



Home at St. E's

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Summer 2022

Soaring Ahead

If it weren't for Deborah, I wouldn't be here today," Ray Maestas asserts.

Now living at Santa Fe Suites, the 60-year-old lifelong Santa Fean is recovering from a succession of physical and mental health challenges that resulted in homelessness and an attempted suicide. But after arriving at St. Elizabeth Shelter last July and meeting Deborah Stump, the organization's SOAR (SSI / SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) coordinator, his life is back on track.

Ray had worked steadily after graduating from Santa Fe High more than 40 years ago. He began in hospitality, spending 21 years at La Fonda as parking attendant, housekeeper and bellman then moving to similar work at Hotel Santa Fe. After that he held various moving jobs before joining R & L Construction for several years until increasing pain from severe arthritis in his knees forced him to leave.

While working at Speedway, his next employer, life began to unravel. Stocking the shelves one day last year, he fell down backwards and hit his head. When he came to his senses, he noticed that his hands were tingling and turning numb. Soon he was unable to grip or fully function, and his aching knees and legs began getting worse making it very difficult getting around.

No longer able to work and with limited savings, he cashed out his retirement funds and put all \$4,000 available toward paying his rent. But after three months, his money began running out and he became desperate. After going 12 days without



Deborah Stump and Ray Maestas catch up in front of the Santa Fe Suites.

eating, he asked his brother for assistance but was rebuffed. Shortly after he became homeless.

"I was so depressed, in constant pain from my legs and neck and didn't know what to do or where to turn," Ray says. "That's when I decided to end it and drank some bleach."

Fortunately he was found and brought to Christus St. Vincent in time. After evaluation and treatment at the hospital's psychiatry department, his depression was put under control with medication and he was discharged last July to St. Elizabeth's medical respite program for homeless people recovering from illness or surgery.

That's when he met Deborah.

"When I got to the shelter I had just 15 cents in my pocket and still no idea what to do," Ray says. "I explained my situation to Deborah, and she said 'let's get started.'"

As SOAR coordinator, Deborah works closely with certain clients to obtain Social Security benefits either through needs-based (SSI)

or disability (SSDI) qualifications. Her job is to assess the clients to determine if they meet the necessary standards and, if so, to prepare the detailed medical history and documentation to present their case for lifetime benefits.

"For all my clients I set up appointments for mental and physical evaluations and then use these to prepare a medical summary report connecting their diagnoses to their actual functioning," she says.

continued on page 5

Inside

2 Director's Corner

3 Casa Collaboration

4 Our Dedicated Chefs

5 Hungry Mouth Live

6 Summer Wish List



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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)

Director's Corner



Edward Archuleta

As most of you know, St. Elizabeth gets the majority of its funding from charitable contributions, but many might be surprised to learn that individuals are our leading donors. Some make monthly gifts, others annual gifts and a select few leave us in their wills or estate plans. Throughout the years these unexpected bequests have

enabled us to add needed new programs and services, balance our budget and pay off old debts.

While this type of support has been immeasurable, we're now going to try and measure it by starting a planned giving society by the end of the year. Doing so will enable us to properly recognize and thank these donors while they're still living, as well as better plan for the future knowing that we can anticipate this impending funding. It also will make us more secure knowing that the vital work we are doing today will continue.

To launch the program, we'll be announcing it on our website and sending notice via mail and email later this year. Though most of you probably don't think you'd be a candidate for this society, you'd be wrong. After making provisions for your family and friends, you might be surprised to see that you have some assets – cash, stock, unspent retirement funds – available to leave to charitable organizations to show appreciation for their work and to continue your support. No gift is too small!

So if St. Elizabeth is important to you, to the community and to all those we serve, this is an opportunity to help ensure our future. If you'd like more information in advance of our "official" announcement, have a question or just want to add your name to those who've already put us in their plans, just give me a call at 505-982-6611 x 107.

Executive Director

Answered Prayers

After 28 years in Santa Fe, working steadily and owning a home, Kathy Williams, 61, succumbed to a combination of substance abuse and overspending becoming bankrupt and homeless.

Realizing she needed help, she checked into the Santa Fe Recovery Center. After completing the program and with nowhere else to go, she moved with trepidation into Casa Familia.

"It was quite an effort, and I was still struggling with anxiety and depression," she says. "Asking for help is a big deal for me, but I had to do it."

