



# Home at St. E's

Vol. 35 No. 01

Summer 2024

## Grateful Resident Leaves Legacy

St. Elizabeth recently launched its Legacy Society to honor and recognize those who have made a bequest in their will or estate to help ensure the organization's future, and the newest member is former Men's Emergency Shelter and current Casa Cerrillos resident Rudy Gelim.

Rudy was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1962, and two years later his family emigrated, moving first to Spain and then the United States after being sponsored by an aunt living in New York City. Initially they lived with her until settling in nearby Hoboken, New Jersey. Rudy went to high school in New York, to George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and then graduate school at the University of Chicago, graduating with a M.B.A. in international business and M.A. in social sciences focusing on the Brazilian economy.

He had a distinguished corporate career working first in corporate marketing for Blue Cross in California, then as healthcare consultant at Ernst & Young in Chicago, a broker in Latin America equities for Bankers Trust and Jeffries & Company in New York, corporate development for Ameritrade in Nebraska and finally back to Chicago in distribution planning for United Airlines, where he helped to establish the online travel company Orbitz.

Along the way he got married in 1994 and had a son, Max, born in



Rudy Gelim in the Casa Cerrillos courtyard.

2000 with Down's Syndrome and a host of other issues, including a gap between his esophagus and stomach and an undeveloped large intestine. After spending his first two months in a neonatal unit, Max subsequently was in and out of hospitals with 14 operations in his first four years until Rudy found Dr. Alberto Peña, creator of the Peña pull-through procedure or posterior sagittal anorectoplasty (PSARP), whose final two surgeries corrected the problem.

"Max is the toughest person I know," Rudy says. "It's amazing how resilient humans are."

All of this put incredible stress on the marriage, and in 2021 Rudy's wife told him she wanted a divorce. Seriously traumatized and seeing his life falling apart, Rudy had a breakdown and ended up in a hospital for several weeks. Released and without a home to go back to, a friend invited him to move to Santa

Fe to start a new life.

"I fled Chicago in a hurry and left everything behind," Rudy says. "So I arrived in Santa Fe without any ID, passport or documents. I initially stayed with my friend, but when it didn't work out I was out on the streets with nothing. That's when I ended up at Pete's Place (Interfaith Community Shelter)."

After staying at Interfaith for two months, Rudy moved to the Men's Emergency Shelter where he

*continued on page 4*

### Inside

**2 Director's Corner**

**3 Artists Arise**

**6 Save the Date**

**7 Our Wonderful Chefs**



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

## Director's Corner



**Edward Archuleta**

I just returned from a recent New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority's (MFA) press conference on the state of housing and homelessness in New Mexico. Besides rebranding themselves as Housing New Mexico, the organization will be providing \$84.6 million in funding this year to provide quality affordable housing opportunities through new construction, preserving and rehabilitating existing housing, providing loans, down payments and vouchers, and funding emergency shelter operations, including our Men's and Casa Familia.

But what was most impressive were some startling statistics they shared. From 2018 to 2022 the median price of a home in our state increased by 53 percent, from \$200,000 to \$306,000. And it's getting worse as the median price today – a little more than one year later – is \$353,000. Remember these numbers are for the entire state – urban, rural and in between – so it's not just Santa Fe where this is happening.

At the same time, 43 percent of New Mexico households earn less than \$50,000 annually, putting most houses out of their reach. So it should be no surprise – even though it was – that the number of homeless individuals in the state jumped by 50 percent from 2022 to 2023.

We see this every day at St. Elizabeth. Our two emergency shelters are filled to capacity and our three longer-term supportive living apartment complexes are fully occupied as well with long waiting lists. On any given night we are sheltering more than 200 people and by year's end will have housed more than 700. Still it's not enough.

What's the answer? We can start with more affordable housing – homes and apartment units – vouchers for low-income tenants to make up the difference between what they can afford to pay and current rental costs, and funding for wrap-around services for those too challenged physically or mentally to live without some sort of assistance. We're making some progress with Santa Fe Suites and Safe Outdoor Spaces at Christ Lutheran Church as good examples, and work should be starting soon on converting the former Lamplighter motel. But there's a long road ahead to provide housing for all.

Executive Director



# Unhoused Artistry

In a little less than a year Unhoused Art, a new program at St. Elizabeth, is making a splash. Besides unleashing the artistic talents of many of our clients, it's providing extra income for some and inspiring self-confidence and a newfound sense of purpose in all.

