

# Voices of Hope

WINTER 2021

CORAL After-School  
Supports the  
'Learning Recovery'



Programs Facilitate Vaccine Education and Access

Disaster Relief Program Director Receives National Recognition

Year-End and Christmas Giving Opportunities

# FROM THE CEO

---

Dear Friends,

I pray that you are staying healthy and safe and that you and your family are thriving. **As we begin to recover from nearly two years of the pandemic, we see signs of hope.** Vaccination rates are high in our county and children will soon be getting vaccinated. Schools are open for in person education. Many jobs are coming back.



At Catholic Charities, our staff and volunteers have done amazing work throughout the pandemic, helping ensure that families recover from the social, emotional, and economic disruption. Through CORAL, our enhanced day learning is enabling students in high poverty neighborhoods to recover from their learning loss over the past year. Through our Family Resource Centers, parents and children have ongoing access, not only to quality parent-child bonding, early childhood education and wellness support, but also the practical necessities like diapers, formula and food. Through our Food Distribution programs, we have served the equivalent of more than 18 million meals throughout the pandemic, including senior to-go meals, parish drive through distribution to thousands of families each week, and home delivery of groceries to hundreds of seniors and people with disabilities who are home-bound. We continue to help hundreds of families apply for rent relief to prevent homelessness, to help parishes respond to local needs, and to reach out to diverse communities in high poverty neighborhoods to encourage families to get vaccinated. We have helped four times more people get jobs than usual. Through our housing development arm, Charities Housing, we continue to build hundreds of units of affordable housing as fast as we can. And we continue helping refugee foster youth, immigrants, seniors, incarcerated residents, youth, kinship families, the unhoused and people struggling with mental illness.

Even as we ramped up our services, the need continues. The wealth gap is the highest in decades. More families are seeking help with food, rent, and jobs. While many families benefit from the expanded Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit, hundreds more still are unaware of the benefit and need help filing their taxes. The psychological trauma of the past two years still requires healing.

---

*As our community recovers, it is urgent that the poorest families not be left behind.*

---

If you and your family have struggled in the past two years, you know firsthand what many of our families are experiencing and our hearts are with you. And if you and your family have been blessed this holiday season, **please consider investing through Catholic Charities** to support families on their path to self-sufficiency and hope.

**Many blessings to you and your family during this season of hope.**

All the best,

Gregory R. Kepferle  
CEO

---

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## *Catholic Charities offers COVID-19 Vaccine Education, Outreach, and Access*

Catholic Charities has supported community health and safety throughout the pandemic, and is currently focused on vaccine outreach, education, acceptance, and access.

Multiple programs are engaged in this critical effort, including our Community Engagement, Disaster Services, and Immigration Legal Services teams. Activities include:

- “knock-and-talk” visits in targeted neighborhoods with lower vaccination rates,
- partnering in a text messaging campaign,
- and facilitating vaccine distribution with the County and Gardner Health at local parishes that serve as easily accessible and trusted environments for residents.

“COVID-19 has elevated the importance and critical need for the Parish Engagement Program and our weekly ‘community markets’ that are open to all and operating weekly at three parishes in San Jose and one in Gilroy,” according to Fr. Jon Pedigo, Catholic Charities’ Director for Advocacy and Community Engagement. “We know that individuals and families who come from marginalized and underserved communities have borne the brunt of the pandemic’s impact. And we’ve seen first hand that they have endured much higher levels of rental/housing crises, job losses, COVID-19 cases and death rates, and are currently facing lack of access to or misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine.”

A grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, awarded this summer to Catholic Charities and project partner Santa Clara University’s Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, is providing funding to increase COVID-19 vaccination acceptance and delivery in targeted communities in Santa Clara County. The project goals are 11,000 vaccine doses administered by May 2022 and 55,000 vaccine education brochures distributed in areas with low vaccination rates.



Fr. Jon Pedigo, Director for Advocacy & Community Engagement, receives his COVID-19 vaccine.

Catholic Charities’ volunteers and staff are distributing vaccine education materials developed by the Markkula Center to the thousands of residents who visit the community market locations – Our Lady of Refuge in the Santee neighborhood in East San Jose, St. Leo Parish in downtown San Jose, and Christ the King Parish in the Edenvale neighborhood in South San Jose. The City of San Jose is also funding outreach conducted by our Disaster Services team in targeted neighborhoods with low vaccination rates.

