

Catholic Charities CHANGING LIVES

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A RESILIENT SPIRIT

To know **Jordana** is to understand the strength and power of a mother’s love for her children and the fighting spirit of a survivor.

Jordana is from El Salvador. She was 13 years old when she was sexually assaulted and became pregnant with her daughter, Juana. Rejected by her parents, Jordana reluctantly left Juana behind with her grandparents and crossed three borders by herself when she was 15 to reach the United States. Although still a teenager, she knew that she needed to somehow get out of the environment she was living in to provide a better future for herself and her daughter.



Years later and three months pregnant with her son, Bernardo, Jordana’s partner physically attacked her and sent her to the hospital for a month. Thankfully, Jordana’s neighbors called the police and her partner, Bernardo’s father, was sent to jail for three months. Once Jordana was out of the hospital, the police helped her with a restraining order and took her to La Casa de Las Madres, a domestic violence shelter. Following a three month stay at La Casa, Jordana found refuge at **Catholic Charities Star Community Home**, where she lived for eight more months.

At Star Community Home, Jordana and her newborn child were safe, stable, and nurtured. She received counseling, intensive case management, and assistance in applying for permanent housing. When she was ready to move on, Jordana and her son received a rental subsidy through **Catholic Charities SF Home** to help them move into a beautiful apartment in East Oakland, which she has since converted to a home daycare. Jordana has been in stable housing for more than six months and now provides child care for other Catholic Charities clients.

Thanks to Star Community Home, Jordana is not only stably housed, she is more confident. She continues to take GED and ESL classes at City College of San Francisco and Small Business Development classes at the Mission Economic Development Agency. Her goals are to open a family home day care, build her own business, become independent, and provide her children with a better life.

Jordana is eager to reunite with her daughter, Juana, and introduce her to Bernardo, the brother whom she has never met. Juana, who is now 15, will also be reacquainted with Jordana; a mother, student, entrepreneur, and role model. Jordana is living proof that a resilient spirit, when combined with a compassionate community, can break cycles of homelessness, abuse, and despair forever. ■



A Visit from Cardinal Marx

His Eminence, The Most Reverend Reinhard **Cardinal Marx**, who is Cardinal Archbishop of Munich and Freising, Germany, recently visited Catholic Charities' administrative offices. It was an honor for senior members of our staff to host Cardinal Marx and his associates, **Dr. Michael Hertl**, **Mrs. Inge Broy**, and **Dr. Matthias Meyer**, for a discussion about how Catholic Charities is impacting our communities.

(Front Row, L to R): Simon Manning, Catholic Charities Board President; Cardinal Marx; and Jeff Bialik, Catholic Charities Executive Director

(Back Row, L to R): Diana Otero, Program Director, Refugee & Immigrant Services San Mateo County; Ellen Hammerle, Division Director, Health Support Services; Kathy Brown, Director of Advancement; Jennifer Bilyk Makokha, Director of Human Resources; Tere Brown, Director of Program Operations; Dr. Michael Hertl; Dr. Matthias Meyer, Mrs. Inge Broy; Keith Spindle, Director of Administration and CFO; Rev. Dr. Kenneth Weare, Catholic Charities Board Member; Jane Ferguson Flout, Director of Community and Parish Engagement; and Dorothy Cartahena, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director ■



Catholic Charities Earns Service Enterprise Certification



In mid-January, Catholic Charities officially earned a two-year **Service Enterprise certification** through the **Service Enterprise Initiative**, led by **Points of Light**, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. We are so proud to be **one of the first** organizations to earn the certification in California.

In the past twelve months, Catholic Charities' volunteer base increased by 23 percent to **3,761 volunteers**. The certification is proof of Catholic Charities' commitment to leveraging the skills of volunteers across all levels of leadership, departments and programs to address community needs. Less than 15 percent of organizations nationwide are characterized as certified Service Enterprises.

