

Catholic Charities CHANGING LIVES

CONTENTS

- Out of the Shadows 1
- Staff Profile: Dreamers on Parallel Paths 2
- Get Involved..... 2
- Faith in Action at Catholic Charities Sunday..... 2
- One Family 3
- Catholic Charities Participates in Twitter’s NeighborNest Launch 3
- Pathways to Citizenship..... 3-4
- Back to School..... 4

OUT OF THE SHADOWS



Angelica came to the United States to earn a living that would allow her to support the two young daughters she reluctantly left behind in Mexico. Shortly after arriving in the U.S., she met her husband, **Manolo**. During their fourteen-year relationship, Manolo became increasingly jealous and violent. Caught between the threat of being deported and the domestic abuse that terrorized herself and their young children, Angelica felt trapped and turned to Catholic Charities for help.

The staff at **Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigrant Services** helped Angelica obtain a U Visa on the basis of the domestic violence that she suffered at the hands of Manolo. Finally free from her abusive relationship, she was now faced with being the sole provider for the children she had with Manolo. With the U Visa, Angelica not only had a chance to come out of the shadows and provide for her children, but she also got the opportunity to travel to Mexico and see her daughters that awaited her there after twenty long years of separation. In addition to the legal assistance Catholic Charities provided, Angelica was also referred to a therapist for emotional support and healing.

Angelica’s success is one of many examples of how Catholic Charities is committed to strengthening all families by helping them become full participants in their community. For more than **40 years**, Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigrant Services has met the immigration needs of thousands of clients from all over the world. Most recently, the program has served large numbers of immigrants who arrived as children with their parents in years past, as well as those who arrived more recently as unaccompanied minors. Doors have been opened to individuals and families who were once hopeless. Now, mothers and children have the opportunity to be safe from abuse with dreams of a brighter future. ■



Staff Profile

DREAMERS ON PARALLEL PATHS

At the age of ten, **Karina Almanza** left Guanajuato, Mexico and migrated to the United States in search of her father. After reuniting with him, she began a new chapter of her young life. As a teenager, Karina excelled in school and regularly volunteered at local organizations that supported low-income families. In May 2015, she earned a bachelor's degree with honors and continues to pursue her passion for helping undocumented immigrants in her community.

Also at the age of ten, **Jennifer Sotz** left her hometown of Lima Cortes, Honduras to reunite with her mother who had moved to the United States months earlier to provide for her children. Although Jennifer struggled with learning a new language, she excelled in school, making it to the honor roll. Her experience as a volunteer fueled her passion for those who needed help in the Spanish-speaking community.

In June 2014, Karina and Jennifer were placed at **Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigrant Services** as part of the **DreamSF Fellowship** program through San Francisco's Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs. This Fellowship is an opportunity for youth in San Francisco's immigrant community to gain valuable professional experience and training. After the six-month Fellowship, both Karina and Jennifer were hired by Catholic Charities to help other immigrants.

Today, Karina and Jennifer serve as On-Call Immigration Legal Assistants at Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigrant Services. They work alongside other immigration counselors to help clients apply for legal status. They assist staff with client applications for immigration benefits and provide administrative support. Catholic Charities is thrilled that the paths of both of these talented women led to helping people with similar stories. ■

GET INVOLVED

Summer is a great time to get your entire family together to help those who are less fortunate in your community. Here are some upcoming volunteer opportunities:

- Help children living in our emergency shelters and supportive housing programs get a fresh start in school this coming year. You, your group, or your company can invest in a child's future by donating backpacks, school supplies, gift cards or uniforms.
- Become an intern! Friendly, outgoing and energetic interns are needed to support Catholic Charities programs with day-to-day activities in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties.

For more on how to get involved, visit CatholicCharitiesSF.org/get-involved or contact **Diana Contreras**, Volunteer Manager, at **415 972 1297** or volunteer@CatholicCharitiesSF.org. ■



FAITH IN ACTION AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES SUNDAY

Thanks to all who loved their neighbors this year by giving to the **Catholic Charities Sunday Second Collection** on May 9 and 10. This annual collection from Catholic parishes throughout San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo Counties helps provide services for more than **35,000 people** who need housing, safety, respite, hope, and a chance to thrive. Your faith in action makes a difference for at-risk individuals and enacts positive change in your communities. ■



PATHWAYS TO CITIZENSHIP

ONE FAMILY



In April, we marked the **40th anniversary of the fall of Saigon**, which ended the Vietnam War and began the migration of thousands of Vietnamese seeking refuge in the United States. Today, many of the ethnic Vietnamese that we know as our friends, colleagues, and business partners are the children or grandchildren of these refugees.

Each year, nearly **70,000 refugees** enter the U.S., many of them seeking asylum from the deep pain of violence, abuse, or starvation. Equally heartbreaking are the **60,000 unaccompanied minors** who have arrived in the United States since 2013. These are children running for their lives with nowhere else to turn for help.

Catholic Charities believes that every human life is precious and we welcome all who come to our doors without judgment. Whether fleeing war, abject poverty, or violence, our cover story about Angelica reminds us that we are all one human family; and that, by working together, even painful stories can have a happy ending.

Sincerely and with gratitude,

Jeff Bialik
Executive Director

“ **Millions of families...refugees from many countries and different faiths, experience in their stories, tragedies and wounds that will not likely be healed. Let us be their neighbors, share their fears and uncertainty about the future, and take concrete steps to reduce their suffering.** ”

Pope Francis



CATHOLIC CHARITIES PARTICIPATES IN TWITTER'S NEIGHBORNEST LAUNCH

On **May 20, 2015**, **Twitter** launched a community center called **NeighborNest**, which offers low-income youth the opportunity to interact with Twitter engineers and learn through technology. **Catholic Charities Maureen & Craig Sullivan Youth Services**, located next to Twitter headquarters in San Francisco's mid-Market neighborhood, has served as the testing ground for NeighborNest over the past year. **Erica Nave**, head teacher at Maureen & Craig Sullivan Youth Services (pictured third from the left), spoke about Catholic Charities' involvement at the launch alongside **Twitter CEO Dick Costolo** (second from right) and **San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee** (at podium). ■

Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigrant Services participated in a Mega Citizenship Workshop that took place at the **Bill Graham Civic Auditorium** in **San Francisco** on **May 16, 2015**. The event is a **collaboration** between **six non-profit agencies** in a joint endeavor called **Pathways to Citizenship**, funded by the **San Francisco Office of the Mayor**. More than **1,000 legal resident immigrants** were assisted, **650** of which were able to file applications for naturalization. ■





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 CatholicCharitiesSF
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A decorative border of white, hand-drawn school-related icons on a black background. The icons include backpacks, globes, lightbulbs, notebooks, pencils, rulers, hearts, and musical notes.

Back to School

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN YOUR COMMUNITY WHO CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY THEIR OWN. YOU CAN HELP BY DONATING:

- BACKPACKS FULL OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES
- TARGET GIFT CARDS
- INSULATED LUNCHBOX SETS

EVEN A SMALL DONATION WILL EQUIP CHILDREN WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO SUCCEED AT SCHOOL. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIFIC DONATION NEEDS, PLEASE VISIT CATHOLICCHARITIESSF.ORG/DONATE OR CONTACT DIANA CONTRERAS AT 415 972 1297 OR VOLUNTEER@CATHOLICCHARITIESSF.ORG.

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