Ryan Williams, a volunteer who conceived the program, initially contacted the shelter last July and began his first workshop in October. Starting with one workshop per week at the Men's Emergency Shelter and Casa Familia, he's now offering weekly workshops at eight different locations adding Casa Cerrillos, Santa Fe Suites, Conseuelo's Place, Casa Milagro, Safe Outdoor Spaces and the Life Link Clubhouse.

Workshops are led by Ryan or a guest artist and last 90 minutes to two hours with the goal for each participant to create a marketable work of art. Participants can keep the artwork for themselves, give as a gift to others or have the program try to sell it with 90 percent of the proceeds going to the artist and 10 percent returned to the program to help cover expenses.

"Unhoused people often have no choices," Ryan says. "They wear the clothes they're given, eat the food they're served and sleep where they're told. Now at these workshops they get to make choices and pick the type of art and individual style they want to make. Sometimes it's non-essential services, like this, that can really increase one's sense of well-being."

Some of the workshops are led by former or current St. Elizabeth residents who receive the same \$50 stipend and art supply reimbursement as other guest artists, providing some income for them along with inspiring the participants.

"We're trying to flip the script

and break stereotypes about the unhoused community," Ryan says. "The workshops create fun and supportive environments where everyone is focused on making something new and no longer only talking about their problems. Here they're valuing their lives, leading the workshops, giving direction and telling others what to do. It's an awesome change and really shows the value of art as a healing component."

Ericka Kidd, program manager at Santa Fe Suites, seconds this appraisal.

"Unhoused Art is helping to shift perceptions among the community about homeless people," she says. "It's taking away barriers and stigma that the general public has and it's making the unhoused feel valued about what they have to offer."

One of the standard workshops is making fleece blankets. Participants

get to pick the color and design they want and then keep the finished blankets.

"You can see their sense of pride with the finished product," Ryan says. "Along with being useful and practical, it's something they made by themselves and wasn't just given to them."

Ryan started the program by getting a \$40 nano-grant from Axle Contemporary, a former food truck converted into a mobile art gallery based in the Railyard that also goes all over town. He followed that up with a Go-Fund-Me campaign that raised \$8,000, and he was off and running.

Originally from rural Oklahoma, he's worked with arts and human-rights organizations in Lebanon, Ghana, the Navajo Nation and New York City. Moving to Santa Fe seven years ago, he was a community

*continued on page 5*



Dot painting workshop at Casa Familia led by Richard Welker.



## Grateful Resident Leaves Legacy

...from page 1

remained for 55 weeks until moving into Casa Cerrillos.

“St. Elizabeth was an absolute lifesaver for me,” he says. “I never would have survived the winter at Pete’s or on the streets. And I was so grateful to be there after Pete’s, it was like night and day.”

Trista Turner was Rudy’s case manager at the Men’s Emergency Shelter.

“Rudy arrived without any documents, in the midst of a very contentious and stressful divorce, and missing his special-needs son,” she says. “He was new to Santa Fe without any contacts or friends. He was going blind due to his untreated diabetes, along with heart issues and neuropathy in his hands and feet. So I began the step-by-step process of restoring his documentation, getting a passport – which was a nightmare because he was born in Cuba and his family fled the island – qualifying him for Social Security disability and placing him on the housing list for Casa Cerrillos.

“Case management is guidance, and Rudy was extremely pro-active following through and attending all his appointments, going to counseling, trying his hand at creativity through artwork. He had bad days and struggled often, but he kept at it and focused on his future. It’s tough living in a group setting, particularly for more than a year, but he persevered and now has his own apartment that we helped make accessible for him.”

Rudy’s long stay at the Men’s Emergency Shelter opened his eyes to the challenges homeless individuals face.

“It’s amazing that so many people have been able to survive all the traumas in their lives,” he says. “Fortunately my trauma happened later in life, and St. E’s was there for me. The organization does an



Rudy gets up front and personal with a big horn sheep.

excellent job at helping people escape the cycle of homelessness and giving them the opportunity to change. Just doing the chores gives people something to do every day along with a sense of responsibility that helps them get back on their feet.”

Settled in his apartment at Casa Cerrillos, Rudy is taking advantage of all that Santa Fe has to offer. A longtime opera fan since his junior year abroad in France, he loves attending the Santa Fe Opera and other cultural events.

“Growing up in Hoboken you don’t have many wildlife encounters,” he says. “But in New Mexico I’ve seen big horn sheep, wild turkeys, coyotes and other animals, not to mention the gorgeous western landscapes.”