Additionally, Catholic Charities will manage the day-of logistics related to vaccine distribution, including providing information, registration assistance, in-language support, and traffic management, as needed. Registration will be prioritized to residents of the high-risk, high-needs neighborhoods surrounding each parish. Volunteers who work within these communities will conduct outreach and offer transportation to help individuals get to vaccination sites and appointments. ■

For more information on vaccine support and locations, please call (408) 675-5075.

## *Catholic Charities opens 11th Family Resource Center at Shirakawa*

Joining Catholic Charities CEO Gregory Kepferle (second from right) to cut the ribbon for the newest Family Resource Center at Shirakawa Elementary School on October 18 were (pictured from left): Franklin-McKinley School District Board Members Michael F. Martinez, Rudy Rodriguez and Board President Maimona Afzal Berta; Maya Esparza, San Jose City Council Member, District 7; Cora Tomalinas, First 5 Commissioner of Santa Clara County; Carmen Montano, City of Milpitas Vice Mayor/Council Member; and Juan Cruz, Superintendent of the Franklin-McKinley School District.



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## *CORAL returns to the classroom as part of the 'learning recovery'*

As local schools are back to in-person classes this year, our CORAL teams are there to support the “learning recovery” that students are facing now due to the pandemic. Catholic Charities’ afterschool expanded learning program is essential to ensure that long-term ramifications for these students—especially those from high-poverty neighborhoods—are minimized. Their future successes depend on a solid educational foundation.



Education support is a key component of Catholic Charities’ mission to alleviate, reduce, and prevent poverty in Santa Clara County. Launched in 2003, CORAL (Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning) features a literacy-based curriculum plus homework support, STEAM learning, and enrichment activities such as theatre and music, sports, field trips, and family engagement. Additionally, the program provides mentorship and referral to critical community services to support students and families on their journeys to a brighter future.

In the fallout from last year’s shift to online virtual learning, many young students have been, and continue to be, negatively impacted by school shutdowns. This is especially true for students from families who were already struggling pre-pandemic. According to a June 2021 Report from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights: “...we know from early studies that for many students, the educational gaps that existed before the pandemic—in access, opportunities, achievement, and outcomes—are widening.”

Ensuring students’ emotional wellness during the stress of the ongoing pandemic is also paramount. Weekly check-ins and one-on-one time for students with their CORAL After School Instructors (CASIs) continue this school year to address students’ individual needs. CORAL leaders are integrating strategies to overcome social-emotional learning challenges, particularly as national data shows the difficulty of connecting and reading expressions when wearing masks/face coverings.

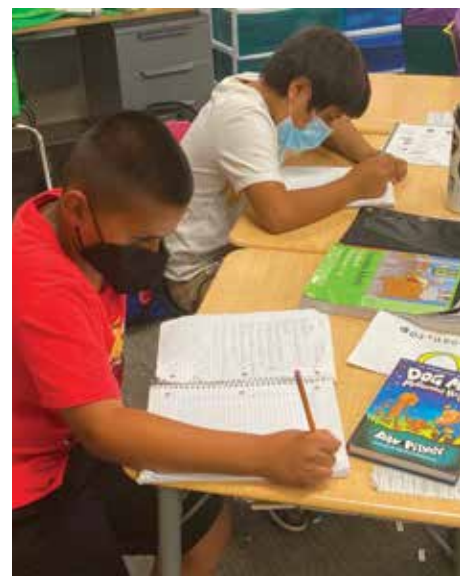
Amidst this new way of learning, CORAL programs are positioned for success as Catholic Charities continues to be a trusted resource in the communities it serves. For many CORAL families, there is a long-term relationship with their extended-learning peers and the staff, providing students with a sense of safety and stability through the bonds of community. Many students enroll in CORAL in their early school years and often remain in the program through middle school.

According to Jenny Sanchez, CORAL Site Manager at Windmill Springs Elementary



who has worked in the program for more than 14 years and three of her children attend CORAL: “Even with all of the challenges, our students are enthusiastic to be back and we are safely continuing with our programs that are so critical for our families.”

CORAL serves 2,500 students at 23 sites in the Franklin-McKinley and San Jose Unified School Districts, plus several charter schools and the Spartan-Keyes Neighborhood Center. ■



For information on investing in the CORAL program, please contact Jimmy Shoven, 408.325.5259 or [jshoven@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:jshoven@catholiccharitiesscc.org)

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## *CORAL Director receives SVCN Leadership Award*

Congratulations to América Gomez, the Managing Director of CORAL, who was recently honored with a Nonprofit Leadership Award from the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits. She will celebrate 25 years of employment with Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County in January 2022.

