

Foster Grandparent inducted into National Hispanic Heritage Hall of Honor



**Rita Vidaurri Eden
2009 Hall of Honor**

Rita Vidaurri Eden was inducted into the National Hispanic Heritage Hall of Honor by the Hispanic Sports Foundation for Education on Aug. 8.

Eden is currently enrolled with the Foster Grandparent Program in San Antonio. As a foster grandparent, she volunteers her time at the Methodist Children's Hospital. Enrolled in the program since 2007, she truly enjoys working with special needs children.

Eden was recognized by the Hispanic Sports Foundation for Education, Inc. (HSFE) for having excelled in the field of arts and entertainment. HSFE is a nonprofit organization working to contribute financial assistance to deserving students who hope to pursue college or university studies.

Beginning her career at the age of 12 after winning a singing contest, Eden traveled through Latin America and was very popular in the 1940s and 1950s. She continues her career with Las Tesoros del Westside de San Antonio and performs as part of the Arte es Vida Project of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center.

Eden has excelled in the arts and entertainment field and has received several honors during her lifetime, to include being inducted into the National Hispanic Music Hall of Fame and being featured at the Texas Music Museum.

At special events hosted by the Foster Grandparent Program, Eden performs some of the songs she made popular during her career.

We are very proud our dear foster granny Rita Vidaurri Eden — not just for her success in music, but for her dedication to the children of the Foster Grandparent Program as well.

Council 786 raises over \$15,000 for Catholic Charities

By Robert Gorena

Knights of Columbus Council 786 held its eighth annual Dallas Cowboy weekend Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 to raise funds for Catholic Charities.

This year Council 786 raised \$15,000. Every year for the last eight years, the council has organized this fundraiser to help Catholic Charities provide vital services to families most in need.

As a member of Council 786, I took on the task of getting this fundraiser off the ground in 2001 when I was working as a case manager for the Crisis Intervention Program and where I saw first-hand just how many needy families are in need of food.

Over the past few years, other Knights of Columbus councils of San Antonio have joined in and have contributed their time and energy toward our efforts, making this event a huge success.

Knights of Columbus 786 is grateful to the following people for their dedication and hard work on this project: Oscar Moreno

with City Public Service; Roland Rios from Holy Spirit Church; Ben and Cindy Sanchez from St. Lawrence Church; Randy and Becky Schulze from St. Mark the Evangelist Church; Jay and Rosine Vela from Our Lady of Atonement Church; and my daughter, Melinda Gorena.

These individuals were responsible for helping with the many activities during the trip.

We cannot forget the following people who generously donated items to help us reduce the cost of this event: Ron Acosta, president of Las Palapas for his donation of food products each year to feed the participants on our trip; Tony Liberto of Rico's Products; Becky Schulze with Westex Insurance for her contribution of a golf bag each year for our raffle; Steve Stack for a 14-karat-gold football; Marcus Schoenenburg of Texas Shine Car Wash; and Louie Mayeux of North Park Lincoln Mercury, a fellow Knights of Columbus member.

I would also like to give many thanks to those who purchased tickets for the trip, which is what



Photo provided

Ben Sanchez and wife Cindy of St. Lawrence Church participate every year in the Knights of Columbus Council 786 annual Dallas Cowboy weekend trip.

truly made our efforts successful.

Every year, I tell our participants, "Good people make good things happen," and by the success of this fundraiser each year, I can say this is a fact. Always helping others — that is what

Catholic Charities and the Knights of Columbus are all about.

What a great team!

Robert Gorena is a community coordinator for the Foster Grandparent Program.

An introduction to the 2010 Census: It's in our hands

The foundation of our American democracy is dependent on fair and equitable representation in Congress. In order to achieve an accurate assessment of the number and location of the people living within the nation's borders, the U.S. Constitution mandates a census of the population every 10 years.

