Social Justice in Leadville, CO

When a life is lost, love and support will overcome. The people of Leadville experienced this after the unfortunate death of a young community member. As a mountain resort town, many migrant workers come to the area seeking employment, which is how Gloria Lizardo, a single mother with her four children and grandchild, came to reside in Leadville. The family lived in a crowded mobile home—all they could afford on Gloria’s limited income.

In May, tragedy struck the Lizardo home when an electrical fire occurred. The smoke alarms were defective and as the family slept, the flames grew. Eventually, the smoke caused 11-year old Marc Anthony, an asthmatic, to wake. He immediately alerted his family so they could get out of the burning home, but once outside, Gloria discovered Marc Anthony was not with the rest of the family. Aware of the gravity of the situation, John Ortiz, Captain of the Leadville Fire Department, called in off-duty firefighters and fire departments in nearby counties for assistance. Once the fire was under control, they entered the structure and found the body of Marc Anthony.

The entire community was impacted by this tragedy. Captain Ortiz said, “Being such a small department in a small town, it hit us hard. As a department, we showed up for the funeral, which was probably one of the hardest things our department has ever done.” For his role in saving his family, Marc Anthony was named an honorary firefighter. The local community rallied around the family with financial, social, and spiritual support, helping the Lizardos slowly piece their lives back together.

Catholic Charities (CC) learned of the tragedy through Holy Family Parish in Leadville, where they make regular deliveries to help stock the parish’s food pantry. CC provided donations of clothes and toys, as well as a donated car to replace the family’s vehicle, which was damaged in the fire. The family also received support from CC’s Life Connections counseling staff. With the local community’s support and assistance from CC, the Lizardo family is now living in a new apartment. Itzel, the oldest child, found work and uses the donated car to make her commute. She says, “Deep inside, we’re really thankful for everyone that helped. We don’t even know how to express our gratefulness.”

The story might not have had a tragic ending if the smoke detectors were working properly because smoke detectors save lives. Rosalie Pena, Parish Social Ministry Coordinator at CC, could not agree more. After contacting numerous resources, Pena learned the American Red Cross of Southeastern Colorado’s Home Fire Campaign partners with Kiddie Smoke Alarms to check and install new smoke alarms in low-income communities. She immediately organized an event to have these free smoke alarms installed in homes in the Leadville area.

In November, a group of volunteers installed 105 smoke alarms in Leadville and Salida, including the community where the Lizardo family had lived. During the event a firefighter discovered and replaced a sparking smoke detector that had melted, possibly preventing a fire; families were educated on the importance of fire safety and taking preventative measures; and several more installation events were scheduled for other at-risk communities. This community-wide collaboration has informed and equipped families with the means to prevent another terrible accident; has provided the foundation of healing for the Lizardo family and the community; and has honored the life of the community’s youngest firefighter, Marc Anthony.
One evening last April I spent three hours at the Emergency Warming Shelter in Colorado Springs visiting with people who had no place to sleep. I was there in an effort to provide information about services that would be available once the shelter closed for the season to the roughly 120 individuals who had been coming inside to keep from freezing all winter.

Throughout the evening, a man who introduced himself as Eddie from Louisiana, visited with me in short spurts as he set up his sleeping space by the window. When I told him I worked for Catholic Charities, he became more serious, thanked me and said, “You know, the Marian House is the only place anyone ever sees me.” When I asked what he meant, he talked about the volunteers who smile and say “hi” and the staff and the nurse who knew his name. All simple parts of most of our days that mean so much for someone who lives on the margins.

For staff, volunteers and community members, seeing the vulnerability of our neighbors can be challenging. It is difficult to walk alongside someone who is battling addiction or a mental health issue. Just as it can be painful to see an immigrant father who works seven days a week in constant fear of seeing his family separated, or to watch a single mother struggling to raise her children in poverty. To get these glimpses of what our poor, our homeless and our immigrant brothers and sisters have seen and what they have known, can break your heart. Yet for Eddie from Louisiana and for so many others, the willingness to see and hear the humanity of everyone we serve is what sets Catholic Charities apart from everyone else.

