

SAINT FRANCIS MINISTRIES

Hi Lite

FALL 2019



EL SALVADOR
HOPES
PROJECT
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Our Mission

Saint Francis, providing
healing and hope to
children and families.

Saint Francis Ministries publishes the Hi-Lites newsletter four times a year.

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A Message From Fr. Bobby

A SPECIAL EDITION -
OUR SPECIAL COMMITMENT



**The Very Reverend
Robert Nelson Smith**

Dean, President, and CEO

This issue of Hi-Lites might seem like a special edition. Although unintentional, it's indicative of the many ways God continues to bless Saint Francis by widening both the scope and reach of our mission to provide healing and hope to children and families.

As a ministry rooted in the Episcopal tradition, we are moved by the Gospel to serve all God's children. You will find this has us walk with lives that are marginalized in the U.S. and increasingly, internationally. In this issue, we feature a story about our HOPES project, a farm program in El Salvador created to provide generational sustainability to the village of San José Obrero, providing at-risk children and families with security, opportunity, healing, and hope.

You'll also learn about our World Refugee Day event during which Saint Francis Migration Ministries and our partners celebrated the many gifts that refugees bring to their adopted Wichita community. You will also read about our recent designation by United Nations as a civil society organization, making us partners in a global effort to promote peace, human rights, and sustainable development.

Of course, we're still serving in areas where we always have. In this issue, you'll read about this year's KidzKamp. You'll hear about Nathan Heiman's visit to Saint Francis at The Mount. A senior policy advisor to Kansas Senator Jerry Moran, Heiman was especially interested in our work with human trafficking survivors, substance use concerns, and Central American children and families. Finally, you'll learn about our Kansas Foster Family of the Year, who has specifically helped teen mothers. One of those mothers was a Guatemalan girl who arrived at their home eight months pregnant, unable to speak English.

So, maybe we should call this a special edition. It is special because it reaffirms Saint Francis' commitment to providing healing and hope where God leads us.

Thank you for your friendship to this ministry and for helping bring Christ's love to a broken world.

You remain ever in my prayers,

Social Justice Looks at Youth “Aging Out”



**The Rev.
Benjamin Thomas**
Director of Social Justice

During a visit to the Diocese of West Missouri, The Rev. Benjamin Thomas discusses human trafficking with members and guests of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, an Episcopal men's organization (photo courtesy Gary Allman).

The Rev. Benjamin Thomas says the crux of his job is to build the most efficient programs with the most effective outcomes by connecting the needs of ministry with community resources. That's why he spends about half of each month on the road, traveling across the country to meet with congregations, speak at conferences, and forge relationships with both nonprofit organizations and private enterprises. As Saint Francis's Director of Social Justice, Fr. Benjamin's mandate is to seek solutions that further the ministry's

mission to provide healing and hope to children and families, especially where entrenched systems of poverty or abuse are concerned.

"I began as director of church relations, and part of that work was reconnecting the Episcopal Church to Saint Francis," said Fr. Benjamin. "We felt it was necessary to see ourselves as part of the wider church and to help the church see us, as an Episcopal organization, as having a place within it. So, during my first two years in that position, we contacted 75 percent of the dioceses within the

Episcopal Church. We soon realized, though, that we didn't need to make annual visits to dioceses just to stay on the map."

Fr. Benjamin had begun to build networks and propose partnerships with people and groups across the wider church. This led he and others in Saint Francis' leadership to begin to think about ways to create new and innovative ministries.

"I was often talking to people about possibilities and about things that would move the needle for people

at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder,” he said. “So, the director of social justice position actually emerged out of the work I was already doing in new business and project management for church relations.”

Fr. Benjamin has a doctorate in theology, so when he speaks to groups about human trafficking, poverty, or unjust systems, he does so from a theological perspective.

“I see through a theological lens, so I don’t just tell people we’re going to fix poverty, I ask how our efforts are informed by the life and message of Jesus,” he said. “My focus is on the why. Then, there’s the project management piece. For example, our first project under social justice is providing for youth aging out of the foster care system in Wichita.”

