

Senior residence at St. Peter the Apostle celebrates anniversary

RIVER EDGE—The Senior Residence at St. Peter the Apostle recently marked its fifth year with a lunch for its residents and prayer of thanks by Tulio (last name withheld), a resident of the community.

"I am so very grateful to be here, with my friends and family nearby. On cold winter days like this, I am particularly thankful not to be alone in my apartment. I

was really lonely then and now I have lots of friends and great food; I have gained 10 pounds since I moved in. The family environment enhances positive and community spirits," said Tulio, who has resided at the residence since it opened.

The Senior Residence is a community of 23 seniors and is housed in a former convent on the grounds of St. Peter the Apostle



Submitted photos

Parish. Meals are shared together by residents in the sunlit dining room, creating a home-like environment. The convent's chapel now serves as a library and sitting room and is a favorite gathering place for residents.

"The Senior Residence is unlike many other senior communities," said Community Manager Gina Principato, who helped plan and open the facility. "We are a small family—we argue, we laugh, but, most importantly, we love. The limited size enables us to know our residents on a person-

al level. We know who likes broccoli and who does not. We care for them as if they were our own."

In addition to three home-cooked meals a day, The Senior Residence provides weekly housekeeping, recreation, assistance with medication and transportation coordination. "We are not a medical facility," Principato explained. "We support our residents so they may remain independent for as long as possible."

For more information, call 201-225-0707 or visit www.stpetersresidence.org.

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Parish ministry helps refugees settle in

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where there is a large Arabic-speaking population. "He just wasn't comfortable here," Mulroe explained. The volunteers raised money for Mooni to pay rent for a few months in his new home.

Nancy Burke, the ministry's fundraising chair, was careful not to get into the more personal circumstances of the refugees' journeys. "I learn that belonging to a community when they get here is extremely important. Learning English is also extremely important," she explained. She learned that every refugee is an individual and has his/her own hopes and dreams, and they're not all going to take the same path. We need to help them communicate what they want to do and help them to take the steps toward their dreams."

Abbas flourished. Within his first few weeks in America, he landed a job at a restaurant in Montclair. Mulroe is like a son or a nephew to him," Mulroe explained. "He's just the most loving, optimistic person; it's really a blessing."

Abbas explained that he fled Nicaragua during his final semester at university. "They wanted me to join up for the army," he said. He traveled to Thailand with a friend and stayed there illegally. While in Thailand, he applied for asylum

with the United Nations. The process lasted five years before Catholic Charities took his case. He credits the organization and volunteers like Mulroe with helping him settle in the United States.

"Cathy is like an angel. Her family is so lovely and her house was so warm and welcoming. It is because of the volunteers that I adjusted so well," Abbas said. "In the past, I was once one of those people at the border. I am feeling what they are feeling right now. I have been through the same thing."

He currently attends Seton Hall University where he hopes to be a social worker. "I want to help others like people have helped me," he stated.

Father Benny Prado, pastor of St. Teresa of Calcutta, relates to the refugees' struggles. Originally from Nicaragua, he immigrated to the United States more than 30 years ago. "I left Nicaragua because there was a dangerous political situation there," he explained. The Sandinista regime was in power and, as a teenager, he would have been forced to join the army. "I knew people in the neighborhood who died because they were told to fight without any training." At 15 years old, he traveled to the Bronx with an older cousin. He spoke no English and lived with his mother's relatives. Six months later, his father arrived in America followed a year later by his mother and sister.

"With the experiences that I've had and from where I came from, I understand the refugees' desperation," Father Prado said. "I am a big believer in social justice and I share Cardinal Tobin's vision. I am so grateful for the diverse committee here at St. Teresa and for the ministry volunteers who help the refugees in need."

The change in government policy caused the refugee resettlement services at Catholic Charities to shut down in December 2018, but despite that, the work to help refugees continues. Catholic Charities has contracts with the International Rescue Committee in Elizabeth, N.J., and continues to help with ESL and skills training.

The refugee resettlement ministry at St. Teresa currently aids a family who arrived from El Salvador. Volunteers recently hosted a pancake breakfast fundraiser to



Submitted photo

Abbas received the Spirit of the Heart award at the Catholic Charities gala from, left to right, John Westervelt, CEO Catholic Charities; Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.; and Msgr. Robert Fuhrman, Catholic Charities board of trustees chairman.

plan their next steps. The group's GoFundMe campaign continues to receive donations from members of the community who support their efforts. The group would like to restore the Our Lady of Mount Carmel rectory in Montclair to house more refugees. "A few families could stay in that rectory—about four or five," Mulroe noted.

Abbas regularly keeps in contact with Mulroe. He has assimilated so well to being in America that he received the Spirit of the Heart award at the Catholic Charities gala last May. The volunteers from St. Teresa

of Calcutta Parish were presented with a Community Partner Service award for "deciding, as Christians, to take a stand supporting refugees."

In his acceptance speech, Abbas referred to Mulroe and fellow volunteers as his "American moms." He credited the refugee resettlement ministry and Catholic Charities for his success and happiness. "I am grateful for everyone who supported me, even with just a smile or by saying, 'welcome to the United States,'" Abbas said in his speech. "From the bottom of my heart, God bless you all and God bless America."



Ma Bامbrick-Santoyo, left, Catherine Mulroe from St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish at the Catholic Charities gala held last

Official Appointments

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., has announced the following appointments:



ARCHDIOCESAN AGENCY MINISTRY

Reverend Monsignor Renato Grasselli, rector of Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Kearny, has been appointed to another three-year term as rector, ending July 1, 2021.

Madonna Parish in Fort Lee, has been appointed administrator of St. John the Baptist Parish in Jersey City, effective July 1, 2019.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

Reverend Brian O. Gonzalez, parochial vicar of St. Aloysius Parish in Newark, has been appointed parochial vicar of St. Joseph and St. Michael Parish in Union City, effective Feb. 1, 2019.

RELEASED

Reverend Ivan Sant, released to the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, has had his release extended for three years, ending Sept. 1, 2021.

PASTOR

Reverend Esterminio Chica, administrator of Christ the King Parish and Our Lady of Sorrows in Jersey City, has been appointed pastor at those parishes, effective immediately.

ADMINISTRATOR

Reverend John Berchmans Antony, parochial vicar of