

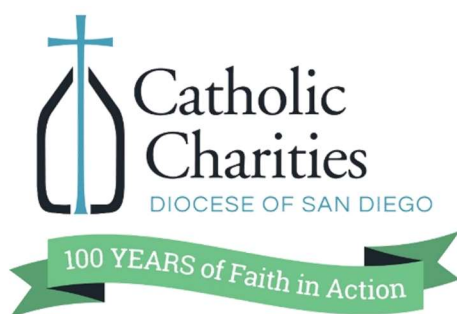


SISTERS' FAITH-IN-ACTION NETWORK

PROGRESS REPORT

September 2022 – August 2023

Program funded by
the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation



Office for Women Religious
Diocese of San Diego

Our Life is Mission / Nuestra Vida es Mision





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“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” – Mathew 25

I. INTRODUCTION

The **Sisters’ Faith-In-Action Network** (known by the acronym FAN) consists of eleven Diocesan Women Religious Congregations (fifteen specific projects) funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Grant (see page 19). The Grant also funds three projects of the Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego.

The Sisters in the eleven Congregations, in conjunction with the Director of the Office for Women Religious, Sister Kathleen Warren, OSF, collaborate with Catholic Charities of San Diego (CCDSD). This mutually beneficial, collaborative arrangement has the potential for the transformation of people, institutions, and our larger culture. The collaboration seeks to enhance existing ministries and add new services for the people of the Diocese of San Diego.

To achieve this goal of transformation, the Hilton Foundation Grant has the following objectives:

1. Support eleven participating Congregations in their ministries to reflect their congregation’s charism through 15 projects and an additional 3 projects from CCDSD.
2. Conduct advocacy across the Diocese of San Diego to generate greater awareness and in-kind support for Sisters’ and CCDSD’s ministries.
3. Create an environment whereby Sisters’ ministries and CCDSD collaborate more deeply to address the needs of vulnerable communities and ensure “Whole Person Wellbeing.”

Sisters’ FAN Leadership Council

The Sisters’ FAN Leadership Council is the Program coordination body of the Hilton Foundation Grant. It meets quarterly with the following objectives:

1. Strengthen collaboration among the Congregations participants in the Hilton Foundation Grant to create interactions among Congregations’ ministries and with CCDSD program services.
2. Share best practices and success stories about the various projects’ execution.

- Review and approve reports that will be submitted by CCSDS to the Hilton Foundation as required by the Hilton Foundation Grant.

The Sisters’ FAN Leadership Council is comprised of the following:

- One Sister representative from each Congregation’s project,
- The Vicar, Office for Women Religious, Diocese of San Diego,
- A Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego representative
- The Sisters’ FAN Program Manager / Leadership Council Liaison
- The Sisters’ FAN Program Consultant.



The present report gathers the key success factors and challenges of the Congregations’ and CCSDS ministries from September 2022 through August 2023. Additionally, considering the successes and challenges analyzed, it gives some ideas to improve the Sisters’ FAN Program.

II. SUCCESSES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

Although each project is different and has specific characteristics and context, there are some elements common to many of them that have contributed considerably to their success:

2.1. Meaningful encounters with the people in need

There are many stereotypes and misconceptions about the population we serve, especially immigrants, asylum seekers, human trafficking victims, and people experiencing homelessness. Many factors contribute to this perception: lack of interaction with these populations, anecdotal stories that may not accurately reflect the diverse realities and experiences of these groups, negative portrayals in Media, deeply ingrained beliefs, or cultural biases, among others. Some individuals may perceive these populations as threats to economic security, cultural identity, or social stability despite evidence to the contrary. Addressing these misconceptions requires a **concerted effort to provide accurate and diverse information, promote empathy and understanding, challenge stereotypes, and encourage meaningful interactions with these communities.**

Some of the programs and ministries participating in the Hilton Foundation Grant invest considerable effort in outreach activities and educate not only the community but also staff and volunteers working on the project. Some of these outreach activities are:

- ✓ Information at community events
- ✓ Local front-line workers speak about their recent experience with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers at the Diocese of San Diego border.
- ✓ Book groups with reflections on the US/Mexico border to study the impacts of immigration, asylum seekers, and undocumented people.
- ✓ Public awareness campaigns
- ✓ Direct communication through various channels like websites, social media, flyers, newsletters, phone calls, or face-to-face interactions

However, **the most effective way of outreach turned out to be giving people and volunteers the opportunity to have meaningful interactions with these populations** and speak with them to know firsthand their problems, fears, feelings, etc. This factor, together with **the opportunity to reflect on their experience, moves them to bring resources, talent, and presence.** For example, Border Compassion (Sisters of St. Joseph Carondelet), in collaboration with The Spiritual Ministry Center (Society of the Sacred Heart), allows grassroots faith communities to visit two shelters in Mexicali, see how the asylum seekers live there, and spend time with them. After their visit, they reflect on and share what they have experienced. The experience is so impactful that 80% of those who cross the border return with others from their community base and beyond.



Border Compassion Volunteers have the opportunity to talk and share some time with the asylum seekers at the Shelter

Casa de Misericordia (Sisters of Mercy of the Americas) facilitates immersion experiences of service with others on both sides of the Border under a model of action and reflection. This enriching experience prepares participants to return home and take action by raising awareness about immigration and its root causes.

In Catholic Charities, people who engage with community members, listen to their stories of struggles and hope and witness the work done through parishes are moved to contribute their time and talent.

These meaningful encounters push people out of their comfort zones, broadening their understanding of the world, challenging stereotypes, and fostering a greater appreciation for diversity and inclusion, creating a sense of fulfillment and connection.

2.2. Collaboration, cooperation and networking

To provide the array of services to the population we serve, all the programs and ministries cooperate, one way or another, with various other organizations to provide appropriate assistance. However, they cooperate for different purposes:

- Some of them coordinate services with complementary organizations to **complement the range of services to address diverse needs**. Beneficiaries often face complex and interconnected challenges that cannot be addressed by a single organization alone. Cooperative efforts enable them to take a holistic approach, considering the multiple dimensions of individuals' lives and providing comprehensive support. For example, Mary's Guest House (Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary) is partnering with other organizations to provide the array of services the women need for healing, such as legal and immigration status, physical and mental health, faith development, education, or recreational activities. Southern California Immigration Project (Sisters of Social Service) is introducing a new program called *Whole Health Connections* that will assist clients in accessing essential resources beyond legal services like food, housing, transportation, education, employment, and more.
- Other programs and ministries collaborate to **pool their resources, expertise, and networks to achieve a more significant impact**. By working together, some projects optimize the allocation of limited resources. For example, the San Diego Ignatian Volunteer Corps (Society of the Sacred Heart) provides volunteers for some of the projects participating in this grant. Many of the students, beneficiaries of the Academy Projects at Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy (Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament), volunteer as teachers in the Escuelitas de Tareas Calasanz (Homework School Calasanz) (Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament & Piarist Fathers), in Mexicali.
- Cooperation allows some projects to **expand their reach and access underserved populations that might be difficult to reach individually**. This enables them to easily access their beneficiaries, establish trust, and deliver services in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. For example, The Women of Wisdom (Sr. of Providence, Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, and Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament) visit senior citizens in Catholic Charities Senior Residentials to help them overcome mobility limitations, reengage in their communities, and resurrect their spirits. Border Ministry to Migrants (Religious of Jesus and Mary) provides spiritual support to asylum seekers at the Catholic Charities shelter in San Diego. Silviano Carrillo Centers (Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament) works with different parishes to offer the opportunity to parishioners to prepare them to take Citizenship Exams. These centers are located in the parishes' facilities, so people learn more efficiently. Similarly, through established partnerships with 20 partnering public schools across San Diego County and seven colleges, Students Without Limits (Society of the Sacred Heart) provides services directly to students at no cost through consultation, meetings, counseling sessions, and workshops designed to support individual and group-wide students.



Women of Wisdom working with a group of Seniors at Catholic Charities Senior Residential

- Cooperative efforts **facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among projects**. They can share their experiences, knowledge about the situation of the immigrant community at the border, and innovative approaches to address common challenges. Some of the Sisters who are part of the Leadership Council have given speeches to other organizations about their experiences working with the immigrant population, such as Sr. Suzanne Jabro, CSJ from Border Compassion, Christina MacLean, SMSM from Mary's Guest House, or Sr. Ann Durst, SHCJ from Casa Cornelia Law Center.

Additionally, a group of congregations that, in the Initiation phase of the grant, was part of the group whose focus was a ministry with migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking along the California/Mexico border continued gathering until becoming a coalition of religious congregations called *The Sisters Collaborative for Border Ministries (Sisters Collaborative)*. Its purpose is to address immediate needs in the border region by providing direct services and gospel presence to immigrants and victims of human trafficking. For them, **collaboration means finding new ways of working together to meet and anticipate the needs of the migrants and refugees**. It meant having a broader pool of resources to assist people in need.

