CELEBRATING PARENTS THIS MOTHER’S DAY AND FATHER’S DAY! This edition focuses on the gift of mothers (and fathers!), their important role in shaping our lives, and how through your support, Catholic Charities’ assistance to mothers and fathers makes a difference!

In this issue:

As late spring gives way to early summer, we honor mothers beginning in May and a month later in June we celebrate fathers. We celebrate the contribution of parents, the guidance given, the lessons taught, their unconditional love and sacrifice for their children. At Catholic Charities, we see the extremes of what that means as we assist families and especially parents attempting to be the parents of Hallmark cards. See Page 2 for more from our CEO Jim Gannon about the love and sacrifices of parents around us.

“Catholic Charities came through for us.” Catholic Charities creates hope and new beginnings for mothers and fathers battling homelessness in our community. See page 2 to learn more.

Outstanding Students! Four of our Adult Education students were recognized as Outstanding Students of the Year at the New Mexico Legislature. Check out page 3 to learn about these outstanding students who balanced work, family life, and furthering their career goals.

We are excited to announce that we continue to further our services in Santa Fe! Learn more on page 6.

Save the Date! We have lots of exciting events in store this fall. See them all on page 7.

Companions on the Journey “I have never been so proud to be a citizen of such an amazing community,” Archbishop John Wester said. “It’s such a wonderful outpouring of care and concern for our brothers and sisters.” Read about how Catholic Charities, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, and many other organizations and volunteers have come together in an interfaith effort to help our asylum-seeker brothers and sisters on their journey to a better life. See page 4.
A Single Father's Journey

Growing up, Gabriel’s only expectation for his future was a life of incarceration. Eventually he found himself a single father of seven children. After his own mother suffered a stroke and was no longer able to help, Gabriel realized he needed to make a change for himself and his family. He became clean and sought to find a stable home for his children. His journey put him in contact with Catholic Charities Center for Self-Sufficiency and Housing Assistance. Within a few weeks, Santana, his Catholic Charities case manager, found him a home large enough for his whole family, just in time for the holidays! She also brought Christmas presents for all seven children. “We got to spend the holidays together as a family. It was one of the best times of our life,” Gabriel says.

In less than a year, Gabriel graduated our La Luz Housing Program, which provides up to 24 months of housing assistance and case management to families with dependent children in Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties. After housing the family, Catholic Charities assisted him with achieving self-sufficiency including acquiring necessary documentation, enrolling the kids in school, providing a class on how to fix his credit, and finding a job as a welder. The kids are now thriving under a stable home with a routine. Gabriel loves watching his kids experience things missing from his own childhood. He graduated our La Luz Housing Program, which provides up to 24 months of housing assistance and case management to families with dependent children in Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties. After housing the family, Catholic Charities assisted him with achieving self-sufficiency including acquiring necessary documentation, enrolling the kids in school, providing a class on how to fix his credit, and finding a job as a welder. The kids are now thriving under a stable home with a routine. Gabriel loves watching his kids experience things missing from his own childhood.

Senior Transportation Helps a Lively Great-Grandmother Stay Connected

Ms. Ellie has been a registered rider of Catholic Charities Senior Transportation Services for almost ten years. After a heart attack grounded her, she had to stop driving. While she sometimes misses the freedom to jump into her car for a spontaneous quick errand, she prefers to focus about the blessings in her life, her family! Ellie’s face beams as she speaks about her two sons, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren who shower her with love from all across the country. Through our Senior Transportation Services, Ellie is able to attend her therapeutic regimen twice a week, which helps her remain a lively and loving presence in her family’s lives. She has additionally been blessed with an extended family of sorts born from her friendships with her volunteer drivers and their families. Ellie tells us, “I am still a happy person as I have lived a wonderful life and continue to keep busy and stay connected with family and friends.”
Four students from Catholic Charities’ Center for Educational Opportunity were recognized as Outstanding Students of the Year at the New Mexico Legislature in February. In honor of New Mexico Adult Education and Literacy Day on February 15th, the New Mexico Adult Education Association recognized fifteen students from thousands of ESL and GED/High School Equivalency (HiSET) students across the state. Over a third of these awardees were students from Catholic Charities’ adult education program! Perla, Josefina, Larissa, and Maria are all hardworking students juggling school, work, and family life.

