Catholic Migration Services is pleased to provide this report on our activities for the year ending March 31, 2018, which continued to be a very challenging period for immigrants in our Brooklyn and Queens communities. For over 47 years, our mission has been to welcome the stranger in our midst, and we have been privileged to collaborate with many others to accomplish this mission.

As you will see from the report that follows, our dedicated staff, with help from many volunteers, provided direct legal assistance to more than 3,100 Brooklyn and Queens residents on immigration, housing and employment matters. Catholic Migration Services also educated more than 3,600 immigrants on changing U.S. immigration policies. In addition, we helped more than 1,200 tenants come together to make their voices heard in the struggle to preserve affordable housing.

We are grateful for the support of our many donors; both those who give their financial support and those who give their time. Your support throughout the year helps us to fulfill our mission of welcoming and empowering immigrants throughout Brooklyn and Queens.

Sincerely,

Very Reverend Patrick J. Keating, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer
OVERVIEW OF OUR LEGAL SERVICES

Catholic Migration Services provided free legal advice and representation on immigration matters to more than 2,200 New Yorkers in this past year. Our team tackled a wide array of matters to help immigrants gain lawful status, adjust their status and reunite with family members. Our work included:

> **CITIZENSHIP**
  
  We helped more than 600 lawful permanent residents apply to become U.S. citizens.

> **DACA**
  
  We helped 202 childhood arrivals obtain or renew DACA status. DACA status provides these children and young adults with some assurance that they will not be deported, and allows them to obtain work authorization.

> **FAMILY REUNIFICATION**
  
  We helped 65 United States citizens and permanent residents obtain immigration status for their family members and reunite in the United States.

> **REMOVAL DEFENSE**
  
  Our attorneys represented hundreds of individuals facing removal in Immigration Court ensuring that all clients are afforded due process under the law and quality legal representation.

> **ASYLUM**
  
  We helped 31 immigrants obtain asylum or adjust their status based on asylee or refugee status.

> **PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

  Catholic Migration Services obtained protections under our immigration laws for dozens of abused and neglected children, victims of trafficking and other serious crimes, and survivors of domestic violence.

> **COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS**

  Our lawyers gave community presentations to more than 3,600 Brooklyn and Queens residents. These presentations informed immigrants about changes in federal immigration policy, and ways to avoid frauds and scams that target vulnerable immigrants.

90%

We obtained a favorable result for more than 90% of the clients we accepted for full representation.
Real Stories
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Juan, a teenager who grew up in rural El Salvador, suffered harassment and persecution for being gay. He changed schools many times to avoid the harassment, but at his last school was threatened by a gang which told him to stop attending school because they didn’t want “fags” there. When Juan continued to go to school, the gang members beat him severely and delivered death threats to Juan and his grandmother. Because the authorities were unresponsive, Juan fled El Salvador and sought asylum in the U.S. Catholic Migration Services’ attorneys advocated for Juan through a two year asylum process, and ultimately succeeded in obtaining asylum for him.

Although the stories are real, the names have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.

Members of the Azam family sought help from Catholic Migration Services because they were persecuted in Bangladesh for their Catholic faith. The persecution became life-threatening when a well-connected Muslim man wanted to marry the Azam family’s 12 year old daughter. He tried to kidnap her several times and confronted her parents stating that he intended to take their daughter, convert her to Islam, and marry her. When the Azam family refused, he told them he would not take no as an answer and had the family’s home attacked by a mob. When that didn’t work, he began calling incessantly, threatened to throw acid on the mother and kill the family’s other two children, and demanded large sums of money. The mother and children left for the U.S. after they filed futile police reports. The father remained in Bangladesh, where he was subjected to beatings, kidnapping, mob attacks, and other persecution before finally fleeing to the U.S. Catholic Migration Services represented the Azam family and helped them obtain grants of asylum so that they can lawfully remain here.
Tenant Representation and Advocacy

