

Wesley Morton is Outreach Director with T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood, New Mexico in conjunction with the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children.

Wesley works with Catholic Charities' Children's Learning Center supervisor, Maggie Rojas and her staff. Through the TEACH program, staff is granted scholarships to further their education in Early Childhood Development, which in turn improves the quality of early care and education for our youngest children. Maggie states that Wesley is always available, helpful, reliable and a problem solver.



Center for Refugee Settlement & Support - Dr. John & Luz Easter

Dr. and Mrs. Easter are retired professionals from the medical field. Both began their volunteer work at Catholic Charities when they became mentors to Cuban refugee participants interested in entering the medical field in the United States. Dr. and Mrs. Easter noticed that their mentees needed several types of support in order to focus on recertifying their medical degree. Once a week they worked diligently with refugees on ESL (English as a Second Language) skills, computer skills and resource research. Both shared their knowledge with compassion and kindness, which elevated their mentee's self-esteem, hope and motivation. Their authentic interest in support is the perfect example of how dignity is shared in the community.



Beatrice Villegas
Dr. and Mrs. Easter

Center for Self-Sufficiency and Housing Assistance

Jerry Boles - J & S Apartment Rentals



Andy Najjar, Jerry Boles
Shannon Vicenti

Jerry Boles owns and manages J & S Apartment Rentals and has played a huge part in the Housing program at Catholic Charities. For the past several years, Jerry has provided units to rent to our families. He has waived fees, lowered costs, included utilities, separated utilities, replaced and repaired. Jerry has given families a chance when other landlords wouldn't. He accommodates the needs of the family and Catholic Charities and has always been willing to adjust paperwork, leases and forms that have had to be changed over the years. Jerry has been such a great person to work with and always has a smile. Jerry is a wonderful person, a joy to work with and a blessing to the families who are on their way to self-sufficiency.

Continued on page 6 ►

◀ *Continued from page 5*

Center for Immigration and Citizenship Legal Assistance - Gretchen Pedersen

Gretchen Pedersen, is a Master level intern from the Copenhagen Business School in Denmark. Gretchen only started with Catholic Charities in September. Her goal is to work with immigrants and the Spanish speaking community here in the U.S. Her responsibilities outlined in her contract with the University is to translate documents from Spanish to English and interview in Spanish. She has been working in the Center for Immigration and Citizenship Legal Assistance translating Affidavits of Hardship and birth certificates from Spanish to English. Gretchen will also share her talents in the Center for Refugee Settlement and Support.

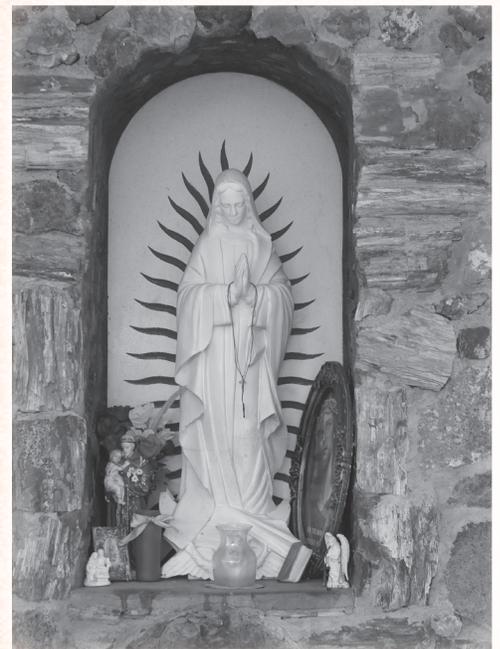


Center for Community Involvement - Don King- SafeLink Wireless

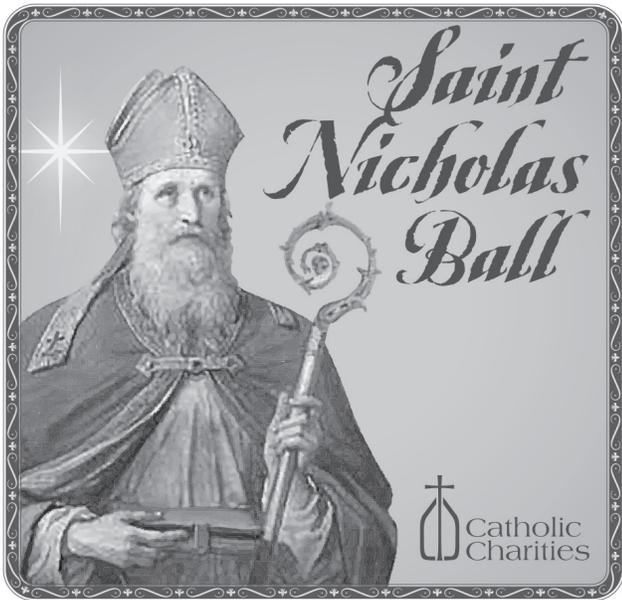
SafeLink is a government supported Lifeline phone service program that provides a free cell phone and free airtime (up to 250 minutes) each month for local and long-distance calls (including texting). No bills, no contracts, no credit checks, no hidden fees. This service is made available to individuals and families and provides much needed support, potential employment opportunities, and emergency services.

For the past two years, Don King has worked with B.J. Jones, SNAP advocate with Catholic Charities, and she states that Don is professional and dedicated to helping individuals in our community with financial struggles. Don provides assistance in a kind and caring manner and when he works with a client, they have his complete attention. Don travels to Santa Fe monthly with B.J. and is a frequent volunteer at our Mobile Food Pantry and community events. The Center for Community Involvement is grateful to have him as a community partner.

This October Staff at Catholic Charities spent an afternoon at Holy Family Parish to recognize staff tenure, build camaraderie and have some time to reconnect with each other. Games and food made for a fun afternoon for everyone.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR BREAKING NEWS AND EVENTS AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES
www.ccasfnm.org



Creating Hope Year-Round



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