

THE GOOD NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF HOLY NAME OF CAMDEN MINISTRIES

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

Fall 2024



Dear Friends,

Greetings to you from Camden, NJ! I always look forward to our fall newsletter because we have so much to share with you! In this newsletter, we introduce you to the two new master level students working at Guadalupe Family Services. St. Joseph University implemented a social work program this September. That is very excit-

ing for us since our social work ministry has been going strong since 1995. We are looking forward to the energy and contribution these students will bring to our clients and to the students at Holy Name School. September is the most exciting month at our school. Everything is newly painted, fresh and sparkling. Our school is blessed with loyal teachers and the families are so happy to see familiar faces on that first day of school! I hope you enjoy reading about the generous gift of chromebooks from the Sisters of St. Joseph

to Holy Name School. They arrived on September 16th and the students were delighted to use them on NWEA testing day, September 17th!

Your support, like the donation from the Sisters of St. Joseph, is a source of encouragement for all of us here at Holy Name Ministries! Our annual fundraiser is on Thursday, November 7th at the Riverton Country Club. We will honor three very important people whose thoughtfulness of others is inspirational! This newsletter and the annual fundraiser are so important to the sustainability of our ministries. Your generosity is changing the future for our youth and giving hope to our families in desperate situations.

Thank you for helping us to help others! I hope to see you on November 7th! May God continue to abundantly bless you!

Sincerely,

Sister Helen Colessy

Sister Helen Cole SSJ

*Holy Name of Camden Ministries
requests the honor of your presence at
our annual celebration in recognition of
"Reaching Out To Those In Need"*

HONOREES

Joan Sandell

Keep Them Dry Program

Johnny E. Santiago

Holy Name School Alumni

Holy Name School Christmas Event Organizer
President, Hispanic Leadership Association of NJ

City Invincible Award

Tracey Hall

Camden City Resident

Founder and Executive Director
of the Daelight Foundation

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2024

6 - 9 pm

THE RIVERTON COUNTRY CLUB

1416 Highland Avenue • Cinnaminson, NJ 08077

Christ has no body but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which
he looks

Compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which
he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands, with which
he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands,
yours are the feet,

Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

—Words attributed to
St. Theresa of Avila,
Feastday October 15

It's Back to School at 5th and Vine

The school year has officially begun at Holy Name School. Students, teachers, faculty, and staff are back for the 2024-2025 school year. With the new school year there are also big changes within the faculty. Our secretary, Rosita Medina, who has worked at the school for 29 years, has retired. She has done amazing work for almost three decades and she will be dearly missed. She was a reliable and faithful member of the Holy Name School Family. In appreciation for her years of dedication and all of her hard work, we had a party to celebrate her retirement and show our gratitude.

With Rosita's retirement, we are excited to promote administrative assistant Yahaira Ocasio to secretary. Yahaira has been a trusted employee at Holy Name School since 2009. Yahaira has experience at Holy Name School and the relationships she has already formed with parents and the community at large is a benefit to everyone. Holy Name also welcomed Dr. Deidre Rood who will be teaching sixth grade as well as supporting the school in the new Assistant Principal role. One final change

within the staff this year is that Mrs. Mendoza has been promoted to Food Service Manager for this school year. It is amazing to see the retention of teachers and staff at Holy Name School and is also important to keep the same faces in the classroom and school.

This year the school is partnering with the North Camden Community



Center on 6th St. to provide a free after-school program for grades 3-8. Also, Holy Name School is bringing back an after-school cooking program called, "Cooking Matters". We are extremely grateful for this opportunity for students to learn culinary skills! Another addition this year is the UFLI phonics program that is being implemented. There is data and evidence that shows that with this program students improve their reading skills and abilities. This program is being used in the K-5 classrooms and we hope to see improvement with this program on standardized test scores. Finally, we would like to say thank you to the Villanova students who came to Holy Name School for a day of service in early September. They helped clean the playground, paint inside Holy Name School, and painted four squares and hopscotch games at the playground for the students to use during recess. With the changes and promotions within the school, Holy Name is excited to continue with events and programming like the Spook-a-thon on Halloween to raise money for the school, and are hoping for an amazing school year!

