

CONTINUING TO SERVE

A Fresh Look at Two Past Achievement Citation Winners

This year's winner of the Achievement Citation, Jeremiah's Hope Skills Center, St. Vincent's Hospital, Birmingham, AL, joins the ranks of a select group of organizations that have received CHA's most prestigious honor. Since 1975, about 80 programs have been singled out for their creativity and dedication in advancing the mission of Catholic health care.

The communities served by these programs

have certainly benefited, and as their needs change over time, so, too, do the Catholic health care organizations that have dedicated themselves to improving the health and well-being of their neighbors. Following are two such examples of past Achievement Citation recipients that have evolved in order to continue advancing Jesus' mission of love and healing today.



BY BEVERLY LITTLEJOHN

Ms. Littlejohn is public relations coordinator, St. Joseph's-Baptist Health Care, Tampa, FL.

San Jose Mission, Dover, FL

ACHIEVEMENT CITATION, 2002

"An innovative program that fosters health and human services through a spirit of collaboration." So said Greg Van Pelt, a CHA board member, when, five years ago, he presented the Achievement Citation award to the San Jose Mission, Dover, FL.*

The San Jose Mission, which serves the needs of migrant farm workers in Florida's Hillsborough County, is a 34-acre campus sponsored collaboratively by St. Joseph's Hospital, Tampa;†

*For more on the history of the San Jose Mission, see "Community Networks," *Health Progress*, May-June 1998, p. 66.

†St. Joseph's Hospital is part of the BayCare Health System, Clearwater, FL.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Petersburg; and other community groups.

Five years ago, the mission's services included health care, education, food and clothing, financial assistance, legal assistance, immigration and citizenship services, counseling and family support, and day care. In recent years, those services have been expanded.

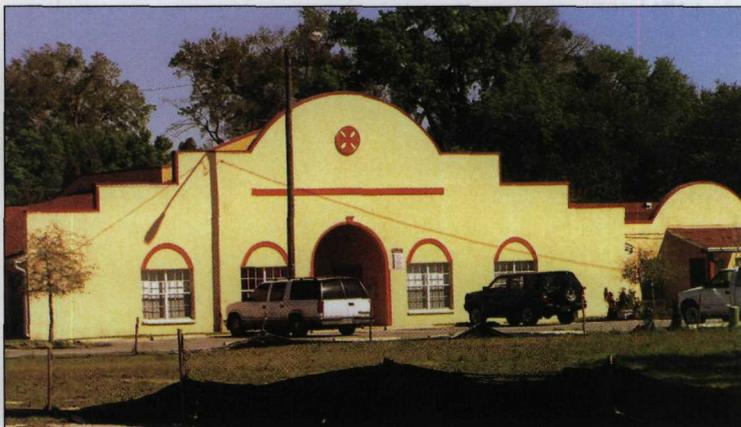


Sr. Sarah

CATHOLIC MOBILE MEDICAL SERVICES

In 2002, the mission's health care services, Catholic Mobile Medical Services, operated out of a St. Joseph's Hospital bus that conducted monthly clinics at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, in the southern part of Hillsborough County, and at San Jose Mission. "Mobile Medical started out very, very slowly," said Sr. Sarah Proctor, DW, Mobile Medical's manager. "It was such a new concept in this area, we didn't know whether we'd be totally inundated or sit here twiddling our thumbs."

Mobile Medical became a more permanent fixture at the mission four years ago. In those days, it shared space with the food pantry; a portable massage table served as a makeshift exam table. Today, Mobile Medical occupies its own space in a prefabricated building, and is more appropriately furnished, thanks to the materials redistribu-



tion program operated by BayCare Health System, Clearwater, FL. "This has been a very spirit-driven program," said Sr. Sarah.

