

# Best Practices Report – Diocese of Tucson

## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Diocese of Tucson has developed a diocesan migrant ministry and outreach center – named “*Casa San Juan*” - based out of a parish with direct proximity to the border. The Center is designed to address the physical, legal and pastoral needs of migrants crossing the border. This Center will develop a model for identification and training of committed clergy and laity, permitting the creation of strategies for expanding such a program to other parishes throughout the diocese.

## THE APPROACH

### *Methods or activities the diocese has taken to address the needs outlined in the diocese’s needs assessment:*

The *Casa San Juan* Diocesan Migrant Service Center is partnering with the following agencies to provide the following services:

- Catholic Social Services of Tucson to provide free Immigration and Citizenship Consultations;
- University of Arizona – Rural Mobile Clinic Program to provide free medical care to migrants;
- Pima County Interfaith Council in advocacy efforts with the City Council, Governor and State Representatives for change in immigration laws and to defend the human rights of migrants;
- Local social service agencies to provide immediate emergency needs;
- Parishes to help migrant families become acquainted and integrated into the community, and to bring them more fully into parish life.

The Diocese of Tucson ultimately oversees the work of the Center and helps to support it financially.

The Center actively fundraises from local community groups, private businesses, parishes and churches (Catholic and others).

### *Challenges or obstacles the diocese has faced in its approach and specific actions the diocese has taken (is taking) to overcome these challenges in order to achieve objectives:*

Immediate challenges are few, but the primary long-range challenge will be the on-going financing of the work of the Center. Creative partnerships have helped to meet the immediate financial and resourcing needs; however, the Center is looking into additional grants and partnership programs to fund on-going work. The Center is exploring the idea of promoting a “twinning” program with parishes throughout the diocese. Through the proposed “twinning program,” the Center would provide awareness training and solidarity opportunities for parishioners from throughout the diocese. The hope would be that Catholics to learn more about the plight of migrants and thus provide active solidarity with them through various kinds of support to the Center.

After more than a year in operation, the Center has now been able to secure donations from private sources such as a substantial donation from Mexico Money Transfer. Even other Christian denominations (such as the Presbyterian Church) are making donations.

<b>OUTCOME-BASED OBJECTIVES</b>		
<i>The following is a list of the primary objectives of the diocesan action plan and indicators of success for each objective, as well as a list of activities the diocese has employed towards accomplishing each objective:</i>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Measurements of Success for Each Objective</b>	<b>Milestones / Activities involved in accomplishing the objective</b>
<p>-- To provide effective and compassionate assistance to the immigrant population dealing with a multitude of concrete immediate needs, including: immigration assistance, legal issues, medical needs, housing, employment-related challenges, language barriers, and consumer exploitation.</p> <p>-- To bring immigrants more fully into parish life.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Over 2300 families and individuals have been assisted from across the diocese.</li> <li>2. Families feel more “directly involved in the development of their center – Casa San Juan” as a result of families being helped and then becoming involved with the center as volunteers themselves.</li> <li>3. All of our families are encouraged to register at their pertaining parishes, to become involved in their community and are offered a basic introduction to various ministries. Many families have registered at parishes in the Diocese of Tucson and many will be receiving sacraments.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First Immigration and Citizenship Session – November 2003 – Over 125 individuals attended.</li> <li>2. Casa San Juan opens its doors with a set schedule and regular office hours – February 2003; center serves on average 10-12 families/ individuals on a daily basis.</li> <li>3. First Town/Community meeting on individual/human rights held – February 2003 – Hosted by Pima County Interfaith Council – over 50 persons attended.</li> <li>4. First Mobile Clinic Visit – March 2003 – 17 individuals from all of our parishes were seen/ treated by a nurse practitioner; mobile clinic will be on-site twice monthly and services will be available free-of-charge to all families.</li> <li>5. As of January 31, 2004, Casa San Juan opens its free medical clinic, available once a week to those who cannot obtain services elsewhere.</li> </ol>
<p>-- Create awareness of the center’s availability and of the services provided.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Over 125 people attended the first “Laws on Immigration and Citizenship Session” in November 2002 – ever since then at least 25 people per week are assisted regarding these issues.</li> <li>2. Over 60 phone calls were received from the article written by “The Arizona Daily Star” newspaper; 48 of these people were provided assistance by the Center and 4 volunteers were gained as a result.</li> <li>3. As a result of the “Univision” story, the Center has received over 75 calls and walk-in’s.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Informational Public Service Announcements are aired on Radio <i>Unica</i> 1210 AM.</li> <li>2. The <i>Arizona Daily Star</i> wrote a one-page article on Casa San Juan on March 3, 2003.</li> <li>3. <i>Univision</i> (Spanish television) did a story on the Center – March 2003.</li> </ol>

## **EVALUATION OF HOW NEEDS HAVE BEEN MET:**

### ***Difference this initiative has made in the lives of those whom it is intended to serve:***

Casa San Juan has served over 300 families and individuals from all over the Diocese of Tucson. The multiplicity of assistance varies from immediate emergency needs (food boxes, furniture, utilities, clothing, etc.), to on-site free medical mobile clinic, free immigration and citizenship consultations, advocacy for the undocumented, and evangelization/ pastoral services. Assistance provided by Casa San Juan has provided migrants with services that they would otherwise not be able to obtain, because of the lack of proof of positive identification, proof of residency, unawareness of resources available or unavailability of resources.

### ***Ways in which the project has contributed to increasing the welcoming capacity of the diocese:***

It has provided a permanent and vital site that migrants can trust for accurate and reliable information and services. The site is staffed with a coordinator and 45 volunteers available 46 hours a week on a regular schedule. Assistance is available by phone, on a walk-in basis or by home appointments after hours.

Having permanent coordinator has been a key component of the success of this initiative in that she provides for the ongoing development of the center through the recruitment of volunteers, researching resources available and creating awareness through local newspapers, television, radio and church bulletins. A permanent coordinator also provides for the continuity, reliability and sustainability of the project.

### ***Ways in which the diocese plans to build up the work in the future:***

From the onset, it was determined that once the center was completely organized, the diocese would expand the concept other needy vicariates where immigrant populations are high. The first replicate pastoral center was thus opened in December of 2003 in Yuma County, Summerton, Arizona. It provides the same services and functions except that this time they also added a soup kitchen. It is hoped that partnering with parishes throughout the diocese will provide a greater consciousness among Catholics as to the plight of migrants and promote an active solidarity with the center (to include donations of financial and human resources).

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### ***For further information about this project and best practices associated with it, please contact:***

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