To see the poor and vulnerable is perhaps the most profound way to understand how Jesus felt. We know of Jesus being among the “least ones”, but it is equally important to recall all that He risked to serve those in need, time and again, because He could not ignore their suffering. He experienced it with the leper in Galilee: “Moved with pity, He stretched out His hand, touched him, and said to him. ‘I will do it. Be made clean.’” (MK 1:41). Then again for the paralytic, the blind Bartimaeus, the deaf man in Decapolis. Jesus’ heart broke for those who suffered and were ignored. He responded with His love, just as you who support Catholic Charities with your time, donations and prayers respond with love to the poor and vulnerable in our communities.

With the help of hundreds of volunteers this holiday season, the Marian House will continue serving over 600 meals every day including Thanksgiving and Christmas. As the only soup kitchen in Colorado Springs, closing for even a day would mean turning away from those in need. Of the patrons who will eat those meals, only 35% will be homeless. The remaining majority of those seeking food each day will be families, seniors, veterans and others who are struggling on fixed incomes and trying to make ends meet. Because of the Marian House, no one in Colorado Springs has to worry about where they will find their next meal.

This holiday season, with your critical support, Catholic Charities will continue Christ’s ministry in our communities. We will work toward building thriving families, providing pathways to financial stability, and supporting healthy lifestyles for those who are poor and vulnerable of their circumstances. Most importantly, for those who are seeking, we will provide a place to go and a smiling face to greet them. They will be seen.
"For it is in Giving that we Receive."
-St. Francis of Assisi

Special Tax Credits

Sharing your time, treasure and talent is a reward in and of itself. Tax credits offer an additional benefit for your generosity. For more information on these credits, call 719-866-6440 or consult your tax advisor.

50% CHILDCARE CONTRIBUTION COLORADO STATE INCOME TAX CREDIT

The Child Care Contribution State Income Tax Credit acknowledges your contributions to child-centric programs. Your donation to Life Connections adoption/child placement program qualifies for this 50% credit. Life Connections provides adoption services, counseling, early literacy programs and many more opportunities for children in our community.

25% ENTERPRISE ZONE COLORADO STATE INCOME TAX CREDIT

This 25% tax credit is a part of the community-wide effort to uplift economically distressed areas in El Paso County. Contributions of $250 or more to businesses that make improvements to this area qualify for this tax credit. This includes donations to 1 of 3 Marian House programs - Soup Kitchen, Client Services, or Community Outreach. In a number of ways, these programs provide support for struggling individuals and families to help them reach a level of self sufficiency.

To utilize this special credit, checks must be made payable to the "El Paso County Enterprise Zone" and mailed to Catholic Charities, 228 N. Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903. Credit cards are not accepted for this tax credit. A Colorado Taxpayer ID or Social Security number must be included if this number has not been provided to us in the past.

Gift Societies

Become a member of Catholic Charities’ Gift Societies!

1968 Founders Society - minimum gift of $1,968
New Members: Gordon & Ann Allott

Caritas Society - minimum gift of $10,000
New Members: Oscar & Rose Valdez
Dr. Peter & Kristin Zimmer

For more information, contact Janet Hutchinson at (719) 866-6440 or jhutchinson@CCharitiesCC.org.

What Our Clients Say

"The Marian House staff and volunteers are shining lights to anybody out there that’s desperate and needs help."
-Jerry, Client Services Guest

Grateful to Our Grantors!

Bike & Build
Family Day Center

El Pomar
Life Support Services
Family Day Center

Employees Community Fund of the Boeing Company
Marian House Soup Kitchen

William and Betty Osborne Trust Fund
Marian House Soup Kitchen
Life Support Services
“...I was one who did not like homeless people.
I would cross the street to avoid them.”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: TOM & CLAUDIA

“Truthfully, I was one who did not like homeless people. I would cross the street to avoid them,” said Claudia as she reflected on her feelings before volunteering at the Marian House. When she first volunteered, Claudia only wanted to work sorting clothes, not with the people. Eventually, she was asked to help with clients, and her heart softened: “Slowly, but surely, I found out that they were just terrific people,” she said. This was the beginning of a transformative change that would lead Claudia and her husband, Tom, to become passionate volunteers for almost nine years.

