

THE GOOD NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF HOLY NAME OF CAMDEN MINISTRIES

509 State Street • Camden, NJ 08102 • 856.365.1001 • holynameofcamdenministries.org

Spring 2022



Dear Friends,

Greetings from Camden! This season of spring greets us with new life and renewed hope! I am so grateful for your faithfulness to Holy Name of Camden Ministries these past two years. I am looking forward to the months ahead. In this newsletter, you will read about our high school students, known as Holy Name Scholars,

who are anticipating graduation and beginning their next step on their journey. We are so proud of our students, their accomplishments and their choices. They are the future generation of teachers, doctors, scientists and military. You have contributed to their formation and future. Holy Name of Camden Ministries provides tuition assistance to Catholic High Schools and Holy Name Grade School through your donations.

Your generosity also benefits the Camden Center for Law and Social Justice as well as Guadalupe Family Services. The Law Center has received grants to continue to meet the

current needs of our families. Under the leadership of Jeff De Cristofaro, they are hiring new staff members as they expand their services. Since the pandemic started, Guadalupe Family Services has distributed diapers and baby supplies twice a month. The parents have expressed their gratitude despite standing outside in line in the rain, snow and heat. Another successful project has been the Christmas Gift Giving Program. Despite the fear of Covid, over 700 children received plentiful gifts this past Christmas.

Our ministries are committed to provide educational, legal, spiritual and social services to those we encounter every day. Through your generosity, Holy Name of Camden Ministries is a beacon of hope for many! We strive to bring the love of God to those we meet — and we can not do it alone. I hope this newsletter — this “Good News” — strengthens your commitment to continue to help us to help others!

May God bless you for your thoughtfulness of others in need.

Sister Helen Colessoj

Sister Helen Cole SSI
Executive Director

Praying for Peace

Since 1995, Guadalupe Family Services has sponsored a Peace Vigil at the end of each year. During this vigil, we remember each victim who was murdered in our city as we pray for peace in the new year. This vigil started in 1995, when 58 people lost their lives at the hands of others. Since that time, the vigil has extended from 22 hours (2021) to 68 hours (2012). Although the crime and murder rate in the city of Camden has decreased, the grief experienced by each family is profound, no matter how many murders occur. Family members who attend the vigil experi-

ence the peacefulness of Camden’s Cathedral, even though it is right in the heart of the city’s activity.

As we all struggle with the powerlessness of watching the devastation in Ukraine, I invite you to join me in praying this prayer for peace from the Sisters of Mercy:



God of faithfulness, we come to You troubled by the war in Ukraine. We are filled with anxieties and questions. What change are we able to effect by our prayer before You, by our words, by our deeds? What can we do to bring peace to our planet?

God, we need Your grace to settle and redirect our hearts. We need Your hope to rekindle and sustain our passion for justice. We need Your wisdom that we might recognize anew.

Your presence dwelling within us, calling us to live as people of light and hope rather than of darkness and fear.

Be with us. Help us to truly believe, not only in Your abiding presence within and among us, but in the power of our prayer to move mountains. Help us, O Beloved, to build a world where people of every nation form community, where all co-exist in peace, gratitude, and love. All this we ask in the name of You, Our Creator, who creates peace in our hearts.

New Staff and Programs Come at a Busy Time for CCLSJ

The Camden Center for Law and Social Justice (CCLSJ) is happy to announce 2 new programs that we have recently launched.

The 1st program is being made possible through a new grant from the NJ Attorney General's office. Under this program, CCLSJ provides an attorney to work in Bridgeton, New Jersey to aid the community. The newly hired CCLSJ attorney, Anais Gonzales, Esq., works as part of the existing Unidos Para Familia Program in Bridgeton. Through the Unidos program, eligible families receive assistance with educational and social services. Now, with CCLSJ's involvement these families will also receive legal screenings, support and services.

