



Casa Romero Renewal Center

Retreat Center: 423 W. Bruce Street, Milwaukee, 53204

Offices: 2604 W. Orchard Street, Milwaukee, 53204

414-224-7564

www.casaromero.org

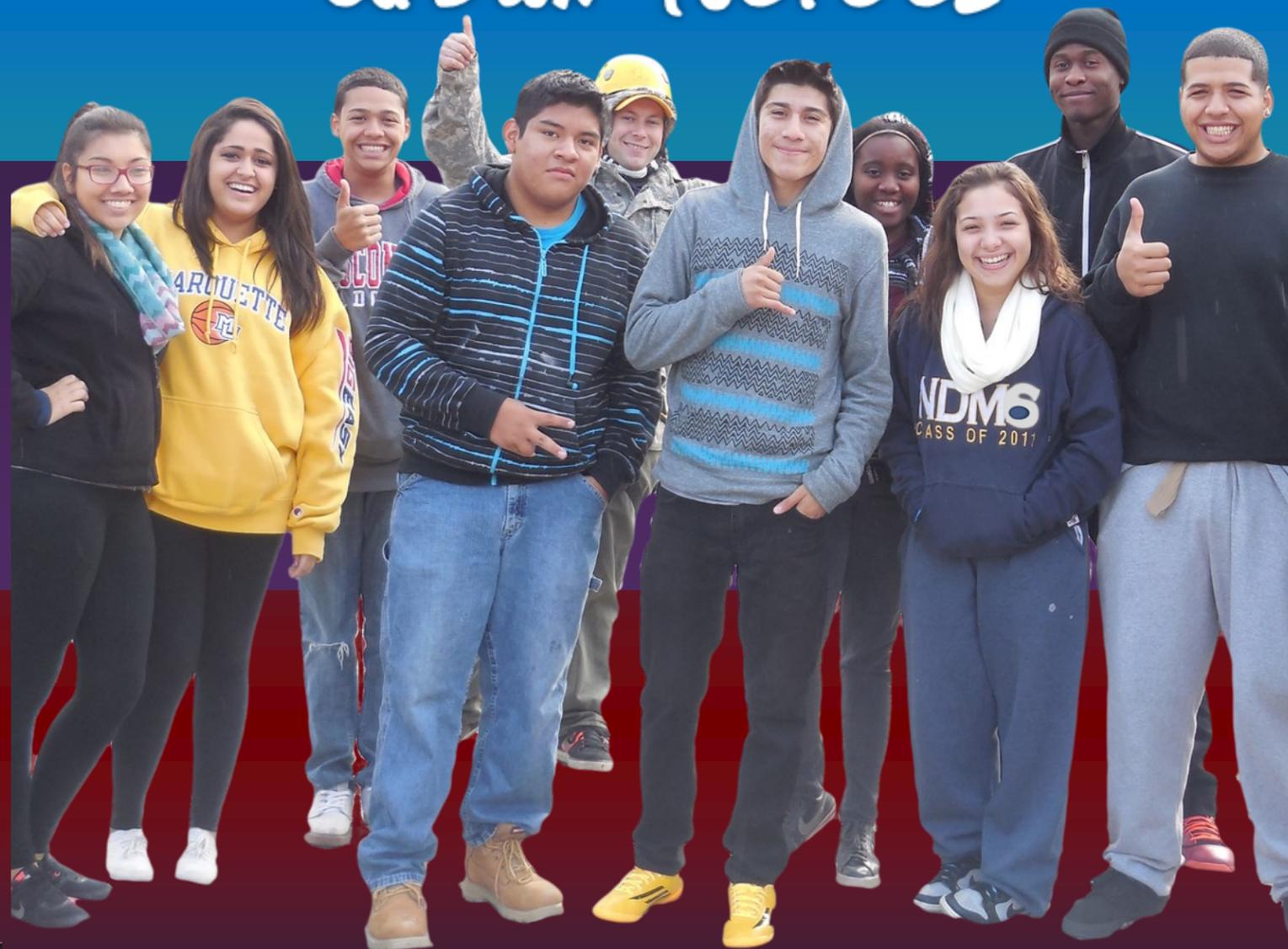


Casa Romero Renewal Center

Celebrating Our Urban Heroes

*“People say, what is the sense of our small effort?
They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time.
A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions.
Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that.
No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless.
There is too much work to be done!”*

~Dorothy Day



Annual Report 2015-16

Embrace the hero that lies within



With the vision of a peaceful, just and sustainable society
in which every person can achieve their divinely inspired potential,

Casa Romero Renewal Center is an

urban, multicultural and *bilingual*

spirituality center

serving Milwaukee and Southeastern Wisconsin.

