

Our Lady of Guadalupe Center

Helping Hispanics Build a New Life

A year ago, Daniel and his family lived in constant fear for their lives. Today, Catholic Social Services' Our Lady of Guadalupe Center is helping this family meet their basic human goals for normalcy and safety.

THE NEED

Daniel was a successful business owner in Honduras. He and his wife owned two large restaurants, a barbershop, and their own home. He never intended to leave his country. But then, something changed.

Daniel started trying to make his community better for his children. He was working to improve schools and create recreation facilities. But in his country, getting involved in community improvement can turn into life or death. His efforts caught the attention of people who opposed his work. One day, they tried to kidnap his daughter from school, and a week later, they threatened his life.

Knowing they were in danger, Daniel and his family fled to the US.

Daniel and his daughter were separated. By the time they were reunited nearly three months later, both had experienced significant trauma. Angie had to stay in the hospital overnight, and even when she was well enough to travel, she had serious Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

When the family arrived in Columbus, where Daniel's older parents lived, they didn't know what their future held. All Daniel knew was that, even though he loved Honduras, he couldn't return because, "If I go back, they gonna find me and kill me." Because he had arrived in the US with nothing, he couldn't afford a lawyer to represent him and he didn't know how to get the mental healthcare his daughter needed. But first things first—he needed to feed his family.



93% increase in the Hispanic population in Ohio since 2000.



38% of Guadalupe Center clients make less than \$5,000 per year.



1/4 of Ohio's 81,200 Hispanic households lives in poverty.

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“I’m just a father who needs a better place for my children. I want to see them grow. I want to live in peace.”

THE SOLUTION

Desperate, Daniel called the 211 hotline to find a food pantry, and they sent him to the Guadalupe Center. When he first went to the Center, he thought he would be getting food for his family for a week. He had no idea he was opening the door to so much more.

Center staff first helped Daniel get the things his family needed to meet their basic needs—food, clothing, and mental healthcare for his daughter. Then they connected him with a pro bono lawyer. Daniel’s family began working with the Center’s case manager, who helped them navigate the challenges of living in a new country, and Daniel and his wife started attending ESL classes.

Today, Daniel’s daughter has the mental healthcare she needs and is doing well in school. Daniel’s asylum case looks promising. And, most importantly to Daniel and his wife, their children are safe. As Daniel said, “I didn’t come to the US looking for money or a big house. I just want to live in peace and have a normal life.”

ABOUT OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CENTER

Through the Our Lady of Guadalupe Center, CSS works to reduce poverty by addressing its root causes within the immigrant Hispanic community concentrated on the west side of Columbus—a population that is growing and experiences disproportionate poverty.

At the Guadalupe Center, we provide services including a food pantry, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, nutrition classes, preventative health screenings, legal and immigration consultations and referrals, and comprehensive case management.



3,248 unduplicated clients served in 2018.



We transformed the Guadalupe Center from a food pantry to a full community center.



100,305 meals provided in 2018.