Josefina was born in Milwaukee, WI. When she was three years old, her parents took her back to their native country of Mexico, where she eventually she married, had four children, studied computer engineering, and worked in social development with the municipal government. About three years ago, she came to Albuquerque and began caring for two-year-olds at Precious Moments Daycare, eventually being promoted to Pre-K Lead Teacher. She also enrolled in ESL and HiSET classes with Catholic Charities while concurrently taking early education credits at CNM. Within two semesters at Catholic Charities, she completed all of her requirements for HSE graduation and is now working on attaining her associate’s degree in early childhood education. Her instructor Juan Sanchez remarks that she has proven to be a natural leader and helps her peers to maximize their own learning potential.

Maria is a mother of 11 adult children and grandmother to many grandchildren. Her family is spread throughout the U.S. and Mexico. She currently lives with one of her sons in Albuquerque along with his wife and their two children. Maria cooks almost every day for her family. Despite her disability, Maria walks to the bus stop to attend her ESL classes at Catholic Charities. Her instructor Laura Nunez says, “She always has a sunny disposition during every class and she is an inspiration to all students at Catholic Charities. I am very fortunate to have her as my student!”

Perla was born in Anahuac, Chihuahua, Mexico, where she studied through the 9th grade. Her family struggled with poverty, and she had to take a full-time job at age 14 rather than attending high school. In 1999, she found herself as a single mother hoping to secure a better future for her son. She came to Denver where she met her current husband and had three more children. Later her family moved to Albuquerque where she managed her own cleaning business for 11 years. Three years ago, she was required by immigration services to return to Mexico. After two years of separation from her family as she waited for her immigration case to be resolved, she finally received her permit to legally reenter the U.S. After returning to Albuquerque, Perla enrolled in HiSET classes at Catholic Charities. “Rarely have I met a student with such firm determination to learn,” remarks her instructor Juan Sanchez. After a total of 35 weeks of class, she passed 4 out of 5 HiSET exams and is currently working towards passing the final exam. After obtaining her HSE diploma, she intends to take ESL courses and to pursue a certification in phlebotomy.

Larissa was born and raised in Albuquerque. In her senior of high school, she ran into curve balls that prevented her from graduating. After a few years, Larissa was ready to go back to school to better her future. She began Catholic Charities’ HiSET program in the fall of 2018, determined to finish as soon as possible. With the support of her instructor Carlos Vasquez, Larissa was able to pass all of the HiSET exams after her first term. “I walked out of my test with tears of happiness in my eyes because I knew taking this big step could help me better my future in so many ways,” says Larissa. This summer Larissa plans to start studying business at CNM. She dreams of helping people achieve their fitness goals in her own personal training or gym facility, possibly even studying nutritional science to further help people with their nutritional goals.

Life & Education Success Week a Hit with Refugee Students!

Over spring break, Catholic Charities Center for Refugee Support hosted a spring break camp for 25 refugee high school students focusing on college and career readiness. These young adults from around the world participated in hands-on learning activities with local professionals from several career paths, heard from UNM and CNM representatives about college planning, and shared their own career goals and hopes for how to make a positive impact on the world. These students showed great dedication and engagement in the program, impressing many of our speakers. In surveys at the end of the camp, students commented that they found the program “eye-opening” and “inspiring.” They also all showed eagerness to participate in future career/collage guidance camps.

We are very grateful to the wonderful volunteers and speakers who helped make this a success, including one of our new board members Henry Narvaez and his wife Bessy. Another huge thank you goes to Chick-fil-A on Gibson, Smith’s Food and Drug Store, La Montañita Co-op, Shamrock Foods, and Papa John’s Pizza for their generous donations to help us provide meals and snacks to students and volunteers.

Catholic Charities Adult Education Registration Begins May 20th!