The census population totals determine which states gain or lose representation in Congress. It also determines the amount of state and federal funding communities receive over the course of the decade. 2010 Census data will directly affect how more than \$4 trillion is allocated to local, state and tribal governments over the next 10 years.

In order for this funding allocation to be accomplished fairly and accurately, the goal of the decennial census is to count everybody, count them only once, and count them in the right place. The facts gathered in

the census also help shape decisions for the rest of the decade about public health, neighborhood improvements, transportation, education, senior services and more.

The goal of the 2010 Census is to count all residents living in the United States on April 1. The U.S. Census Bureau does not ask about the legal status of respondents in any of its surveys and census programs.

To help ensure the nation's increasingly diverse population can answer the questionnaire accurately and completely, about 13 million bilingual Spanish/English forms will be mailed to housing units in neighborhoods identified as requiring high levels of Spanish assistance.

Additionally, questionnaires

in Spanish, Chinese (Simplified), Korean, Vietnamese and Russian — as well as language guides in 59 languages — will be available on request. By 2010, there will be an estimated 310 million people residing in the United States. Counting each

person is one of the largest operations the federal government undertakes.

For example, the Census Bureau will recruit nearly 3.8 million applicants for 2010 Census

field operations. Of these applicants, the Census Bureau will hire about 1.4 million temporary employees. Some of these employees will be using GPS-equipped hand-held computers to update maps and ensure there is an accurate address list for the mailing of the census questionnaires.

With one of the shortest questionnaires in history, the 2010 Census asks for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship and whether you own or rent your home. It takes only about 10 minutes for the average household to complete. Questions about how we live as a nation — our diversity, education, housing, jobs and more — are now covered in the American Community Survey, which is conducted every year throughout the decade and replaces the Census 2000 long-form questionnaire. Responses to the 2010 Census questionnaire are required by law. All responses are used for statistical purposes only, and all are strictly confidential.

For more information, visit the 2010 Census Web site at <http://www.census.gov/2010>.

This article was provided by the United States Census Bureau.



Character education program develops positive morals

By Pamela Raines

Guadalupe Community Center has partnered with The Character Connection (TCC) to offer character education classes to youth ages five to 17 who express a desire to learn how to develop a positive moral character and avoid future gang involvement, illegal drug use, teen pregnancy and prison. These classes are voluntary and are provided at no charge.

TCC provides quality character education programs designed to prevent/reduce juvenile crime, drug abuse, domestic violence and organized gang activities. The curriculum used is the Peaceful Solution Character Education Program, which is a classroom-ready curriculum developed for children in grades kinder through high school that enables the instructor to incite in its participants a heightened sense of consideration,

care and respect for their own well-being and that of their family, friends and society.

The Peaceful Solution program promotes an increased awareness of the impact of personal choices, property rights, self control, respect and the understanding of positive and negative influences that are prevalent in modern society. These character education classes generate respectful individuals who think before they act and consider the consequences of their actions before deciding what direction those actions will take.

Classes will be held at Guadalupe Community Center every Saturday through February. Parents are welcome to attend the classes with their children. Call (210) 226-6178 for class times or to register your child.

Pamela Raines is the director of development for Catholic Charities.



Photo provided

Character Connection Regional Director John Martinez guides Peaceful Solution participants, from left, Abram Raines, Serenity Ramon, Sebastian Ramon and Nathan Ramon in activities that promote respect for themselves and others.

Refugees pursue economic self-sufficiency through employment

By Mary Nan Ollis

The stories that ring throughout the office of Catholic Charities Refugee Services have the tone of the miraculous: A blind man from a far away land has been enabled to work. A severely deformed individual has found healing through doctors who donated their time and services. This same man, upon healing, asserted his need for employment and subsequently was placed at a local factory where he is able to get his first paycheck that did not come from Catholic Charities.

There are reports of the men and women who have always been denied the basic right to work because they resided in refugee camps practicing their English for their first interviews for their first jobs.

