



**December 2020**

Dear Catalyst family and supporters,

Despite all the challenges this year, we have a high performing staff team, are fiscally healthy at the end of this year, and have transitioned almost all our services online! Looking back we see God's faithfulness in provision at the times we needed it most, and given our current pandemic, at times it feels like a miracle that we are doing so well as an agency. Thank you to all who have supported and contributed to continue the work we do with youth and families in our schools and communities!

While we celebrate the health of our organization, we wanted to highlight some stories of the positive impact in service to our underserved youth and families.

### **HOPE Program (HOMeless and Parent Engagement program)**

The B family is a family of three, retired grandparents that are legally responsible for their grandson. Grandparents are on a fixed income and have been paying for a motel for the past 6 plus months. Mr. B has been working odd jobs despite him being diabetic and feeling so tired that his body can only give so much to make ends meet. Our case manager Delmy has been connecting him to food banks that can deliver to his motel, HOPE meals, and gift cards through the school district. She has also been working with this family to find permanent housing. Delmy connected this family to a donor that wanted to adopt a family for Christmas. The donor dropped off their Christmas wish list and this is what Mr. B. wrote in response after receiving the donation:

*"Delmy thank you so much girl. You and Rosie (our intern) truly are a blessing to me, M and A. There are no words to express how much we feel but I want you to know that if I can ever do anything for you all, all you have to do is ask and please let the people who sent the gifts know they are our real Christmas gift. I know God will bless them 10 times more for their kindness..."*

### **Healthy Relationship Teen Curriculum & Support Groups**

This curriculum is offered to community and local school youth and this year it's been harder to get numbers because of the pandemic, but our staff was still able to offer One of the youth who recently finished the 13 week program: *"Thank you again Mr. G, Rosibel and Mrs. Emily I really enjoyed the program and feel wiser when it comes to the topic of relationships. So...now when my friends come to me for advice I'll say I'm basically a certified relationship expert because I took part in your program lol. Happy Holidays!"*

Our staff team also led four junior high boys and girls online support groups at two of our partner schools. Students who are struggling socially, behaviorally or academically were invited by the school counselor for our groups. While it was difficult sometimes to get full participation, the last



few sessions of the girls group saw them opening up and sharing more (even turning their cameras on!). Many of these girls didn't have a place to "hang out" with peers after online school ended, so this space provided the social support that so many people sorely need while staying at home for so long.

### **New School/District Partnership**

While we weren't able to distribute our HOPE meal bags like we used to at Alhambra District, we were able to distribute 1,000 meals put together by service clubs from Don Bosco Tech to a recent school we started partnering with: Bella Vista in Monterey Park, part of Montebello Unified School District (pictured below). While we only had a superficial relationship with this school the last few years, this pandemic year the principal has welcomed many of our connections and donations: from back to school headphones and supplies from local congregations, our book mobile, and food boxes for needy families.



### **Garden Highlighted in Statewide Publication**

I (Jesse) could only continue to maintain the school garden at Garvey Intermediate in Rosemead since the shutdown. Despite not having students around to help, it also happened to be the year that this garden was featured in the statewide quarterly publication of the California Native Plant Society. Garvey District was happy for good news and good publicity in the midst of all the struggles and hassles of online schooling.

The full article is here (starting p. 30 in the publication): [CNPS Fall Issue](#)

Thank you all for your continued support and blessing to our community! ---Jesse Chang