Claudia remembers the day she lost her wallet. It turned out that a couple of Marian House guests had found it and recognizing Claudia’s identification, one of the clients biked to the nearest police station to return it. Claudia was amazed: “There was not one dime gone, not one credit card missing. It was a beautiful experience.”

Tom recalls a day when he went to pick up a donation of twelve boxes of clothing. The donation was so big, he had to sit in his convertible while volunteers packed the car around him. As he drove through the Marian House parking lot, he witnessed a moment of sincere gratitude. He said, “There was this little old lady… as I went by her, she cupped her hands and yelled ‘God bless you, sir, God bless you!’ and started applauding, and people started looking and they started applauding. Then, I had a couple hundred people out there applauding.” Tom was left with nothing to say. “I just couldn’t believe it.”

Tom and Claudia’s work with the Marian House has done so much more than provide a new perspective on poverty; it has contributed to their flourishing relationship with each other. “It’s brought us so close together…this is a great mutual effort that we put forth,” said Tom.
The new Family Day Center (FDC), which opened September 1st in the Hanifen Center at Marian House, continues to grow. The FDC, the only day center in Colorado Springs specifically addressing families experiencing homelessness or poverty, provides resources and a safe place for families to relax during the day. In the two months of operation, 38 unduplicated families made 77 visits to the FDC. About half of the families are homeless while the other half are housed, but facing eviction.

Nearly all families use the Family Lounge to relax with their children, and most utilize job search and financial literacy opportunities. When asked about the most enjoyable activity, families list "talking about things and getting to solve issues," and "working on the computer without their child present" (children play in child watch while parents participate in activities).

"This is the most relaxed I have been in a long time."
- Homeless Mother of Two, Family Day Center Guest

Several families were referred for shelter, provided rental assistance, or had a case manager act as a liaison with a landlord. On Tuesdays, enrichment activities, including painting, theater, cooking, storytelling and movies, are available to all Marian House guests, regardless of participation in the FDC. The activities allow participants to be creative and engage to relieve stress. Solving family homelessness is not a quick fix; however, the initial results of the FDC indicate this unique program is a step in the right direction.

Catholic Charities is grateful for our partnership with Family Promise of Colorado Springs. We applaud the 24 dedicated volunteers who have logged over 250 hours of service, in addition to Lisa Lundquist, Sophie Javna, Colorado College students, and Seeds Community Cafe staff members who have led enrichment activities. We are also grateful for our funders including Marson Foundation, Peak Producers, the City of Colorado Springs, Bike & Build, and El Pomar Foundation.
LAS POSADAS - FRIDAY DECEMBER 18TH

Las Posadas is a tradition rooted in Hispanic cultures around the world. The custom symbolizes the search of Mary and Joseph for a place for Jesus to be born. Las Posadas helps us recognize that the story of the Holy Family is also the story of a migrant family. Join us this year on Friday, December 18 at 5:30 p.m. at the Marian House Soup Kitchen. Donations benefit immigration programs at Catholic Charities. For more information and to RSVP, contact Corey Almond at 719-866-6510 or calmond@CCharitiesCC.org.

ST. PATRICK’S DAY GALA - SATURDAY MARCH 12TH

Save the date for an extravagant evening of Green & Gold at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort! Food, fun, and fabulous auction items - this Gala has it all. Proceeds benefit Catholic Charities’ programs and services. Invitations will be in your mailbox by mid-February, but you can RSVP to reserve your seat now at 719-866-6422! Tickets are $125 and include a seated Irish dinner, wine, and entertainment.

Do you want to host all of your friends and have your name up on the big screen during the event? Contact Janet at 719-866-6440 to become a sponsor! Sponsorship levels range from green to gold and are a great way to generate community recognition for your business as a caring community partner.

The success of the Gala relies on generous community members like you who donate unique items to include in our silent and live auctions. From exclusive vacation packages, to fine dining, to beautiful jewelry, donations of all sorts are accepted. If you have an item to donate, please contact us at 719-866-6523 for details or to arrange a pick-up.

