



A MISSION FOR *Hope*

A Newsletter by Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington

VOLUME 12 | FALL 2025

9 Families in Sunnyside Become Homeowners Through “Sweat Equity”

Dalila and her two daughters were among the nine Sunnyside families celebrating home ownership on July 31st, 2025. They stood proudly in front of their brand-new home, scissors in hand, ready to cut the red ribbon, and step into the next chapter of their lives. Dalila, a single mom who works full time, was able to realize this dream through the Mutual Self-Help program.

Offered through Catholic Charities Housing Services, applicants in the Mutual Self-Help program know they'll need to do more than move boxes to get into their new home; they have to help build it. Groups of 6–10 families work side-by-side, investing their time and effort (often called “sweat equity”).

The ribbon cutting for these families was more than just an event. It was the culmination of months of hard work, dedication, and community spirit.

Tears, smiles, and cheers filled the air as each family turned the key to their own home, knowing that they had literally built it with their own hands.

Each household commits to at least 30 hours a week on the build. 15 hours completed by the future homeowner and 15 that can be covered by volunteers such as friends or family members over the age of 18. Among the new homeowners are a single mother raising her child and grandchild, a family of six with mom, dad, and four children, a family of five with mom, dad, and three children, and several single parents—most of them mothers—raising between one and four children. There is also a single father with two children.

“It was extremely challenging for me,” says Delilah.

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Homeowners

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“The construction for all the homes took quite a while, and I felt like I had two full time jobs.” Her nearly grown daughters helped with some of the time requirements, but it mostly fell to Dalila. “There were times when I felt so overwhelmed and tired and wanted to quit. But then I’d look at my daughters and realize that soon we would have our own home!”

By investing their time and effort, each family saves an estimated \$26,000–\$56,000 in labor costs. This not only lowers their monthly mortgage payments but also provides built-in equity the day they move in. The Catholic Charities construction team is there every step of the way, guiding and supporting the families through the building process.

“This group reflects the heart of our Mutual Self-Help Housing Program: hardworking families and individuals building a future together,” explains Jeannette Rodriguez, Residential Mortgage Loan Processor for Catholic Charities Housing Services. While each household varies in size and differs in story, they all share the determination to work hard and create a safe, stable place to call home.

“It was hard work, but doable,” concludes Dalila. “This program has shown me I’m so much stronger than I thought. My daughters are always telling me how proud they are of me. And nothing compares to coming home to my home at the end of the day.”



“a life-changing experience, and I think I get as much from it as the mamas I companion.”

These stories reminded everyone that PREPARES is more than a program; it is a promise of stability, dignity, and peace of mind. For a parent in crisis, something as simple as a clean diaper or a safe crib can mean the difference between despair and hope.

The event carried a theme of Southern hospitality, complete with tea, finger sandwiches, and sweet treats, creating a warm and welcoming space for conversation. But the real takeaway was the growing need. In the past four years, PREPARES has expanded by 65 percent and now serves

families in seven counties across Central Washington. That growth means more families are asking for help, which requires more baby essentials, more volunteers from all faith backgrounds, and more financial support.

Sip & See was about more than enjoying a pleasant afternoon; it was about building a network of care for parents and children in our community.

If you or someone you know would like to learn about becoming a PREPARES Companion or learn how you can support the program, please contact Syndee Cavazos at 509-946-4645, ext. 2010.



One Mission, Many Hands

When Community Answers the Call: Standing with Mothers in Need

On July 25th, community members in the Tri-Cities gathered at Layered Cake Artistry in Kennewick for an event called Sip & See. The purpose was simple but important: to learn about PREPARES, a program that supports parents during pregnancy and early childhood, and to invite the community to join in that mission.

PREPARES, which stands for Pregnancy and Parenting Support, is a statewide initiative created by the Catholic Bishops of Washington. It exists because parenting can be overwhelming, especially for families facing financial or social challenges.

The program offers two kinds of help: essential items like diapers, wipes, baby clothing, and safe sleep solutions, and something even more powerful: relationships. Volunteers known as Companions walk alongside parents, offering encouragement and practical support so that no family feels alone.

Sip & See gave about 40 guests a chance to hear real stories of impact. Christina, one of the Companions, shared how meaningful this work has been for her: “This has been such

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We serve all in the community, regardless of faith.

Help us make a lasting impact, serving you and your neighbors for over 75 years.

Donate to support essential resources from counseling services to housing and childcare to senior services, your gift provides hope to the most vulnerable in our community.

Volunteer across our services. How you help is up to you! Your skills and interests are matched to provide the best fit for you and those you help.

Join the Catholic Charities team, our most valuable resource is our people, and you might be the perfect match for one of our open positions.

Pray for our Mission.





We envision communities where people are treated with dignity and respect, their basic needs are met, and they are empowered to enhance the quality of their own lives.

Find hope at a Catholic Charities office near you.



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Yakima, WA 98909

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Childcare, housing, nutrition, and more:

Strengthening Families and Community at Our Annual Resource Fair

More than 200 people joined us at our West Yakima location for a day of connection, fun, and community care. On September 13th, guests explored over 20 partner booths and 13 Catholic Charities programs, discovering services for childcare, nutrition, housing, and more.

While adults connected with experts and resources that make a real difference, our team kept the day fun with a dedicated children's play area, games, and activities.

This event was made possible by the incredible support of local businesses and public sponsors who came together to support all within the Yakima valley. If you missed it, mark your calendar for next year. All are invited to connect, learn, and enjoy a day designed for the whole family.

