



# Home at St. E's

1986 **35** Celebrating **YEARS OF SERVICE** 2021

Vol. 32 No. 02

Winter 2021

## Home at Last

**T**hird time's the charm for Yudi Bustillos.

That's how many separate stays it took for her during the past 20 years at St. Elizabeth's Sonrisa Family Supportive Living Program before she was finally able to find and buy a permanent home for herself and her four children. This past May her lifelong dream came true when she closed on a house in Albuquerque.

"It's amazing to own our own home," Yudi says. "I wanted this for all my children since they were little."

Born in Mexico, Yudi's parents brought her to the U.S. when she was 11. The family lived in Santa Fe where she attended Capital High before leaving after her junior year pregnant with her first child, Angel. Shortly after his birth, she and her husband moved into Sonrisa for a short stay.

After a few months, she got a job working in assisted living and the couple moved into their own apartment with a second child, Melanie, soon following. But the marriage broke up and Yudi was on her own.

"I've worked since I was 18 and



Yudi Bustillos (front) and her children Joel, Angel, Melanie (left to right in rear) and Santiago in front of their new home in Albuquerque.

usually hold two jobs," she says. "But it's difficult making it as a single-income family."

Still, things were fine for quite a while. But 11 years ago after the birth of Joel, her third child, life became challenging again and Yudi returned to Sonrisa. She stayed two years, continued working hard and saved up enough money to move out into an income-regulated apartment. Seeking a larger space, they moved after five years into a

bigger apartment but found it hard to keep up with the ever-increasing rents in Santa Fe. So after four years there and another child, Santiago, it was back to Sonrisa.

"Our mission is to help families who are struggling like Yudi's," says Neal Windham, Sonrisa's program manager. "We provide below-market rent at 30 percent of monthly income along with a safe and secure environment and a full range of supportive services designed to help

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### Past Challenge Met, New Challenge Issued

Thanks to your generous support, the earlier \$20,000 challenge grant from the Carl & Marie Jo Anderson Foundation for Santa Fe Suites was matched. But now we have a new \$8,000 matching challenge from the James Talcott Fund to subsidize rents for even more recently homeless tenants at the Suites. So please donate online at [www.steshelter.org](http://www.steshelter.org) or mail your check to St. Elizabeth at 804 Alarid St. 87505.

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St. Elizabeth is dedicated to assisting homeless individuals and families by providing emergency shelter, food, case management, counseling, supportive housing and referrals to partnering human-services agencies.

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St. Elizabeth Shelters & Supportive Housing  
 804 Alarid St. Santa Fe, NM 87505  
 505-982-6611  
 505-982-5347 (fax)

[www.steshelter.org](http://www.steshelter.org)

## Director's Corner



Edward Archuleta

In a previous column I mentioned that the COVID crisis has been the most challenging time in all my years at St. Elizabeth – including 11 years as a staff member, 10 as a volunteer and 8 as a board member. From the first days of the pandemic not knowing what was happening or how to react, to making sure that the staff followed all the initial recommended safety and disinfection protocols, through

moving all guests at our two emergency shelters into motel rooms while still providing them services, then getting all the staff and guests tested and finally vaccinated has been stressful beyond belief. Add to that ensuring that dozens of our long-term supportive housing residents, many with serious behavioral health issues, had the extra support needed to weather the storm. And finally, in the midst of it all, overseeing the launch of a new 120-unit apartment complex for folks coming out of homelessness.

But there is a silver lining to all this.

Before the pandemic, most of the social service agencies in town, us included, were happy working in their own little silos. Yes, there was interaction between staffs and referrals for services would go back and forth, but the most part we all just did our day-to-day jobs within our own agencies. Then COVID happened, and we all began to rely on each other more and more.

In February 2020, after the virus had been detected in Washington state, Christus St. Vincent called a meeting of all the directors and executive staff of the social services agencies in town. While they did their best to address our concerns, we left with more questions than answers. But then we began meeting together via Zoom and sharing ideas about protocols and ways to prevent the virus from spreading.