Why these kids? Fr. Benjamin says it’s because they’re among the most vulnerable served by Saint Francis. Young people who age out of care without a permanent placement are more likely to end up in social services, commit a crime, or abuse substances.

“We asked, ‘what can we do to change their horizon of hope? How do we give them a longer view of life when they’re 18, a view that says they don’t have to remain in the system with no deep connections, no deep community, and little prospect for change in their future?’ How can Saint Francis change the outcome for these kids, so their lives are completely altered? These are important questions because a permanent underclass represents a perpetually unjust system.”

So, he met with Tim Gay, founder and executive director of Youthrive, an organization that provides programs and support to young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood. Together, along with other Wichita community and business leaders, they began developing a model that provides meaningful employment, life skills, educational opportunities, financial management instruction, and workforce soft skills to help youth achieve and maintain adult autonomy. This builds on the model already employed by Saint Francis’ Independent Living program. Yet, Fr. Benjamin said he hopes this effort will extend beyond to include a wider range of community partnerships.

“This is a much more holistic approach,” he said. “What we’re doing in Independent Living is good, and much of it will remain the same. Our hope is that this program we’re developing will give us a broader view so that instead of just looking at a youth’s needs today, we can look at their needs five or six years down the road and create opportunities to meet challenges they’ll face.”

It’s an ambitious goal, yet a solid step towards what Fr. Benjamin hopes will eventually be a variety of social enterprise programs and strategies that help the most vulnerable among those Saint Francis serves. Yet, he says he can’t do it alone. Nor, can Saint Francis. Problems such as this require a community response and cooperative solutions.

“Saint Francis can’t do everything, but we can connect the children in our care to people in our communities who want to help them grow towards the fullness of their potential. There are acres of goodwill, both on the Saint Francis side and on the community side, and we hope to build bridges to connect them.”

“There are acres of goodwill, both on the Saint Francis side and on the community side, and we hope to build bridges to connect them.”



Learn more about our Independent Living program visit www.saintfrancisministries.org/services/independent-living.



LUND FAMILY LEARNS HEALING THROUGH PAIN

Lydia Lund prayed for eight years that her husband, Tyler, would share her desire that they become foster parents. Thanks to a career in social work, she knew firsthand the effect a good foster parent can have on the life of a child. Although not completely opposed to the idea, Tyler just wasn't sure if it was a good option for them. He and Lydia had recently started their own family and already had two little girls, ages 5 and 2. Then one day, following a conversation with friends who are foster parents, something clicked with Tyler. Three weeks later the Salina couple was in a foster parent training course.

"I knew that once he decided, we would go all in," said Lydia.

Tyler said the reason was his friend's description of how fostering had enriched their friend's family and taught empathy and understanding to their children.

"My heart started to melt," he said. "Maybe it's selfish, but I wanted my kids to join us in ministering to these kids. What better way is there to reach out to others and share love than as a family?"

They started slowly four years ago, providing respite care and taking in emergency placements.

"It was neat to see our daughters get involved and discover what roles they could play," said Tyler. "Two of our first placements were little boys,

Saint Francis Foster Family of the Year

ages 10 and 8. It was bedtime, but the 10-year-old wanted a cookie. He became agitated because we said no, that he needed to go to bed. Suddenly, he bolted for the door – as I tried to remember my training about how to handle this type of situation. He was already outside, about to jump off the porch and run, when my 5-year-old daughter said, ‘Remember what Daniel Tiger says. When you want to roar, take a deep breath and count to four.’ She helped him breathe and count to four, and then he quietly walked back inside the house and sat down. To see her handle herself so well, to not be scared, was pretty amazing.”

Now, the Lunds have three girls, along with an 18-year-old foster daughter and her own 2-year-old girl. They also foster a toddler boy. The older foster daughter came to their home about two years ago, eight months pregnant, and unable to speak English. From Guatemala, she spoke Spanish and a native dialect. Fortunately, Lydia speaks fluent Spanish.

“We supported her in giving birth to her child and helped make her as comfortable as possible,” said Lydia. “Because she’s 18, she could age out, but she still has one year of high school left. So, she’ll remain in foster care until she’s finished. She’s doing great in school, and now speaks English very well. Supporting teen moms has subsequently become something we really care about.”