Catholic Charities Adult Education offers classes at several sites in GED/High School Equivalency, ESL, workforce development, Microsoft Excel, and citizenship. New student registration sessions will be held at Catholic Charities, 2010 Bridge Blvd SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105, on May 20th – May 22nd at 9am, 12pm, and 6pm. The only cost is a $10 registration fee paid by credit/debit card or money order. Sessions typically last 1-2 hours so please make sure to be on-time and plan accordingly. The summer semester will go from May 28th through August 23rd. Late registration will also be offered on June 3rd and 4th. For more information, please call (505) 724-4672 or visit ccedu.org.
Welcoming the Stranger: Companions on the Journey

At the beginning of President’s Day weekend, Archbishop John C. Wester received a call for help from Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso. Asylum-seekers who had been vetted by U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and released for further assistance, were in dire need of help with the next step in their long journeys. Archbishop Wester then called our CEO, Jim Gannon. Thanks to support from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and numerous groups from all walks of faith throughout the area, Catholic Charities staff and numerous volunteers gathered were ready within 24 hours to welcome several migrant families. These asylum-seekers had followed the legal process and were released by ICE to stay with sponsoring friends or relatives in the U.S. while awaiting their assigned hearing date.

The refugee families arrived with only the clothes on their backs and a small bag of paperwork. Many were hungry, dehydrated, and exhausted. Infants were in desperate need of clean diapers and everyone needed showers. Catholic Charities volunteers and staff were able to provide them with a place to stay for the night, food, clothing, hygiene items, cellphone access with a phone card, and assistance in getting to their sponsors and families. After seeing how the community was able to come together to make a difference in one day, a volunteer told her husband “this is America at its best.” As the need has continued, this effort has evolved into our Companions on the Journey project, with two respite sites in the Albuquerque metro area serving new arrivals nearly every week.

Background

Annunciation House in El Paso, has been serving refugees from Central America since 1976. The past year has seen a large influx of Central American families fleeing violence, food insecurity, oppression, human trafficking, poverty, and extortion of families. The asylum-seekers released have passed initial screening while in ICE custody and have a friend or family member in the U.S. to receive them as a “sponsor,” as they await their asylum court hearing date. Due to the overwhelming numbers, ICE asked Annunciation House for assistance in order to avoid releasing families to the streets, without any way to get to their destination or contact their families. As resources and shelter capacity in El Paso reached its limitations, Annunciation House Director Ruben Garcia reached out to churches in El Paso and Las Cruces, and eventually to Albuquerque. Catholic Charities and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe are among many organizations who answered the call. Each organization involved in this assistance works with Annunciation House to ensure they are able to properly process and care for a group of refugee arrivals.

“They make these decisions to take the risk of coming here because they need help to raise their families to live a life,” said Archbishop Wester. “These brothers and sisters of ours have inalienable rights given by God Himself. We believe they are created in the image and likeness of God, as we all are, and so we reach out to them, and in any way that we can. ...This is part of the sanctity of life.” “You never leave your home if you don’t have to leave your home,” remarks a volunteer. “You leave your home either because you are forced to leave your home or you just can’t live like you are living, especially with your children. These parents are giving them a chance to live and to grow.”

A Coordinated Process

While Catholic Charities has hired a small number of part-time staff to help coordinate the effort, it is primarily volunteer-driven with collaboration from many local organizations of all faiths. Volunteers are organized into teams led by team coordinators based on availability, areas of interest, and skills. “Jesus gave us an example of welcoming the stranger in our midst,” said Archbishop Wester. “I am deeply grateful to all who have been helping us to do just that here in the City of Albuquerque.” When refugee travelers arrive, intake volunteers greet them, help them feel safe, explain where they are and what will happen next, and help them contact their sponsoring family. The arrivals are next taken to the team of volunteers with medical backgrounds for triage. Part of their initial screening with ICE included checks for serious diseases and vaccinations. The primary symptoms the medical team helps alleviate are from dehydration, malnutrition, heat, prolonged sun exposure, and exhaustion. Nearly all of the arrivals have young children with them.