Motivated by the integration of *faith* and *justice*,

our programs and retreats offer *formation* and *renewal*

to youth and adults, *strengthen* families and *build* community

in the Ignatian tradition.



“Soccer Camp really inspired me to think at a deeper level about the goals I have for my life. This experience encouraged me to be a more determined person and to never give up on what I’m trying to accomplish for my life.”

~Soccer Camp Participant

Living Our Mission

Our Staff in 2015-16

Executive Director:	David Shields, SJ
Associate Director:	DeAnn Cortés
Development Director:	Brenda Rodriguez
Family Program Director:	Annie Rivera
Youth Program Director:	Valencia Laws
Retreat Coordinator:	Carlos Beltrán
Urban Plunge Coordinator:	Sr. Jean Ellman, SSND
Lutheran Volunteer:	Amy Sowers
Moms Program Coordinator:	Carmen Ayala
Communications Manager:	Patty Link
Business & Bookkeeping:	María Lopez
Martha Ministry:	Guisela Dominguez

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2015-16**

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Fr. Scott Wallenfelsz, SDS
Finance Director, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi



Heroes Among Us Donor Support (over \$200)

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- Brian and Carol Brush
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- Christopher and Kathlyn Callen
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Thank You! ¡Muchas Gracias!

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- Christine Tomek
- Kathleen Tomek
- Phillip and Srey-Nang Tomek
- Raymond and Lyn Tysdal
- Richard and Barbara Wiederhold
- Anthony Ziebert



Celebrating Our Urban Heroes

Dear Friends of Casa Romero,

It is truly my good fortune to write this letter to you about Casa Romero's many activities and achievements this past year because I can unashamedly boast. I can boast of Casa Romero's excellent staff and their fierce loyalty and generosity to our mission; I can boast of the powerful programs for youth and families that Casa Romero provides and which more and more schools and parishes are asking for. But most of all, I can boast of the youth involved in our programming, both as participants and as retreat leaders.

The youth we serve are urban kids, "at risk kids," but also highly motivated young people. We call them **Urban Heroes**. Many face daily peril on the streets as they go to and from school, but they do not walk with eyes cast down. Rather, they are looking up ahead. Each is looking to contribute to society, not to be one of society's sad statistics. So they don't do the easy thing, they do the right thing. On some of Milwaukee's streets, just reaching for a dream can be a heroic act.

At present there are 63 alums from our middle school retreats involved in our IGNITE (Youth Leadership Development) Program and in the past year, our IGNITE youth have given more than 2,800 hours of service to the community. We are proud that their efforts touched a good part of the 2,917 individuals Casa Romero served last year. This number is a new high for the Center and represents the intense dedication of our staff to our programs. In fact, since Casa Romero opened 15 years ago, over 20,880 individuals have participated in our retreats and programs. But we don't boast just for ourselves. We boast for you, too. Only by the wonderful generosity of all of you--the foundations, sponsors, parishes and individuals mentioned in these pages--could the mission of Casa Romero be possible. We are most grateful and appreciative for what you make possible for us.

¡MUCHISIMAS GRACIAS!

David Shields SJ

David Shields, SJ
Executive Director



Milestones of 2015-16

- ◆ Community demand for our Middle School Anti-bullying retreats increased by 50% this past year!
- ◆ Our Program Staff attended together the 6 week *Unlearning Racism* Course at the YWCA and are actively working to integrate the acquired knowledge into our youth and young adult programming!
- ◆ Our *Breaking Down Bullying* retreat went international! This past June Fr. David, along with a team of 3 of our bilingual college facilitators, traveled to *La Escuela Bernardo A. Grousset*, a K-8 school located on the outskirts of Monterrey, Mexico, to offer our *Breaking Down Bullying* retreats for three 6th grade classrooms serving 90 students!
- ◆ Several of our youth leaders received nearly full-ride scholarships for college based on essays they wrote about the youth leadership experiences they had facilitating retreats for urban, multicultural classrooms through Casa Romero!