Since then several ad-hoc committees that work with the homeless have formed, and we now meet on a regular basis. One is led by the NM Coalition to End Homelessness and consists of all the shelters, the city, county, funders and various other agencies. Finally, we're all working together to get more people housed and provide the wrap-around support services they need to stay housed.

Sometimes it takes a crisis to bring out the best in all of us.

Executive Director



# Residents Floored by Renovations

**B**ig changes are afoot at Casa Cerrillos. The entire complex is being renovated from top to bottom with new electrical, plumbing, appliances, drywall, cabinetry, light fixtures and other features replaced as needed. Though all the apartments have differing needs, there is one constant – overlaying the painted concrete floors with new vinyl laminate flooring.

“As permanent supportive housing, Casa Cerrillos’ goal is not only to provide all the ongoing services the residents need to thrive but to complement that with a comfortable and desirable

living environment,” says Edward Archuleta, St. Elizabeth’s executive director.



Deborah Burns inside her renovated apartment.

This aim has been made more attainable by the recent \$63,961 grant from the City of Santa Fe’s Community Block Development Fund to purchase and install the flooring. Starting in July, the apartments began being inspected, cleaned and then renovated one at a time. It’s a big job and one that requires all residents to vacate their former apartments and then move into a renovated one.

“There was a lot of opposition at first, particularly from the long-term residents,” says Neal Windham, Casa Cerrillos program manager, “but once they saw a newly renovated apartment the complaints turned to compliments.”

Tammy Georgopulus, a five-year resident at Casa Cerrillos, was one of those.

“It was a big pain in the butt to move,” she says. “I had to put and pack all my things in bags in preparation for the move and then change my address at Social Security, Medicaid, my doctors’ offices and a lot of other places. But in the end it was worth it.”

“My old apartment had two blue walls, a pink bathroom and the old floors were horrible. You could wash them a million times and you still couldn’t get them clean. It was so nice to move into a totally cleaned, bright new place with all freshly painted white walls. The new floors make the apartment so much brighter and when you wash them, they shine.”

The Casa Cerrillos complex was built in the 1960s and has seen a lot of use and turnover

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The new floors and painted walls give Deborah’s apartment a more calming ambience.



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Finally, thank you, to all the SUPPORTERS who have always been there assisting St. Elizabeth Shelters & Supportive Housing.  
We look forward to celebrating with you in 2022. Happy Holidays and may you and yours have a blessed Holiday Season!

Cheers,

Calvin A Fields

Event Fundraising Community Outreach

## Home at Last

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Yudi and family inside their new living room.

families acquire needed life skills and save up enough funds to move into housing of their own after two years.

"Everyone who comes to us is having a tough time," he continues, "and sometimes it takes more than one stay. But Yudi's the type of person who will succeed. She's highly motivated, very open to suggestion and guidance, and determined to provide her children with the best lives possible."

Through it all Yudi earned her GED and continued working, first at Community Options for 10 years and now at El Mirador, her current employer, providing in-

home assistance, particularly for those with special needs. She does all the shopping, cleaning, laundry, cooking, helping with bathing, even performing CPR once – everything but injecting medications.

"My work is so rewarding," she says. "You meet amazing people and they are so happy for whatever I can do for them. It also makes me so appreciative for being fully functional for my family."

All along Yudi had yearned for her own home. For seven years she worked with the home ownership program at Homewise with little success. Finally an employee there

advised her to go directly to a bank for a loan. But her credit was too low to obtain a large enough loan for a house. That's when her last stay at Sonrisa made it all possible.

"Yudi did such an incredible job saving money and was so close to home ownership that we allowed her to extend her stay by six months," Neal says. "She focused on the future, saved all her stimulus savings, built up her credit and in nearly three years became eligible for a \$180,000 loan from Guadalupe Credit Union. She bought a home in Albuquerque because it was much more affordable than anything in Santa Fe."

