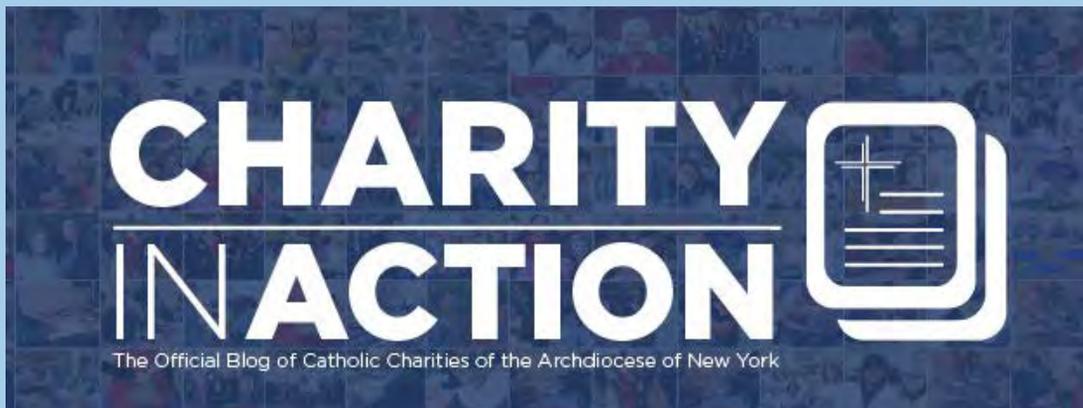


# Charity In Action: Bi-weekly Roundup



## What, if Suddenly, Immigration to the US Stopped?

By Jim Sliney Jr

The conversation in America has turned, temporarily to the idea of #publiccharge. It isn't kind or compassionate to talk about your fellow man in terms of their monetary burden on a government. But since our society brought it up, let's look a little closer.

## **LET'S GET ON THE SAME PAGE FIRST**

“Public charge,” the National Immigration Law Center tells us, “is a term used in immigration law to refer to a person who is primarily dependent on the government for support. The proposed new rule would broaden the definition of who is to be considered a public charge so that it includes immigrants who use one or more government programs listed in the proposed rule”. Is that the right way to judge the value of your fellow man?

## **CHANGING WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW**

According to Alexandria Fernandez Campbell of Vox, “The hardest-to-find workers are no longer computer engineers. They are home health care aides, restaurant workers, and hotel staff. The shift is happening because more and more Americans are going to college and taking professional jobs, while working-class baby boomers are retiring en masse.” That removes a huge portion of the population from the people who can fill those blue-collar jobs.

Details from The Bureau of Labor Statistics show that 17.4% of the labor force are immigrants (by the way, half of these are Hispanic, one quarter are Asian). Many more immigrant people work in natural resources, construction and maintenance than U.S.-born workers do. But something they have in common is that the largest industry both occupy is management, business, science and arts, not agriculture as most immigrant photographs would imply.

All of this is to say that the old notion that immigrants come to America and take good jobs away from born-Americans is outdated and wrong. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics says that for the last 16 months, there are more open, non-farming jobs, than workers who can fill those jobs.



## A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT: WHAT IF THE CURRENT DEPORTATION POLICIES WORKED?

What would happen if suddenly all undocumented workers were detained or removed? If the public charge is about the drag on the economy then it seems like someone's got this all wrong.

- Jobs would go away – millions of Americans who are employed by undocumented business owners would lose their jobs.
- Construction would slow – 22% of construction workers are undocumented.
- Meat and agriculture industries could break down – 36% of all agricultural workers are undocumented, that means over 1/3 of all food production would cease. Food prices would explode, and industries would not be able to fill the vacant jobs at the rate they pay currently.

The loss of undocumented immigrant labor would cost the U.S. \$5 trillion over a decade. Undocumented Americans also pay \$11.64 billion in state and local taxes. That would disappear. That GDP would decrease 2.6% (\$434 billion) in a year.



## SO HOW DOES ONE VALUE THE UNDOCUMENTED WORKFORCE

Catholic Charities of New York has talked about how hard the “immigrant crisis” has been on new Americans. Immigrants live in fear of what might happen to them tomorrow. The shadow of hateful violence and racism still hangs over the country, and the sudden storm of immigrant detentions and arrests in Mississippi has brewed up a fear and anxiety most Americans can never imagine. Our new Americans have it hard.