Now that his divorce is settled

and house in Chicago sold, Rudy established a trust for his son and designated the rest of his estate to St. Elizabeth.

“I love being in Santa Fe, but I’m living on my disability income and can afford to stay only because my rent at Casa Cerrillos is subsidized by St. Elizabeth,” he says. “That’s why I’m more than happy to donate whatever I’ll have when I’m gone to the organization and encourage others to do the same.”

*All it takes to join the Legacy Society is to leave a bequest in your will of any amount to St. Elizabeth to help ensure our future and then let us know about it. More information is available at [legacygiving@steshelter.org](mailto:legacygiving@steshelter.org) or by calling 505-982-6611 x 105.*



# Unhoused Artistry



Recent workshop for current and former St. Elizabeth residents at Meow Wolf.

educator at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum until COVID ended that job and then was general manager at the Santa Fe Playhouse.

"There were no homeless people where I grew up," he says. "But I was on a family vacation in Florida when I was six or seven and we drove past a woman pulling a shopping cart with a mattress on it. I asked my parents what she was doing, and they said it was likely she didn't have a home and was living on the streets. I remember crying until they turned the car around so we could talk to her and give her some money. Then later when I moved to New York for college there were a lot of homeless people around and I would often sit and talk with them."

Unhoused Art has held three public events so far, the first at St. Elizabeth's Kentucky Derby Day, and at each one sold a little more

than \$600 worth of residents' artwork. Next up on August 2nd is the program's first exhibition at Vital Spaces on the Santa Fe Art Institute campus. Then on August 16, Exodus Ensemble is partnering with current and formerly unhoused community members for a Theater of the Oppressed performance. Then in early 2025, Axle Contemporary will be hosting another exhibition of works.

"Here visitors will be able to meet the artists and talk about their work instead of their being homeless," Ryan says. "It will be about the light, not the plight."

Between 20 to 30 people participate in workshops each week, and there have been nearly 100 workshops so far. The program continues to grow, and Meow Wolf is now hosting one workshop per month where former as well as

current shelter residents can attend.

"If this really takes off, it can be a model for other cities to follow," Ryan says. "It's a win-win all around. It helps the unhoused rebuild their pride and self-confidence after so much hardship and trauma because it's an incredible feeling when something you've made is sold and valued."

"We're always looking for new guest artists, community partners, donors and businesses to showcase or sell art. So if you're interested in participating, please get in touch with me."

*If you're interested in following Unhoused Art, you can see upcoming events, current workshops, etc. on Instagram at [unhoused\\_art](https://www.instagram.com/unhoused_art). Contact Ryan Williams at [unhousedart@unhousedart.org](mailto:unhousedart@unhousedart.org).*

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CALLING ALL INTERNS. WE'RE PLANNING AN INTERN REUNION FOR OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2026 AND WE'RE INVITING YOU TO ATTEND. PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION SO WE CAN KEEP IN TOUCH BY EMAILING [DIRECTOR@STESHELTER.ORG](mailto:DIRECTOR@STESHELTER.ORG), SUBJECT LINE: INTERN ALUM



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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:** Hats, rain ponchos, men's jackets, socks, underwear, backpacks.

**Personal Hygiene:** Shaving cream, disposable razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hotel-size shampoo, deodorant, sun screen.

**Food:** Shelf-stable single serving beverages, milk, juice, eggs, fresh fruits, bottled water, coffee.

**Other:** Blankets, bus passes.

**Volunteers:** 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 Zyrtec 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:** Hose wheel for outdoor hose, Propane grill propane for barbeque.

**Household Items:** Cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, dish soap, dish towels.

**Other:** AA/AAA batteries.

**Volunteers:** Cooks for dinner

### CASA CERRILLOS

Please call (471-3456) to discuss their current needs before bringing them to the facility at 3811½ Cerrillos Road.

**Household Items:** Pots & pans, bedding, furniture, cleaning supplies, light bulbs.

### SANTA FE SUITES

Please bring to 3007 S. St. Francis Drive (behind Albertson's) but call first (505-494-4231) for furniture.

**Personal Hygiene:** Shampoo, conditioner, disposable razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hair brushes, body soap/wash, nail clippers & files, deodorant, sun screen, cough drops, feminine pads/tampons.

**Household Items:** Cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, pots/pans, crockpots, kitchen & cooking utensils, full size sheets/blankets, towels, dish soap, dish towels, toilet paper, paper towels, vacuum cleaners.

**Other:** AA/AAA/9-volt batteries, bus passes.