“It’s been an interesting dynamic, having a teenager for our oldest foster child,” added Tyler. “On any given day, there’s potential conflict. After all, we’ve had to learn to communicate in two languages – Spanish and

“teenager”. Plus, there are the cultural differences. It’s required lots of work, but it’s also added so much richness to our family. It’s been rewarding to help her as she learns to become a mom. That’s why family and fostering are connected for us.”

Their emphasis on family is what makes Tyler and Lydia such effective foster parents. For them, fostering is an “all in” endeavor that enlists all the Lunds, the children in their care, and the birth families of the children they foster.

“Part of our job is to work with parents for reintegration,” said Tyler. “When we realized that we can help more than one generation by helping two people reconnect, that’s when the importance of helping teen moms hit. There’s always going to be a parent involved: sometimes we’re even working with three generations. That’s three generations in which we can help model hope and reconciliation by helping multiple people heal through just one child.”

Healing, though, nearly always includes pain. Tyler learned that the hard way with one little boy in their care. The Lunds picked him up at the hospital when he was just two days old. Because they also had an infant girl of their own, Tyler shouldered most of the responsibility of caring for him, so Lydia could focus on their daughter. Soon, Tyler realized he’d fallen hopelessly in love. After spending a year with them, the boy became available for adoption, and the Lunds began making plans.

A week later, the birth father was released from jail and sought custody of his son. The Lunds felt fearful and frustrated. Yet, they believed the boy’s father deserved a chance.

“He came for all his meetings and supervised visits, and did everything he was supposed to do,” said Tyler. “We also invited him to our home, so he could share meals with his son and put him to bed at night. In the process, we got to know him very well and became friends. So, when the day came, we lost a child we loved – by returning him to his father. What could have been a day of pain and loss was much better.

“I keep thinking of a photo we took on the day he went back to his father. The photographer took the picture with his son and him in the foreground and us in the background. Their image is in focus, but ours is blurred. If we’d looked at the story as focused on us, we would have experienced great loss, but the focus was rightfully on that child and his father. So, in that moment, we were able to experience joy that they were back together. Yes, it can be hard to give up a child you’ve cared for and grown to love, but if you go into it in the right mode, it can change that pain into something good.”

‘Remember what Daniel Tiger says. When you want to roar, take a deep breath and count to four.’

The Lunds’ 5-year-old daughter

HOPES Project

SAINT FRANCIS CREATES LASTING CHANGE IN EL SALVADOR

In silence, they threaded their way through dense vegetation, walking a worn single-file trail to the spot where they were to begin their work. Each equipped with a machete and a small backpack in which they carried water and lunch, the team of seven women and four men spoke in low tones. At seven o'clock in the morning, the air was already thick, hot, and heavy. Beneath the shadow of Santa Ana volcano, the small Saint Francis crew exuded a mood of expectancy and hope.

Just the day before their work began, they had celebrated. The remote village of San José Obrero, situated in the southwest portion of El Salvador, nearly two hours from the capital of San Salvador, is home to about 30 families. Poverty is palpable in this rural community. Living daily with marginalization and violence, there is rarely reason for optimism. Yet, on May 23, they arrived at the clearing outside the village filled with anticipation.

Shepherded by teachers, school children waved small American and Salvadoran flags. Parents and neighbors mingled with invited dignitaries, guests, and Saint Francis staff to celebrate the launch of a special project, one that might spark a spirit of hope in San José Obrero and help forge a path towards a sustainable future for the community.

The HOPES (Holistic, Organic, Prosperous, El Salvador) is a Saint Francis justice enterprise initiative based on the philosophy that creating opportunities to improve the well-being of families is fundamental to community transformation. Situated deep within the Santa Ana foothills, "Finca la Esperanza (the farm of hope) de Martín Barahona" honors the memory of The Rt. Rev. Martín Barahona, former Bishop of the Anglican Episcopal Church in El Salvador and Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church in Central America, whose life and ministry inspired people across the Episcopal Church and around the world. On this 65-acre farm, a unique kind of crop will be cultivated, harvested, and processed for sale. The revenue generated will be reinvested into the community of San José Obrero and social programs that expand the Saint Francis mission of healing and hope for children and families in El Salvador.