No longer living in apartments, the family now finally has a long-awaited dog. But they still look back at their time at Sonrisa with gratitude.

"The program has helped us so much," Yudi says. "It provided assistance for my children with school supplies, the Thornburg Christmas party gave them holiday gifts, and Neal put us in touch with other organizations that helped us in the homebuying process and throughout our stays."

"I don't know how it would have been possible to save enough for a home if we had continued living in an apartment in Santa Fe. They are so expensive. Sonrisa helped us so much and made our dreams come true, and we are all so very thankful."

## Avoid Holiday Hang-Ups This Year

Supply-chain problems putting a crimp in your year-end gift giving? Tired of slow boats from China dampening your holiday spirit? How about considering a gift to St. Elizabeth in honor of friends or family instead. All gifts are immediately put to use helping the more than 1,000 homeless men, women and children we assist each year make positive changes in their lives and move into housing. Just go to [www.steshelter.org](http://www.steshelter.org) or mail a check to us at 804 Alarid St., Santa Fe, NM 87505 and your holiday cheer will be much appreciated and delivered on time.



## Thank You to Our Dedicated Chefs!

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## Residents Floored by Renovations

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throughout the years. St. Elizabeth purchased the property in 1998 to provide permanent supportive housing for homeless adults with disabilities. On-site case managers work together with the residents to help them access physical and/or behavioral healthcare, benefits, alcohol/substance abuse counseling and whatever other services might be needed. Life-skills training is provided along with transportation for those without vehicles and weekly food deliveries from the Food Depot. Residents can stay for as long as they need the services offered.

"All of our current 28 residents have some sort of disability, making it difficult for many to maintain their apartments or even to recognize and report problems," Neal says. "That's

why we decided to do this top-to-bottom renovation, removing all furniture, cleaning and inspecting all appliances, cabinets, sinks, showers and bathtubs, replacing those in need, then installing the new durable, waterproof and scratch-resistant flooring."

Another resident, Deborah Burns, has lived at Casa Cerrillos for two-and-a-half years.

"I used to do kitchen and bath remodeling back in the day," she says,



A Casa Cerrillos apartment awaiting renovation.



Once renovated, apartments become more tidy and homey.

"so I know all about flooring, and this laminate is great. It's all but indestructible.

"I'm very grateful for the new floors," Deborah continues. "It's made it so much more enjoyable living here. I love my new place and my life is getting so much better. And Lily (her Pomeranian mix emotional-support animal), who helps keep me focused, enjoys it too."

Tammy, who has long-term biliary cholangitis – "but nothing to do with drinking," she asserts – seconds this feeling.

"My mental health is better, and the new apartment is really helping my situation," she says. "I love living at Casa Cerrillos."

## THANK YOU DONORS

Please visit our website, [www.steshelter.org](http://www.steshelter.org), to view the list of our generous donors from July 1, 2021 – October 31, 2021.

## ROUNDUP APP

Make an impact with little effort. Donate your change to St. E's using the Roundup App. Visit your app store or go to

[www.steshelter.org](http://www.steshelter.org)



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## Winter Wish List

### MEN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER

Please call (982-6611) or bring the smaller items to St. Elizabeth at 804 Alarid Street.

**Clothing** – Hats, gloves, boots, shoes, socks, men's jackets, sweaters, hooded sweatshirts, long underwear, winter outerware.

**Personal Hygiene** – Disposable razors, shampoo, deodorant, chapstick.

**Other** – Sleeping bags, sleeping pads or mats, blankets.

**Food** – Milk, juice, fresh fruits, bottled water, cheese, ground beef, ham, roasts, sliced lunch meats.

**Non-food items** – Non-alcoholic cough syrup, thera-flu, multivitamins, Emergen-C® packets, cough drops, Vitamin C, lip balm, band aids, alka-seltzer cold®, pepto-bismol®, hand sanitizer, hand wipes, tissues, Lysol spray, foot powder.