At the core of Catholic Charities Refugee Services — its backbone — is the Refugee Employment Program. Last year, Refugee Services accepted 415 resettlement cases, bringing a total 1,009 refugees to San Antonio.

Funded through various government grants and private donations, these families receive approximately three to six months of assistance with their rent and utilities. The mandate from the government, however, is that these families pursue economic self-sufficiency through employment.

Refugees, who come from countries such as Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, Cuba, Iran and Iraq, come to the United States with permission to work. These refugees are persons who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of being persecuted based on their religion, race, nationality or membership in a particular social or political group. Because of this persecution, they are forced to leave their country.

The vocational backgrounds of the refugees that come to San Antonio are diverse. There are engineers, surgeons, teachers, farmers, students, tailors and midwives. Upon arriving to the United States, these refugees long to prosper.

The vocational backgrounds of the refugees that come to San Antonio are diverse. There are engineers, surgeons, teachers, farmers, students, tailors and midwives.

Upon arriving to the United States, these refugees long to prosper. They long to meet the needs of their families by maintaining meaningful work.

There are many barriers, however, that the refugees must overcome in order to reach the goal of employment. The first barrier to overcome is that many employers are unfamiliar with the legal work status of refugees. Therefore, there is an automatic wall built prior to even going into an interview.

The refugee employment coordinators from Catholic Charities serve the role of the liaison between the refugee and the business community. As liaisons, they assure the potential employer that all refugees are authorized to work, have received background checks in their own countries and have their legal and authentic documentation in order.

Once this barrier is overcome, a potential employer might still be skeptical to hire a refugee because of the fear of language barriers. Many of the refugees do speak English, but for those who do not, there have been methods put into place for hiring, training and managing refugees while they go through the process of learning English.

For example, when Karen refugees, an ethnic minority from Burma, first came to the United States, many were hired by local hotels. A hotel would hire a group of refugees in which at least one spoke English. The one who spoke English was responsible for helping the entire group learn their assigned tasks at the hotel.

As refugees are hired, Catholic Charities provides multiple support services to the employer to assist with the transition process.



Photo provided

ESL instructor Sharon Marr, standing, and Refugee Services volunteer Michael Petty, center, guide refugee clients Kuli Chimon, Hita Acharya and Dhan Mongar as they practice their interviewing skills in English class. Catholic Charities Refugee Services strives to place all employable adults into jobs that will make them self-sufficient as soon as possible.

Interpreters are provided on an as-needed basis, the employment coordinators are available to assist members of management to troubleshoot any issues and administrative support is available for completing employee paperwork.

Additionally, for the refugees, job-readiness classes and English as a Second Language classes (ESL) are available as they prepare to be placed in jobs.

Catholic Charities Refugee Services strives to place all employable adults into employment positions that will make the individual economically self-sufficient as soon as possible.

As the Refugee Employment Program and the refugees themselves navigate the job market today, we are ever on the look-out for partners and community advocates.

From businesses that have vacancies to persons who have the desire to assist with searching for job placements, there are multiple avenues in which one can assist with helping

the refugee who is in search of finding employment.

Helen Keller is quoted as to having said, "My share of the work may be limited, but the fact that it is work makes it precious." The jobs that are found and refugees that are placed in them — as limited as the positions may be in stature and number — are precious. They represent lives that are being reassembled here in the United States one day at a time. They represent hard work on the part of the Refugee Employment Program, volunteers, refugees and employers. They represent families who will reach economic self-sufficiency in due time. They represent miracles.

To find out how you can help a refugee family transition to a new life in San Antonio, call Refugee Services at (210) 222-1294.

Mary Nan Ollis is a program assistant for the Refugee Cash Assistance Program.

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program hosts annual recognition luncheon

By Katie Pawsey

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) hosted its annual volunteer recognition luncheon on Oct. 30 at La Villita Assembly Hall.

RSVP is a nationwide volunteer program for adults ages 55 and over. RSVP provides opportunities for senior citizens to use their life experience and skills by volunteering throughout the community.