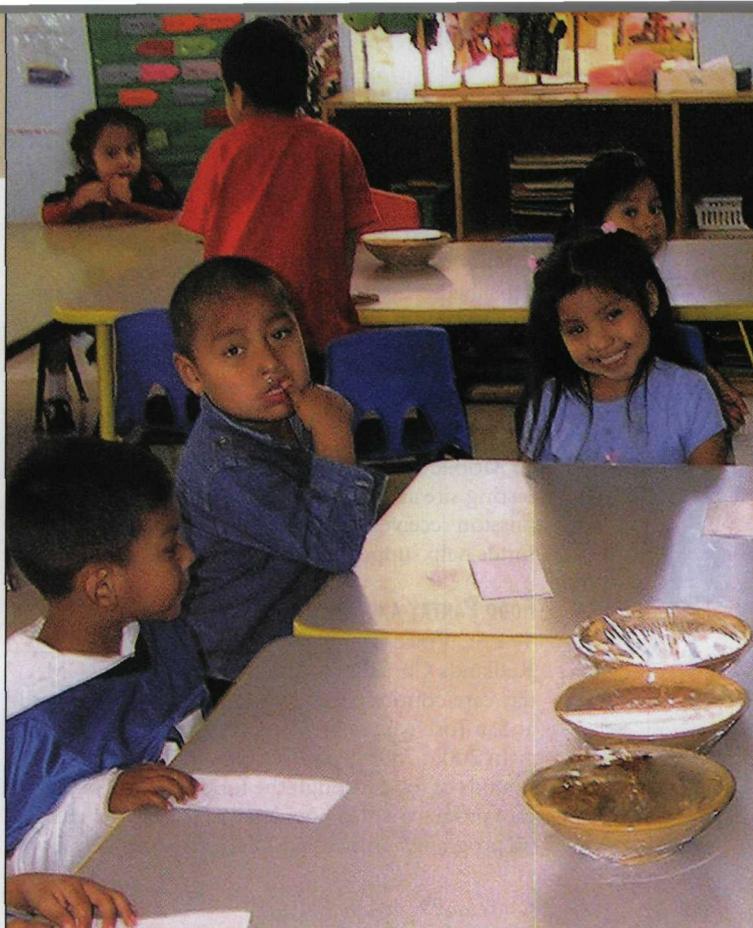
FAMILY HOUSING

In the past five years, perhaps the most significant development at San Jose Mission has been the addition of family housing. "The housing was a long-term dream of the diocese's Catholic Charities agency," explained Sr. Sarah. "It took over seven years to pull together all of the patchwork of funding needed to build these units, not to mention permits, consents, zonings, and the county's insistence that we have our own water purification plant."

Today, the 80 attractive, two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartments are home to about 200 migrant residents. The southwestern-style buildings are arranged in a quadrangle format so that an inner courtyard provides a safe place for children to play. More than 150 people convened late last year for their first residents' meeting, during which they established a neighborhood watch program with the assistance of the local police department.

EDUCATION

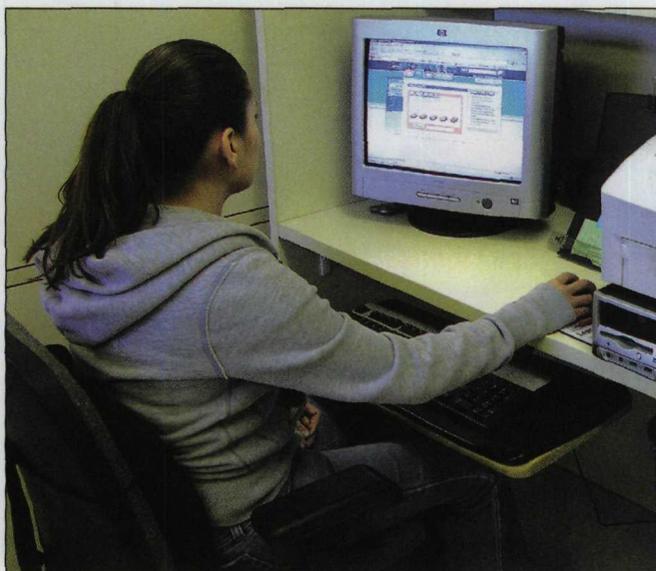
Education continues to be an important part of the mission. "From the very beginning, we had the school system out here," explained Guadalupe Lamas, a parish nurse from St. Joseph's Hospital. "Adult education, English-as-



a-second-language, and GED preparation were available." In 2006, the mission's director of adult education persuaded the Hillsborough County School Board to give the mission portable units. "They had leftovers which we took responsibility for," added Sr. Sarah.

The extra space allowed San Jose Mission to add certified nursing assistant (CNA) classes. It currently conducts three classes a year, producing approximately 50 graduates annually. The mission has a relationship with St. Joseph Hospital that enables students to "shadow" CNAs on the job at the hospital. "Some of them have been hired there, which is a great thing," said Lamas. "Two years ago, [the students] were migrant workers, working the fields, and now they're at St. Joseph's as CNAs."