With a degree from San Jose State in International Business, she originally envisioned traveling around the globe as she pursued a career in the corporate world. But a volunteer position and a mentor steered América toward a career in nonprofit and she's never looked back. In her more than 15 years managing Catholic Charities' after-school extended learning program, she has overseen its growth and expansion, including deftly navigating her team of 123 employees at 23 school sites during the ongoing pandemic.

América's colleagues will attest to her ongoing commitment to putting the needs of the CORAL students

first, while ensuring the wellbeing of her teams. This has recently included working daily to ensure safety measures are in place, and managing with compassion during the stressful times.

Superintendent of the Franklin-McKinley School District, Juan Cruz, has worked closely with América for many years. He says: "América has always been an amazing supporter of our students and families. But during these difficult times, she has gone way above and beyond and made sure our students had a safe, supportive environment that supported our families."

CORAL continues to be deeply embedded in neighborhoods and many employees come from the communities served. One of América's favorite parts of her job is when former students come back to work in the program as instructors. América herself feels a deep connection to her San Jose roots and a strong commitment to giving back to the community. She



**América Gomez**

says, "I see myself and my own parents in these CORAL students and their families, and the dreams they have for their lives."

When asked about what she would want to see for the program in the future, América quickly responds: "My wish is that we could expand CORAL to every single child and family who wants to be in our program. There are still many students who need our help." ■

# SPOTLIGHT

## Jesus Flores Board

Jesus Flores joined the Catholic Charities' Board of Directors in July. Flores founded the Latino Business Foundation Silicon Valley in 2019 and is Broker Owner of Flores Professional Services Inc., an Income Tax and Real Estate Services company started in 1995.

### What is your personal mission of giving back to the community?

Since 1998, I have been supporting local family-owned small businesses as an advocate and to help them access resources. These are the businesses that are the cornerstones of our neighborhoods, and their owners are our neighbors and their children go to school with our children. By supporting these small business owners who contribute so much to our local economy, I know I am giving back to my community.

### Is there one area of Catholic Charities' community programming that is most meaningful to you?

Immigration services are very important to me. As a resident of East San Jose where a good number of residents are undocumented, I understand their needs and the many challenges they are faced with. I love and support the impact CCSCC has with its excellent Immigration Legal Services program.

### Why would you encourage others to support Catholic Charities?

The variety of services that CCSCC offers has an incredible impact, especially for our low income and disadvantaged communities. Very few organizations have the impact that Catholic Charities has on our entire community.

**Professional recognition:** Flores is a member of the Mayor's Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable, General Plan Task Force, the East San Jose PEACE Partnership Leadership Team, and the Latinos in Action 2020 collective, in addition to several other organizations. For his continued leadership, he has been presented with numerous recognitions including the 2020 Individual Champion Award as part of the *Silicon Valley Business Journal's* Community Impact Awards.

**Personal:** When not working on his own business or in the community, he loves spending time with his active family which includes his wife, Angelica, and six children. ■



Photo courtesy of Silicon Valley Business Journal/Tomas Ovalle

Jesus Flores

### Foundation Partner:

the David & Lucile Packard FOUNDATION

Catholic Charities is fortunate to have the partnership of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation – continuing over many years and on many fronts. From their Children, Families, + Communities strategy to Local Grantmaking, General Operations, and Organizational Effectiveness, the Packard Foundation has not only invested in our work, but informed it – and invited us to inform theirs.

They have sought input from our leadership on emerging needs and trends, funded financial management training for program staff, and provided critical General Operating support. At the onset of the pandemic, they offered conversion of existing program grants to flexible support, and immediately reached out to discuss community needs and our own, adding emergency funds to help us meet those needs. Most recently they have advocated for American Rescue Plan Act funds for our region to aid our community's ongoing recovery.

For all they have done throughout the pandemic, we know that the Packard Foundation is looking beyond to a landscape of increased stability, equity, and prosperity for all residents of Silicon Valley. And they stand ready to help us achieve that goal – together. We are grateful for our continuing partnership!

## Catholic Charities USA selects Araceli Gonzales for national recognition



Congratulations to Araceli Gonzales, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County's Program Director of Disaster Services, as the recipient of the 2021 Management Leadership Award from Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA). She was the only recipient of the award from CCUSA which has 175 nationwide affiliates. Araceli was honored with the award in recognition of her leadership and management of the agency's pandemic food distribution program. ■

# DEVELOPMENT NEWS

## Wise Giving at Year End to Change Lives for Good

The holidays are a good time to be reminded of timely giving strategies. Join donors like Jim, Edna, Mary and Enrique to maximize year-end giving and help Catholic Charities *change lives for good*.