Since the creation of the group, they have met monthly to assess the ministries' needs, become knowledgeable about the ever-changing border situation, and anticipate future needs to be addressed. For example:

- The legal concerns of the immigrant community in Barrio Logan have been addressed in a collaborative way with the establishment of a monthly legal clinic at Casa de Misericordia (Sisters of Mercy of the Americas) staffed by Casa Cornelia Law Center attorneys (Society of the Holy Child Jesus).
- Pastoral ministry of the Spiritual Ministry Center (Society of the Sacred Heart) has found expression in Mexicali through regular monthly collaboration with Border Compassion (Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet) in support of migrants, front-line workers and volunteers at the *Posada del Migrante* shelter. Southern California Immigrant Project (Sisters of Social Service) also collaborates with Border Compassion in offering immigration law services to asylum seekers at the Posada del Migrante shelter.



Sister Lisa Lopez, SSS, Immigration Attorney, and founder of SCIP, presenting up-to-date information about the asylum process to adults at the Posada del Migrante shelter.

However, they also cooperate with other congregations and organizations that are part of the Hilton Foundation Grant. For example, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Calexico are now in the loop for local assistance to the Shelters that Border Compassion (Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet) helps in Mexicali.

In May, they received the visit of Maryanne Loughry, RSM, from the UISG Migration Committee. She arrived in San Diego to gain an understanding of the different border



ministries being carried out by the Sisters along the California/Mexico border. The collaboration and networking done here to support the *People on the Move* during this unprecedented time impressed her greatly.

Finally, three congregations (Sr. of Providence, Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, and Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament) worked together to form a new program called Women of Wisdom – WOW. It aims to provide a healing approach to seniors in low-income housing or retirement homes.

Most of these collaborations and partnerships have been possible thanks to the Sisters' FAN (Faith-in-Action-Network) Leadership Council. They meet quarterly to strengthening collaboration among the Congregations participants and share best practices and success stories about the various projects' execution.

By working together, Congregations and CCDSO are creating a more coordinated, efficient, and impactful response to address underserved populations' complex challenges.

2.3. Volunteer opportunities

All the ministries and organizations need more staff and personnel to meet our beneficiaries' needs. To solve this situation, some **provided volunteer opportunities to enhance the program's capacity and better serve those in need.** By involving volunteers, they could serve more people, offer a more comprehensive range of services, and respond to emerging needs more effectively.

Volunteers often possess a wide range of skills and expertise that complement the program's existing staff. For example, people seeking legal services at Casa Cornelia Law Center (Society of the Holy Child Jesus) come from 58 different countries and speak 44 different languages. To properly attend to such vast cultural diversity, Casa Cornelia has a corps of volunteers (attorneys, language volunteers, students, and others) who contribute more than 11,700 volunteer hours per year.

At the San Diego Ignatian Volunteer Corps Program (Society of the Sacred Heart), **volunteers bring unique talents, professional backgrounds, and life experiences that enrich the services provided by their partner agencies.** This diversity of skills enhances the partner agencies' capacity to address the varied needs of people in need, whether it involves specialized knowledge or specific professional competencies.

In the case of the Escuelas de Tareas Calasanz (Sister Servants of the Blessed Sacrament), **volunteer involvement fosters stronger connections between the program and the community it serves.** It provides an opportunity for individuals from the community to actively participate in addressing the needs of their fellow community members. The same

young people and residents of the community act as volunteer “teachers” to reduce the gaps in the school, the family, and the neighborhood. These volunteers provide guidance and support and serve as positive influences. Additionally, volunteers increase their self-esteem, motivation, and personal development.



A group of volunteer teachers working one-on-one with their students at Escuelas de Tareas Calasanz (Homework Schools Calasanz)

In Catholic Charities, **volunteers contribute to the Program’s flexibility and responsiveness.** They assist during peak periods, providing support in emergency situations or during special festivities like Thanksgiving. Volunteer availability can often be more flexible than paid staff, enabling the program to adapt and scale its services based on evolving needs or limited resources.

Utilizing volunteers helped in many Ministries, such as Casa de Misericordia Sisters of Mercy of the Americas) or Silvano Carrillo Centers (Sister Servants of the Blessed Sacrament) to **reduce the program’s operational costs.** While there may still be associated expenses like training, supervision, or volunteer management, the program can benefit from the unpaid contributions of volunteers. This allows them to maximize the program’s impact within the available budget.

Finally, **volunteering provides individuals with a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and empowerment.** Some recovered victims are invited to volunteer in Mary’s Guest House

(Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary) to tutor other guests. Similarly, some SWOL students present their experiences to other students and school and college staff all over San Diego (Society of the Sacred Heart).



SWOL alumnus Francisco speaking and sharing his story with a class of graduate counseling students at the University of San Diego.

These experiences have many benefits:

- ✓ Volunteers feel valued and contribute to increasing their self-esteem.
- ✓ Volunteers discover their own giftedness and what they have to share.
- ✓ Despite coming from various cultures and religious backgrounds and speaking different languages, there is solidarity and an appreciation of each other that goes beyond all these boundaries. Due to this intercultural experience, they gain a broader view of different cultures and a greater appreciation of the diversity and beauty within them, and they feel they have a richer perspective on life.
- ✓ Volunteers can share their experiences and success stories with others experiencing the same situation, encourage them during difficult times, and inspire them to move forward with their education.
- ✓ Volunteers have the opportunity to return the goods they received by being a help to others.

III. CHALLENGES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

3.1. Increasing Demand

The unprecedented US/Mexican border crisis has significantly impacted the increasing number of people in need. The crisis has resulted in a large number of migrants, including families and unaccompanied minors, arriving at the border in search of protection or better opportunities. These individuals are more vulnerable than ever and face immediate humanitarian needs such as food, shelter, medical care, and support services. The influx of migrants has strained existing resources, making it challenging to provide adequate assistance to everyone promptly.

As a result, **all the ministries and projects under the Hilton Foundation Grant have experienced an increasing demand for their services, pushing the limited program's resources.** This includes financial resources, staff availability, physical infrastructure, and other necessary assets, causing a decreased ability to meet the needs of the population we serve effectively.

This strain on resources, especially staff and personnel, has had multiple effects:

- **Longer processing times and need to prioritize:** With increasing applications or requests, some programs and ministries experienced longer processing times. The additional workload slowed down the processing of cases, leading to delays in providing necessary services to immigrants and people in need. In some cases, programs needed to use waiting lists, prioritize cases, and even decline new clients or beneficiaries and refer them to other organizations. Prolonged waiting times cause frustration, anxiety, and uncertainty for those seeking assistance.
- **Increased stress and burnout:** Programs suffering from insufficient staff significantly burden existing personnel. They must handle an overwhelming workload, leading to increased stress, longer working hours, and burnout. This can negatively affect their performance and motivation, further exacerbating the challenges faced by the Program.
- **Limited capacity for program development:** Insufficient staff hindered programs and ministries' ability to adapt, innovate, and improve over time. As a result, it has been necessary to postpone new projects for next year, hampered the programs' ability to address evolving needs, respond to emerging challenges, and effectively serve people in need.

However, this increased demand has positively affected some ministries and programs. It **attracted attention and resources from donors and volunteers and has encouraged partnerships and collaborations to address growing needs.** As a result, some programs scaled up their operations by opening new centers, hiring additional staff, expanding

physical infrastructure, or establishing new services. For example, Silvano Carrillo Centers (Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament) opened a new Center in Escondido, and they have more petitions from other parishes that cannot attend due to lack of funds and personnel.



Students attending citizenship classes at Silvano Carrillo Centers

The Myanmar/Burmese Immigrant Catholic Community (Sisters of St. Francis Xavier) is increasingly demanding spiritual accompaniment in their own language and traditions. Sr. Nant Shwe, SFX, has been very creative in attending to their increasing needs, using technology, reducing expenses, and encouraging and inspiring people to be leaders in the community.

Sisters' ministries are learning what they can offer as they also learn about their limits. Additionally, **they revealed a great capacity for flexibility and adaptability** to respond to changing circumstances and ensure their ministries can effectively meet the needs of the people they serve.

3.2. Language and cultural barriers

San Diego County is known for its linguistic diversity. According to the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, some of the most commonly spoken languages, besides English, in San Diego County include Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese), Arabic, Korean, Somali, and various South Asian languages such

as Hindi, Gujarati, and Punjabi. Additionally, there are likely numerous other languages spoken by smaller communities within the County, such as Tigrinya, Amharic, Twi, and Yoruba.

Attending to the immigrant population, especially newcomers, is challenging because many don't speak English well. **Language barriers impede effective communication between personnel working in ministries and programs and people seeking support.** It is challenging for them to express their needs, thoughts, emotions, experiences, and concerns accurately. It also makes it difficult for immigrants to access crucial information about available services, eligibility criteria, and application processes.