Once a year, the RSVP program has a luncheon to say "thank you" to the volunteers for all the hard work they do throughout the year. The event is a Halloween-themed costume party.

This year's Mistress of Ceremonies was the lovely Monica Navarro from Channel 41-KWEX Univision. Councilwoman Mary Alice Cisneros provided words of encouragement to all the volunteers along with her gratitude for their hard work and dedication.

The luncheon had a costume contest and a dancing contest in which trophies and ribbons were awarded for best dancing and most creative costume.

The highlight of the luncheon, however, was a special performance provided by music legend René René. He transported the seniors to a different time with his crooning of days past in another era. As you watched them singing along with René René, you could

envision them in their youth with not a care in the world.

RSVP also gives thanks to its many sponsors: Alamo Kidney Health PA, Inc.; A Plus Family Care; AQTs Health Service; Care Improvement Plus; Caring Companions; Carter Taylor Williams Mortuary; Heart to Heart Hospice; Home Instead Senior Care; House Call Doctors; Mr. and Mrs. G.'s Home Cooking; Serenity Home Care; and Sutton and Sutton Mortuary, Inc.

For more information on RSVP, call (210) 222-0301.

Katie Pawsey is the administrative assistant for RSVP.



Photo provided

RSVP volunteers enjoy dressing up for Halloween at the annual volunteer recognition luncheon.

Give your family a Great Start!



Get help managing the stresses of having a child or new baby.

Call (210) 222-1294.

Catholic Charities' food pantry prepares for holidays

By Ester Geffre

Catholic Charities Crisis Intervention Program offers assistance to those in need in several ways. In addition to emergency financial assistance for utilities and rent, we offer clothing and food assistance. Clients may visit our West Salinas location to pick up clothing items for the members of their households.

Depending on how many individuals they have in their households, clients may take one, two or three bags of groceries. Clients are able to receive clothing and food assistance once every

three months. We also offer smaller bags of food to homeless individuals, who may receive up to one bag per week. As the holiday season approaches, our food pantry will need a more abundant supply of food items on hand to help needy individuals and families. Our food pantry items include canned corn or green beans, pinto beans, spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, vermicelli, rice, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, jelly, tomato sauce, tuna, cereal, ground turkey, bread, potted meat, Vienna sausages, boxed mashed potatoes, crackers and bottled water.

For the Christmas holiday, we would like to

offer turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing, sweet potatoes and other traditional holiday meal items.

The needy individuals and families of the San Antonio community will greatly appreciate any and all assistance we can give them during the holiday season. We will gladly accept donations of any of the items listed above or monetary donations at our 2903 West Salinas location.

For more information, call (210) 433-3256.

Ester Geffre is the program director for the Crisis Intervention Program.

The challenges, successes and aspirations of a teen-age parent

By Anna Ramirez

I first met Krystal and Heaven in 2003. Krystal was 17 years old and Heaven was six months old. Krystal had heard about Precious Minds, New Connections through the parenting class in her high school. She decided to enroll when she learned that the parent educator could visit her at home. Also, she saw an opportunity to get advice and incentives. Krystal commented, "I didn't have a clue about good parenting skills and what to expect."

When I met Krystal, she was eager to learn about Heaven's development and had many questions. But, what also caught my attention about Krystal was that she had dreams and goals of her own. She was getting ready to graduate from high school and was enrolled in a summer program to earn college credit. During this time, Krystal was very busy going to school full-time, but she made it a point to have at least one home visit with me every month. When the summer program ended, she was ready to meet with me weekly and learn more about how she could impact her and Heaven's future.

During the years I visited Krystal, she was faced with many challenges. She was left alone to raise Heaven because Heaven's dad decided to make decisions that would not improve their lives. So, Krystal felt that she and Heaven were better off living on their own. After this, Krystal had many financial obstacles to overcome. She would try to make ends meet by stretching \$10 over two weeks. She said sometimes she only had Ramen noodles and milk in the home.