But generous, inspired people have empowered Catholic Charities to extend both hands to the immigrants in our country. CCNY reaches out with legal services, hotlines, and offers fundamental help connecting immigrants with the services CCNY provides, or services provided by their many partners and agencies.

I presented you with a bunch of statistics attempting to put a value on immigrants. But there is nothing I need to show you to remind you of the value these families and individuals possess inherently. They, like you, like the people at Catholic Charities, like everyone, share in the universal family – the family of the children of God. No other statistics needed.

Help us continue to provide dignified, compassionate care to all our brothers and sisters. If you cannot give money, give time or sweat as a volunteer. If you can't volunteer, give prayers, or pass on the good word of what we are all doing together.



## Another Great Success for the Saint Nicholas Project



By Jim Sliney Jr.

If you've been following the progress of Catholic Charities of New York's Saint Nicholas Project, (and we hope you are) you'll recall that they organized the "31-Days of Giving." The campaign provided donors, just like you, the opportunity to shop for winter coats at Kmart for up to \$5 a coat! The coats will be distributed among our Federation of 90 agencies that provide to those in need this winter season.

Maybe you showed up at the Sears in Westchester and purchased one of the 800 coats sold there! Or maybe, you went to one of the two Kmart locations in Manhattan that sold 200 coats! Perhaps you were part of one of the several church groups that teamed up to purchase 50+ coats each! If you were part of any of that, we thank you, seriously, you're awesome! But, if you missed your chance it's okay, because the Saint Nicholas Project always has opportunities to give and get involved.



## **DOUBLE YOUR DONATION, OR MORE!**

Don't forget to check with your company to see if they offer a "Matching Gifts" program. Did you know that companies put money aside just for charitable gift matching, but between \$4-7 Billion of that goes ungiven each year? That's because most folks don't know to ask. Know you know! So, check your employer; your gift could be doubled, or more!

## **THE ADOPT-A-FAMILY INITIATIVE**

The adopt-a-family participation starts in October (formal start date to be announced soon, so keep an eye out!) and it works like this:

- You choose to adopt from a family ranging from one to as many as twelve members.
- We'll match you with a family based on your capacity.
- Once you agree, we will send you a family description and a list of what they need.
- We will be in touch with more specifics, as well as information about the family(s) you would like to support, very soon!
- Then, you get to shop! You'll then bring or mail your goods one of our Catholic Charities locations where items will be distributed to your adopted family.

## **SAINT NICHOLAS PROJECT**

The Saint Nicholas Project is a year-round initiative that provides much-needed items and case management assistance to children and families in need. Not just during the Christmas season.

If you would like to support the St. Nicholas Project by providing a monetary or a donation of new goods like clothes, toys, school supplies, or household appliances and more! – We are happy to accept it! You know, gift cards for retailers are always welcome too. If you want to arrange a donation you can contact Lakisha Morris at 646-794-2436 or you can email her at [Lakisha.morris@archny.org](mailto:Lakisha.morris@archny.org).



## Three Documents That Might Save Your Children in an Emergency

By Jim Sliney Jr.

Families have few legal choices when it comes to who will care for or what will happen to their children in an emergency - and all of them are scary. The idea of going to family court and signing away custody of one's children is a terrible decision to have to make. Good news - there are less frightening options.

"We asked the question," said Raluca Oncioiu, Director of Immigration Legal Services of Catholic Charities Community Services, "what other arrangements are there for families, short of going to family court?"

1. Catholic Charities of New York put together a 'Know Your Rights' phone bank in cooperation with Univision Noticias 41, to help immigrants understand what legal options are at their disposal regarding Guardianship for their children. Part of what came out of that event are two very important forms people should know about. These are New York State specific:
2. Designation of person in parental relationship: This establishes an adult who can assist with educational and medical decisions for a child. For example, take a child to school or the doctor, provide consent for medical procedures. In the event of unexpected detention or deportation, this is a weak tool and will not prevent a child from being put into the hands of the state. This does not require appearing in court.