Those programs that provide legal support reported that the lack of competent interpreters in court is a challenge because telling their client's story accurately to the immigration judge is extremely important and can seriously affect the case outcome.

Language and cultural barriers also **reduce the engagement and participation of immigrants in program activities.** If immigrants feel they cannot effectively communicate or relate to Sisters or program personnel, they may be less likely to seek assistance or actively engage with the programs' resources and services. This can hinder their ability to access necessary support and impede their integration and success in their new community.

In schools, language **barriers impact communication, instruction, and students' academic progress.** Additionally, parents who don't speak English can't help their children with their homework.

To overcome these challenges, ministries and programs try to prioritize language support, including translation and interpretation services, multilingual materials, and bilingual and culturally competent staff and volunteers. They also may have to use pictures or act things out to ensure mutual understanding. Some Sisters reported seeking support by inviting bilingual Sisters from their congregations or even using technology. Finally, some Sisters are engaged in learning new languages, especially Spanish.

By building bridges of understanding and trust through cultural sensitivity training and actively engaging with diverse communities, Sisters and personnel are addressing language and cultural barriers, ensuring that program services are accessible and effectively meet the needs of the population we serve.

Finally, those Sisters who provide spiritual support agreed that, although it is challenging to communicate with those people who don't speak their language, in the end, **the Holy Spirit helps them to understand and provides support and comfort.** Sisters from Border Ministry to Migrants (Religious of Jesus and Mary) reported: *"In these simple encounters, we discover the Lord in our midst of suffering and journeying together. We are even more aware of how our eyes can speak. No need for words."*

3.3. Funding and sustainability

Funding and sustainability are the Achilles' heel of almost all ministries and programs. As most of them provide their services for free, **they rely on funding and donations to operate and provide their services.** As the *Sisters Collaborative for Border Ministries* reported, like all true missionaries, they always need the support of the faith community, foundations, organizations, and people of goodwill to support their ministries.

Some **carry out multiple efforts to raise funds during the year**, such as launching fundraising campaigns, asking for donations on their websites, organizing community events, negotiating corporate sponsorships, or establishing a donor program. However, it is always a stress factor.



14th annual Ignatian Volunteer Corps Evening of Gratitude
Every year, the Ignatian Volunteer Corps hosts an Evening of Gratitude to honor distinguished individuals, show appreciation to their Service Corps Members, Partner Agencies, and supporters, and raise funds for their Ministry.

Some also rely on **donations from individuals, businesses, or organizations.** This can include goods, services, or expertise directly supporting the program's operations or reducing operational costs.

The *Sisters Collaborative for Border Ministries* said that they believe that emphasis must be placed on **identifying and developing the potential of lay colleagues.** For them, sustainability must be in terms of people. They minister with lay staff and volunteers. **Investment in their professional and spiritual development is essential for sustaining the ministry** and life of service for the most vulnerable people.

Finally, some of them **rely on their Congregations to support their ministries.**

The Hilton Foundation Grant has significantly relieved the urgency of constantly raising funds to sustain their ministries. This has given them more time and resources to plan and

organize their programs, leading to greater sustainability in the future. With the grant, they could hire staff, expand their services, purchase necessary equipment, initiate pilot programs, and increase the number of people they could support. **Nearly all the projects and ministries have successfully met their grant goals within a year.** However, we had assumed that we would receive funds again in the following year as the budget submitted was just for one year. Unfortunately, we have learned that we will only receive 20% of the budget for the second year. Consequently, **this decrease in funds will have a significant impact on projects and services:**

- Some projects have been put on hold during the summer to allocate more money for next year’s programming.
- Additionally, some ministries have postponed new programs or services until they secure funding.
- Many programs will have to reduce the services they provide, resulting in fewer people receiving support.
- Some may also decrease their outreach and advertising efforts, negatively affecting their projects and ministries.
- All of them are actively seeking ways to cut costs and find funding opportunities and donations to continue their work the following year.

IV. IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE PROGRAM

In their monthly reports, Sisters and CCDSD noted multiple ideas to improve their ministries and programs that respond to their specific challenges. However, some of them could enhance the Sisters’ FAN Program in general and each project in particular.

4.1. Collaborative efforts to outreach and advertising.

Joint efforts to carry out outreach activities could significantly impact the Sisters’ FAN and their projects and ministries, allowing larger-scale outreach activities and the ability to reach more people in need. In addition, it would enable each ministry to access different networks and reach populations we might not have reached individually. Collaborative efforts to outreach also provide opportunities for sharing successful strategies to enhance our approaches and learn from each other. We would have a stronger collective voice and influence, amplifying our message and increasing our chances of success.

This collaborative effort could raise awareness about the problems faced by the people we help and increase community involvement, moving them to use their money, time, and talent to help those in need.

4.2. Partner and collaboration to provide comprehensive support.

Each congregation's ministry pursues and maintains its specific mission. However, given the growing complexity of government policies, the increased numbers of refugees and immigrants, as well as the increased number of people in need on both sides of the US/Mexican border, **it is imperative that all the Sisters ministries and CCDSD collaborate more effectively and generate collaborative programs to address the humanitarian crisis in the diocese of San Diego.**

The complex nature of the problem requires addressing it from a holistic approach. This enables providing comprehensive support to individuals or communities in need. Instead of offering fragmented or isolated services, addressing multiple dimensions of well-being, such as education, healthcare, and spiritual, legal, and social support, is necessary. This comprehensive support tackles various challenges simultaneously, enhancing the overall effectiveness of our programs and ministries.

However, **this approach needs collaboration and synergy among different congregations in the diocese, CCDSD, and other organizations working in San Diego, Imperial Valley, and the Mexican border.** By working together, we can create a more coordinated and efficient response, reducing duplication of efforts and maximizing collective impact.

Some of the strategies for collaborative efforts could be:

- Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among projects. By sharing experiences and knowledge about the situation of the immigrant community at the border, we can explore innovative approaches to address common challenges.
- Build relationships and define referral pathways to refer individuals to the appropriate services and programs offered by the Sisters' Faith in Action Network. This ensures that individuals receive coordinated support from multiple sources.
- Organize workshops and training to overcome the different challenges we are facing.
- Establish protocols for sharing data, with appropriate privacy and consent measures in place. Sharing relevant data allows for a comprehensive understanding of an individual's needs and progress across different services.
- Going on a retreat where Sisters' FAN members could foster open communication, trust, understanding, and shared goals. This environment offers a unique opportunity to build deeper connections and address collaboration challenges, ultimately leading to a more cohesive and effective leadership team.

4.3. Improve communication

Effective communication will allow Leadership Council members to coordinate our efforts and collaborate more efficiently. By sharing information in a timely manner, we can identify partnership opportunities and align our activities to maximize impact.

Additionally, if we openly communicate and share information about our beneficiaries' challenges, we will gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. This shared knowledge will enable us to collectively identify gaps, prioritize needs, and tailor programs and ministries accordingly.

Effective communication will also enable sharing essential and timely information, such as policy changes, research findings, or available resources.

Improving communication of Sisters' FAN is an ongoing process that requires commitment, active engagement, and a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. Some ideas to improve communication are:

- Ensure that all the Leadership Council members have a shared understanding of the purpose of the Council and its intended outcomes.
- Establish clear communication channels and platforms, such as shared online spaces or dedicated collaboration software, to facilitate ongoing communication and document sharing.
- Promote transparency by sharing relevant information, including program updates and challenges faced by ministries and organizations.
- Encourage collaborative decision-making processes that involve input from all Leadership Council members.
- Offer training and capacity-building opportunities for the Sisters' FAN Leadership Council members to enhance their communication skills and knowledge related to immigration issues.
- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the Leadership Council's communication strategies and overall functioning. Adjust and improve processes based on feedback and outcomes.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements and milestones of the Leadership Council and its member organizations.

By implementing these strategies, the Sisters' FAN Leadership Council can work more cohesively, share resources effectively, and ultimately better attend to the needs of the people we serve.



V. INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS AND MINISTRIES

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SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	ACADEMY PROJECTS
CONGREGATION	Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
REPORT PERIOD	September 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

The Academy Projects Program provides a holistic education for students addressing intellectual, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions. Four programs are included in the Academy Projects:

- Fine Arts: The program offers students the opportunity to learn, develop, and experience different fine arts classes such as photography, pastels painting, cooking, drawing design, science language, music, arts & craft, and many more. This program helps students to get out of their comfort zone, encourages creativity and confidence, promotes self-confidence, and improves emotional expression. It also develops other skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, focus, collaboration, and accountability.
- Wellness: The Wellness Program is an initiative that promotes and supports students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It was created during the COVID-19 pandemic to help the students cope with their isolation during those times. Depending on their emerging needs, a psychologist works with students on various subjects, such as bullying, identity, effective communication, or emotional intelligence.
- After-School Program: This program provides a safe place for students who need extra academic support, especially with the English Language. Students from different grade levels (1st- 8th) receive daily academic tutoring/homework assistance.
- Retreats: Retreats offer parents and students the opportunity to experience a day of recollection to encounter peace, forgiveness, and mercy of our God and perceive God's love around them, in their friends and families, while growing in faith.
- Summer Program: This Program provides students with tools and strategies that can help them improve their math skills and language acquisition. This program is offered to first through fourth graders who perform below average in math and English, incoming students for the next school year, and junior High schoolers who failed a class.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

TOTAL GOAL: 900 students
FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 450 students
REACHED FIRST YEAR: 467 students

CLIENT STORY



Valeria Velasquez, the mother of Oscar Vega, 5th Grade student, says she chose to keep Oscar in the after-school-program because last year she saw him very motivated, focused, and improving academically.

Teachers mentioned the great improvement they see in those students who stayed in the After-school Program. They gained a lot of confidence, and they improved their English Skills as well as their comprehension ability.

Bringing the project to life



After-School Program



Fine Arts Program



Wellbeing Program

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	Border Compassion
CONGREGATION	Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
REPORT PERIOD	November 22 – August 23

<p>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED</p>	<p>Border Compassion invites Catholic and interfaith leadership, parishes, schools, LCWR women religious, and individuals from four Southern California dioceses to cross over the US/Mexico border at Mexicali to join efforts to address the needs of asylum seekers living at <i>La Posada del Migrante</i> and <i>El Refugio</i> shelters. Border Compassion supports them with food, basic needs, legal services, English as a Second Language classes, health and wellness opportunities, and helps to maintain the shelter facility.</p>
<p>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED</p>	<p>TOTAL GOAL: 106 Asylum seekers FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 53 Asylum seekers REACHED FIRST YEAR: 2,172 asylum seekers</p>
<p>SUCCESS STORY</p>	<p>A REFLECTION FROM A CROSS-OVER VOLUNTEER.</p> <p>Both migrants in this photo are translators for cross-over volunteers. They are from Honduras.</p> <p>The story of Elvis, a young man (right in photo) who came through terrifying challenges to get to the US, which included riding on the Beast, which is precariously holding on to the roof of the freight train, not knowing if you will be robbed, killed or will fall to your death. Elvis did fall off the train, but his injuries were not life-threatening. He was admitted to the hospital but ran away for fear of being deported back to Honduras. It was a miracle that he survived. He said that if he went back, he would die. If he stayed, he would win. He taught himself English, played the guitar, and sang. He was admitted into the US legally. He will be helped by Sr. Suzanne and Modesto, who employed him while he awaits his court date.</p> <p>How have I been changed? I have seen the resilience of these people who continue to move forward to bring a better life for themselves and their children. They are fleeing for their lives from the cartels and gangs. They know that if they stay, they will be killed, or their children will be forced to be part of a gang, or those who have a business, the gangs will force them to perform illegal actions. They really do not have a choice. They either choose physical death, emotional death, and indeed spiritual death or the possibility of a new life if they get into the US.</p> <p>I have realized the importance of sharing the Capacitar practices that these people can take with them wherever they go to help heal their stress and trauma.</p> 



Capacitar teaches body-based practices that empower people to use their inner wisdom to heal and transform themselves. All the adults participated in this healing modality.



Asylum seekers wait eagerly for Sr. Lisa Lopez, Immigration Attorney, and her intern team. The general presentation was informative. Sister Simone Campbell translates.



'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:40)

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT

YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	Border Ministry to Migrants
CONGREGATION	Religious of Jesus and Mary
REPORT PERIOD	November 22 – August 23

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED	Border Ministries to Migrants (BMM) accompanies migrants in the border area, providing pastoral counseling and care as well as providing basic needs. It purchases and distributes clothing and backpacks for refugees in transit at the Catholic Charities shelter in San Diego. Similarly, it distributes donations of clothing and purchased food items for asylum seekers living on the streets of Tijuana.
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED	<p>TOTAL GOAL: 1,140 individuals</p> <p>FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 720 individuals</p> <p>REACHED FIRST YEAR: 3,773</p> <p>713 people were spiritually accompanied, 1,495 received clothes, and 992 received food.</p>
CLIENT STORIES	<p><i>"One man expressed his gratitude when he had been told he and his wife were going to a Catholic Charities Shelter. He hoped he would meet priests or Sisters whom he could talk with and pray. He thanked us for being present to him in his painful journey".</i></p> <p><i>"I had the opportunity to pray with a group of men of different creeds fleeing their countries. Some of them with death threats and with the pain of having left their families. Their prayer was full of faith and hope in the good Father God, who does not abandon them. Many, with tears in their eyes, thanked this simple prayer."</i></p> <p><i>"Sr. Rosa and I were waiting for a list to go visit families in their rooms when we were asked by Catholic Charities to speak to a woman from Afghanistan. She was alone on her journey and trying to get a sponsor. She cried, remembering the fear she felt living in her home country. As a woman, she felt hopeless after the death of her husband, who was killed several years ago. She felt her only hope was to come to the US, build a new life, and participate in the community here. We embraced her, assured her of God's love and care, and that we would keep her in our hearts and prayers."</i></p> <p><i>"Sr. Natalia and I prayed with a single mom and her three young children. She was very stressed yet trusting in God to help her family find a new sponsor. Simply listening and praying was helpful to her and transforming for us. She was grateful to receive a psalm paper for later, and the children smiled with excitement as we gave each of them a small stuffed animal. Hugs were everywhere."</i></p>



Sr. Rosie, RJM, purchased stuffed animal companions for children they meet while they pray with migrants at the Catholic Charities shelter in San Diego, and scarves, candy canes, and printed messages in English, Spanish, and Portuguese for the migrants each Christmas.

Srs. Rosa and Natalia, RJM, visiting, listening, and praying with migrants at the Catholic Charities shelter.



Cookie Galleta, who runs Madres Deportadas en Accion, serves migrants who are living on the streets of Tijuana or in nearby shelters. She is distributing items we have purchased or received for the migrants.

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	Casa Cornelia Law Center
CONGREGATION	Society of the Holy Child Jesus
REPORT PERIOD	November 22 – August 23

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED	<p>Casa Cornelia Law Center (CCLC) is a ministry of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ). It was founded in 1993 to provide quality legal services to victims of human and civil rights violations. Its focus has been to provide pro bono legal assistance to the immigrant community in San Diego and Imperial Counties.</p>
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS RESPONDED	<p>FINAL GOAL: 32 clients under this grant FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 16 clients under this grant REACHED: 32 clients under this grant</p> <p>On average, Casa Cornelia responds to 1,260 clients a month.</p> <p>Last year, Casa Cornelia responded to 2,323 victimized children, women, and men seeking safe haven in the United States.</p> <p>Among those served were 986 persons fleeing persecution in their homelands: Haitians, Nicaraguans, Venezuelans, Cubans, Afghanis, Ukrainians, and Russians. Some 900 unaccompanied children from Central America and other countries fleeing gang violence received legal services, and over 400 victims of violent crimes were represented.</p>
SUCCESS STORY	<p>Margarita* is a 40 year-old Mexican woman who married a United States (U.S.) citizen that locked her into a life of domestic violence and forced servitude. Casa Cornelia staff attorney Evelyn Lopez took Margarita's case, and applied for certain requirements placed on those who are processing their immigration status based on a marriage to a U.S. citizen. The application was successful and Margarita is now independent and free.</p> <p>After marrying Joe*, a U.S citizen, Margarita* started a new life in the United States, and shortly after applied for legal permanent residency (LPR) as his wife. As time went by, her husband Joe began assaulting her, abusing her emotionally and physically. Joe also began threatening her with stopping the LPR application so she would remain undocumented and potentially deported.</p> <p>Fearful for her life, Margarita left her husband and sought help at a domestic violence advocacy organization, which eventually referred her to Casa Cornelia for legal advice. Due to her history, Margarita was eligible for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) relief. Staff attorney Evelyn Lopez took Margarita's case, but during the legal process, Margarita returned to her husband.</p> <p>As Margarita became the caretaker of Joe's mother, she discovered that Joe planned to retire and forced Margarita to be the sole provider and caretaker of the household. This is why he continued with her permanent residency application—so she could work to support him and his mother.</p>

Joe became increasingly violent and abusive. Looking to end this ongoing cycle of violence, Margarita returned to Casa Cornelia in the Spring of 2017. Evelyn López reopened her case and proceeded to file the appropriate petition to remove certain conditions for her residency. In November of 2018, Margarita's application was approved and thus, no longer dependent on her U.S. citizen husband. Margarita is now independent and free from an abusive relationship that forced her into servitude.

Casa Cornelia Law Center is incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed to the success of this case. Thank you so much for your support!