In spite of numerous challenges and setbacks, Krystal continued to stay in the



Becoming a mother at the young age of 17, Krystal has taken large strides in her life as she works hard to provide stability for her now 7-year-old daughter Heaven. With the help of the Precious Minds, New Connections parenting program at Catholic Charities, Krystal is a successful, nurturing mother.



Photos provided

parenting program. Over the years, the bond between Krystal and I became stronger and more trusting. Krystal came to realize that she would not be judged for the decisions or mistakes she made.

As time passed, Krystal observed that Heaven looked forward to our home visits. Heaven would often look into my bag to see what fun activity I had brought for her and ask, "You bring toys?" Krystal began to notice that during our home visits, Heaven would find a sense of stability and familiarity. During the home visits, Krystal would role model positive social skills, demonstrating for Heaven the valuable characteristics of following directions, cooperation and sharing.

Krystal learned a new world of parenting styles and applied them to everything from discipline to toilet training. As a result, she receives compliments on Heaven's behavior in school and from her own college professors. Sometimes when Krystal cannot find a babysitter, she will take Heaven to her college night class. When

Krystal is in class, Heaven will sit right next to her and draw or play games on her laptop. One professor has complimented that Heaven is so quiet and nice.

Through hard work and perseverance, Krystal made it on the 2004 Dean's List with a 4.0 grade point average. She was also listed in "Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges" while attending St. Philip's College. In 2008, she received a scholarship from the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) for staying enrolled and graduating with an associate degree from St. Philip's College. The LULAC scholarship will give Heaven the opportunity to attend any Alamo Community College District campus tuition-free when she is older. As Krystal earned her degree at St. Philip's, Heaven graduated from the Head Start Program with Parent Child Incorporated.

Krystal is continuing her education at Texas A&M in San Antonio to become a special education teacher. She has already applied for her student teaching internship and is currently working part-time at Connelly Middle School in the Northside Independent School District as a tutor for the Advanced Via Individual Determination Program (AVID). Her job involves tutoring high school students who are at risk of dropping out of school in

order to help prepare them for college.

Krystal's next ambition is to graduate from Texas A&M with her bachelor's degree in the spring of 2010. With her degree, she would like to find a job in a public school as a special education teacher. She also hopes to improve her finances and credit score. Another important aspiration is for her, her daughter, her current boyfriend and his son to become a family. Krystal mentioned that she and her boyfriend Mark are talking about a wedding in the future. Krystal said, "I always wanted to live a 'happily ever after.'"

As someone who has lived the role of a teen parent, Krystal has a few words of advice for teen parents: "Things have to get worse before they can get better. Also, don't let people get you down and interfere with your goals. Stay positive, be assertive and don't accept 'no' for an answer. As far as your children, be patient with them and be consistent with their routines and consequences. Lastly, don't be afraid to ask for help! It could make a difference in yours and your child's life."

If you are a pregnant or parenting teen and want to learn more about our parenting programs, call (210) 222-1294, ext. 243.

Anna Ramirez is the assistant director for Catholic Charities Parenting Programs.

"Things have to get worse before they can get better...Stay positive, be assertive and don't accept 'no' for an answer. As far as your children, be patient with them..."

Krystal, teen mom

'My Voice Matters' strengthens families

By Jane Garza

The Making Connections — San Antonio "My Voice Matters/Mi Voz Cuenta" project started in August 2008. It is known to the Annie E. Casey Foundation and their various funded sites as the participant family data collection project. The title came from a resident in San Antonio's Edgewood community, who after reading the proposal and interview guide, remarked, "It's about the community; it's about me."

"My Voice Matters" is a longitudinal project where 200 families in the Edgewood Independent School District (EISD), primarily Loma Park, Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson elementary schools, are interviewed. The 25-page interview gathers information on demographics, country of origin, employment, savings and children's status in school. This information gives the "My Voice Matters" team a better understanding of families and their needs in order to direct them to appropriate services. Additionally, data gathered from participating

families informs service providers and EISD how to improve delivery and quality of services.