OVERVIEW OF OUR LEGAL WORK

Our Tenant Advocacy Program advises and represents hundreds of tenants each year on a wide range of housing-related matters. Our work, primarily in Queens, preserves the limited supply of decent, affordable housing. We do so by preventing evictions, ensuring tenants are not overcharged, forcing landlords to provide repairs and essential services, and helping seniors and the disabled obtain exemptions from rent increases. We also organize tenants so that they can use their collective power to win concessions from landlords and improve housing policies on a local and state level. Some highlights of our work this year include:

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

Carmen, a senior from the Dominican Republic, came to Catholic Migration Services in April 2017, requesting help to succeed to the rent stabilized tenancy of her father, who had recently passed away. By gathering documents to support her succession claim and advocating on her behalf, we convinced the landlord, without litigation, to provide Carmen with a renewal lease in her own name, with a rent increase limited to the percentage allowed for rent stabilized renewal leases. In addition, we were able to convince the New York City Department of Finance to approve her claim to succeed to her father’s Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption, thereby having her rent frozen at less than half of the maximum legal rent for the apartment. Thanks to the work of the staff at Catholic Migration Services, Carmen was able to keep her long-time home at a rent that she will be able to afford long into the future.

Jésus came to Catholic Migration Services in July 2016, seeking help to obtain a lease from his landlord after his mother, the tenant of record of their rent stabilized apartment, passed away. Jésus lived in that apartment with his mother and sister for more than 30 years. Although the landlord was willing to recognize his right to succeed to her tenancy, it sought to increase the rent by more than $400 per month, claiming that Jésus was his family’s second successor (his mother being the first) and that the law permitted it to charge the same increase it would have been able to charge a new tenant. After Jésus refused to sign the lease offered by the landlord, the landlord commenced a case to evict him and his sister from the apartment. After substantial motion practice, the court agreed with our argument that under the rent stabilization law, Jésus was the first successor, not the second, and issued an order dismissing the case and directing the landlord to provide Jésus with a rent stabilized renewal lease, without a vacancy increase.
Tenant Organizers Achieve Big Wins

Our tenant organizers, in partnership with a dedicated group of tenant leaders from Queens and Brooklyn communities, achieved some important results this year that will benefit tenants citywide.

Advocating for Reasonable Rents

In June 2017, Catholic Migration Services and its partner organizations organized 150 Queens tenants to attend, and 50 to testify at, a hearing of the Rent Guidelines Board, the body that determines the maximum amount that landlords can raise rents in rent regulated housing. Thanks to these efforts, the Board limited rent increases on one year leases to only 1.25%, among the lowest increases in the Board’s history.

Right to Counsel for Tenants Facing Eviction

Our tenant organizers have been educating thousands of tenants about their right to free representation in housing court if they are sued for eviction. That right was won in August 2017 after three years of advocacy by Catholic Migration Services and other organizations in the Right to Counsel Coalition. In March 2018, the National Low Income Housing Coalition awarded Catholic Migration Services and its coalition partners with the Trailblazer Award in recognition of our work to have New York City become the first city in the country to have Right to Counsel legislation enacted.

Representing Immigrant Workers

OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK

Each day millions of low-wage and immigrant workers struggle to make ends meet. Their struggle is made immeasurably more difficult when these workers perform the work that they have been hired to do, but their employers refuse to pay them in full, either by withholding wages for some or all of the hours worked, failing to pay the minimum wage, or refusing to pay overtime premiums when employees’ hours exceed 40 in a week. The goal of our Workers’ Rights Program (WRP) is to strengthen the enforcement of workers’ rights through affirmative litigation, policy reform, individual representation and community education.