* Names and images have been changed to protect client's confidentiality.



SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	Casa de Misericordia
CONGREGATION	Sisters of Mercy of the Americas/Mercy Ministry Corp.
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

<p>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED</p>	<p>Casa de Misericordia is an intentional faith community committed to welcoming persons of diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds, faith traditions, gender identities, and ages. Its primary purpose is to respond to the needs of migrant persons and families at the USA/Mexico border in Southern California. It has several ministry projects positioned to address the needs of Barrio Logan and build strong community relationships every step of the way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <u>Community Resource Center (CRC)</u>: Every Thursday-Friday, the CRC provides case management for immigration and social service support. The first Thursday of each month is a food distribution in cooperation with Feeding San Diego. The last Wednesday of each month is food distribution to the families of Our Lady's School. – <u>Community Garden</u>: Teaches families how to grow and harvest healthy fresh food. It is an opportunity for people to reconnect with each other. – <u>English as a Second Language</u>: This program helps adult non-English speakers improve their English-speaking skills. – <u>Healing Hearts Circle</u>: The Healing Hearts Program invites adults who recognize and want the healing of current or past wounds. – <u>Mercy Immigration Justice Project</u>: Promotes access to justice for immigrants through collaboration with various legal aid agencies and immigration educational workshops.
<p>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED</p>	<p>TOTAL GOAL: 240 individuals FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 120 individuals REACHED FIRST YEAR: 3,379 (Many are returning clients/individuals/families)</p>
<p>CLIENT STORY</p>	<p><i>A very moving story from the beginning of our days. I cannot have a photo for the safety of those involved. Two staff members were in the CRC when two women came and wanted to talk to somebody who could help one of them. She spoke no English. She and her husband were driving to Mass the prior Sunday when the Border Patrol's siren pulled their car over. The Border Patrol took her husband, and she was lost, sad, not knowing what to do. For us at the CRC, it was the "first" of a call to help our people with immigration matters.</i></p>
<p>Bringing the project to life</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Community Garden</p>



Food Distribution



English as a Second Language



Mercy Immigration Justice Project

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	DIOCESE OUTREACH
ORGANIZATION	CCDSD
REPORT PERIOD	September 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

Provided outreach to parishes within the Diocese of San Diego, leveraging our current programs such as the Emergency Food Distribution Network Plus (EFDN+) to let community members know about the services we have available to them and also inform the community about the various projects that the Sister's Congregations in San Diego and Imperial County are working on.

Encourage parishioners to be participants of these services if they are in need and volunteer their time and talent to assist their communities in programs like these, where volunteers are the backbone of the program.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

TOTAL GOAL 1: Outreach to 10,000 individuals
FIRST-YEAR GOAL 1: Outreach to 5,000 individuals
REACHED FIRST-YEAR GOAL 1: 24,684 individuals

TOTAL GOAL 2: Mobilize 60 parishioners to volunteer
FIRST-YEAR GOAL 2: Mobilize 30 parishioners to volunteer
REACHED FIRST-YEAR GOAL 2: 670 volunteers

CLIENT STORY

Carmen, a mother of 3 daughters, started coming to get food for her family through the EFDN+ program. Inflation and increases in gas, and the cost of food were making it hard to feed her family.

"Every time we shopped for groceries, we spent at least \$200 to \$300 weekly. The prices for groceries, food, and gas keep going up," Carmen said.

While coming each week to pick up food, Carmen and her daughters wanted to give back. Adriana, her 14-year-old daughter, was helping to get her community service hours but said she would help even if she did not get credit for volunteering for the program. Carmen and her two daughters volunteer each week on both Wednesday and Saturday for food distribution.

"I would still come here; I would still want to volunteer here. It feels nice that it's not just me doing it. My mother and sister also volunteer each week with me." Adriana said.



Bringing the project to life



Community events

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
ORGANIZATION	CCDSD
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

The Emotional Wellbeing Program provides onsite clinical services and appropriate as-needed warm hand-off referrals to assist residents in addressing psychiatric, social, and behavioral issues.

To achieve this, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker provides the following services:

- Clinical assessment of residents' mental, emotional, and physical needs, providing therapeutic support, validation, and psychoeducation.
- Psychoeducation to staff regarding major depression, schizophrenia, and generalized anxiety and how to assist residents in managing their symptoms.
- Psychoeducation to residents' parents regarding schizoaffective disorder and education on psychotropic medication.
- Connecting patients to mental health services within the community.
- Helping residents develop adaptive coping skills.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

TOTAL GOAL: Provide counseling sessions to 1,066 individuals.

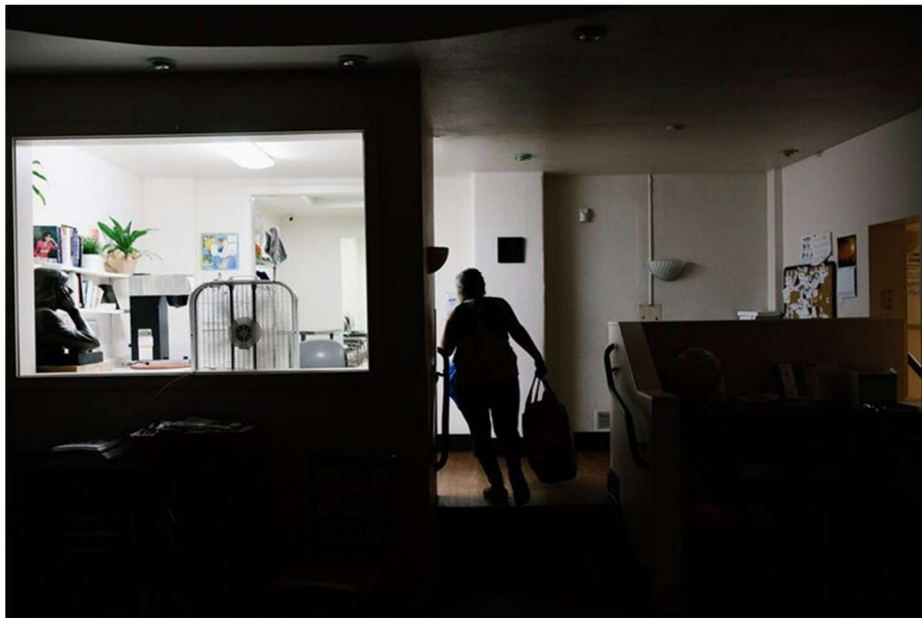
FIRST-YEAR GOAL: Provide counseling sessions to 533 individuals.

REACHED FIRST-YEAR: 982 individuals

CLIENT STORY

A resident shared feeling better about having the opportunity to meet with a therapist. Pt shared that he had so many things going on in his mind that he really needed clinical help to sort it out. He stated, "I feel so much better knowing I am not crazy. I was really worried I was."

The resident also shared having unhelpful experiences with therapy in the past and had been hesitant to try it again. He meets with the onsite therapist weekly for individual help.



A resident has been unhoused since 2020 and lives with anxiety and depression. He has a long history of using drugs and alcohol. He came to La Posada shortly after a relapse in his substance use recovery journey. His goals included stabilizing his recovery, getting into a sober living home, and returning to work as a hairdresser. While staying at La Posada, he regularly attended an outpatient treatment program and used his SSI to repay his friends and family \$2000 of the \$3000 borrowed from them when he was addicted. Shortly before leaving La Posada to move into sober living, he celebrated 60 days in recovery and proudly displayed the chip he earned. He was grateful to La Posada for giving him a warm, safe place to stay and helping him achieve 60 days sobriety.

Bringing the
project to life



SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	ESCUELA DE TAREAS CALASANZ
CONGREGATION	Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

<p>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED</p>	<p>The Escuelas de Tareas Calasaz (Homework School Calasanz) is a Non-formal academic education program founded by the Piarist Fathers, rooted in values, solidarity, and diversity, directed to children, young people, and families in socially disadvantaged areas of Mexicali. It provides a safe space where children can overcome their frustration with regular school tasks and, at the same time, establish affective and social bonds through play. With two hours two days a week throughout the school year, volunteers and children share in the Escuelita under the call Learn, live, and have fun!</p> <p>The Hilton Foundation Grant also supports The Instituto Jose Calasanz, a community school for kindergarten and elementary students from the most underprivileged families in Mexicali. The grant provides school equipment like computers and projectors and funds field trips and personal growth workshops for parents.</p>
<p>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED</p>	<p>TOTAL GOAL: 540 students FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 270 students REACHED FIRST YEAR: 388 students</p>
<p>CLIENT STORY</p>	<p>Teresita started in the Escuelita when she was seven years old. She was a shy girl but loved attending the Escuelita, where she made good friends. Little by little, she improved not only academically but also enhanced her ability to communicate with others, cooperated, empathized, and learned how to work collaboratively with her peers in the Escuelita.</p> <p>When she entered High School, she remained in the Escuelita as a volunteer teacher. This increased her confidence and self-esteem while she developed other skills, such as communication and patience, and developed strategies to resolve conflicts with love and empathy. Next semester, she will assume a new role as a coordinator in her Escuelita. She is also planning to start her college studies in teacher education.</p> <p>We are sure her leadership, her unique way of communicating with children with patience and love, and her passion for Escuelitas will make her an excellent coordinator!</p> 



Children working with their volunteer teachers.



