Moving children, youth and families from **Crisis** to **Stability** to **Prosperity**
From Persecution to Freedom
How you helped the Shahzads start a new life in the East Bay

The Shahzad family is Christian, a small, persecuted religious minority in Pakistan. Two of Ghaffor Shahzad’s brothers were murdered for their religious beliefs, and Ghaffor himself was severely beaten. Fearing for the safety of his wife, Teresa, and their 4 young children, he left everything behind and fled to nearby Thailand. “It was better to flee, and to keep my family together and alive,” he explained.

Life in Bangkok was difficult. His family was ineligible for permanent residency, and shared a cramped one-room apartment, but at least they were safe from persecution. The Shahzads applied for refugee status in the United States, and after a long 3-year wait, they were finally approved.

A Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement case worker welcomed the family at Oakland International Airport, part of the long journey all refugees take toward self-sufficiency. We immediately found them affordable housing and assisted them with their social security applications, health screenings, and other social service appointments. We also enrolled the three youngest children in high school.

Over the next several months, we helped the Shahzads acclimate to their new home. Ghafoor and Teresa enrolled in Catholic Charities’ Refugee Employment Services to prepare for work in the US. The Shahzad family was accepted into Family to Family, a program that creates a relationship between a low-income family and a team of volunteers within a parish. As a result of that partnership, the family has found connection in their new home. Just as importantly, by helping Ghaffor find a good job with benefits for his entire family, he has a sense of empowerment that he hasn’t felt since he fled Pakistan.

“I am very thankful to God and Catholic Charities,” he explained. “We are connected to community through Catholic Charities. God has blessed us, and we are safe.”

Thank You!

Catholic Charities is grateful to all of our donors. Because of your gifts, both large and small, you are transforming lives in the East Bay.

No two gifts are alike, but every gift transforms lives. One mother of 4, on a very limited budget, captures the spirit of sacrificial giving. She heard our appeal during Mass and was so moved she contributed the last $20 in her purse – the money that was to last her the remainder of the week. Stories like this inspire us to continue our work.

Thank You!

Our Mission
Rooted in compassion and human dignity for all, Catholic Charities of the East Bay works with youth, children and families to promote self-sufficiency, strengthen families and pursue safety and justice.
Vision & Legacy

As Catholic Charities of the East Bay celebrates its 80th Anniversary, we have embraced Pope Francis’ call to be “Christ’s church in the street.” It has also been a year of growth as we focused on the ever-changing needs of our community, and on our strengths as an agency. As a result, we have applied for and received significantly more funding through government contracts. That has had a direct impact on our ability to fund crucial services and meet the needs of the working poor and marginalized in the East Bay.

1. Our nationally recognized Restorative Trauma-Informed Practices program (RTIPs) continued to transform the lives of youth in the West Contra Costa Unified School District over the past 4 years. We are now poised to expand our RTIPs program into the Oakland Unified School District.

2. We opened the new West County Service Center in Richmond, which will allow us to provide a wider array of services to one of the East Bay’s most underserved communities.

3. We have responded to the wave of unaccompanied minors fleeing violence and persecution in their homeland. We secured government funding to create a new legal practice area devoted to protecting the most vulnerable in our society, and have successfully represented our first cases.

4. We have completed over 60 policies and procedures as we seek agency accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA). This mark of excellence ensures that we continue to provide a high level of service to youth, children, and families.
You’re Our Hero!

Your support allowed Catholic Charities of the East Bay to transform the lives of over 14,820 Alameda and Contra Costa County residents in 2014. Through our welcoming the stranger, healing trauma and fostering self-sufficiency program areas, we are able to make a sustainable impact in youth and families.

In the United States, 654,949 immigrants seeking hope for a better life became naturalized US citizens in 2014. Your donation helped 1,618 people enter the pathway to citizenship. Together we were able to instill a spirit of empowerment so that they can be leaders in their home, community and work.

The average youth suspension rate across 16 West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) secondary schools is more than twice the California average. Your donation helped reduce the suspension rate in 11 WCCUSD secondary schools by 69%. Together, we are breaking the school-to-prison pipeline.

The average monthly, one-bedroom rent in the East Bay is $1,704. In Contra Costa County, it costs approximately 10 times more to house a family who becomes homeless than to keep them in their home. Your donation kept 356 families together in their homes.

Thank You!

Take the Tour, Learn More & Get Involved
To attend, contact Debra Gunn at 510.768.3142 or dgunn@ceeb.org