**In our 15 years of service to the community,
our ministry has touched the lives of over 20,880 individuals!**



Serving the Community

Since our opening in January of 2001, Casa Romero has dedicated itself to developing programs that empower participants to recognize their unique calling, fortify the family structure, and form youth and adult lay leaders of high moral and personal character, motivated to contribute their unrestricted potential through their contribution to the human family.

Program Goals are to:

- ◆ Offer a safe, structured, nurturing family environment
- ◆ Engage individuals in the recognition and understanding of their unique gifts
- ◆ Facilitate youth dreams, goals, and the creation of a life vision
- ◆ Provide youth and adults with leadership formation
- ◆ Help inform a positive worldview

WHAT MAKES CASA ROMERO PROGRAMMING UNIQUE?

- * *Bilingual, multicultural & urban sensitivity*
- * *Apprenticeship model of leadership training / youth leadership*
- * *Driving belief: you are gifted, whole, and complete --- not broken*

Oscar Romero Society

We would like to offer a special word of thanks to the donors who support our mission with monthly gifts through the Oscar Romero Society:

- ◆ Dee Bernhardt
- ◆ Carol Brush
- ◆ Patricia Crerar
- ◆ John & Margaret Ellgas
- ◆ Rachelle Kramer
- ◆ Anna Martes

Join our Oscar Romero Society today by calling us today at 414-224-7564!



We deeply appreciate all those who have supported our mission this past year!

Every effort has been made to provide an accurate list of our donors and supporters for the 2015-16 fiscal year. If you observe any discrepancies or corrections please call our Development Director at 414-224-7564 x 5462. Gracias!

Support from Foundations & Trusts

Anonymous Foundation (2)

Baxter International Foundation

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Catholic Community Foundation

Community Development Block Grant, City of Milwaukee

Doerr Charitable Trust

Erica P. John Fund

Forest County Potawatomi Foundation

Gordon Henke Family Foundation, Inc.

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Non-Profit Management Fund

San Damiano Mission Fund from the Hospital

Sisters of St. Francis

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Central Pacific Province Fund

Racine Dominican Mission Fund

WE Energies Foundation





We gratefully acknowledge the benefactors who generously supported our programming this year!

Parish & Religious Community Support

- Arrupe House Jesuit Community
- Jesuit Retreat House, Lake Elmo
- Holy Apostles Parish
- Lumen Christi Parish
- Old St. Mary Parish
- School Sisters of Notre Dame
- St. Charles Borromeo Parish
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
- St. Eugene Parish
- St. Francis Borgia Parish
- St. James Parish
- St. John Vianney Parish
- St. Monica Congregation
- St. Sebastian Parish
- St. Williams Parish
- St. Therese Parish
- STS. Clare and Francis ECC
- Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus



Business, School & NonProfit Support

- Carmen High School of Science & Technology
- Catholic Financial Life
- Chicago Equity Partners
- Cinespace Chicago Film Studio
- E.H.G. Enterprises, Inc.
- Fordham University
- Gembara Insurance Agency, Inc.
- George J. Bahramis & Co., PC
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of WI
- INTEC
- La Casa de Esperanza
- Landmark Credit Union
- Maldonado and Morgan
- Marquette University High School
- Notre Dame School of Milwaukee
- Parish Evaluation Project
- UMOS
- United Community Center
- Washington Federal Bank

Youth Leadership Development

Casa Romero's Youth Programs cultivate students' self-awareness, leadership capacity, faith life and commitment to service, with the aim of empowering Milwaukee's urban youth to be a powerful voice in their community as agents of hope and positive change.



High School Programs

The Ignite Program offers holistic leadership development for teens, empowering them to employ their gifts and talents in their relationships, service work and their dreams for their future.

Emmaus is a series of Life Mission Discernment Workshops for high school teens with the aim of guiding students to discern their call and identify the contributions they feel inspired to offer the human family.

Bridge-Builders Retreats inspire the creation of positive, culturally diverse communities through activities that build mutual respect and appreciation for the richness of a multi-cultural community.

Art & Activism retreats feature professional local artists and a team of youth leaders who guide high school participants to put an artistic voice to their messages of justice, peace and social change through the creation of group murals.