That crop is the moringa tree. Hardy, fast-growing, and relatively easy to store and process, the leaves of the tree provide seven times the vitamin C of oranges, four times the vitamin A of carrots, four times the calcium of milk, three times the potassium of bananas, and two times the protein of yogurt. Moringa has been justifiably called a "miracle" plant. Every part of the tree can be used, including for medicinal purposes to treat everything from

headaches and anemia to colitis and cholera. It's a near perfect food source for malnourished populations.

A constant source of inspiration and encouragement for the vision of HOPES, Bishop Barahona lived to see the purchase of the land for the farm, but he died before the official launch in May. Yet, his spirit filled the air at the celebration. It is in that spirit that HOPES will walk with the people of San José Obrero, touching the lives of about 2,700 people through integrated economic and social impact initiatives.

"About 70 percent of the Saint Francis farm employees are women, and that's intentional" said Osvaldo Lopez, director of Saint Francis Programs in El Salvador. "Many times, it's difficult for women to have jobs outside the home. Some of them are single mothers. So, this project will strengthen women and their families by providing much needed income. This area has a high rate of unemployment, so the farm and its processing center will generate important opportunities for many people."

But moringa farming is just one component of HOPES. Saint Francis currently has a social psychologist who specializes in community building on the ground working with local people to identify needs that Saint Francis can help address. Working closely with the school and community, he helps them assess and prioritize their goals, the assets they already have available to address them, and the tools and knowledge required to organize for success.

According to Angela Smith, vice president of International Ministries, “This accompaniment is essential to long-term sustainability. People are their own best resource for creating change,” she said. “They know their challenges better than anyone, and the solutions they design themselves empower long-term, sustainable change that is people-centered and relevant.” HOPES will help provide long-term stability to social impact initiatives by creating a source of sustainable revenue. This approach will complement other funding mechanisms that are not always sufficient for achieving long-term goals.

“We need this project to prosper and allies to help us realize the vision,” said Lopez. “It requires initial investment that needs to be recovered in order to provide financial resources necessary to sustain the work. It’s innovative and ambitious in the best sense, and with faith, hard work, and solidarity, it can provide healing and hope for many families in really vulnerable circumstances.”

That small farm crew of 11 Saint Francis employees has already



The Rev. Alfredo Lopez blesses members of the Saint Francis leadership team in El Salvador (from left, Naun Rivera Cuadra, Nelson Carranza, Osvaldo Lopez, and Angela Smith) during the HOPES Project inaugural event.

cleared nearly 10 acres of land, about half of the projected first phase of production. Soil tests affirm the crop will be certified 100 percent organic. Work has also been completed on a 135-meter well with a capacity of 75 gallons of water per minute, along with a water retention tank. Together, they’ll provide the main source of water for irrigation and the planned processing facility. The first test plots have already yielded healthy, prolific plants.

“The Saint Francis mission and vision is about providing healing and hope to children and families by transforming lives and systems in ways others believe impossible,” said Smith. “And we do that wherever God calls us to be. That means addressing root causes of complex social challenges like poverty, violence, migration, and human trafficking. Some may think these issues are too huge to tackle – that it’s impossible – but Saint Francis is no stranger to tough challenges.”

Ultimately, HOPES is about empowering and equipping people with the tools and resources they

need to build healthy, secure lives for themselves and their children. Like every other Saint Francis program, the HOPES project affirms human dignity and honors those who serve and are served by it. That’s why it means so much to the people of San José Obrero.

Saint Francis employee Katherine Ramírez Molina is on the crew that helped clear the land and plant the first moringa trees for the project. She, like the rest of the group, is not solely a farmworker, but a leader. As she said during the launch celebration, “We remember that when the coffee plantations died, so did employment for many people. Now, many must travel for miles just to work, to bring home food for our families. But, thanks to Saint Francis, this situation will change. Now, our children can have parents nearby, and we can all have a chance to start over. So, on behalf of our community, I thank the creators of this project with all my heart for the help they will give us. May God bless you always.”



