



ST. JOSEPH
Social Service Center



Annual Appeal
March - April, 2017

Dear Friends,

Last week we received a call from a school teacher in Elizabeth. “Amanda”, the mother of one of her students had asked to speak with her. In the midst of tears, she told the teacher that she was afraid of being deported due to her immigration status. She told the teacher she wanted so much for her 3 sons, who were born here, to grow up in America where they would have the opportunity for a better life. ‘If they take me,” she asked, “would you let my boys live with you?” The teacher was distraught and called us. “This is happening to so many of our children and their families. Is there anything that can be done to help them?” We met with Amanda, whose only “crime” was not having proper documentation. She works hard to achieve the “American Dream” for her family. We assisted her with food and basic necessities, and we connected her with agencies that provide legal assistance to immigrants. Since then, we found that many of our immigrant clients are living in fear, especially since members of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) have been seen in Elizabeth.

For the past 31 years, St Joseph Social Service Center has welcomed people from many countries – people of all ethnic backgrounds, races and religions. We also continue to provide assistance to those who were born here, who have experienced hardships in their lives.

“Bernice” was born in this country. Abused as a child and again later as an adult, she was determined to change her life. She got a job and went to school for nursing. Then she found out she had cancer, which required several surgeries. She lost her job and had to drop out of school. As bills piled up, she was unable to pay her rent and became homeless. Eventually, she returned to work and school, until she was struck crossing the street by a “hit and run” driver, which resulted in serious injuries. Now, unable to work, she has applied for disability. St Joseph’s is assisting her with food and medicine, while our Coalition helped her with housing.

It is only because of people like you, who assist us that we are able to help Amanda, Bernice and so many others, in their times of crisis.

Every year in March and April, we have our Annual Appeal. Last year, we raised \$78,000 and we hope to surpass that this year. Whatever you can give will be greatly appreciated.

May you be blessed for caring about our sisters and brothers in need, and for sharing your resources with them. Let us work and pray, together with Pope Francis and Cardinal Tobin, for a world, where all people are welcomed and included.

Sincerely,

Sister Jacinta Fernandes

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