Gratitude Day



Closing ceremony



Field trip to the Zoo with Instituto Calasanz Students

Bringing the project to life

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	LOW BONO PROGRAM
ORGANIZATION	CCDSD
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

Provide legal assistance to individuals in the Archdiocese of San Diego who cannot afford the high cost of legal services provided by the attorneys in the open market but do not qualify for pro bono services.

The Low Bono program would allow individuals in this “gap” to obtain legal assistance with a sliding scale for payment based on their income.

The services provided to these individuals would include but not be limited to temporary protected status, affirmative asylum preparation and presentation, parole submission, non-detained/detained IOIR representation for asylums, etc.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

TOTAL GOAL: Provide legal assistance to 32 clients.

FIRST-YEAR GOAL: Provide legal assistance to 16 clients.

REACHED FIRST-YEAR: 52 individuals

CLIENT STORY



Mr. Ajapmou is a caring father of a seven-year-old daughter who arrived in the United States after escaping a three-month detention. He was seized at a police checkpoint when some others at the checkpoint tried to run, and police forces opened fire on the group. Two of those fleeing were presumed dead, and Mr. Ajapmou was repeatedly brutalized based on his Anglophone status. Anglophones are a marginalized minority group in Cameroon, with little access to representation in government, and face discrimination in schools, housing, and the job market. Mr. Ajapmou had previously participated in two peaceful protests regarding the improvement of rights for all Anglophones in Cameroon.

Regarding the support of Catholic Charities and his attorney, Mr. Ajapmou said, “I was really happy. I had no one else. To have someone visit you and stand next to you and stand up for you...I am so grateful. I will appreciate it for life and pray for your continued efforts [for other immigration cases].”

As to his future, Mr. Ajapmou has been reunited with his fiancé in Maryland. He hopes to continue his studies in banking and finance. He is looking forward to “working, saving up money for my daughter to come to the United States.” He says, “I want to pay my taxes and be a good citizen. I wish my attorney and Catholic Charities blessings on their work.”

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	MARY'S GUEST HOUSE
CONGREGATION	Missionary Srs. Of the Society of Mary
REPORTING PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED	<p>Mary's Guest House provides a safe, long term and homelike environment offering hope, refuge, and healing for women survivors of human trafficking. We accompany them as mentors in the journey toward healing and help empower them to become self-reliant.</p> <p>While at Mary's Guest House, in addition to room and board, the residents receive services provided by a network of organizations and medical centers, such as trauma-informed therapy, legal and immigration counseling and representation, as well as medical care. Residents were also helped to pursue educational goals. Additionally, they are assisted in finding employment. Care is taken to provide recreational activities, and each one is offered the opportunity to develop her faith journey by encouraging them to connect with their church, mosque, or temple.</p>
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED	<p>TOTAL GOAL: Provide a residential program (24/7) for 14 victims of human trafficking</p> <p>FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 7 women</p> <p>REACHED FIRST YEAR: 7 women</p>
CLIENT STORY	<p><i>"At a time when I was a victim of crime and homeless, I miraculously met sisters, and they gave me the opportunity to live and be educated there. I had a really hard time, especially mentally, because the case was ongoing for many years. I was extremely depressed, demotivated, and stressed. After I became independent, I still had a lot of things to go through because my immigration status had been pending for 4 years. When I was feeling very useless, Sr. Judy and Sr. Christina, Marist Missionary Sisters, reached out to me again. They knew that I needed to do something productive with my life and invited me to come and teach Math, Computer, and Biology to women who were victims of human trafficking from Africa, Mexico, and Indonesia. When I was teaching the women, I discovered that I was not useless. I was on a two-way street where I was helping the women, but they also helped me with their recognition of the gifts that I had. They helped me to discover my own giffedness and what I had to share. One of the most unifying experiences was that we came from various cultures, from different religious backgrounds, and spoke different languages nevertheless, there was a solidarity and an appreciation of each other that went beyond all these boundaries. I believe because of this intercultural experience, I gained a broader view of different cultures and a greater appreciation of the diversity and beauty within them. I also feel I have a richer perspective on life because of my experience. For me, I contribute to my community by being attentive to the needs of others. I also have contributed through the realization of how important it is to receive love and support in difficult times. I am very happy that I am able to share with others what I received by encouraging them during their difficult times and by inspiring them to move forward with their education. I feel I have done very little. However, I also believe that many times, it can be the little things we do for another that mean a lot. It has also brought me a lot of joy to see these women realize the importance of education and to see them moving forward with their lives and becoming productive members of their communities. Mary's guest house never abandoned me, and it became my real home, and we still gather for all holidays as real family.</i></p> <p><i>Now, I am an older student, and finally, I have become a California resident, and the US has become my home. Sisters always told us how important education is, and I feel that I am going to remain here. I needed to pursue an education. Eventually, I will be graduating this year and working at the lab which is developing drugs and vaccines after my BS degree. Although this trauma occurred in my life, I have changed because of the support and care</i></p>

that I have received. We have a saying in Korea that says, "A misfortune turns into a blessing." And I have been blessed in many ways. I could have remained a victim. However, because of the assistance received, I was able to move on with my life and to see that I could become a life-giving member of my community. I am at a point in life where I want to return the good I received by being a help to others. Because of this sexual assault and the need to remain in the US for the last 9 years, my vision changed as I realized the importance of education. And I feel this is my last opportunity for a better life. I believe if I could overcome my experiences, so can others, and I would like to be a role model for them. I feel in the beginning, I went through a lot of trials and errors because I did not know what opportunities were available to me. Learning from my journey, I also would like to help others move forward with their lives quicker than I did."

On May 13th we had the joy of Celebrating with Violet when she fulfilled her dream and graduated from Berkeley with a BS in Biology. Congratulations, Violet! Your diploma is well deserved, and we are all very proud of how you were able to overcome the many challenges you encountered on your journey.



SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	MYANMAR IMMIGRANT CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
CONGREGATION	Sisters of St. Francis Xavier
REPORTING PERIOD	November 22 – August 23

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

The Myanmar / Burmese Immigrant Catholic Community attends to the spiritual needs of this community through catechesis of children and adults and training programs for youth and young adult leaders to provide spiritual care and spread the word and love of God within their Community.

Some of the services provided are:

- Weekly online religion classes for children and young adults, especially kids who can't attend catholic school and have problems connecting with their local church.
- Adult annual in-person retreats
- Bible study group
- Preparing non-Catholics for entry into the Catholic Church
- Preparing couples for receiving marriage
- Leadership training for youth and young adult leaders
- Faith youth summer camps
- Translation services and assisting young adults in applying for entry to college
- Spiritual and emotional support to families, most of them facing domestic violence

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

TOTAL GOAL: Attend 466 members of the community

FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 233 members

REACHED FIRST YEAR: 1204 members

CLIENT STORY

Le VaTin is a first-year student at Notre Dame University and is majoring in finance and obtaining a minor in theology. He is the first outstanding student from Myanmar Catholic Community and qualified to attend the prestigious Catholic University in the US.

He is one of my students from religious education classes and leadership introduction online courses. I also accompany and support him in leading the younger members of the community. He is always aware of the community's needs. For example, the intergeneration conflict/ cultural adaptability issue among Muammar Catholic Community. He is a wonderful youth leader in this community.



He said: "My parents didn't go to High school, nor did they go to College. Although they understand the value of pursuing a High school and College education, they don't really understand what happens in the school, in the building, in making friends, and in building relationships with teachers and mentors at the school. And it is the same for college. They don't really have the same vision in terms of what happens in college, in terms of making friends, dealing with academics, pursuing a career, relationships, and things like that in their heads. They understand that it is important, but because they don't have this experience, there's a gap, and they

can't relate to my experience. I would say this leads to one of the cultural differences. Many Americans have parents who went to High school and College, so they're able to understand and speak with them about that much better than a first-generation student with parents who never went to college. So, I think this is one of the things that can make it a

little bit difficult and lead to intergenerational conflicts".

This situation provokes many conflicts between parents and children when they need to participate in school/college activities and can make them feel alienation.

He inspires the rest of the children and youths by witnessing his faith and hard work. Together with SFX Sisters, this Summer, he has been one of our speakers and shared his knowledge with the children and youths during our retreat and gathering.