From Generation to Generation

For the past six newsletters, Holy Name Ministries has been featuring families who have attended Holy Name School through the generations. In this newsletter, we are happy to introduce Gerube, Class of 2005. Gerube has many happy memories of her years at Holy Name School! Her favorite teachers were Mr. Nulty, Ms. Branyan, Ms. Curran and Mr. Daybeck. Her most favorite subject was Social Studies. She remembers that Mr. Nulty made history come alive and that her class made it their mission to go to Washington DC for their eighth grade class trip. They also wrote a letter to their future selves and that time capsule is expected to be opened twenty years later — next year in 2025!

After graduating from Holy Name, Gerube attended Camden Catholic and

graduated in 2009. She then studied Communications at Camden County College in Blackwood. Then Gerube pursued her modeling career in New York as well as acting in movies and shows in Georgia. Three years ago, she returned to New Jersey and enrolled her children at Holy Name School. Xzavier is in sixth grade and Heavenly is in 5th grade. Gerube's children have also enjoyed two years in Guadalupe Family Services summer camp, organized by Sister Helen. Gerube stated "I wanted to keep the legacy going as well as have my children experience the same Catholic values as I did in Catholic School". She also said that she is so happy to meet other families who graduated from Holy Name, especially her classmate Julie, who was featured in the Spring 2024 newsletter!



Gerube surrounded by her children, Xzavier and Heavenly



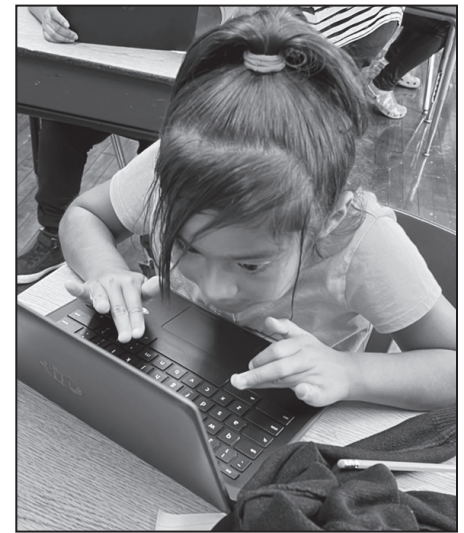
Sisters of St. Joseph Award \$20,000 Grant to Holy Name School!

In the spring, Sister Rosemary, our fifth-grade teacher, and Sister Helen, the Director of Holy Name Ministries, applied for a \$20,000 grant from the Sisters of Saint Joseph Mission Fund. The SSJ Mission Fund was established in 2016 to provide funding to SSJ's for projects reflective of our mission to serve those who are materially poor. The Sisters of Saint Joseph established this fund to foster the mission and vision of the Congregation, which flows from the Mission of Jesus. "Challenged by our broken world" and mandated by our Generous Promise "to commit ourselves...and appropriate resources...to the unmet needs of per-

sons who are poor, marginalized, and vulnerable," we respond with humble gratitude for all that we have been given. This fund is a concrete manifestation of our commitment to "respond creatively...to the developing needs of people, to see what miseries exist and how we might address them ourselves or remedy them in collaboration with others." (Constitutions 26)

Just prior to the pandemic, the Sisters of St. Joseph had provided chromebooks to the students at Holy Name School. This generous gift gave the teachers and students to become familiar with the online Google Classroom

resource. Little did we know that the pandemic would make this resource a lifeline for the teachers and students! Since the pandemic, dependency on chromebooks has become a daily need. However, chromebooks have a limited update capacity and constant use made many of the chromebooks inoperable. Holy Name School was in desperate need of new chromebooks! Through the generosity of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the students at Holy Name have new chromebooks for this school year. We know that this donation will help our students to have a successful academic year at Holy Name. Thank you, Sisters of St. Joseph!



New Staff at Guadalupe Family Services

GFS would like to welcome Matthew Clifford, who is a new ACE fellow from Saint Joseph's University. Matthew is originally from Annapolis, Maryland and completed his undergraduate degree in Psychology at Saint Joseph's University in 2023. Following graduation, Matthew served with the Colorado Vincentian Volunteers in Denver, Colorado for a year. His placement was at Arrupe Jesuit High School; the Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Denver. He worked in the Corporate Work Study Program Office where he helped wherever help was needed; this included performing site visits & meeting with student's supervisors, helping with workplace training, or being the substitute bus/van driver.