**Volunteers** – Handyman/woman for repairs, front-desk receptionists for 4- to 8-hour blocks of time once a week, cooks for dinners any night.

### CASA FAMILIA

Please call (983-2042) or bring the smaller items to Casa Familia at 1604 Berry Ave.

**Clothing** – Women's underwear, socks, warm jackets, rain wear, hand warmers, shoes, weather-appropriate boots; girl's/boy's clothing, school uniforms.

**Personal Hygiene** – Hand sanitizer, shampoo, conditioner, moisturizer, feminine hygiene products, disposable razors (female), toothbrushes, toothpaste, band aids, hair brushes, foot powder, body soap, nail polisher & clippers, nail files, deodorant (women's) alka-seltzer cold®, pepto-bismol®, over-the-counter medication (ibuprofen), baby wipes, baby powder, make up.

**Food** – Non-perishable food, bottled water, juice, coffee & tea, spices, \$25 gift cards for Walmart, McDonald's, Wendy's, Subway, Plaza Café, etc.

**Other** – Blankets, sleeping bags, tents, bed sheets (twin), diapers (all sizes, particularly 2-5), cleaning supplies, dish soap, toilet paper, paper towels, Qtips, cotton balls, laundry detergent, latex-free gloves, kitchen utensils, can openers, plastic plates, silverware, kitchen pots & pans, water bottles, shower shoes, AA/9-volt & AAA batteries, backpacks (adult & children), ear plugs, headphones, bus passes (Santa Fe Trails one-day, round trip or monthly), passes for community activities (eg. Chavez Center or Children's Museum), standard tools for home repair, microwaves, mini-fridges.

**Volunteers** – Front-desk receptionists from 4- to 8-hour blocks of time once a week, cooks for dinner any night.

### CASA CERRILLO

Please call (471-3456) to discuss their current needs before bringing them to the facility at 381½ Cerrillos Road.

**Household Items** – Kitchen appliances, cleaning supplies, pet food.

**Larger Items** – Flatscreen tvs, computers & laptops, fencing materials.

## 8 St. Elizabeth Shelters





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Winter 2021

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*Executive Director*

Dear Friends:

A few days after St. Elizabeth first opened its doors in December of 1986, I walked in one afternoon to make a donation and met Sister Shirley LeBlanc, the first executive director. After thanking her for the work she and her fellow nuns were doing, I began to walk away to leave. Instead, something compelled me to turn around and offer to volunteer if they needed someone to help. And that's how it all started.

"What are you doing right now?" were the first words out of her mouth. "Nothing," I replied. Immediately she asked, "Can you make a salad?" Of course I could. Next thing I know I'm helping cook dinner for the guests and afterwards joined them for their meal.

Sitting in the living room talking with some of the guys after dinner, I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was Sister Shirley asking me about my counseling skills. My training was in architecture and planning, and I didn't know the first thing about counseling. No matter. The police had just brought in an 18-year-old who was threatening to kill himself, and she was already dealing with another guest in crisis. She asked if I would talk to him, and I thought, "Oh Lord, what did I get myself into this time." Fortunately, I must have had some unknown talent in that area because I talked him out of it.

Little did I then know that incident would begin a 35-year love affair with St. Elizabeth. And never in my wildest dreams did I think that now, all these years later, I would be sitting at Sister Shirley's desk.

St. Elizabeth has come a long way during that time. From our humble beginnings in a rented house on Don Gaspar, we now operate five separate facilities: two emergency shelters – Men's and Casa Familia for women and families – and three supportive housing programs for the recently homeless, families and adults with disabilities. These, combined with our outreach services, assist more than 1,000 men, women and children every year, and move more than half those who stay with us into housing.

This month, as we celebrate our 35th anniversary, I hope that you, too, will feel the call, like I did so many years ago, and join us in helping those in our community most at-risk and in-need.

Sincerely,

Edward Archuleta  
Executive Director

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