138 second graders to high school students attended 2023 Religious Summer Camp

Bringing the project to life



Family visits

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT

YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	SAN DIEGO IGNATIAN VOLUNTEER CORPS
CONGREGATION	Society of the Sacred Heart
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

<p>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED</p>	<p>The Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC) provides mature men and women the opportunity to serve the needs of people who are poor, to work for a more just society, and to grow deeper in the Christian faith by reflecting and praying in the Ignatian tradition. Founded on a national level in 1995, the San Diego Region of IVC has been in operation since 2001.</p> <p>IVC Volunteers commit to serving an IVC Partner Agency, a non-profit organization or school that provides services to those in marginalized communities. IVC Volunteers apply their professional expertise, life wisdom, and compassionate commitment to helping to expand the staff capacity at their assigned Partner Agency and participate in IVC's Spiritual Program for faith sharing, discussion, retreats, and communal and individual discernment of ministry and social justice.</p> <p>During the current program year (Sept 2022 – June 2023), IVC San Diego has matched 25 Volunteers with 13 different local Partner Agencies in various roles. Together, these IVC members have provided approximately 8,600 volunteer hours serving a variety of individuals of all ages: refugees, migrants, single mothers, students at risk, recently incarcerated men, and people experiencing homelessness. Three volunteers have been discerning/awaiting placements.</p>
<p>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED</p>	<p>TOTAL GOAL: 30 volunteers FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 15 volunteers REACHED FIRST YEAR: 31 volunteers</p>
<p>CLIENT STORIES</p>	<p>Tricia has been a member of IVC for four years and is currently volunteering 16 hours a week at Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego in their Immigrant Services program. She is also a member of the IVC Regional Advisory Council. Since joining IVC in 2018, Tricia has enjoyed the fellowship of monthly meetings, deepening her relationships with other IVC members and ultimately enriching her spiritual life. For Tricia, service is deeply bound to her faith, and through IVC, she has been able to incorporate the two in a unique way.</p> <p>The monthly IVC meetings create a sense of community and shared spiritual experience," says Tricia. "One of the many reasons it's been so positive is the effort that IVC puts into the spirituality program," which also includes annual retreats and connecting volunteers to spiritual directors. The monthly gatherings also provide a space for IVC members to learn from one another and reflect on the important work being done at their respective partner agencies.</p> <p>When Tricia first joined IVC, she served at an organization closely related to her previous field of psychology. But over the years and because of the opportunities presented to her by IVC, Tricia was able to expand her horizons, learning new skills in new fields. Now, she is helping DACA recipients, immigrants, green card applicants, and many others through the immigration process at Catholic Charities. Even though immigration services were not her original field of expertise, Tricia feels that this opportunity has been a perfect fit for her as it's something she is very passionate about.</p>



"Supporting and serving the integrity and the dignity of the working poor so that they can provide food and shelter to their families is meaningful work that brings the kingdom of God closer," remarks Tricia.

"Tricia has the heart to serve and is always willing to go out of her way to help," says Stephanie Alvarez, Director of Community Services with Catholic Charities. "IVC volunteers, like Tricia, have been part of the backbone of our programs. They go above and beyond for our communities and are such a blessing to our clients."

Tricia Heras serves 16 hours per week with the Immigrant Services Department of Catholic Charities. As a retired psychologist who is fluent in Spanish, she is equipped to provide outstanding support to her clients.



A group of 20 members of our IVC community attended a 3-day retreat at Prince of Peace Abbey.



IVC Volunteer Terrie Teegarden, a retired college math professor, provides individual and group math tutoring at Our Lady's School.



Neil Quinn (above left) works virtually with his site supervisor at North County Lifeline. Neil provided administrative support, helping to organize a donor database for the organization.

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	SCHOOL PARENTING PROGRAM
CONGREGATION	Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

<p>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED</p>	<p>The School Parenting Program focuses on strengthening parenting competencies and encouraging parent involvement in children's school experiences to promote children's academic, social, and emotional skills.</p> <p>The Program fosters positive values, communication, and parenting support through retreats, workshops, meetings, and other activities for parents. The workshops focus on different topics that will help parents to guide their kids, such as social media, bullying, or physical and mental issues.</p>
<p>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED</p>	<p>TOTAL GOAL: 300 families FIRST-YEAR GOAL: 150 families REACHED FIRST YEAR: 425 families</p>
<p>CLIENT STORY</p>	<p><u>Mr. Gustavo Cisneros</u>, parent of student Isaac Cisneros, shared:</p> <p><i>"I am grateful for these moments of parent formation. I always attend "Escuela para padres" (The School Parenting Program). They give me different tools to help my son with his studies, homework, and, above all, with his behavior in school and at home. Few schools (in Mexicali) worry about providing quality workshops to families and parents, and I am thankful you guys do so."</i></p> <p><u>Dominick Soto</u>, a fifth-grader student, shares the following about his dad participating in The School Parenting Program:</p> <p><i>"My dad participates in "Escuela para padres" (The School Parenting Program), and he tells me they talk about school-related topics. He also says he has learned from the parent workshops not to talk about certain topics in front of me. He has also become more patient with me."</i></p> <p><u>Samuel Salazar</u>, Guest Speaker for the "Learning Styles" workshop, shared his self-evaluation about his time with our school parents:</p> <p><i>"The families that attended the workshop "Learning Styles" showed great interest in the topic. The majority understood the importance of knowing about different learning styles and how to use this information to aid their children in academic endeavors. During my participation, I was also able to witness how grateful parents are for providing these spaces for learning and self-growth. In general, parents who participate in "Escuela para padres" do it out of their self-interest and not because the school requires them to attend. As a guest speaker, I can honestly say I am thankful for this experience and look forward to being back to "Escuela para padres" in the future."</i></p>



The teacher from OUR LADY OF ACADEMY in Cal Calexico, Samuel Salazar, was a guest speaker for the Learning Styles Workshop



Male parents' workshop



Parent's Retreat

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	SILVIANO CARRILLO
CONGREGATION	Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

Silviano Carrillo Centers – SCC prepares students to take Citizenship exams in English and Spanish.

Our Citizenship classes instill in individuals the knowledge of their worth as children of God created in His image. As such, SCC's students will be motivated to nourish their faith and to encourage adults to be responsible and productive citizens of this country, to develop better English speaking and writing skills, and to help themselves and their families set precise goals that will result in more dignified lives.

We operate three San Diego County centers: Encinitas, Escondido, and Lemon Grove.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

TOTAL GOAL: Prepare 52 students
FIRST-YEAR GOAL: Prepare 26 students
REACHED FIRST YEAR: 120 students

CLIENT STORIES



Maria Luisa Rodriguez is 78 years old and has lived in the United States for 56 years. She is one of our first students at the Silviano Carrillo Centers in Escondido.

In 1966, she decided to come to the US with her children after living alone in Mexico for a while because her husband was already working in the US. She had various jobs but unfortunately never learned the language well and could not test in English.

Now that she is retired, she no longer must worry about raising children or keeping her job, so she can now focus on preparing for her citizenship exam. Her biggest wish is to become a citizen of the US.

Thankfully, thanks to the support of the Hilton Foundation and Catholic Charities, we are close to making her dream come true!

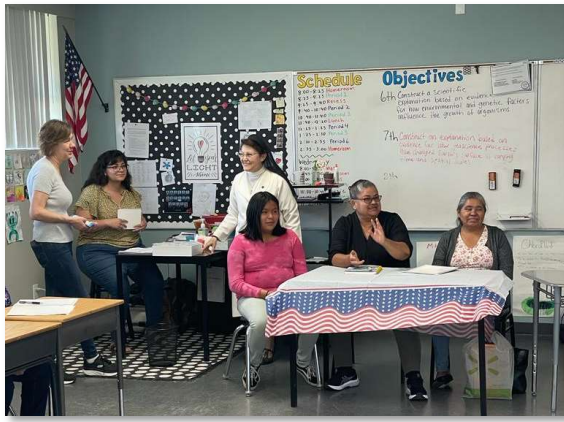


Earlier this year, Javier reached out to us seeking help. He has been waiting for over 20 years to receive a response from Immigration regarding his request to bring his daughter to the US. Javier, who only speaks Spanish, is retired and relies solely on social assistance. His only wish is for his daughter to be able to visit him in the US while he is still alive. His story emphasizes the crucial need to prioritize family needs during immigration proceedings.

Sister Ana Guzman assisted Javier by translating his documents, driving him to Catholic Charities for aid, and allowing him to use her cell phone to call his daughter. Sister Ana has been a great source of comfort and support to Javier during his journey. Our centers provide safe spaces where people can feel the love of God and neighbor.

Thanks to the support of this grant, we can continue to offer this vital ministry.

Bringing the project to life



On class



Practicing interview



Congratulations on your new citizenship!