The ultimate goal is to strengthen families and the community, ultimately resulting in children doing better in school. This is all made possible by the Making Connections — San Antonio partners: Family Service Association; City of San Antonio, Department of Community Initiatives; Edgewood Independent School District; Catholic Charities; and most importantly, the residents of San Antonio's West Side.

The "My Voice Matters" research document was recently accepted by the American Sociological Association. In August 2009, sociologists from around the world were introduced to EISD for the first time in San Francisco, CA, where the document was presented by Tamara Casso, senior evaluator with EISD who is assigned to Making Connections — San Antonio.

Jane Garza is the communications associate for Making Connections — San Antonio.

GCC youth celebrates with Hispanic leaders at Hall of Honor induction ceremony



Guadalupe Community Center Director Clara Soto and her husband Aroldo, back row, join General Belisario Flores, center, for a photo with, from left, After School Care Program participants Sergio Olveda, Angus Antu, Joseph Wolf, Brianna Villarreal, Jose Del Bosque, Maria Mendoza and Claudia Nolasco.

Photo provided

Seven lucky youth participants of the Guadalupe Community Center (GCC) After School Care Program were personally invited by General Belisario J. Flores to his induction ceremony into the National Hispanic Heritage Hall of Honor on Aug. 8.

General Flores was recognized by the Hispanic Sports Foundation for Education, Inc. (HSFE) for having excelled in the field of military service. HSFE is a nonprofit community service organization working to contribute financial assistance to deserving students who hope to pursue college or university studies. At the induction ceremony, HSFE also presented scholarships to local Hispanic youth.

Through the Hall of Honor, HSFE reinforces their mission to provide Hispanic youth with role models who will inspire and motivate them to complete higher levels of education.

General Flores invited the children from the GCC youth program to this event to encourage them to pursue a higher education and expose them to the potential each one of them already has.

We are grateful to General Flores for this opportunity. We are also grateful to Stardust, who generously donated the cost of the tickets to the ceremony.

The Catholic Counseling & Consultation Center has moved!



New offices are located on the campus of
Oblate School of Theology
at 7711 Madonna.

Call (210) 377-1133.

Program educates community on human trafficking

By Melissa Moreno, J.D.

A common misconception is that all human trafficking victims are foreign nationals. Although there is data from the U.S. State Department showing that between 14,500 and 17,500 victims are trafficked into the U.S. from Asia, Central and South America and Eastern Europe, a Congressional report found that 100,000 to 300,000 children in the United States are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation at any time.

Despite the legal innovations of the Trafficking Victim's Protection Act, very little is known about the gravity of this atrocious crime and its consequences. What has been discovered since the enactment of federal legislation over the last

eight years is that victimization and sexual exploitation of U.S. children and at-risk youth comprise all the elements of human trafficking.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) estimates that one in five girls and one in 10 boys are sexually abused or assaulted before they reach adulthood. The cycle of exploitation may begin when a family member or friend abuses a child in their custody or care, only to escalate to a systematic and continuum of abuse and commercial exploitation.

Traffickers recruit children by scouting bus stations, arcades, malls and focusing on girls who appear to be runaways. Traffickers use a child's emotional and financial dependency to coerce him or her into selling sex for money that is

turned over to the trafficker, and in time, the relationship evolves into a contractual union whereby the trafficker sets a minimum on the child's earnings. Once exploited, the children are threatened or assaulted to ensure obedience and prevent escape.

In collaboration with the Bexar County Sheriff's Office Human Trafficking Task Force, Catholic Charities Anti-Trafficking Program provides law enforcement training, education and cross-training of

service providers and community outreach and education to raise public awareness on the issue of human trafficking.

For more information on human trafficking, to request a training session or to learn more about our program, contact the Catholic

Charities Anti-Trafficking Program at (210) 222-2975 or atp@ccaosa.org.

