

Love *in* Action



Heart of the Harvest honors our
Farm Working Mothers

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we step into summer, a season of growth and warmth, we are proud to share the powerful stories that defined our mission in the past six months. Every day, thanks to your support, we plant seeds of hope, resilience, and transformation across our community. In this newsletter, we are excited to spotlight:

- The work of our **immigration legal services**, offering education and consultations in collaboration with partners and parishes across the region.
- Our **after-school community garden program**, where rural communities gain access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and young minds receive mentorship and support.
- The joy of our **Heart of the Harvest initiative**, which brought smiles and comfort to women who give so much to their families and community, just in time for Mother's Day.

As we look ahead, amid growing funding uncertainties for safety net programs like ours, we invite you to continue supporting our critical services. Your donation provides stability and a brighter future to individuals and families in need. Please consider making a gift today to continue planting seeds of change. Together, we are cultivating a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

With much gratitude,



Angela Di Novella
Executive Director



Volunteer with Us



Join Catholic Charities as a volunteer and help make a difference in the lives of individuals and families in need. Whether it's lending a hand at events, supporting our team, or helping with the programs, your time and compassion can change lives.

GIVE HELP



Catholic Charities' Immigration Work Across the Central Coast

Across the counties of **Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo**, Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey is a trusted and compassionate resource for immigrant families navigating the complex U.S. immigration system. Through a series of Immigration Forums and community-based clinics, we provide hope, guidance, and practical support to people seeking stability and security for themselves and their loved ones.

Our Immigration Forums are designed to empower community members with knowledge about their constitutional rights, legal updates, and available pathways to citizenship or legal residency. These events often feature presentations from our Department of Justice-accredited legal team, immigration attorneys, and local partners who bring years of experience and insight to help break down intimidating legal processes. Attendees leave with more than just information—they leave with a plan, trusted legal guidance, and reassurance that they're not alone.



Immigration legal team

In addition to forums, we host numerous Immigration Clinics throughout the year, rotating locations across all four counties to meet people in their local communities. **These clinics offer free or low-cost consultations, DACA renewals, citizenship application assistance, green card guidance, and help with family-based petitions.** Each event is staffed by a compassionate team of bilingual legal workers, volunteers, and attorneys dedicated to treating every client with dignity and respect.

Our presence in communities like Watsonville, Hollister, Salinas, Greenfield, Paso Robles, and Santa Maria reflects our commitment to reaching underserved and rural areas where access to trusted immigration services can be limited. We work in close collaboration with churches, local schools, nonprofit partners, and volunteers to ensure that everyone has access to services, especially the most vulnerable. These services are a bridge to a better life. **For many, our immigration legal work is the first step toward reuniting families, gaining lawful employment, or finally feeling safe in the place they call home.**



Our team members at the Seaside immigration forum

Help Us Stand with Immigrant Families

The need for immigration legal services is greater than ever. Your gift helps provide trusted guidance, reunite families, and bring hope to those seeking a better future. Please give today.

Visit www.catholiccharitiesdom.org to learn how you can help today.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Dreams in Motion: A Young Migrant's Journey Toward Hope

Armando's journey **began in the shadow of abuse**. Growing up in El Salvador, his parents' abuse and eventual abandonment drove him to make an impossible choice: leave everything behind and travel alone to the United States, seeking refuge with his aunt, the only family member who had ever shown him genuine care.

During Armando's first meeting with our immigration attorney, he talked about his fascination for systems – electrical, hydraulic, and diesel. **"I want to fix big machines," he said.** While other high school students might dream of different futures, Armando's focus remains unwavering: understanding the complex mechanics that power construction equipment.

In his umpteenth meeting, the legal systems that might have pointed toward trouble for Armando are now working in his favor. Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey was able to provide a service to him that helped him in two ways.



First, his petition for guardianship made it clear that his aunt can continue to help him heal and grow. Second, that process also placed him on the road to a green card.

Now, for perhaps the first time, in addition to his passion for machines, Armando speaks of long-term dreams that are becoming more and more tangible: Completing technical training, finding work as a heavy equipment mechanic, and even starting a family someday.

Rooted in Care: SNAP-Ed Afterschool Garden Program Blossoms



Did you know?

Through Catholic Charities, SNAP-Ed (CalFresh Healthy Living) provides **direct services to 1,192 individuals** via afterschool programs, nutrition education, and cooking demos—teaching families to stretch SNAP dollars and cook healthy meals.

We also reach **7,384+ people** through community partnerships, workshops, and resources. SNAP-Ed empowers Californians to thrive with practical skills and healthier lifestyles!

On a warm spring day, at one of our five community gardens, our **Nutrition Education** (CalFresh) team created a welcoming space where learning, nourishment, and fun come together for local children at Eden Housing in Soledad.

Each day, our team welcomes the kids home at their school bus stop, greets them with healthy snacks, and helps them with their homework—laying the foundation for a positive and supportive afternoon. **After homework and indoor activities, the children head outside to their community garden, where hands-on learning begins.**

With trowels in hand, the kids plant seeds, explore where food comes from, and discover the importance of healthy eating and caring for the earth. Guided by our educators, they learn how sunlight, water, and patience work together to help things grow.

For many children, in rural communities like this, access to fresh fruits and vegetables is very limited so this program is very critical for them.

Honoring the Women Behind Our Fields This Mother's Day Heart of the Harvest

This **Mother's Day**, Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey proudly hosted **Heart of the Harvest**, a **heartfelt event dedicated to uplift and celebrate the resilient women working in our local agricultural fields**—many of them mothers who balance long hours of labor with the responsibilities of nurturing their families.