The 2nd program is being made possible through funding from the NJ

Office of New Americans. Under this program, CCLSJ is partnering with the State of New Jersey, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) and several other Northern New Jersey legal service organizations to provide free representation for unaccompanied immigrant children who are currently in the legal system. This program offers a state-wide centralized intake unit for these children. CCLSJ was the only provider selected from South Jersey and will be focusing on cases from this area. With funding from this program, CCLSJ has hired a new paralegal and is in the process of hiring an attorney and social worker dedicated to this project.

The launch of these 2 programs came while we were quickly winding down our work at Fort Dix with Afghan nationals who were evacuated under the Operation Allies Refuge

Program. As the lead legal technical adviser for the USCCB and NGO legal programs at Fort Dix, CCLSJ coordinated the statewide training of volunteer attorneys to assist at the base, coordinated the immigration filing process for the State Department and other NGOs, and maintained a weekly presence to provide legal assistance at the base from the first day of operation through the last. During the first 4 months of our work at Fort Dix, approximately 7,000 people had been resettled. The remaining 7,000 were resettled in the last 6 weeks!

Fortunately, the quick pace of work at Fort Dix did not keep us from launching these 2 new programs. We are excited to see the new faces in our offices. We look forward to introducing our new staff members to the HNCM community! ■

Florida Studio Theatre Company

The Florida Studio Theatre Company arrived in Camden earlier this month to run a week-long playwriting workshop for the students of Holy Name. The Florida Studio Theatre Company was founded in 1973 in Sarasota, Florida and it has grown into one of the largest theater companies in the United States. The company is committed to making the arts as affordable and accessible as possible. They come to Holy Name each year thanks to the generosity of supporters Bob and Wendy Grady.

Throughout the week students learned from talented performers how to write their own play. At the end of the week all the plays were read by the members of the Florida Theatre Company and winners were selected from each grade to have their plays performed for the entire school. The performances of Holy Name students' plays took place in the church on the 1st floor and were a big hit with the students as they were able to see their imaginations come to life on stage. Nathaniel, an eighth grader at the school, was particularly impressed by the visitors' acting abilities, "The way they changed their voices for each play was amazing." While Isiah in the first grade shared how he learned the best way to write a play is when, "We can work together to write a play as a team." Students from younger and older grades all found something to take away from the experience. First grade teacher Mrs. Georgie Gatinella reaffirmed this sentiment saying, "I truly believe it's an excellent experience for the students to learn how to work together to write a play and act it out."



Students developed their creative writing skills guided by the expertise of the Florida Studio visitors.

The winning play from each grade is placed in a competition with winning plays from other schools participating this year in the Theatre Company. Students who have plays submitted to that larger competition have a chance for their play to be selected for a special show in Florida where winning playwrights from schools across the country get flown down to receive an award and see their play be performed by a big production. Holy Name students have won this competition in 2020 and 2019, however Covid-19 prevented the competition from occurring last year. Hopefully this year we will see Holy Name students return to their winning ways in the playwriting competition! ■

Catholic High School Graduates Thank You!

In 2010, these students began first grade. Each of these students graduated from Holy Name Grade School in 2018. Each of the students are the graduating class of 2022. Your generosity to Holy Name of Camden Ministries contributed to their Catholic education.

The Future is Full of Promise Because of You!

38 Holy Name High School Scholars will attend Camden Catholic, Cristo Rey, Gloucester Catholic, Paul VI, St. Augustine Prep and St. Joseph Prep in September 2022. Please consider a special donation for tuition assistance to the Holy Name High School Scholars Program.

You are making a difference!



Julie: From Camden Catholic to Moore College of Art and Design



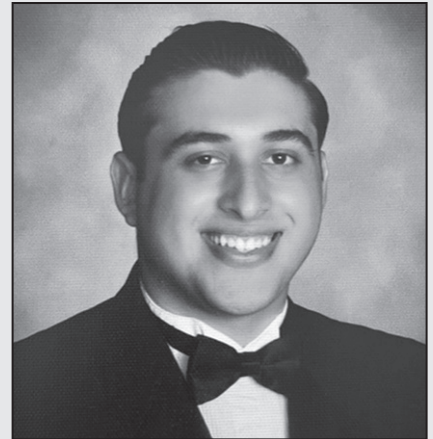
Taina: From Camden Catholic to Montclair State University