Standby Guardianship: This form sets up an official stand-by-guardian figure for future care. It gives legal, parental-level authority for 60 days, during which time the Guardian must go to family court to get the guardianship extended beyond the 60 days. Court appearance is not required unless people are extending Standby Guardianship into full Guardianship before the end of the 60-day window. In the event of unexpected detention or deportation, this is a strong tool that can keep a child in the care of the appointed guardian for 60-days.



In both cases the status granted by these forms do not take effect unless there is a triggering event such as deportation or detention, so no one is signing away their children while they are still there to care for them themselves.

These forms were originally designed to help chronically or terminally ill parents grant authority to another adult to care for their children. Immigration and Legal Services is now using them to help new Americans protect their children in the event of sudden removal from the family, like happened in Mississippi.

Raluca also suggested that families should use the resources provided by Catholic Charities Community Services rather than paying someone they don't know to help them with legal services. "It isn't always safe and it can be very costly. The unauthorized practice of law and notarios cheat vulnerable immigrants out of thousands of dollars." Better if they call the New Americans Hotline, (1-800-566-7636) which is run by New York State and operated by Catholic Charities of New York. They can direct parents or families to vetted resources and get them to the services they need.

Even though bad things can happen to families, there are resources in place to help empower those families in the case of an emergency. Everyone should know about and use these resources.



## 10,000 Pounds of Good Will

By Jim Sliney Jr.

On Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, to honor the National Dominican Day Parade (taking place on August 11<sup>th</sup>), *Goya Gives* delivered 10,000 pounds of food to the Catholic Charities Community Services center at the Mosaic Beacon food pantry on Ogden Avenue in the Bronx.

Goya Foods is the largest Hispanic-owned food company in the United States. Bob Unanue is the President of Goya Foods and a Board Member of Catholic Charities of New York. He says, “For Goya, we have always believed that we have a social responsibility to support our communities and to give back to those less fortunate. It’s not just about providing a monetary donation but bringing people together to make a positive difference in the lives of others and to celebrate our heritage.”



## THE PANTRY EVENT

At the pantry-donation event there was a DJ playing music, balloons and tents, banners and podiums, and giveaways from Catholic Charities. CCNY also dispensed water and bags of groceries to the folks, and food to the 200+ local families who attended. Members of the Goya board were present along with Rafael Toro, Goya's director of public relations and Wilton Cedeno president of the Dominican Day Parade. Much to the joy of the younger crowd, Dominican NBA player, Felipe Lopez was also there, talking with the kids.

Eddie Silverio, director of the Alianza Youth División of Catholic Charities Community Services (CCCS) said, "The pantry was a great success. So festive! It was also great to see the young people flourishing at the event; something that will continue throughout the school year." The young people Eddie is talking about were 50 of some of the 500+ youth that use the Alianza cultural center during the summer and in after-school programs during the school year. These young people were wearing Catholic Charity shirts and helping make the entire food pantry event a success.



Catholic Charities of New York volunteers distribute food in The Bronx  
Credit: Alianza Dominica

## THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NEW YORK

Part of Catholic Charities of New York's core mission is to feed the hungry. CCNY gives out more than 2.5 million pounds of food each year through their food pantries. In its history, CCNY has served over 6.5 million nutritious meals through parish and community food programs. They also partner with the Food Bank for New York City, food banks in the Hudson Valley, and the New York Coalition Against Hunger.

The generous donation from *Goya Gives* (the global initiative of Goya Foods) is going to CCNY's Bronx-based food pantries. There, it will provide a total of 16,667 meals to hungry New Yorkers. "We are once again proud to partner with Goya and Catholic Charities to positively impact the community during our annual food distribution drive and to celebrate our culture and contributions at this year's benefit gala and parade," said Wilton Cedeño.

"We continue to be grateful for Goya's commitment and that of the Dominican Parade Committee leadership, to highlight, celebrate and provide for one of the many communities our agency is proud to serve," said Beatriz Diaz Taveras, Executive Director of Catholic Charities Community Services. Being a New Yorker means celebrating the patchwork of heritages that make this place unique in the world. Catholic Charities supports all New Yorkers no matter their heritage, race, ethnicity, or religion. Goya's annual food donation stands as a great example for helping your neighbors in need. If you contribute to a food pantry, or you want to thank Goya, you can share using #GoyaGives on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



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