



Summer 2021 - Your Quarterly News & Updates



MEASURING OUR IMPACT



To say that the past year has been difficult for many East Bay families would be an understatement. But Catholic Charities rose to the challenge by distributing an estimated \$2.1 million for housing assistance, largely in the form of back rent and help paying utility bills. We also bought laptops for students and gave out approximately \$46,000 in grocery gift cards since the start of the pandemic.

Check out our [2021 Impact Report](#) for a closer look at our work this year.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Laura Tapia – Associate Clinical Social Worker, Mental Health

Most employees come into a program that is

already delivering services. Laura Tapia has a knack for starting new programs, which she has been doing since joining Catholic Charities in 2000. Her tenure makes Laura one of our longest serving employees.

Laura's first role at Catholic Charities was coordinating a job training program for immigrants who wanted to work in early childhood education, a partnership with Contra Costa College and West Contra Costa Unified School District's Adult Education program.



After the pilot ended in 2005, Laura joined a new program that sought to prevent unnecessary removal of children from homes, a novel idea in the early 2000s.

“Research was just coming out at the time that removing kids from the family could really traumatize children and that they would suffer PTSD because their brains were still developing,” recalls Laura.

The job was stressful and, at times, dangerous such as when Laura had to respond to a client who had been tracked down and sexually assaulted by her abuser in her new home on Thanksgiving. After the attack, the woman tried calling police, but could not communicate due to a language barrier. Her next call was to Laura, who helped the woman make a report, seek medical care and obtain an emergency protective order, all while dealing with personal threats from her client's abuser. Laura also referred the client to Catholic Charities immigration legal services team, which helped her apply for a special visa for victims of crime who cooperate with police. Today, the woman is a U.S. citizen.

Laura went back to school at Cal State East Bay, receiving a master's degree in social work in 2016. Today Laura lends her experience across several services: in Family Support Services, where she handles intense domestic violence cases, and in Crisis Response Support Network, where she provides grief therapy to families who have lost loved ones to violence.

In her remaining time, Laura is preparing to launch (surprise!) another service, a support group for Latino parents.

“The reasons that people leave home, what they experience during their journey and when they arrive here can all be very traumatic,” she says. The groups will meet in person over ten sessions during which Laura will present on parenting, immigration trauma and domestic violence.

“I truly believe that Catholic Charities provides a platform that allows

me to do the work that is my mission in life, which is to empower families and provide resources for them so that they can better themselves,” says Laura.



SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Rental Assistance Continues

Do you know someone who is struggling to pay rent? If so, they may be eligible for assistance from our Housing Program, which helps clients pay back rent, security deposits and utilities. More information and applications in both English and Spanish are available on our [website](#).



Feeding the Hungry

In this year of great need, we have been busy, distributing more than 64,000 pounds of food to nearly 11,000 East Bay residents through a partnership with Saint Vincent de Paul Contra Costa and the Contra Costa Food Bank.

Groceries are distributed the second Tuesday of the month at our Richmond Service Center, located at 217 Harbour Way. The next date is August 10, at 10:00 am. And this summer, we brought our

food pantry to the Oakland community, holding a monthly event the first Wednesday of the month at St. Elizabeth School in partnership with the school and the Alameda County Food Bank. The next date is August 4, beginning at 2:30 pm. This site will only operate through summer, but we hope to be able to offer this service year-round in the future.

For more details about the food distribution program, please visit our [events calendar](#).

Free Legal Consultations for Green Card Holders

Are you ready to become an American citizen? If you have had a green card for at least five years, you may be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.



Please contact us at 510-768-3100 to set up a consultation with a member of our Immigration Legal Services team.



STAFF & BOARD UPDATES

Welcome New Board Members

On May 1, the Catholic Charities East Bay Board of Directors elected Jim Jones as chair of the board. Jim has served on the board since 2015 and replaces John Espinoza, who has retired from the board. Additionally, James Fiedler was elected Vice Chair and David Katreeb has been named assistant treasurer. We also want to welcome two new members to our board: Wendy Levich and Matthew Kemner. Please [visit our website](#) to learn more.



Golfing for COVID-19 Relief

After a year off in 2020, our Golf Tournament returned on June 21 and was held at the Blackhawk Country Club. The event raised more than \$50,000, funds that will be used for COVID-19 relief, including assistance with back

rent and food gift cards.

We are grateful to our Presenting Sponsor [Wilcox Family Foundation](#) and Platinum Sponsor [Catholic Funeral & Cemetery Services](#). We also want to thank our Silver Sponsors [Fremont Bank](#), [Mechanics Bank](#) and [Peterson CAT](#). For more information about our golf tournament, [click here](#).

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