OPERATION STRYKER CHRISTMAS

The sixth annual Stryker Christmas, formally Operation Happy Holidays, took place on December 4th. Nearly 2,000 soldiers packed their field packs full of donations of food, clothing, gifts, toys, etc., for our neighbors in need and marched from Dorchester Park to Marian House. Soldiers not only volunteer their time to participate in the march, they also collect all the donations they bring.

This event showcases the collaboration of the City of Colorado Springs, the Colorado Springs Police Department and the Homeless Outreach Team, the Sheriffs office, Ft. Carson Raider Brigade, and Marian House in helping our neighbors in need. This year, all the human service agencies in the area were encouraged to share the event with their clients.

Thousands of community members are able to enjoy a safe, warm, and cheerful holiday season due to this spectacular event.
KEEP STUFFING THAT BIRD!

Thank you for supporting the 2nd Annual Stuff the Bird Turkey Drive! For the second year in a row, Catholic Charities was a member of the "Turkey Team" alongside Care and Share Food Bank and Springs Rescue Mission. As a community, we helped to collect 14,000 turkeys, and the number continues to grow.

Turkeys collected for the Marian House will be served for the Thanksgiving meal, distributed to our rural partners, used in food boxes for families, and stored to be used in meal preparation throughout the year. Your support matters! Thousands of families will be able to enjoy the holiday season thanks to the generosity of our community.

If you missed the event and still want to donate, turkeys will be used in our Christmas food boxes. Just drop your turkey at Marian House, 14 West Bijou, Monday - Saturday, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

SERVING UP PIZZA WITH LOVE

On October 22, Marian House Soup Kitchen guests enjoyed a special pizza lunch in addition to the regular meal, thanks to the Little Caesar’s Love Kitchen. The Love Kitchen is a mobile pizza kitchen that travels throughout the continental U.S. serving pizza at soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and at disaster recovery sites. Volunteers from local Little Caesar’s franchises prepare and serve the pizza at each site. The Kitchen last visited the Marian House in 2009.

Material Needs:

**Food**
- Frozen Turkeys, Ground beef, non-dairy coffee creamer, hot chocolate, sugar, salt, non-perishable food items
- Infants & Children
  - Size 4 & 5 diapers, parents’ choice baby formula, baby food, new baby clothes, children’s books ages 0-5 - especially board books

**Home & Transportation**
- Dishes, pots & pans, working vehicles

**Clothing**
- Coats, hoodies & sweatpants, men’s pants, hygiene items, men’s & women’s underwear

**Volunteers**
- Family day center volunteers, early literacy volunteers, & ESL teachers

Drop off donations at the Marian House West dock
14 West Bijou Street
Mon - Sat, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

What Our Clients Say

"It’s more than just a soup kitchen. They don’t just feed people and put them back on the street."
- Client Services Guest
Mission Statement

In response to Jesus Christ’s call to affirm the value and dignity of each human life, to build solidarity within the community, and to advocate for justice for the poor and vulnerable, Catholic Charities of Central Colorado humbly engages in the ministry of charity for those in both economic and spiritual poverty so that all – staff, volunteers, and clients – may fully achieve their God-given potential.

Contact Us:
Colorado Springs Office
228 North Cascade, Colorado Springs, CO 80903
T: 719-636-2345     F: 719-636-1216

Castle Rock Office
2746 Fifth Street, Castle Rock, CO 80104
T: 720-215-4521     F: 303-688-4016

www.CCharitiesCC.org
info@CCharitiesCC.org

WARM 600 HEARTS IN A DAY.

What a difference a day makes.

Sponsor a day of meals at MarianHouseSponsorADay.org

For only $1,500, you, your business, organization or church can sponsor a day at Marian House. In that one day, your support provides a homemade, nutritious meal to everyone who comes through our doors. They are families with children, veterans, seniors, the working poor, and people who are homeless. Most just need a little help to make ends meet, but for some, this is their only hot meal of the day.

Commit to a sponsorship today by calling 719-866-6427 or visit us online at MarianHouseSponsorADay.org

To Donate

Call (719) 866-6440
or visit www.CCharitiesCC.org