Guests next receive a backpack which includes a “Dignity Bag” of hygiene items including a toothbrush, soap, and deodorant. Volunteers then escort families to their assigned rooms, explain house rules. Then guests are taken the donations area where they can “shop” from many donated clothes sorted by type, before being given a chance to shower. Finally, they make their way to the dining area where a kind-hearted organization, church, or business has provided a warm meal and some volunteers to serve them. Meanwhile, other volunteers work with the sponsoring families to ensure travel is booked and arrange transportation on each guest’s departure date/time. On average, families typically stay in Albuquerque 48-72 hours before departing from a bus station or airport to their next destination.

Honduras

Gracias por todo lo que queremos
Bendiciones

More information and details on how to help can be found at www.ccasfnm.org/companions
Giving

Funding

• Online: Go to www.ccasfnm.org/companions and click the "Donate Online" button

• Mail: You can mail checks or money orders to Catholic Charities, Attn: Companions, 2010 Bridge Blvd. SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105. If using a Catholic Charities appeal envelope, please make sure to include a reference to “companions” or “asylum-seekers” on the envelope or check’s memo line. (When looking to donate specifically to asylum-seekers, please do not reference “immigration” or “refugee support” as these are typically used to indicate donations to our ongoing programs for immigrants and refugees living in central NM.)

Goods

• Drop-Off Items: Thanks to generous support from the community, our community drop off center is currently at capacity. Please check www.ccasfnm.org/companions to see if this changes.

• Order Online: If you like to shop online, you can also shop from our Amazon wish list to have items shipped directly to our site. When you use Amazon Smile a portion of your purchase will also be donated to Catholic Charities! A link to the list can be found on our website or by typing the following into your browser: smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/Z41DT14S8VAB.

Meals

We have been relying on the generosity of churches and civic organizations to provide warm meals to the migrant families. With two sites now taking arrivals in the Albuquerque metro area, we have a great need for volunteers to prepare, deliver, and/or serve warm meals to arrivals at both locations each week. Because many of these refugees have had periods of limited food or are recovering from dehydration or heat exhaustion, food needs to be safe for sensitive stomachs (nothing spicy, greasy, rich, etc.)

If your church or organization would be interested in providing meals to these weary travelers, please either visit www.ccasfnm.org/companions for more information.

Time & Talents

• If you are interested in joining the effort to help these arrivals in the Albuquerque metro area, whether through Catholic Charities or another one of the amazing organizations in the area receiving travelers, please fill out the volunteer interest form, available at www.ccasfnm.org/companions.

• Do you want to learn more about volunteering or see if your group might be interested in receiving buses of asylum-seekers? Catholic Charities is conducting trainings on asylum-seeker arrival assistance. The next available sessions are at 1:30pm on Friday, May 10th and Friday May 17th at Catholic Charities offices, 2010 Bridge Blvd, SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105. Sessions typically last about an hour to an hour and a half.

A Thank You to Our Partners!

This amazing interfaith collaborative effort has included participation and support from the following groups:

• Archdiocese of Santa Fe, including its many parishes and ministries
• CABQ Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
• Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice
• Albuquerque Interfaith
• Albuquerque Mennonite Church
• Bosque Center for Spiritual Living
• Central United Methodist Church
• El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos
• First Unitarian Church
• Indivisible Nob Hill
• New Life Presbyterian Church
• New Mexico Dream Team
• New Mexico Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice
• New Mexico Immigrant Law Center
• Norbertine Community of Santa Maria de la Vid Abbey
• One Spiritual Center
• Our Lady of Guadalupe Province, Order of Friars Minor
• Students of Encuentro
• The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
• The Congregation Albert Social Justice Committee
• Unity Spiritual Center

Following the Legal Process

The 1980 U.S. Refugee Act established two paths to obtain refugee status: either from abroad as a resettled refugee or in the United States as an asylum-seeker. Asylum is a form of protection granted to those who meet the definition of a refugee, as outlined by the United Nations 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, and are either already present in the U.S. or are seeking admission at a port of entry. Any foreign national may apply for asylum in the U.S. regardless of country of origin or current immigration status.

