



Sister José
Women's Center
Sisters Helping Sisters

FALL 2022



"Sister José's is here to help you!"

We were able to sit down with one of our guests, Eloise, recently and she shared her story with us.

Eloise moved from California to Tucson last April to live with her daughter. Unfortunately, her new living arrangement didn't work out. Luckily, a friend told her about our center.

She was able to leave her volatile situation and became a Sister José overnight guest 11 weeks ago. At Sister José's, she was able to sign up for social security, start seeing a doctor through our partnership with El Rio, and obtain a housing voucher. With her voucher, she has \$915 for rent and utilities. Eloise has applied to some apartments and is waiting to hear back.

LOVE
IS THE
ANSWER

Eloise found a part-time job to help make ends meet. Being at Sister José's has lowered her stress level, which is important because she's in recovery. Her goal is to keep herself in a safe environment.

"Sister José's saved my life."

Who can resist a fuzzy face?

Not our guests! We're a proud pet-friendly center. "The [Human-Animal Bond Research Institute](#) has found that relationships with pets improve physical and emotional health, encourage positive social development, reduce loneliness, and provide a sense of security."



Read why this is so important to the women we serve:

<https://bit.ly/3pHO5cD>

How you can give back

Here is an updated list of items that are needed by our guests:



- New underwear
- Tennis shoes (new or gently used)
- Backpacks
- Bras and sports bras of all sizes (new or gently used)
- Socks, ankle & long
- Bath tissue
- Deodorant
- Travel sized items: hand sanitizer, body wash, shampoo, conditioner, tissues, and sunscreen
- Hair ties, brushes, and combs
- Pet food and treats
- Blankets
- Dinner sponsor

Everyone has a different pathway to homelessness.

A few words from our founder, Jean Fedigan

It's been 13 years since Sister José's was founded, and I'm optimistic and thankful. We are seeing more women than ever before, and more women with significant challenges, including a more elderly population. Right now, our oldest guest is 80 years of age. Some of these women have never been on the street and finding ways to help them is paramount. One reason for increased homelessness is rental price increases that women on a fixed income cannot pay. Along with age also comes increased health needs. We are also seeing more illicit drugs and more women who are victims of violence.

I was recently visited by KGUN 9 and shared that the answer to homelessness is housing, and support to help women navigate the challenges of finding permanent, low-income housing. Working together as a community, we must develop a community-wide plan.



be a good steward of the environment. Through grants and donor gifts, we purchased a solar array that has tremendously decreased our electric bill while providing shade for our guests. We are working to do our part to create a sustainable environment.

At Sister José's we:

- Recycle
- Uses rain barrels, drought-resistant plants, and clotheslines
- If we receive something we can't use, we pay it forward to community partners



The other area of Sister José's that I am very proud of is continuing to

Our next goal is to assess our water consumption with support from the city. There is always room to improve, and we believe in being good stewards of our natural resources.

To sustain our services, we need your continued support. We appreciate and welcome volunteers, monetary and in-kind gifts. Thank you for caring.

[Make your gift today!](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: Jean is the national recipient of [Catholic Extension's](#) 2022-2023 Lumen Christi award that celebrates those who positively impact others through actions and leadership.

We couldn't be prouder!

People On the Move



Brenda Druke is our new Volunteer & Administrative Coordinator. She was the Development Associate.

"Volunteers mean everything to the center and are vital to its existence. I admire and love our current volunteers, and I can't wait to meet new compassionate people!"

Since 2017, **Penny Buckley** was the Program Director. Now she's Director of Grants & Program Evaluation.

"I'm a research geek, so I'm excited to stay up-to-date on new research studies and best practices. Plus, I get to show the impact of what we do and increase awareness."

Laura Lynn, formerly Director of Volunteer & Guest Services,

is now Program Director.

"I'm most excited about learning how our organization can help meet more needs, improve quality of life, and reduce unnecessary suffering for women experiencing homelessness."

The Cooling Center is Open!

This past May, we returned to pre-pandemic hours, and the Cooling Center opened for women living on the streets. They come to Sister José's for a cool, safe space six days a week until 4 pm. Guests can nap in an air-conditioned room and enjoy snacks, cold drinks, and relaxing activities. Some guests choose to stay outside in the shade under the solar panels.

When they leave at 4 pm, they can take a to-go dinner and more cold drinks. This might be the only time our guests eat or sleep each day; it's life-saving.

When the program started, we offered more activities and fewer sleeping mats. What Jessy has learned is that our guests want just the opposite.

Why do we need more mats?

"Women can't safely sleep on the streets because they have to be on alert to protect themselves. They stay up all night, navigate the



potential of being assaulted or having their personal items stolen, and try to sleep during the day."

How can you help?

"We need volunteers to help things run smoother for all times of the day. One specific item that we need is assistance setting up phones and emails for our guests."

More good news:

Jessy's been promoted to a Case Navigator at Sister José's! Let us know if you're interested in working with Jessy and our guests.

Serving Up the Numbers

70 

In the past year, **70 guests had improved living circumstances from our “Moving Forward” program.** Our guests worked with case navigators and identified personal goals together. They have shown a 70% success rate with achieving their goals.

60% 

This fiscal year, **we expect more than 60% of all funds raised to come from individual donors, just like you.** Your support literally keeps our safe spaces open.

35% 

35% of our guests are aged 55 or older. We are now seeing sicker, older guests due mainly to significant rent increases.

6 

6 months is the average time it takes to find Section 8 housing. Lack of availability and our guests’ disabilities and lack of employment history are some of the reasons.

50% 

50% of our guests have zero income. We choose to serve the poorest of the poor; women that no other organization will invite in.

Volunteer Spotlight: Kathleen Kirk

Kathleen's diverse career has had one focus: people-centered service. She has spent time in education, public health, and social work, to name a few. Kathleen grew up in the New York metropolitan area and is currently a life coach and a Certified Family Life Educator. In her free time, she's an avid bike rider and lover of cultures and languages.

While in New York City as a child, she had a pivotal experience. Kathleen saw a man who was homeless sleeping on a grate and was devastated to learn this was how he survived cold nights. "I was haunted by this experience, and it stayed with me." Her parents taught her to give generously and that we do what we can to help others.

Kathleen has been a volunteer at Sister José's for the past year, and it has changed her perspective on life. "In the grand scheme of things, we are all here to help each other. And it feels so good; it's one of the greatest joys to give some your time and attention or share your resources." When collaborating with Sister José's guests, we do our best each day



to share our love with all who seek respite and a safe place.

Kathleen said that after she leaves for the day, she thinks about the women. "If there's a storm, will they be dry?" We also talked about more seniors coming through our doors. "I cry tears of sadness, but I also cry out of laughter sometimes." It is a busy place in the morning, accepting all with compassion and meeting guests where they are at. "Getting involved is easy — bring an extra backpack or your gently used sneakers. When you're in Target, buy an extra pack or two of underwear."

Thank you, Kathleen, for your compassion and giving nature!

Join Kathleen and other Sister José volunteers today:

Reach out to Brenda, our volunteer coordinator at (520) 909-3905 or volunteer@sisterjose.org

GREAT NEWS — You can keep your tax dollars local and support Sister José's!

You may be able to reduce what you pay in Arizona taxes with a qualifying credit. In the state of Arizona, up to \$400 per person (\$800 per couple filing jointly) can be directly deducted, dollar-for-dollar, from the taxes you owe the state of Arizona.

Always consult your tax professional with questions about eligible contributions.



MAKE YOUR TAX CREDIT DONATION TODAY!

Our Arizona Qualifying Charitable Organization number is: 20826.



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