Jim enjoys inspiring kids by discovering the boundless universe displayed nightly in the skies above us. Now in his mid 70s, he directs

the required distribution from his IRA to support Catholic Charities' CORAL after-school program. His gift satisfies the IRS's requirement to take an annual distribution from his IRA, avoids income tax incurred if he took the distribution directly, and provides fun astronomy and other science-based activities for youth.

Edna loves Christmas time, especially giving gifts. Toys for her grandkids, warm



sweaters crocheted throughout the year for her daughters, and fresh-baked goods for neighbors are all part of what brings her holiday joy. Among these joys is the tradition of giving to the charities she loves, like Catholic Charities. As in 2020, she delights in a perk for herself gleaned from her generosity: Edna can **claim up to \$300 as a charitable deduction, even though she doesn't itemize**. Giving with a bit of receiving makes the holidays just a touch brighter for Edna.



Maria is a news junky and always has Bay area, state, national, and international news buzzing on the radio. Hearing of her neighbors

impacted by fires, she supports Catholic Charities' emergency fire relief work. Despite the fires, pandemic, and uncertain economic forecasts, she's enjoyed growth in her investment

portfolio, advised by the many financial podcasts she follows. Instead of sending cash, Mary **transfers stocks that grew as much as 30% in 2021** to Catholic Charities. Giving this way allows her to avoid capital gains taxes, give more, and help her neighbors in need.



Enrique was excited to visit his son this Christmas who was stationed abroad in Germany. He was advised to have an estate plan in place before traveling in previous years but just never got around to it. He used Catholic Charities' **FreeWill (freewill.com/CCSCC) tool to create a will** in just 20 minutes. "Now I can travel worry free knowing my wishes were documented. I'll meet with my attorney for more comprehensive planning later," said Enrique, who also chose the option of including a legacy gift to Catholic Charities. ■



If you have questions about year-end giving, need sample IRA distribution letters, or stock transfer forms please contact David Russo, Senior Director of Planned Giving at 408-325-5248 or [drusso@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:drusso@catholiccharitiesscc.org).

## Thank you to our amazing sponsors, teams and volunteers who made our 13th Annual "Roll Against Poverty" Bocce Tournament in October a great success!

With the support of our presenting sponsor Republic Urban Properties and Bocce Committee Chairperson Michael Van Every, the tournament raised \$100,000 to support our neighbors in need in our community. Additional tournament sponsors included JJ Albanese, Charities Housing and Township Building Services. Our winning team this year was sponsored by Party Helpers and players were (pictured left to right) Roy Moses, Ken Dickens, Duino Giordano and Scott Holt with Gregory Kepferle, CEO of Catholic Charities. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities for Catholic Charities' events, please contact Deanna Sisneros ([dsisneros@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:dsisneros@catholiccharitiesscc.org), 408-925-5191). ■



**Address Service Requested**



## *Christmas Giving Opportunities*

Please Support Catholic Charities This Holiday Season

### Sign Up for AmazonSmile

With AmazonSmile, your online holiday shopping can support Catholic Charities at no cost to you. Visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) to learn more.

### Donate Gift Cards for Season of Sharing

Donations of gift cards make the holidays brighter for Catholic Charities clients. We recommend Target, Walmart or Visa gift cards. For information, email Nick Ingoglia, [ningoglia@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:ningoglia@catholiccharitiesscc.org) or call (408) 325-5250.

### Matching Gifts through Your Employer

Please visit our donation page at [ccsc.org/donate](http://ccsc.org/donate) where you may search your company's name and get information and documentation on your employer's matching gifts. For more information, please contact David Russo, [drusso@catholiccharitiesscc.org](mailto:drusso@catholiccharitiesscc.org) or 408-325-5248

### Donate a Car or Boat

For information, please visit [catholiccharitiesscc.org/car-donations](http://catholiccharitiesscc.org/car-donations) or call 408-209-1924.

### Support for our Neighbors in Need

Catholic Charities programs, especially critical as the pandemic economic recovery continues, are providing support for families and individuals on their journeys to self-sufficiency. We are addressing multiple needs to ensure future success – food, housing, mental and physical health, employment and education. Your gift goes directly to support children and adults served through more than 30 Catholic Charities programs throughout the county.

For more information, visit [CatholicCharitiesSCC.org/christmas-giving](http://CatholicCharitiesSCC.org/christmas-giving)