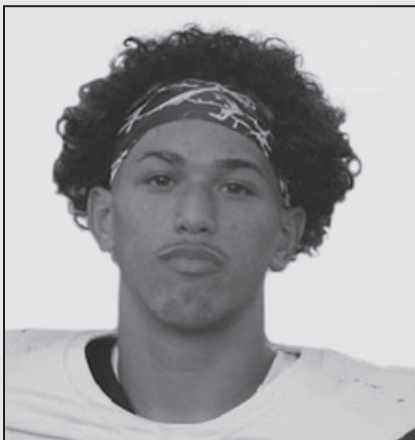
Sierra: From Gloucester Catholic to United States Air Force



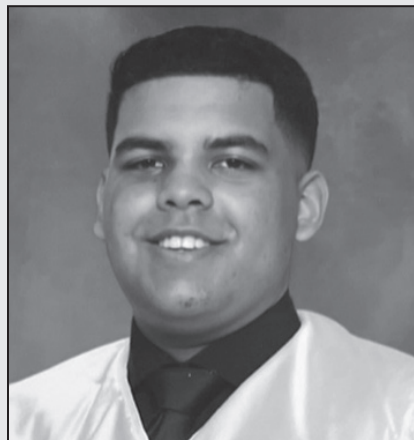
Jocelyn: From Camden Catholic to Montclair State University



Jared: From St. Joseph Prep to Fairfield University



Denis: From St. Augustine to Syracuse University



John: From Cristo Rey to one of 4 possible choices



Nygel: From Camden Catholic to one of 12 possible colleges

Meet Our Star Scholar

Julieyanna



High School: Camden Catholic High School, 12th grade – Class of 2022

Favorite Subject: Art is my favorite subject because of the creative experience that happens while I am doing it. I have been drawing since kindergarten and it is the only subject I feel proud of my accomplishments in.

Most Inspiring Teacher: Ms. Carmen Turner and Ms. Yahaira Ocasio are

both my most inspiring teachers from Holy Name because they helped me grow as a person in different ways. Ms. Turner helped calm me down when I was stressed and told me things like, “One day you’ll look back at this moment and laugh” which helped give me perspective on problems I was having. Ms. Turner also helped me with my art skills by teaching me new things and giving me activities to do. Ms. Yahaira

pushed me towards my goals and made sure that I didn’t waste the opportunities I had in front of me. She helped me realize that I had a lot more to look forward to than what I was seeing at that moment. Both of their positive energies played a big role in molding me into the person who I am today. For that I am very grateful to them.

What I like to do in my free time:

I play with my little brother Noah who is two and about to be three. He is very advanced for his age and sneaky! He is always taking my food.

What I’d like to do when I’m older:

I want to get a college degree in art education and get a masters in art education because I want to become an art teacher to younger kids. I am starting a four year college in the summer in that area so I am already on my way — which I am excited about!

If I could go anywhere in the world,

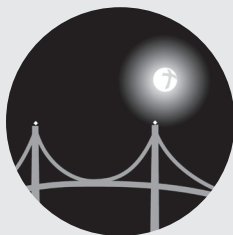
I would go to: I would go to Paris, France and travel around more of France. I am very interested in art and I think that would be a great place to learn more about my favorite interest.

What does Holy Name mean to me:

When I think of Holy Name, I think of family, friends, and role models. There are a lot of good people there. ■

**Julie created our 2021 HNCM Christmas card and the Easter greeting for the CASA meeting room)*

Holy Name of Camden Ministries



CAMDEN CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
 Jeff DeCristofaro, Esquire
 856.583.2950

GUADALUPE FAMILY SERVICES
 Sister Helen Cole
 SSJ, MSW, LCSW
 856.365.8081

HOLY NAME SCHOOL
 Meg Kent, BA
 856.365.7930

HOLY NAME SCHOLARS
 Barbara Power
 856.365.1001

Visit our website that has links to each ministry! holynamenameofcamdenministries.org