

Catholic Community Services
of Southern Arizona, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catholic Community Services begins new focus with Casa Alitas Shelters

Tucson, AZ – June 28, 2024, Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona has for ten years “Provided Help, Created Hope, and Served All” in response to the crisis of legally processed asylum seekers arriving at our borders. Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona has expanded services as record numbers of processed asylum seekers arrived needing help year after year. Catholic Community Services is proud of the work of our dedicated staff and hundreds of dedicated volunteers who together have served more than 400,000 men, women, children, and families since 2014.

“I continue to be immensely proud of the great work done by the staff and volunteers at Catholic Community Services. Their compassion for serving our brothers and sisters in need is nothing short of remarkable. The partnership between Catholic Community Services and Pima County is commendable as it serves as a model for others to follow, shared Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger the Bishop of Tucson.

To everything, there is a season, and it has become apparent that without substantive change to our Nation’s immigration and asylum policies, the ever-growing crisis of the last decade has become the norm. It is now the endemic reality of day-to-day life along the border. Reflecting this current reality, noting the reality of limited resources, and respecting the staff and volunteers who have been stretched beyond reasonable expectations, Catholic Community Services is refocusing the efforts of Casa Alitas to better support women and families with children – those most at risk and in need of expanded services while under our care within our shelter facilities. “Our revised scope of services will focus exclusively on the Welcome Center at the Ajo shelter location,” said Elena Dwyre, CEO of Catholic Community Services.

The Welcome Center, with a capacity of 140 guests, will continue to provide essential services to families and children, just as it has for the past ten years. “Our staffing and planning efforts are designed to accommodate this capacity without exceeding it,” continued Dwyre. “This new focus will allow other new partners to step in to help additional legally processed asylum

seekers along their journey and allow Catholic Community Services to better anticipate the day-to-day needs of those we serve. It will also allow staff and volunteers in other ministries to fully engage in supporting this work. We will be providing a Trauma-Informed approach to care, child welfare, and educational programs, in addition to providing food, clothing, shelter, and necessary medical assistance.”

“These changes will help reduce operational risks and financial liabilities for the organization, strengthen our services, and uphold the high standards of care we have maintained over the past ten years,” reported Dwyre. This will also allow Catholic Community Services to refocus staff and volunteers to expand programs serving others across southern Arizona, especially with regards to housing and support services to the homeless. Including expanded operations at our new Medical Respite Center, Casa de Respiro, which opened on June 1st. We will also provide much-needed services to domestic violence survivors, and others in marginalized communities. We are excited for this new chapter in our answer to the Gospel’s call to “welcome the stranger” (Matthew 25:42-46) which has been reflected in our work since our founding in 1933, shared Elena Dwyre, CEO of Catholic Community Services.

“The people of Pima County owe Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona and its incredible staff and volunteers an enormous amount of gratitude,” said Adelita S. Grijalva, Pima County Board of Supervisors Chair. “For more than 10 years the agency has shown the people of our nation who we are as a community—one that doesn’t turn our back on people in need. Catholic Community Services has shown kindness and compassion to more than half a million asylum-seekers fleeing oppression and grinding poverty hoping for a life of safety and prosperity. I am heartened that CCS, while in a reduced role, is still standing with our community and providing aid, shelter, and compassion to the continual stream of asylum seekers coming through Pima County.”

About Catholic Community Services:

Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona has been dedicated to Providing Help, Creating Hope, and Serving All since 1933. As a diverse family of clients, staff, volunteers, and donors, Catholic Community Services is committed to touching lives daily, guided by love, hope, and compassion. With a wide range of services, from our Community Outreach Program for the Deaf to the Pio Decimo Center for young children, Casa Alitas for migrants and refugees, our new Medical Respite Center for men and women experiencing homelessness, and services in Yuma, Sierra Vista, and beyond, we provide access to basic needs and ensure vulnerable communities' safety, stability, and lifelong health.

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