

ROCIO OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF YOLO-SOLANO HELPS OTHERS WITH RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

BY JOHN GONSALVES JR.



■ Rocio and Giovanni Moreno

IN THE FALL OF 2020, Catholic Charities of Yolo-Solano (CCYOSO) distributed over \$4.1 million in one-time cash assistance to low-income families residing in Solano County who had lost their jobs or had their wages reduced due to COVID-19. These dollars directly impacted 1,286 households within Solano County communities, helping prevent eviction due to COVID-19 and reducing the risk of families and individuals from becoming homeless.

The Rental Assistance Program, funded by the Federal CARES Act, was implemented by an amazing staff of 20, CCYOSO Board and countless volunteers who helped implement and execute this program within a span of three months.

One person, in particular, was not only one of the temporary case managers assisting with the program but also a client of the program herself. Rocio Moreno, a parishioner of St. Mary Parish in Vacaville, a single mother, lost multiple part-time jobs when the pandemic began. Rocio's

first contact with CCYOSO was seeking legal aid, for help with a child custody battle in which she feared losing her son, Giovanni. At the same time, she was struggling with homelessness and finding work. It was during this difficult time in her life that she looked within and decided that she needed to learn to place her trust in God and be aware of his signs.

Rocio has always tried to be involved in her parish. She is currently in her second year with HAHA (Hearts and Hands Apostolate), her first year with faith formation and as a lector.

In August 2020, she heard of the opportunity to be a volunteer for the Rental Assistance Program with CCYOSO. With little to no experience in case management, Rocio dove in headfirst and was willing to get out of her comfort zone to assist those suffering in her community. There were many long days and nights, very tough and emotional phone calls with individuals and families suffering from fear of losing their homes. Rocio went above and beyond to assist, always willing to help the team any way she could, and was instrumental in the success of the program.

When asked about the experience, Rocio replied: "When I think of CCYOSO I feel blessed! A smile comes to my face and an avalanche of emotions, thoughts and feelings overflows my mind! Some hurtful, some beautiful. But one prevails, the thought of God looking at me, at us, and saying come done my faithful servants, come to the joy of the Lord!" †

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