Soccer Camp is a one-week athletes camp which guides teens to use self-awareness, conscience, imagination, and willpower as agents in decision-making, both on and off the field.



Middle School Programs

The Knight's Quest retreat series for boys calls young men to realize their personal area of gift, explore the challenges that a "modern-day knight" faces, and construct a personal "coat of arms" to aid them in articulating the values that guide their lives.

The Discovery Retreat Series for girls inspires participants to discover their inner beauty, identify their strengths, and look beyond the external "wrappings," encouraging them to hold themselves and others with a sense of reverence and respect.

Breaking Down Bullying & Beyond the Label retreats assist students in understanding the roles we all play in bullying, empowering them to stand up for their beliefs and relate to others with empathy and compassion.

Art Club, offered in an after-school, retreat, or summer camp format, introduces students to art as a vehicle to explore, represent, and envision self-identity, culture, emotion and personal voice through contemporary, culturally responsive approaches to making art.

The MC in Me is a 2 week summer camp that uses musical elements of the Hip-Hop culture to empower participants to be positive agents of change, encouraging them to grow in self-awareness and practice aspects of critical judgment as they explore their outer and inner environment.

Partners & Funders

Funding partners this past year for our youth development programming include:

- ◆ Arrupe House Jesuit Community
- ◆ Catholic Community Foundation
- ◆ Catholic Campaign for Human Development
- ◆ City of Milwaukee Community Development Block Grant
- ◆ Forest County Potawatomi Foundation
- ◆ Erica P. John Fund
- ◆ Knights of Columbus - Pere Marquette Foundation
- ◆ Old St. Mary Parish
- ◆ San Damiano Mission Fund, Hospital Sisters of St. Francis
- ◆ School Sisters of Notre Dame-Central Pacific Province Fund
- ◆ St. Eugene Parish
- ◆ St. John Vianney Parish
- ◆ St. Francis Borgia Parish
- ◆ St. Monica Parish
- ◆ St. James Parish, Menomonee Falls
- ◆ St. Sebastian Parish
- ◆ St. Therese Parish
- ◆ WE Energies Foundation

Some of our program collaborators this past year included:

- ◆ Aurora Walker's Point Community Clinic
- ◆ Carmen High School of Science & Technology
- ◆ House in the Woods
- ◆ John XXIII Educational Center, Racine
- ◆ Lake Geneva Canopy Tours
- ◆ Lutheran Volunteer Corps
- ◆ Lynde & Harry Bradley Technology and Trade School
- ◆ Messmer Preparatory Catholic School
- ◆ Mequon Nature Preserve
- ◆ Milwaukee Soccer Development Group
- ◆ Nativity Jesuit Academy
- ◆ Notre Dame School of Milwaukee
- ◆ Prince of Peace Middle School
- ◆ St. Josaphat Parish School
- ◆ Too Much Movement Studios
- ◆ United Community Center
- ◆ UWM - Peck School of the Arts
- ◆ Walkers Point Center for the Arts



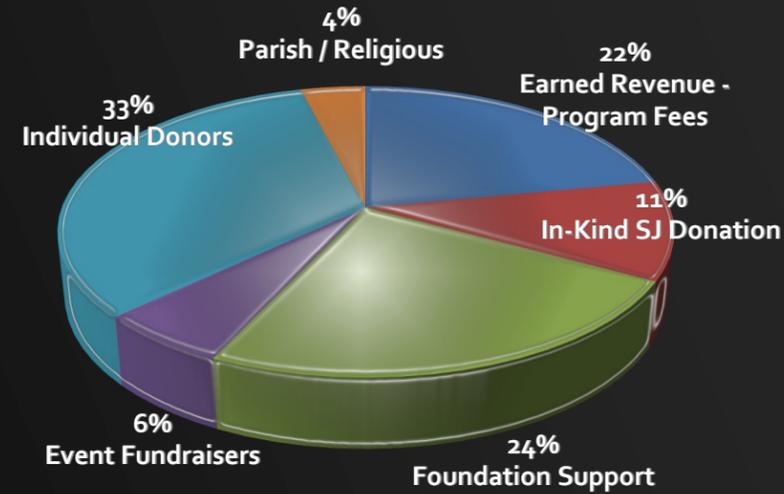
"IGNITE is something very important to me. It gives me a sense of happiness knowing that I am able to begin a thoughtful idea in someone's mind. The reason why I'm here is because I want to keep sharing my talents with my community."