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA IMMIGRATION PROJECT
CONGREGATION	Sisters of Social Service
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED	<p>Southern California Immigrant Project (SCIP) is a ministry of the Sisters of Social Service (SSS) founded in 2015 to provide pro bono legal services to immigrants, primarily focusing on African and LGBTQ asylum seekers in San Diego and Imperial Counties.</p> <p>SCIP's services are comprehensive and provided through the Naturalization process.</p>
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED	<p>TOTAL GOAL: Provide legal representation for 40 asylum seekers.</p> <p>FIRST-YEAR GOAL: Provide legal representation for 20 asylum seekers.</p> <p>REACHED FIRST YEAR: 244 asylum seekers</p>
CLIENT STORY	<p><i>"AM is a 34-year-old man from Somalia. In July 2021, his wife was killed by Somalian police because they believed she was a member of the terrorist group Al-Shabab. The police tied AM up and beat him. After AM convinced the Somalian police that he was not a member of Al-Shabab, they let him go. Later that same day, Al-Shabab captured AM and tortured him for two days because they believed he had given the Somalian government information on their activities. AM never knew that his wife was involved with Al-Shabab, and he had never been involved with their activities. Al-Shabab told AM he needed to join them, and they slashed his tongue as punishment for "lying" to them. After they let AM go, he immediately left Somalia and began his journey to the US."</i></p> <p><i>"HF – from Ghana, who is a gay man. It is against the law of Ghana and against the Quran to engage in homosexual partnerships. This client was caught with his partner being intimate and was beaten and tortured. He was able to escape the crowd of vigilantes and fled for his life."</i></p> <p><i>"FM- a Senegalese man suspected to be gay because he attended a party of a gay friend. He received threatening calls, and rumors were spread throughout his town to the point that he was ostracized. Within three weeks, he was attacked and left for dead. After this, he fled from his country because being gay or suspected of being gay is against the law and the Islamic law."</i></p> <p><i>"Sudanese male who was a member of a resistance committee and participated in protests against the government because the government was failing to provide basic necessities (humanitarian aid) to the poorer, darker-skinned Sudanese population. Our client was arrested and tortured twice for his protesting activities. He was recently granted asylum."</i></p>

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	SPIRITUAL MINISTRY CENTER
CONGREGATION	Society of the Sacred Heart
REPORT PERIOD	October 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED

The Spiritual Ministry Center offers retreats and respite for those ministering in the San Diego Diocese working with migrants and refugees. It welcomes people of diverse faiths and cultures who seek to deepen their relationship with God and others in light of Gospel values. Additionally, it conducts outreach programs with frontline workers and volunteers in a refugee shelter in Mexicali, Mexico, in collaboration with *Border Compassion* ministry.

Among other activities, the Spiritual Ministry Center:

- Hosted two retreat days for Spanish speakers at the Spiritual Ministry Center.
- Supports a staff member to lead Women in the Bible a 10-week Series for Spanish Speakers (at a local parish in San Diego).
- Provides spiritual support and respite to those involved in direct and/or support services serving the immigrant community along the Tijuana/Mexicali corridor.
- Assists and offers spiritual support to groups and individuals crossing the US/Mexico border at Mexicali to join efforts to address asylum seekers' needs living at *La Posada del Migrante* and *El Refugio* shelters.
- Provide spiritual support and reflection for volunteers/front-line workers who participate in immersion experiences at the border.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

TOTAL GOAL: Support 60 individuals
FIRST-YEAR GOAL: Support 30 individuals
REACHED FIRST YEAR: 492 individuals

CLIENT STORY

"Seven women making the 19th Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius came to the Spiritual Ministry for a morning prayer on Saturday, December 10. They had time to reflect and pray on their experience of the Second week of the Exercises and celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation during their morning prayer."



Women making the 19th Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

“One of the groups from the January Crossover was from St. Ignatius Parish in San Francisco (five adults). The group included two fluent Spanish speakers, and because of their ability to speak Spanish, it provided deep exchanges of encounters as they met and assisted the migrants. The volunteers would hear the unmet needs and go out of their way to provide resources. They really did it all, from purchasing a washer and dryer for the shelter to accompanying two different women to the Red Cross who needed medical attention. While they were at the shelter, they met a family from Venezuela seeking asylum. The family had an official appointment to present their papers and cross into the US on January 29, 2023. Through this encounter, the family is now being accompanied by this group of volunteers in the San Francisco area and supported by the parish as they continue their asylum journey.”



Some of the group from St. Ignatius Parish in San Francisco



Venezuelan Family

Bringing the project to life



A Celebration to mark the end of a ten-week retreat on Women in the Bible.

SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	STUDENTS WITHOUT LIMITS
CONGREGATION	Society of the Sacred Heart
REPORT PERIOD	November 2022 – August 2023

<p>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED</p>	<p>Students Without Limits – SWOL provides legal, mental health, and continuing education support to underserved minority and immigrant teenagers from low-income families, most of whom will be first-generation college students across San Diego County.</p> <p>SWOL's unique three-pronged approach provides students and their families a greater understanding and knowledge of their legal rights and options, raised spirits and motivation, improved quality of life by learning positive coping skills, and a greater possibility of these students graduating high school, attending college, and becoming meaningful contributors to the San Diego community and beyond.</p> <p>The Society of the Sacred Heart helped to found SWOL and continues to provide leadership and funding for this educational project.</p>
<p>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED</p>	<p>TOTAL GOAL: Support 390 students FIRST-YEAR GOAL: Support 195 students REACHED FIRST YEAR: 594 students</p>
<p>CLIENT STORY</p>	<p>Florencia has been part of the SWOL family for ten years. She was a founding member of SWOL's first-ever Dreamers' Club and became student President during her high school senior year. She graduated from UCR and has spent the last few years gaining work experience.</p>  <p>Florencia's passion is giving back to her community. She has been a star volunteer with SWOL for many years. She has presented with us to students, school staff, and college staff all over San Diego. Florencia has a gift of connecting with people with her warm personality and sense of humor. When she shares her challenges growing up undocumented, the whole room is brought to tears. Countless teachers and counselors have gone out of their way to thank Florencia for helping them understand how to support undocumented youth better. After hearing her heartfelt stories, many educators have expressed a renewed sense of purpose.</p> <p>We are humbled and grateful for the opportunity to consider making Florencia part of the SWOL team. She will undoubtedly take the SWOL program to a whole new level by showing high school students that if she can do it, they can too.</p>



Amie Scully, SWOL CEO, and immigration attorney, provides a presentation on legal and college options for students at Hoover High School in City Heights, San Diego.




Kevin Scully, school psychologist, and SWOL director, presents mental health skills and positive coping strategies to a group of students at Hilltop High School in Chula Vista, California.



SISTERS' FAN PROGRAM

HILTON FOUNDATION GRANT
YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT NAME	WOMEN OF WISDOM
CONGREGATIONS	Sisters of Providence Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
MONTH	September 2022 – August 2023

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES PROVIDED	<p>Women of Wisdom – WOW, group three congregations with the aim of visiting and supporting senior citizens in low-income housing or retiring homes to overcome mobility limitations or other barriers to re-engage in their communities and resurrect their spirits.</p> <p>We also provide caregiving to elderly Sisters living in the community at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Convent in San Ysidro, CA.</p>
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED	<p>TOTAL GOAL: Engage and reintroduce 300 seniors to their communities</p> <p>FIRST-YEAR GOAL: Engage and reintroduce 150 seniors to their communities</p> <p>REACHED FIRST YEAR: 783 seniors</p>
CLIENT STORY	<p><i>We met a Vietnamese woman, probably in her mid-seventies. She had just suffered the loss of her husband two weeks ago. She is now alone. When one of the Sisters spoke to her in Vietnamese, she responded with a comforting hug. She showed us pictures of her beloved spouse and her experience coming to the US. She was delighted to be able to share her grief and the gift of a fulfilled life. In our farewell, she said: "You made my day."</i></p> <p><i>A homeless Vietnam veteran worked as a piano player in a small restaurant. He shared his experience of living in the war. He had sufficient food for his body but needed food for his soul. His wisdom and lessons from the war and living in the street fed us with wisdom. We all went home nourished with hope in humankind.</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p><i>Sr. Ma. Paz has always been very outgoing and has a happy-go-lucky attitude. When she came down with COVID-19, she got depressed, and because of her dementia, she did not understand why she had to stay confined in her bedroom. We did what we could to cheer her up, but it was still difficult for her and everyone around her. Being at school full-time, I could not give her more attention or socialize enough with her. Now that she is free from COVID and I can have more time to spend with her (thanks to this Hilton Grant), she is back to herself and continues with her lighthearted demeanor. She still goes next door to school to help with yard duties and gives good advice to the students that come to her for help. She talks to parents and staff and encourages people to have a good attitude in life. After being a principal at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School for many years, many parents know her and appreciate that she is still around. I appreciate that I can be of service to her.</i></p> </div> </div>

Bringing the project to life



"We have not seen God, but we have met God in every encounter."