Matthew chose to join the ACE program upon return from Dever because he felt that it was a great way to continue this call to service, live in a

community with other volunteers, and grow as a person of faith. He is excited to interact and build connections with the students at Holy Name and with the teens in the CASA Program.

This year, Matthew will be teaching life skills class to 5th, 6th, & 8th grade at Holy Name. He will also assist with the CASA Program after school. Matthew is only with us part-time but is ready to build community with the GFS, Holy Name, and Camden community.

Outside of GFS, Matthew will be working as a Campus Minister at Saint Joseph's University and working towards his Master's Degree in Organizational Development and Leadership. Matthew is looking forward to the next two years and all the experiences that will come with it.

CCLSJ Brings Legal Services to the Community

At CCLSJ, we understand that providing legal services is about more than just showing up in court—it's about supporting our clients throughout very difficult situations. Many of the people we serve face barriers that make it difficult for them to access the help they need, so we take an active role in meeting them within their communities. This summer, we organized two special events to bring our support directly to vulnerable populations, helping them navigate their legal challenges while also building a sense of connection and trust.

The first event, held on June 27 at Atkinson Park in Sewell, was for Afghan families who received asylum with CCLSJ's help. We've been committed to this resettlement program since August 2021, when we began providing services to evacuees while they were awaiting resettlement at Fort Dix, NJ. The June event offered information on next steps

like family reunification and green card applications. It was a joyful day, complete with food and live music from a talented Afghan musician who traveled from Denver to join us, making the day extra special. One attendee shared, "It was truly the most special and best day we've had since arriving in the U.S."

The second event, held on July 12 at Lindenwold Memorial Park, was organized by our Unaccompanied Minors Program. This program supports some of our most vulnerable clients—unaccompanied children navigating the complicated immigration court system. These children have faced immense challenges, with many being separated from their parents at the border, making dangerous journeys alone, or being trafficked or brought to the U.S. against their will. The event was designed not only to provide legal guidance but also to create a supportive, fun atmosphere for these young clients.

During the event, CCLSJ partnered with the NJ Cover All Kids Health Insurance program to offer a presentation on healthcare resources available to children, ensuring that they have access to medical support in addition to legal representation. We made sure the day was enjoyable, with food, games, and sweet treats for everyone to enjoy. To top it off, we distributed 50 backpacks filled with back-to-school supplies, helping the children feel prepared and supported as they head into the new school year. It wasn't just about the legal help—it was about making sure these children felt seen, cared for, and ready to face the challenges ahead.

These events highlight CCLSJ's ongoing commitment to bringing legal aid into the heart of our communities. We're proud to support our clients so they feel safe, helping them take the next steps toward a brighter future. ■

New Staff at GFS *continued*

Ally Craskey is a Delaware County, PA native. One of 5 children, Ally was raised with a love and passion for service as an integral family value. She is a graduate of Saint Joseph's University with a Bachelor's Degree in English, having minored in Faith-Justice Studies, Educational Studies, and Gender Studies. Ally is currently studying for her master's degree in social work at Saint Joe's and a part of the ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education) service program. Her service site is 2 days a week with Guadalupe Family Services. She will teach life skills at Holy Name School and assist with the CASA after school high school program at GFS.

Ally is coming from an immersive service year as an AmeriCorps member with Maggie's Place in Phoenix, AZ. Post graduation from Saint Joe's, Ally moved to Phoenix to work with

the housing insecure population of pregnant and mothering persons in need of stability and support in Central Arizona. Ally served as the House Manager, House Operations Coordinator, and Program Coordinator for the Magdalene Home, serving 12 mothers and their babies over the course of the year with 6 mothers living in the home at a time. Ally shared in the joys and challenges of their journeys and even had the special privilege and honor of being a support person during a Maggie's Place mom's labor and delivery.

Ally is excited to be working with Guadalupe Family Services and connecting with the community of Camden, New Jersey. Having a passion for serving children and families, Ally is elated to begin another service year with an organization she deeply admires and appreciates! ■