Hero Highlights

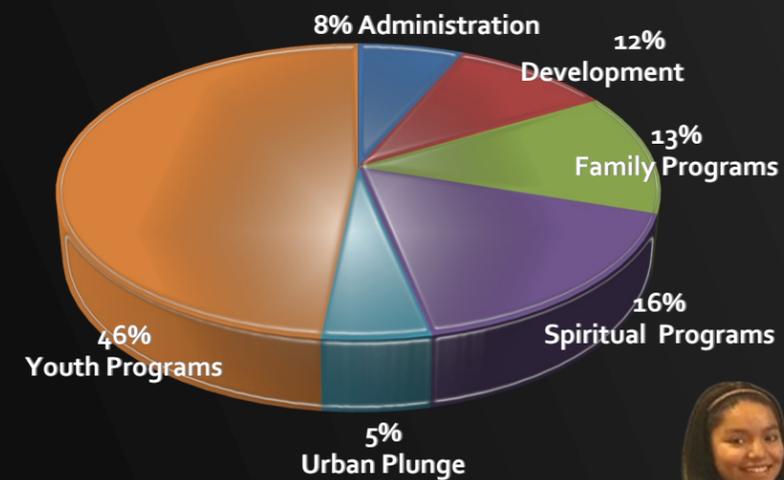
- ◆ 63 alumni from our middle school retreats returned last year to be trained to lead retreats for their younger counterparts in their community!
- ◆ Casa Romero provided these youth leaders 171 hours of leadership formation workshops/retreats
- ◆ These IGNITE youth leaders collectively offered over 2,800 hours of service to the community this year through 78 different service experiences (retreats, camps and workshops), delivering services to over 60 schools, parishes and community organizations
- ◆ IGNITE youth led over 1,000 younger students from their neighborhoods in Casa Romero retreats
- ◆ Over the past 3 years, 100% of our IGNITE youth leaders graduated from high school!

Funding the Mission

Revenue Sources
\$570,082



Use of Funds
\$583,082



Gifts that Planted the Seeds

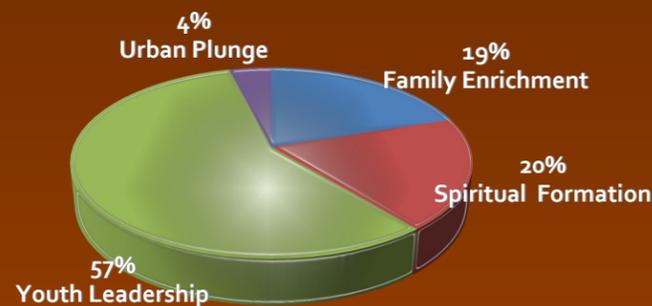
Gifts made in memory/honor of our special friends:

- Rev. Karl Acker
- Dee Bernhardt
- Tom Burns
- Casa Romero Staff
- DeAnn Cortés
- Michael Diliberti
- Gerald Kopps
- Lakes Family
- George and Betsy Lubeley
- William McGavict
- Robert L. McGlynn
- MUHS class of '61
- Rev. Dieudonné Ntakarutimana
- Bill Pauly, SJ
- Fr. David Shields, SJ
- Gary Stockhausen
- Bassy Virella
- Francis Wasielewski
- Delia Martinez Wellstein

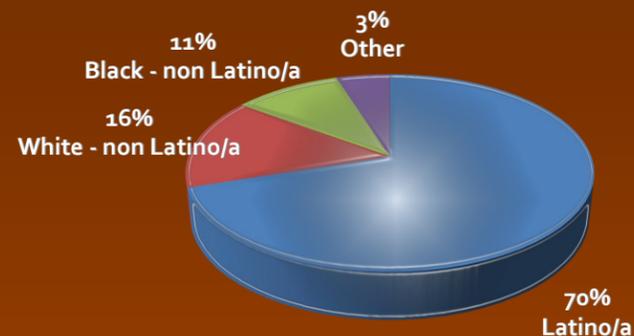


Who We Serve

Individuals Served by Program



Individuals Served by Ethnicity



2,917 Unduplicated individuals were served in 2015-2016

How Can You Help?