Held in partnership with local community organizations and generous donors, Heart of the Harvest was our way of giving back to those who gave so much. Dozens of farm working mothers were welcomed with warm smiles and thoughtful gestures, including beautifully prepared care packages, wellness items, and fresh roses—simple symbols of appreciation for their strength, sacrifice, and love.

Throughout the event, our staff and volunteers shared messages of gratitude, offered words of encouragement, and connected with women whose stories reflect both the challenges and the enduring spirit of our agricultural communities.



These mothers are not only the heart of their homes but also the hands that help feed Monterey County and beyond.

As part of our ongoing mission to serve the most vulnerable with compassion and dignity, **Heart of the Harvest exemplifies our commitment to recognizing and uplifting the invisible heroes among us.** Through your support, we are able to bring hope and humanity to those who often go unseen.

We extend our deepest thanks to our Sponsors who helped make this event possible—

PINNACLE BANK
REACH HIGHER

Frank and Mary Fritsch

ZÓCALO
Health

Marich Chocolates, Luigi's Restaurant, Soy Tank Candle Co, Supervisor Lopez, Pebble Beach, Grocery Outlet in Seaside, Trader Joe's, Bette and David Harken, Christine Glunz, Will and Martina O'Sullivan, Sue Hardy, Megal Carlson, Christine Ward, Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, and Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce



To learn more or support future programs like this, please visit www.catholiccharitiesdom.org.

GIVE HELP

GET HELP

Your generous gift today helps transform lives—bringing hope, dignity, and vital support to our neighbors.



RECOGNITION IN OUR COMMUNITY

Celebrating Service and Community in Watsonville

We are honored to share that the **City of Watsonville** recognized **Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey** for our ongoing commitment and service to Watsonville residents.

Through programs that offer food assistance, disaster relief, immigration support, family strengthening, and more, our team has been a steady source of hope and healing for individuals and families in need. Watsonville is home to many of the resilient communities we proudly serve, and this recognition reflects the deep partnerships and trust we've built together over the years.

Whether it's helping a neighbor navigate a difficult time or walking alongside families as they build a better future, our mission remains the same: to serve with dignity, compassion, and love.

Thank you to the Watsonville City Council and Mayor Maria Orozco for this meaningful recognition—and to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters who make this work possible every day.



Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey being recognized by the Watsonville City Council

A Grateful Recognition: Honored for Our Work in the Immigration Forums



Catholic Charities: Diocese of Monterey was presented with Proclamations for our work at the Immigration Forums

Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey is deeply honored for the **Proclamation** received from the **Monterey County Board of Supervisors** in recognition of our work supporting immigrants through our recent Immigration Forums.

This acknowledgment reflects the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and community partners who continue to provide trustworthy guidance, education, and resources to immigrant families across the region. The forums have offered a safe space for individuals to access vital legal information, ask questions, and find hope during uncertain times.

We are truly grateful to the Monterey Board of Supervisors, especially Supervisor Luis Alejo and Chris Lopez for bringing together partners and shining a light on this important work. Their support affirms the value of our mission and inspires us to continue walking alongside our neighbors seeking stability, safety, and belonging. Together, we are building a more informed, compassionate, and inclusive community.

A Message from the Board President

First, a word of thanks to each one of you. The work of Catholic Charities and the hearts, minds, and **lives that are changed each day would not be possible without the support of our donors and partners** in the four counties of the Diocese of Monterey and beyond. In my time on the Board of Directors, the Agency and staff have weathered pandemic, floods, wildfires, and a whole host of other seemingly insurmountable situations with compassion, dedication, and hope - all thanks to your ongoing support and prayers.

Today we find ourselves ready to navigate new and ever-changing dynamics all without losing sense of who we are and why we do what we do. **As a Catholic agency, at our core is the foundation that every human person has been created in the image and likeness of God.** Rooted in our common humanity and shared origin, we undertake the privilege of accompanying the most vulnerable of the human family with attentive hearts, informed minds, and eyes that look to the future with hope. This is the beauty of Catholic Charities.



Jordan Lewis, Board President

This work is far more than programs, charts, and statistics – these are instead the framework for the human lives, households, and communities whose futures are forever changed by access to legal assistance, fresh food and nutrition education, the affirming generosity of others, and the unifying sense of community that comes from the family of parishes in the Diocese. **On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, thank you for being part of making possible all that you have read.** With a sense of profound humility, I am proud to be part of this organization, and I hope you are too.

With Grateful Hearts: Honoring the Compassion of Our Parishes

We are deeply thankful for our **46 parishes across Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo counties.** More than places of faith, they walk with our community in times of need—**living examples of the Good Samaritan, lifting neighbors in their darkest hours.**

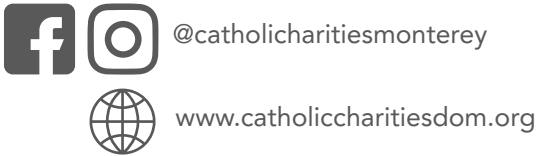
Rooted in faith and compassion, our parishes partner with us to offer real solutions. Parishioners extend open hands and hearts, quietly assuring: “You are not alone.” Their generosity—raising \$56,834.00 through second collections—has directly supported our programs and people facing hunger, housing instability, and personal crises.

Many parishes also host Catholic Charities services on-site, including information sessions and outreach events. These trusted spaces have become hubs of connection, where people find support, dignity, and hope.



Our parishes are lifelines. In them, faith becomes action, isolation turns into belonging, and strangers become family. **Together, we weave a tapestry of compassion—small acts of love creating lasting transformation.**

Please follow us on:



Giving back to our Farm Working Mothers



Cover Photo: A hardworking mother in the fields receives a care package and a rose during our Heart of the Harvest event honoring the incredible women in agriculture for Mother's Day. Hosted by Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey.

Scan the QR code for more info about Catholic Charities