To learn more about Saint Francis Ministries’ work in El Salvador and Central America, visit www.saintfrancisministries.org/services/international-ministries. **Hope knows no borders.**

Senator Moran Senior Advisor Visits The Mount



Nathan Heiman (far left) of Sen. Jerry Moran's office meets with Saint Francis staff (from left) Darrin Sewell, Yeni Telles, Vickie McArthur, Amanda Pfannenstiel, and The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith during a visit to Saint Francis at The Mount in Wichita.

Substance use, sex trafficking, child immigrants, and family preservation were among the topics of discussion during a visit to Wichita over the summer by Nathan Heiman, senior policy advisor to U.S. Senator Jerry Moran. Hosted by The Very Reverend Robert N. Smith, Heiman toured Head Start and Saint Francis offices at The Mount before sitting down with Fr. Smith and other Saint Francis staff to discuss ways in which the senator and Saint Francis might work together to improve outcomes for at-risk children and families.

Clinical Director Vickie McArthur began the dialogue by noting that

although Saint Francis and the State of Kansas have made significant progress in identifying victims of trafficking, more work is needed to provide protective services and therapeutic programs to survivors. She said Saint Francis has trained 15 persons to serve on rapid response teams, which assess youth identified by law enforcement as possible victims of sex trafficking. Those teams have conducted 270 assessments since 2014, 60 percent of which provided confirmation of trafficking.

McArthur said Saint Francis has tried to address the mental health needs of survivors by providing clinicians that

follow them wherever they are placed within the state. Using VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) dollars to fund traveling clinicians, Saint Francis has been able to reduce mental health placements by 75 percent. Additional funding, however, would help Saint Francis to better serve the therapeutic and security needs of trafficking survivors.

Clinical Services Director Amanda Pfannenstiel also talked about funding during her discussion of substance use and its affect on Kansas families. Noting that Kansas ranks 18th among the states in substance use-related removals from the home, Pfannenstiel said most federal dollars

are directed towards the child, rather than the parents.

"Systems don't do well with treating substance-using families," she said. "That's unfortunate because children coming into out-of-home placement almost always have at least one parent that is using. Those children will also stay longer in out-of-home placement than children from homes where their parents are not using."

Yet, Pfannenstiel said, few federal funds are allocated to treat the whole family. Parents are often left to handle their own treatment services.

"Kansas has a limited tolerance for parental substance abuse," said McArthur. "Yet, how do we support those families as they're going through recovery - because it's not easy, and it's not a straight line."

Yeni Telles, associate director of International Ministries, briefed Heiman on the work Saint Francis is doing in immigrant child and family services, refugee resettlement, and Central America. Noting that El Salvador has no child welfare system, she shared how Saint Francis is working with local partners to build early childhood education, women's empowerment, family preservation, and justice enterprise programs for communities. Other programs are being explored and developed for children and families in Guatemala.

"Back when Fr. Bob Mize started Saint Francis 75 years ago, there were no systems in place to take care of kids, so he founded the Boys' Home," said Fr. Smith. "So, we asked ourselves, if he were to start something today, would he even do it in the U.S., where there are systems in place? Our vision



is to transform lives and systems, so we had to ask how we partner and walk with people in places with no systems of care."

"I understand how sometimes your jobs can be frustrating, but how fulfilling it can be, too," said Heiman. "I might work on legislation, but I hardly ever get to see the direct impact it has on lives. So, I'm kind of envious of what you all do. Thank you for your work."

"I never make guarantees, but I'm happy to go back and tell our staff that works closely on these issues how important your work is to us. I want you to know we're here to work for you."



Accompanied by The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith, Saint Francis president and CEO, Director of Operations Darrin Sewell gives Sen. Moran staffer Nathan Heiman a tour of Saint Francis facilities at The Mount in Wichita.

Saint Francis expands services in Nebraska, Texas



Jodie Austin

Nebraska Regional Vice President

NEBRASKA

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced in June that the agency

had selected Saint Francis Ministries to provide child welfare case management services in the Eastern Service Area, comprised of Omaha and surrounding Douglas county, along with Sarpy county. Saint Francis has already been providing services to youth in central and western Nebraska since 2012.