There are many ways you can be a part of supporting Casa Romero's mission in the Milwaukee community!

Please consider offering a:

Gift of your time by volunteering at Casa Romero. We are always looking for help with office work and mailings, building repairs, shopping and cooking meals!

Donation of items such as bedding, floor pillows, arts & craft supplies or a meal for a retreat group.

Monetary Gift in the form of cash, check or credit card.

Monthly donation by joining the Oscar Romero Society and signing up for monthly donations through electronic funds transfer.

Matching gift by inquiring if your company matches employee donations.

Planned Gift by arranging to donate to Casa Romero in the future through a bequest, charitable trust, or a gift of stock.

Prayer for our mission!

*Our Development Director is happy to assist you in making your contribution. Please call her at 414-224-7564 or send an email to: brodriguez@casaromero.org.

With Your Support We Can Make It Happen!



Family Enrichment

Casa Romero's Bilingual Family Retreats highlight the abundance of gifts that participants already possess. The Center's emphasis on mutuality offers participants the safe space to share, to understand that they are valuable, to learn from one another, and to share their wisdom and experiences.

La Quinceañera: Dreaming a Future of Hope provides a sacred environment for teen girls and their mothers/fathers to reflect, to deepen their relationship, and to strengthen their bond by focusing on the inter-generational (and often multi-cultural) sharing of memories, wisdom, hopes and dreams for the young woman's future.

Canasta Llena is a multi-session family program that nurtures the bond between parents and their teenage children through a day of mutual sharing and exploration of family strengths and values, culminating with each family creating a common goal they would like to work on for the betterment of the family.

¡Abundancia! Days of Reflection are one-day, bilingual retreats for Latina moms and couples that explore the blessings of living a life of purpose, abundant love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and faithfulness.

The Spiritual Journey of Motherhood is a two month bilingual program that provides immigrant and 2nd generation moms the opportunity to reclaim their areas of giftedness, and discover new ways to integrate these gifts into the lives of their families and communities as they embrace the sacred vocation of motherhood.

Hero Highlights

- Through Casa Romero's Family Retreats, 168 Latino Families increased their bonds of trust as they explored and enhanced their faith and cultural values
- Over 200 individuals from 19 different parishes throughout the Archdiocese were served by our Quinceañera Retreats
- 95% of mom-daughter participants reported that their retreat experience helped them grow their sense of trust and respect for one another
- Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, foundress of the SSNDs, talked about the role women play in the transformation of society through their role as mothers. Through our Spiritual Journey of Motherhood Program Casa Romero empowered over 50 mothers to be that transforming presence in the world!



Partners & Funders

Funding partners this past year for our family enrichment programming include:

- ♦ The Racine Dominican Mission Fund
- ♦ John Paul II Parish
- ♦ Holy Apostles Parish
- ♦ Lumen Christi Parish
- ♦ St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
- ♦ St. Patrick Parish, Racine

Program collaborators this past year included:

- ♦ Carmen High School of Science & Technology
- ♦ Extraordinary Life Ministry
- ♦ John Paul II Parishes
- ♦ Prince of Peace Parish
- ♦ St. Anthony Parish
- ♦ St. Bernard Parish, Watertown
- ♦ St. Catherine Parish
- ♦ St. Clement Parish, Sheboygan
- ♦ St. Florian Parish
- ♦ St. Gregory the Great Parish
- ♦ St. Henry Parish, Watertown
- ♦ St. Hyacinth Parish
- ♦ St. Lawrence Parish
- ♦ St. Mary Parish, Kenosha
- ♦ St. Michael Parish
- ♦ St. Patrick Parish, Milwaukee
- ♦ St. Patrick, Racine
- ♦ St. Patrick Parish, Whitewater
- ♦ St. Roman Parish
- ♦ St. Vincent de Paul Parish





Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual Formation programming at Casa Romero invites people to heal, to be grateful for life, and to deepen their faith. Enriched with Ignatian Spirituality, these programs guide participants to see God in everything, and have a strong component of community built through spiritual mentorship, equipping people to be faithful in their spiritual walk, and becoming true companions to others as they journey through life.