Check out the links provided at www.ccasfnm.org/companions for more information about this process.
What’s New at Catholic Charities?

Round of Applause for our Employees’ Achievements!

- Meet the new face of our five-star Children’s Learning Center (CLC)! After working with Catholic Charities Children’s Learning Center and Center for Educational Opportunity for several years, Diane Lozano has been appointed the new Director of the Children’s Learning Center. Diane will be supported by an amazing staff, including Melissa Bojorquez who was recently promoted to Preschool Manager.

- Peace Izabayo, Case Manager/Student Advocate in our Center for Refugee Support, was appointed to the City of Albuquerque Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Steering Committee! She will serve in this position for a year, acting as an advisor to the city on immigrant and refugee issues. The steering committee is made up of representatives from various groups helping immigrants and refugees. It aims to improve the lives of all immigrants and resettled refugees who are living in Albuquerque. We are very honored to have a representative on this board.

- Our Center for Immigration and Citizenship Legal Assistance (CICLA) now has four Department of Justice (DOJ) Accredited Representatives! After working in CICLA for years as a program assistant, Juana Salazar received DOJ Accreditation this January!

- Joel Hagaman, our VAWA Staff Attorney, was awarded a scholarship to attend the Conference on Crimes Against Women, a national conference for training and best practices regarding the identification, investigation and prosecution of all types of violence crimes against women.

- Jim Gannon, Catholic Charities CEO, was asked by Mayor Keller to join the One Albuquerque Kids Cabinet. The Cabinet’s goal is to maximize and increase youth opportunities across Albuquerque, increase effective, coordinated inter-departmental organization and collaboration, assess and maximize limited resources, foster public-private partnerships, and track indicators of the well-being of children and youth.

Celebrating Success and Expansion in Santa Fe

We are excited to announce that we continue to further our services in Santa Fe! For several years, Catholic Charities’ Santa Fe office has provided immigration and citizenship legal assistance. Last fall, Catholic Charities began sponsoring a pilot program known as Project Ascent Upon Literacy (PAUL), organized by Santa Fe resident and author John Lonergan. PAUL aims to help second grade students at Sweeney Elementary School read at grade level with intensive one-on-one coaching and mentorship from Capital High School students. In less than a year, many students have shown higher level reading competency levels!

Then in January of this year, thanks to support from new funders, a new case manager, Concepta Hernandez, joined our Center for Self-Sufficiency and Housing Assistance team to offer outreach services to Santa Fe residents. This is only the beginning of our plans to further this center’s assistance to Santa Fe.

In February, we celebrated these successes and new beginnings with a small reception in our Santa Fe office. We introduced new Santa Fe board member Deacon Jack Conrad of CHRISTUS St. Vincent Hospital, thanked departing board member and Santa Fe resident Eddie Gallegos, and recognized the volunteers, staff, and supporters who have made all of this possible.

Affordable Housing is Coming to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Construction is over half-way complete on Generations at West Mesa, an affordable housing multi-family complex on 57th and Central developed by Catholic Charities and Gorman and Company with support from the City of Albuquerque, MFA, and various investors. The complex will have 54 units available to seniors at a variety of income levels, with a particular focus on grandparents raising grandchildren. Catholic Charities will further assist residents with parenting/grand parenting classes, after school programs, computer trainings, senior transportation, support groups, financial counseling/education and youth/family/elderly services. The first tenants are expected to move in this September!

New Year and New Board Members

This January, Catholic Charities held our annual Board Blessing at San Felipe de Neri Church with Mass celebrated by Fr. Andy Pavlak and a reception held at High Noon. It was a beautiful evening of welcoming new board members and saying farewell to board members who are stepping down.