IN THE PAST YEAR, WRP’S ACCOMPLISHMENT INCLUDES:

- Provided legal advice to hundreds of individuals who called our free bilingual hotline;
- Recovered more than $200,000 in unpaid wages for low-wage and immigrant workers;
- Successfully advocated to the Kings County District Attorney to pursue criminal charges against an scofflaw employer who abused dozens of construction workers; and
- Presented know-your-rights trainings at churches and community centers.
EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

**Hector**, an immigrant from Ecuador, worked as a tailor for over fifteen years. Although Hector typically worked over fifty hours per week, he never received correct overtime pay. Throughout his employment, his employer would often “forget” to pay him or would give him checks with insufficient funds. When Hector asked that his wages be paid on time, his employer fired him. Catholic Migration Services filed a claim on Hector’s behalf with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL). At a mediation at NYSDOL, our advocacy led to a $20,000 settlement for Hector.

**Atif** sought help from Catholic Migration Services after being fired from a security job at a theater, a job he held for fifteen years. Atif believed that his termination was related to his age and religious affiliation. He was often passed over for promotions although he had a spotless record and was one of the most experienced workers on staff. He was abruptly fired from his job after returning from his annual vacation visiting family in Bangladesh. Catholic Migration Services reached out to the theater, and after prolonged negotiations, the theater offered Atif his job back together with a significant amount of money to compensate him for his lost wages. Atif was thrilled to be able to return to work.

Catholic Migration Services is committed to collaborating with and serving the diverse ethnic ministries of our community through pastoral services for immigrants. The ethnic ministries preserve the cultural traditions and heritage of our people by ensuring ongoing fellowship and spiritual growth in the life of the Church.

Our annual **Shining Star Award** acknowledges honorees who, through their efforts in their communities, embody our mission of “Welcoming the Stranger Among Us.”
Financial Overview

Revenue (Calendar Year 2017)

- Grants: $2,227,540
- Brooklyn Diocese: $700,000
- Events & Contributions: $105,271
- In-Kind Contributions: $368,576
- Other: $185,358

TOTAL REVENUE: $3,586,745

Operating Expenses (Calendar Year 2017)

- Salaries and Benefits: $2,145,466
- Other: $1,140,256

TOTAL EXPENSES: $3,285,722

Our Team

Sr. Joan Anzalone, Immigration Counselor
Victoria Arrao, Administrative Assistant
Magdalena Barbosa, Managing Attorney, Workers’ Rights
Xiomara Bustamante, Immigration Counselor
Marisol Canales, Lead Immigration Counselor
Amy Collado, Tenant Organizer
David Colodny, Director of Legal Services
Sandra Cordoba, Law Graduate
Alice Davis, Senior Staff Attorney
Stephani Espinal, Housing Paralegal
Erin Fitzgerald, Operations Coordinator
Alexandra Goncalves-Peña, Managing Attorney, Immigration
Michael Holland, Volunteer, Ignatian Volunteer Corps
Christopher Holtz, Supervising Attorney
Very Rev. Patrick J. Keating, Chief Executive Officer
Mercy Kershner, Mercy Volunteer Corps
Ellen LaCarrubba, Executive Secretary
Andrew Lehrer, Managing Attorney, Tenant Advocacy
José León, Supervising Attorney
Maria Londano, Custodian
Lorena Lopez, Tenant Organizer
Samantha Lyons, Staff Attorney
Marian Magar, Senior Staff Attorney
Jose Giovanny Miranda, Law Graduate
Chloe Moore, Naturalization Coordinator
Nanette Morales, Receptionist
Aida Ocasio, Receptionist
Carlos Ortiz, Tenant Organizer
Nancy Pardo, Executive Assistant
Thomas Power, Staff Attorney
Emma Qualy-Pearson, Jesuit Volunteer Corps
Ellen Ryan, Development Officer
Rebecca Rybaltowski, Outreach Coordinator
Jeanne Sanon, Immigration Counselor
Aviva Schaffer, Law Graduate
Amandeep Singh, Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow
Nicole Skaluba, Mercy Volunteer Corps
Nicolé Steward, Senior Staff Attorney
Natasha B. Venegas Abarca, External Relations Associate
Joseph Weiman, Immigration Paralegal
Caitlin Wright, Immigration Counselor

List current as of December 31, 2018