"Our mission is to provide healing and hope to children and families," said The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith, Saint Francis dean, president, and CEO. "We are excited about the possibilities encompassed by the Family First Prevention Act and



look forward to collaborating with Nebraska's leaders, businesses, and organizations on the best way to use child welfare knowledge and dollars at the beginning of a child's contact with the system, where we can change their future."

The Eastern Service Area carries nearly 40 percent of the child welfare cases in Nebraska. Under the contract, which begins in January 2020, DHHS will continue to provide initial assessment and community support services in the area.



Cristian Garcia

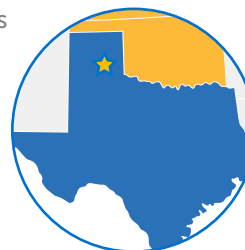
Texas Regional Vice President

TEXAS

Also in June, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) awarded Saint Francis a Community-Based Care contract to provide child welfare services to 41 counties

within the state. About two years ago, the Texas Legislature voted to expand its foster care redesign model to give sole responsibility for foster care and kinship case management to a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC), which locates foster homes and other placement arrangements for children in state care, while providing them with a full continuum of services. Saint Francis is now contracted to serve as SSCC in Region 1 of Texas.

Saint Francis already provides foster care services in the state through recruitment, training, certification, and supervision of foster homes in 29 counties.



"Saint Francis is excited to team with DFPS and its stakeholders to expand our partnerships and work in Texas," said Fr. Smith "We are especially excited to partner on the transition to community-based care, which fits well with our history of providing innovative care and strategies that are individualized to the communities we serve."

To support the Texas expansion, Saint Francis has hired Cristian Garcia to serve as Regional Vice President for West Texas. A native of the area, Garcia spent seven years at the Texas DFPS before serving as Regional Director for Foster Care and Adoption for West Texas and the Rio Grande Valley at Buckner International.

Saint Francis Receives United Nations Designation

The United Nations Department of Global Communications announced in June that the world body has designated Saint Francis Ministries a civil society organization, making it one of 1,519 such organizations throughout the globe. Civil society organizations partner with the United Nations to advocate for and share information about several key U.N. priorities, particularly "peace and humanitarian concerns, sustainable development, and human rights."

As a civil society organization, Saint Francis can designate adult and youth

representatives to attend events at the U.N. headquarters in New York City and other places.

"Working alongside the United Nations offers Saint Francis opportunities to engage on an international level in a new and more robust way," said The Very Rev. Robert N. Smith, Saint Francis dean, president, and CEO. "We are excited to share our knowledge and to learn from others whose work aligns with ours so that we can continue to enrich our programs and initiatives."



Saint Francis earned the designation because of the ministry's work serving children and families, as well as its efforts to address poverty and human rights issues associated with voluntary or forced migration, adoption, and human trafficking.

Saint Francis KidzKampers celebrate "One World"

Thanks to Saint Francis donors, volunteers, and friends, 61 Kansas children in foster care enjoyed three fun-filled days at KidzKamp this summer in Salina. With a nod to Saint Francis' work with refugees in Wichita and with children and families in Central America, campers celebrated "One World" by participating in educational activities that included a scavenger hunt for items related to the Congo, Eritrea, Myanmar, and El Salvador.

Other activities included a trip to Kenwood Cove Aquatic Park, a talent show, outdoor games, and a trip down the zipline at Camp Webster.

KidzKamp has given girls and boys ages 8-12 a chance to forget their

troubles and act like kids for a few days. Sponsored by Saint Francis Ministries, with help from donors and communities partners, no child pays to attend.

"I see the smiles every year," said Todd Hadnot, director of community outreach services. "I hear in their laughter and see in their eyes just how much KidzKamp means to these children. That's why I'm so grateful to those volunteers and donors who give their time and resources to make this such a special event for these amazing children."