The Spiritual Mentoring Program is a two-year program seeking to enhance participants' spiritual journeys as they explore their inner divine nature and the sacred purpose to which they are called. Through reflection and thoughtful examination of theology, scripture, psychology and other aspects related to mentoring, this program incites the spiritual growth of participants as well as augmenting their capacity to companion others in their faith journeys.

Acompañantes Espirituales is an ongoing program that offers monthly training and spiritual enrichment workshops for the ongoing formation of spiritual mentors, who in turn help facilitate other Spanish-language adult retreats at Casa Romero and throughout the Archdiocese.

Amar y Servir is a six week Lenten "retreat in daily life" experience, facilitated by our *Acompañantes Leaders*, which gives the participant a taste of Ignatian Spirituality through personal reflection and small group sharing.

Ponerse a Caminar is a Spanish-language retreat series also facilitated by Casa Romero's *Acompañantes* retreat leaders, designed to deepen participants' prayer life and introduce them to concepts of Ignatian Spirituality.

Spanish-Language Preached Retreat is a retreat co-sponsored by Casa Romero and the Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, following the major themes of Ignatian Spirituality and emphasizing silence and contemplation as a means to adopt a prayerful attitude and practice.



Partners & Funders

Programming & Funding partners this past year for adult spiritual formation include:

- ◆ The Koch Foundation
- ◆ The Racine Dominican Mission Fund
- ◆ St. Charles Borromeo Parish
- ◆ St. Francis Borgia Parish
- ◆ Ss. Clare and Francis EEC
- ◆ Arrupe House Jesuit Community
- ◆ Jesuit Retreat House, Lake Elmo
- ◆ Jesuit Retreat Center, Oshkosh



Hero Highlights

- 96% of participants in our Spiritual Enrichment programming felt their retreat experience helped them to grow in faith and in their understanding of Ignatian Spirituality.
- Our Spanish-language preached retreat at the Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh attracted a 25% growth in attendance - filling the retreat house to its capacity!
- 100% of the *Acompañantes* lay leaders who participated in spiritual companion training programming reported that the formation they received helped them develop their capacity to walk with others in their faith journeys.

Social Justice Urban Plunge

Casa Romero's Urban Plunge Program is a cultural immersion retreat that encourages participants to better understand the social sins that plague many urban communities such as poverty, homelessness, violence, environmental and immigration injustice. The Plunge can range from a day long up to a week long experience, blending together direct service experiences, critical analysis and reflection around social justice issues through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching, personal reflection, and eye-opening witnesses from people living within the harsh realities of injustice, racism and inequality.

Partners

Program collaborators for Urban Plunge include:

- All Peoples Church
- All Saints Catholic Church
- Boudicca House
- Carmen HS of Science & Technology
- Casa Maria Catholic Worker House
- Congregation of the Great Spirit
- Core El Centro
- Cross Lutheran Food Pantry
- Feeding America
- Guest House
- Hope House
- House of Peace
- Hunger Task Force
- La Causa
- Marquette High School – YES Group
- Milwaukee Christian Center Food Pantry
- Milwaukee Rescue Mission
- Open Door Café
- Repairers of the Breach
- St. Ann's Center
- St. Ben's Meal Program
- St. Francis Catholic Church
- St. Patrick Parish
- Straub Immigration Law Firm
- The Gathering
- True Skool
- UMOS
- United Community Center
- Urban Ecology Center
- Vets Place Central
- Voces de la Frontera



"My Plunge experience took me out of my comfort zone—it was powerful & humbling... it helped me to really see the dignity that lies within each person."



Hero Highlights

- ◆ 2015-16 Urban Plunge participants offered more than 1,270 service hours throughout the Milwaukee community at 28 different non-profits.
- ◆ From a plethora of diverse experiences ranging from one-on-one tutoring of immigrants for their citizenship test, to sharing a meal with homeless Vets, to in-depth tours of facilities that are on the front lines of addressing hunger and homelessness in our city, to working in a central city community garden, Urban Plunge participants were deeply impacted by their experiences and 97% reported gaining a greater appreciation for how they can integrate their faith with justice, ultimately inspiring them to a commitment to engage in justice work in their own communities.
- ◆ In the past four years the Urban Plunge Program has raised the social consciousness and inspired servant leadership in over 600 individuals from parishes, schools and universities from all over the U.S.!