"We have always highly valued the work of our volunteers and we are so grateful for their support," said **Jeff Bialik**, Executive Director of Catholic Charities. "Now that we earned the Service Enterprise certification, we look forward to welcoming even more people to join us in serving our at-risk neighbors. We simply could not maintain the quality of our programs without those in our communities who give of their time and talents." ■

Volunteer Profile

NANCY LUBAMERSKY



Most of Catholic Charities' volunteers have stories about someone they respected who taught them about the value of giving back. For **Nancy Lubamersky**, it was her mother. "About 10 years ago I got involved," says Nancy. "My mom had been a Catholic Charities volunteer my entire life, so a couple of years after she died, I decided to get involved in Catholic Charities too." Nancy followed closely in her mother's footsteps in many regards. "My mom was a wonderful person. Even with four kids, she worked full time, volunteered at Catholic Charities and was president of the PTA and president of the Guild at St. Patrick's – she was the ultimate volunteer." Nancy is a wife and mother of two grown children, vice president of a telecommunications company, active in her parish choir, serves as president of the Cal Alumni Club of Marin, and volunteers for Catholic Charities.

Living in Marin, Nancy was drawn to get involved with a local program. At Catholic Charities Canal Family Support, located

in San Rafael, she spearheads food drives with her fellow church choir members to provide holiday food for families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Nancy and her friends also sang at the program's Christmas party and helped out at the end-of-year school event. But her generosity has not stopped there. She also collects and donates children's clothing for two additional Catholic Charities programs: St. Joseph's Family Center and Treasure Island Child Development Center.

"Once you see what you get back from giving, it's almost like an addiction. How good it feels to make a difference – to help someone who wants to help themselves! How good it feels to run off and shop for a need and know a 2-year old is going to have a pair of boots – it's better than going out to dinner," says Nancy. "What matters is helping others – an individual, a family – and helping the wonderful people who do good work, who dedicate their lives to helping others. That translates to exponentially more than any hour I can give." ■

The Necessity of Stability



At Catholic Charities, we believe that every person has a fundamental right to life and to those things required for human decency, including an affordable and appropriate place to live.

As demonstrated in our cover story about Jordana, an individual or family without stable housing is a person or family in crisis. All the investments we might make in better schools, improved health systems, and smarter food choices will not make up for the lack of housing stability. This is especially true for our children. It is impossible for a child to imagine a positive future while living in an unstable present.

That is why so much of our work with individuals and families in crisis is centered first on securing a safe place to live; either by preventing eviction, rapidly moving homeless families into shelter or providing permanent supportive housing. To a person who is both chronically ill and homeless, housing is medicine. To a homeless child, housing stability is a prerequisite to learning in the classroom.

Last year, Catholic Charities Homelessness and Housing Services helped **4,500 people** – children, single adults, families – avoid homelessness and stay stably housed.



Our mission of strengthening families and reducing poverty begins with a safe and secure place to live for Jordana, her children and thousands like them each year.

Sincerely and with gratitude,



Jeff Bialik
Executive Director

CYO
camp



Visit us at
www.cyocamp.org
for **Summer Camp 2015**
dates and info!



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GET INVOLVED

The Lenten season is a special time of year when we are reminded to love our neighbors. Here are some meaningful ways to share your time and talents as a Catholic Charities volunteer:

- Read to children at Star Community Home (March 24 or 31)
- Distribute food to seniors at Edith Witt Senior Community (March 26 or April 2)
- Decorate Easter baskets with residents at Leland House (March 29)

For more details about these and other volunteer opportunities, contact **Clint Womack**, Volunteer Coordinator, at **415 972 1297** or volunteer@CatholicCharitiesSF.org. ■



990 Eddy Street
San Francisco, CA 94109

415 972 1200
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LOAVES & FISHES
Awards Dinner & Gala

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18TH ANNUAL LOAVES & FISHES
AWARDS DINNER AND GALA
HONORING KRISTINE & JIM SILVA
BENEFITING CATHOLIC CHARITIES
HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SERVICES

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2015
ST. REGIS HOTEL

*To purchase tickets, visit www.CatholicCharitiesSF.org/LoavesAndFishes
or contact our Event Manager at 415 972 1273 or
LoavesAndFishes2015@CatholicCharitiesSF.org.*