Catholic Charities would like to welcome the following individuals to our board this year: Guy Berger, Jack Conrad, Don Kawal, Philip Menicucci, Henry Narvaez, James Ortiz, and Mary Rose Twohig. We would also like to thank the following departing board members for their years of incredible service to Catholic Charities: Pamela Alexanderson, Bob Casey, Eddie Gallegos, Susan Keil Smith, Lori Muller, and Virginia Schroder. Eddie Fernandez did a wonderful job as chairperson of our board through 2018. We expect to have another amazing year with our new board chairperson, Tom Keleher.
Catholic Charities lifts anyone in need with your help....

Mark Your Calendars!

Catholic Charities USA Annual Gathering: September 24 – 27
Every year around 500 Catholic Charities professionals, volunteers, and partners from around the country convene at the Annual Gathering to advance our work, strategize about poverty reduction, and celebrate our shared identity. This September, the CCUSA Annual Gathering will be right here in Albuquerque. As the local host agency, we will be treating our guests to an enchanting evening at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and an enlightening morning tour at a historical site. To make all of this possible, we will need sponsors and volunteer support. If you want to step up to volunteer, please contact Cathy Aragon-Marquez at 505-724-4634 or marquezc@ccasfnm.org. For information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Dolores Nunez at 505-724-4693 or nunezd@ccasfnm.org.

7th Annual Rio Grande Credit Union Golf Classic Benefitting Catholic Charities: September 19 at Sandia Golf Club
Rio Grande Credit Union has named Catholic Charities as the primary beneficiary of proceeds from this year’s tournament. We are grateful to Rio Grande Credit Union as a mission partner with Catholic Charities, including various fundraisers and collaboration with our adult education program. The tournament will be held on Thursday, September 19 at Sandia Golf Club - 30 Rainbow Rd NE Albuquerque, NM 87113. Details will be forthcoming and published on our website – www.ccasfnm.org. Until then, if you are interested in golfing, sponsorship opportunities, or if you have questions, please call Dolores Nunez at (505) 724-4693 or email to nunezd@ccasfnm.org. See you on the links!

16th Annual Saint Nicholas Ball: November 23, 2019 at Sandia Resort and Casino
Catholic Charities signature fundraiser has a new location! Make plans now to join us at Sandia Resort and Casino on Saturday, November 23, 2019 for an incredible evening of dining and dancing to benefit those in need. It’s never too early to arrange your sponsorship or auction donation. You may even want to join our gala planning committee! Contact our Development office at (505) 724-4637 for more information.

Did you know Catholic Charities can even help you with your unused vehicle? Whether it’s a car, motorcycle, RV, or boat, running or not, we might be able to take it to generate funds to support our programs. Give us a call at (505) 724-4670 or visit our website and we’ll handle the pickup and paperwork! Your parents will be happy to see your clean yard or garage.

Because of your generosity, today’s newsletter is filled with stories of inspiration and hope! At Catholic Charities, we continue to seek creative and innovative ways to raise the much-needed funds to support the most vulnerable in our community. Here are just a few examples:

Help While You Shop! When you shop at Smith’s or Amazon, you can direct a portion of the proceeds of your purchase to Catholic Charities. For information about these programs, call our Development office at (505) 724-4637.

Let Your Spring Cleaning Bring You Joy! Catholic Charities In-Kind Donation Center takes new and gently-used furniture and household goods so we can move our families into new homes ready for day-to-day living with dignity. To arrange a free pick-up of large furniture, leave a voicemail for our In-Kind Donation Center at (505) 724-4678. For smaller items, please stop by on Tuesdays-Thursdays from 9:30am – 12:00pm at 3600 Osuna NE #519, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

We’d Like To Thank Our Many Funders:
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

INCLUSIVITY
Openness
Diversity
Reconciliation of differences

COLLABORATION
Partnering with others
Seeking others with the abilities to find solutions

INTEGRITY
Honesty
Transparency
Trustworthiness
Fairness

You are invited...
MOBILE FOOD PANTRY
At 10:00 am numbers will be distributed to the first 100 families and food boxes will be served approximately at 12:00 pm

Dates: May 17th
June 21st
July 19th

Time: 12:00 PM to 2:00 pm

Location: St. Francis Xavier
(820 Broadway SE)

Please Bring: Boxes or cloth bags to hold your food