Saint Francis Celebrates World Refugee Day

When telling a story, Seline Safi's hands, hips, eyes, and feet are just as vital as her voice. As Tanzanian gospel music filled the space at the Hilltop Community Center, Safi and her daughters, Asta and Martine, shared a song of Africa, swaying and stepping in unison as Seline sang in rhythmic Swahili. The spectators, gathered primarily from parts of Africa and Asia, clapped and smiled for each dance and for every performance that followed.

They gathered in Wichita because Wichita welcomed them, first as refugees and then as neighbors and friends. Observed as a reminder that millions of persons annually are forced to flee oppression and persecution, World Refugee Day has taken on added meaning in recent years. Today, at 70.8 million worldwide, the number of refugees fleeing violence and conflict is estimated to be the highest since World War II. Some of them, mostly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, and Burma, find their way to Wichita, where they build new lives with help from Saint Francis Migration Ministries.

Saint Francis celebrated refugees and their contributions during its own World Refugee Day event in June. Long-time immigrant residents joined those barely in the U.S. 24 hours for a day of games, song, dance, and ethnic cuisine from Africa, Asia, and the United States. Churches, social service



Seline Safi (right), a Congolese refugee, sings a Tanzanian gospel song as her daughters Asta and Martine perform a traditional dance during Saint Francis' World Refugee Day celebration in Wichita.

and other non-profit organizations, and employers offered information, educational materials, and resources to help newly arrived refugees succeed and make the most of their new life in Wichita.

"We welcome refugees because that's how we live into the Saint Francis mission to provide healing and hope to children and families," said Annette Kazungu, director of refugee resettlement. "Celebrating World Refugee Day is important because it recognizes the strengths, diversity, and contributions these new

American families bring to their community."

Saint Francis Migration Ministries is a refugee resettlement program affiliated with Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM). As one of the nine national agencies that partner with the federal government to resettle refugees, EMM helps refugees transition from displacement to security and hope.



To learn more about this life-saving program, visit www.saintfrancisministries.org/services/migration-ministries.

Behavioral Health, Foundational to Saint Francis Mission



Susan Montague *Director of Outpatient Behavioral Health*

Susan Montague joined the Saint Francis family to serve a two-year stint as a psychometrist and research assistant to former military psychologist Ron Force, who was instrumental in setting Saint Francis on the course to excellence in behavioral healthcare. In July, Montague marked her 40th anniversary of employment with Saint Francis, where she now serves as Director of Outpatient Behavioral Health and is the lead clinician for psychological testing and substance use treatment.

What is Behavioral Health and why is it important to the mission of Saint Francis Ministries?

Behavioral Health has always been at the core of the Saint Francis mission. Fr. Bob Mize, our founder, realized that the boys in his care needed more than a place to stay. The hope was to improve the health and functioning of the youth so they could leave successfully and experience responsible lives. In the 1960s, Ron Force implemented the Primary Counselor Model and treatment planning under the direction of a clinical director. By 1974, he'd also helped us earn accreditation by The Joint Commission. During Ron's tenure, the focus was on residential treatment for boys (expanded later for girls), outpatient substance use and mental health treatment, partial day programming, and in-home treatment.

Our substance use programs also help families heal. Years ago, treatment programs used shame as part of the treatment process. But that made it difficult to foster hope since most clients already experienced shame and anger. Saint Francis has always focused on giving people hope to change, so we steered away from that type of treatment. People need to feel worthy of care.

What is it about Saint Francis that kept you here for four decades?

I found that I didn't need to leave Saint Francis to grow. I arrived with an undergraduate degree in psychology and earned my master's while working here. Over the years, I've been a psychometrist, substance use counselor, therapist, psychologist, clinical director, interim director of Mississippi programs, and director of outpatient behavioral health (my current position).

I also stayed because Saint Francis is a faith-based organization. I believe spirituality is an important part of healing, especially in the mental health and substance use field. When I was a researcher, parents thought their child's progress was directly related to their relationships with the people at Saint Francis. Those relationships were promoted through chapel and spending time with staff. One could see change in the child as they learned to trust the people at Saint Francis.

What opportunities would you like to see develop in the Behavioral Health program over the next several years?

I'd like to see the continued growth of our behavioral clinics to new locations. Nationally, there is need for more psychiatric, assessment, substance use, and mental health services, especially in rural areas.



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