Melissa Moreno is the program director for the Anti-Trafficking Program.



Community center provides a safe place for kids after school

By Alyssa Rodriguez

Guadalupe Community Center's After School Care Program (ASCP) recently wrapped up an eventful fall quarter. From September to November, the program has provided care for over 400 children and served over 300 meals through its San Antonio Food Bank Kids Café program.

From week to week, ASCP participants exercised with the Center's dance teacher, Elsa Champion, created "papel picado" for Mexican Independence Day, participated in drug and alcohol awareness activities, received daily homework help, read with volunteers and celebrated Halloween, Día de Los Muertos and Thanksgiving.

Drug and alcohol awareness activities were conducted by the San Antonio Council on Alcohol

and Drug Abuse (SACADA). From September through October, a SACADA representative worked with the children weekly, creating different arts and crafts projects related to drug and alcohol prevention.

For Halloween, the children were given costumes and treat bags and attended nearby Halloween events held by local community organizations, such as American Sunrise and Guadalupe Street Coffee Shop. On Nov. 3, the participants were educated on Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), a traditional Mexican holiday focusing on the remembrance of family members and friends who have passed away.

Also, in November, a new community youth development program was begun. This program is sponsored by the Children's Shelter.

Another major focus of ASCP

has been fostering the importance of reading with the children. Two families from Redeemer Presbyterian Church have been bringing books to share with the kids. Every week, a day is set aside for the children to practice their reading skills.

December will prove to be an even busier month for Guadalupe Community Center. In addition to making the After School Care Program available to our families during the winter break, the Center is planning two holiday parties for the children it serves, as well as their families.

For information on Guadalupe Community Center services, call us at (210) 226-6178.

Alyssa Rodriguez is the program coordinator for the After School Care Program.



Photo provided

GCC After School Care Program Coordinator Alyssa Rodriguez, Associate Coordinator Elyssa Escobedo, back row, and SACADA prevention specialist Lillian Esparza, far right, congratulate Joel Salazar, Nathan Ramon and Nadine Muñoz on winning a Presa Community Center National Night Out coloring contest.

Program protects elderly from exploitation

By Patsy Moreno

In an effort to prevent financial abuse and exploitation of the elderly, Catholic Charities Money Management Program provides daily money management services to low-income seniors ages 55 and older who are experiencing difficulty with budgeting, paying routine bills and keeping track of their financial matters.

The program's goal is to promote independent living among these at-risk seniors, helping them to restore their lives with dignity and trust. The program utilizes a corps of volunteers to assist these vulnerable seniors who do not

have friends or relatives available to help them. The program has operated in conjunction with AARP as a less restrictive alternative to guardianship since 2004.

The Money Management Program is comprised of two components: the Bill Payer Service and the Representative Payee Service.

The Bill Payer Service assists low-income seniors who are able to make responsible decisions about their financial affairs but may be physically or mentally impaired.

The Representative Payee Service involves the complete financial management of a government benefit on behalf of an individual determined as

incapacitated by a physician.

The program operates in the counties of Bexar, Bandera, Comal, Kendall, Atascosa, Medina, Wilson and Guadalupe. In order to be eligible for money management services, you must: be 55 years or older; have \$35,000 or less in liquid assets (excluding home); and have a yearly income of no more than \$24,837 (single) or \$34,144 (household).

To find out if you qualify for the Money Management Program, or if you would like to become a volunteer, call (210) 293-1009.

Patsy Moreno is the volunteer coordinator for Catholic Charities Money Management Program.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program is seeking volunteers to assist in next year's tax season.

Receive a \$25 gift card for every five volunteers recruited, trained or placed by an individual or corporation.

(210) 222-2975
www.vitasa.org

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Please mail to: Catholic Charities
202 W. French Place
San Antonio, Texas 78212-5818

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide for the needs of our community through selfless service under the sign of love. Catholic Charities is committed to empowering individuals and families in our community with the goal of fostering independence.

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