Once at Casa Familia, the staff took the time needed to make Kathy feel safe and comfortable before beginning to work with her on her goals.

"It's all about building relationships," says Jennifer Buffaloe, Casa Familia's case manager. "When Kathy arrived, she was too shy to look me in the eye but gradually she began to feel more at ease and trusting of us and the assistance we could offer."

During her time there, staff kept encouraging her throughout her continuing withdrawal and



Jenn Buffaloe (left), Casa Familia case manager, checks up with Kathy Williams on her progress after leaving the program and moving into housing of her own.

recovery from the drugs while advocating with her physicians for their ongoing care in the process. When housing became available, they bought her furniture and assisted with the move.

"Like most everyone who comes to us in need, Kathy was looking for help," Jenn says. "While we can provide the support and guide our residents through the social services network to get the assistance they

need, in the end it's a collaborative effort. She asked for help, and we gave it to her, but she took it out into the world on her own and made it work."

After three months, Kathy found a job, moved into an apartment at Santa Fe Suites, got a cat for company and remains grateful.

"Casa Familia has been the answer to a lot of my prayers," she says.



A Sonrisa family lines up to be driven to an appointment in the program's new all-wheel drive hybrid Toyota Sienna. The van was purchased with a combination of funds from Thornburg Investment Management, HUD and private donors.

Thank You to Our Dedicated Chefs!

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Soaring Ahead

...from page 1

"In Ray's case, he presented a major depressive disorder along with spinal stenosis in his cervical region and severe osteoarthritis in both knees with significant structural damage. He was not steady on his feet and in constant pain that made it difficult for him to concentrate, focus or sleep and disrupted all his hobbies and interests. The Social Security adjudicator looks at your limitations as well as diagnoses, and for Ray I prepared 50 pages of paperwork stressing his age, debilitating arthritis, depression and suicide attempt."

Ray stayed at St. Elizabeth for seven months awaiting a decision on his case. During this time, he had successful surgery on his neck in August relieving much of his pain. In December his claim was approved, and he began receiving benefits. His newfound income enabled him to move into an apartment at Santa Fe Suites, St. Elizabeth's supportive permanent housing program for recently homeless and lower-income individuals, this January.

"I really enjoy living here," he says. "The staff is so helpful and responsive. Because of my bad legs

and difficulty walking, they gave me a first-floor apartment. Then when I asked for a grab bar and chair for my shower, they got them for me in a few days. Even though I use a walker to get around, all the sidewalks make it easy to get to Albertson's for food and to walk around the complex, so I have a lot of freedom.

"I owe a lot to St. Elizabeth," Ray says. "Everybody was so very nice and so helpful during my long time there. But no one compares to Deborah. She's given me my life back, and I thank her from the bottom of my heart."



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Summer Wish List

MEN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER

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

Clothing – Winter caps, rain ponchos, men's jackets, socks, underwear, backpacks.

Personal Hygiene – Disposable razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hotel-size shampoo, deodorant, sun screen.

Food – Disposable razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hotel-size shampoo, deodorant, sun screen.

Other – Blankets, bus passes, tents, sleeping bag

Volunteers – Front desk & cooks for dinner.

CASA FAMILIA

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

Clothing – Women's new underwear, socks, long-sleeve shirts, shoes, rain gear, umbrellas, sun hats.

Personal Hygiene – Shampoo, conditioner, disposable razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair brushes, foot powder, body soap, nail clippers, nail files, deodorant, sun screen, cough drops, cotton balls and Q-tips, Emergen Vitamin C®, face wash and moisturizer, body wash, allergy meds Zrytex and Claritan.

Food – Fresh fruits & vegetables, bottled water, coffee and creamer.

Other – Bus passes, movie passes, diapers (all sizes, particularly 4-6), baby wipes, twin size sheets, towels, latex-free gloves, kitchen utensils, pots & pans, dish soap, toilet paper, paper towels, shower shoes, AA/AAA/9-volt batteries, laundry detergent, painting supplies (roller covers, brushes tape), birdseed for feeders, sleeping bags and tents.

Tools – Outdoor garden hose & caddy, propane for barbeque.

Volunteers – Cooks for dinner.

CASA CERRILLO

Please call 471-3456 for a complete list: Household Items: Pots & pans, bedding, furniture, cleaning supplies, light bulbs