One portable building has been set aside as a multipurpose center. "This is used for Mass on Saturday evenings, and as a waiting area for the CNAs taking their tests," said Sr. Sarah. Being able to take the CNA test in the same facility where they studied is one of the benefits that the portable units afford the students. "My students are just tickled pink because they don't have the worry of 'What's it going to be like



when I go' [to take the CNA exam]?" Lamas explained. "I can say, 'This is exactly what's going to happen,' because it's the very same place. They're doing very well."

Previously, certification exams were administered by a private firm in nearby Plant City, FL. The firm was looking for an alternative location, so Mobile Medical signed a contract to have the testing site at San Jose Mission; in return, the mission receives a stipend for each student. The funds help support the Mobile Medical program.

FOOD PANTRY AND DAY CARE

The St. Vincent DePaul food pantry and Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) day care continue to be important services offered at San Jose Mission.

In 2005, 78,082 people received 780,262 pounds of food through the food pantry. The day care program is also popular. "RCMA is a wonderful program," Lamas said. "It is very definitely an

early childhood intervention program, not just a babysitting service." The day care program is for migrant children only. Children ranging from infancy to school age are eligible. From 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, children participate in indoor and outdoor play time, nap time, mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks, and a hot midday meal. All interaction with the teachers is bilingual—even if Spanish alone is spoken in the child's home. "They do a very good job," Lamas said of the program's staff.

MORE IMPROVEMENTS ARE PLANNED

"Little by little, we've continued to see what we can do to improve the mission," Sr. Sarah said. More improvements are planned. Future developments include 16 more housing units, contingent upon permits and funding. The next phase will include a multipurpose center to replace the current portable buildings, and a chapel. Sr. Sarah added, "These are just the baby steps toward the ultimate development of the mission."





The Latino Health Promoter Program

ACHIEVEMENT CITATION, 1998

The Latino Health Promoter Program was started in 1993 by Providence Holy Cross Medical Center, Mission Hills, CA, to work with the Latino population residing in the San Fernando Valley to help them become healthier. Many of the people targeted by this program were uninsured and have limited incomes. Working in partnership with area churches, the medical center recruited community residents and trained them to be *promotoras de salud* (health promoters). The program, which proved to be popular in the Latino community, continues today.

Once trained, *promotoras* are able to make presentations on various health topics, assist in planning and organizing health events, conduct selected health screenings, provide one-on-one education, assist families to link with health benefits, and direct people to health and community

resources. In 1998, the program received the Achievement Citation Award from the CHA.

PARTNERING WITH CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

Today, the Latino Health Promoter Program continues to expand and thrive in the community as the Latino population itself continues to grow. The program works in partnership with seven churches in the area. Based in those churches, *promotoras* provide education, conduct health screenings, and make referrals to area resources. The program has also established partnerships with area public schools, working with the parent centers at these schools to provide health education and information to the students' parents. Last year, a senior outreach component was added; in this component, called *Familias Ayudando Familias* (Families Helping Families),

BY RON SORENSON

Mr. Sorenson is director, Center for Community Health Improvement, Providence Health System, San Fernando Valley Service Area, Burbank, CA.



trained volunteers help the Latino elderly in the community.

The training to become a *promotora* has also been enhanced. Initially lasting about three months, the curriculum now covers approximately six months. Continuing education is also pro-

vided to ensure that *promotoras* stay current on health information and community resources.

A STATEWIDE NETWORK

The Providence Holy Cross Latino Health Promoter Program is part of California State Network for Health Promoters and Community Health Workers, a statewide coalition of health promoter programs. The network organizes conferences in which program representatives meet to discuss training curricula and share resources in order to enhance the training and preparation of health promoters in their communities.

The Latino Health Promoter Program continues to develop and plan for the future. Given its success with the Latino population, the program's leaders are looking to expand to serve other ethnic groups in the community. They plan to recruit people from the identified populations, offer them culturally based health promoter training, and partner with churches and organizations that serve these different ethnic groups.



JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

www.chausa.org

HEALTH PROGRESS®

Reprinted from *Health Progress*, July-August 2007
Copyright © 2007 by The Catholic Health Association of the United States
