

## Article for EDNC E-News 5/3/2022

by Jim Schaal, Executive Director, the Center at St. Matthew's

### Forward with Families: Double Your Donation to the Center at St. Matthew's between Mother's Day and Father's Day!

Feed the Hungry. Welcome the Refugee and the Immigrant. Care for the Homeless. Lift Up Hearts. That's what we do every week at the Center at St. Matthew's, our diocesan outreach outpost in Arden Arcade. Put another way, the Center supports families of all shapes, sizes, and circumstances. That's why we're delighted to invite you to join us in our "Forward with Families" giving campaign in May and June 2022. Thanks to a generous donor, your donations will be doubled up to the matching gift amount of \$25,000.

Over the next few weeks, you'll hear from several leaders of the Center at St. Matthew's about the many ways that we support and sustain families. The Center is an innovative community service center and outreach ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California. We serve neighbors in need in the Arden Arcade area of Sacramento County, one of the most poverty-stricken neighborhoods in the state's capital region that is also home to the largest community of Afghan refugees in the nation. On our campus, the Center feeds families through our partnership with River City Food Bank (serving 700 households every week) and educates parents through our partnership with Highlands Community Charter School (providing language and literacy classes to 175 refugees and immigrants every weekday).

Beyond our campus, the Center supports families experiencing homelessness through our partnership with Arden Arcade Homeless Assistance Resource Team (a community organization we launched at the Center in 2019). At the spiritual heart of the Center is the Mission at St. Matthew's, a bilingual congregation offering Episcopal worship, fellowship, and pastoral care in both Spanish and English.

What all these ministries have in common is a focus on helping families move forward—whether it's an immigrant couple working three or four jobs just to make ends meet, a single mom trying to feed her kids a nutritious breakfast before school, or a refugee dad learning English so he can provide for his family in a new country.

It is often said that "it takes a village to raise a child." When I listen to the many languages and accents spoken on our Center courtyard, I marvel at the global village that gathers here. When I see a Ukrainian grandmother in a *babushka* scarf greet a young Afghan mother in full *hijab*, I rejoice in the wisdom that mothers pass down from generation to generation. When I see a Pashtun elder in his traditional tunic, deeply traumatized and dislocated by war and famine, I think of my Grandpa Jake—a second-generation bilingual immigrant who lost his young wife in a tragic fire and raised his two sons alone in a sod house through the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and the Second World War. It's never been easy being a parent, and all of us who have tried can feel compassion for the struggles that so many parents face today.

On Mother's Day, my wife Sarah and I will donate to the Center at St. Mathew's in memory of our dear mothers: my mom, who shared her gifts of Christian education, hospitality, and music ministry; and Sarah's mom, who taught us about church planting, social justice work, and environmental activism. On Father's Day, we will donate in memory of my dad, who was a role model in

multilingual missionary leadership and parish ministry; and we will donate in honor of Sarah's dad, our last living parent, who was a role model for teenagers as a high school teacher and coach. This May and June, I invite you to join us by making a donation in honor or in memory of your parents, grandparents, or other loved ones. Thanks to our generous matching gift donor, every dollar you donate will be doubled to support the Center at St. Matthew's as we help families to move forward. Both gifts from individuals and gifts from congregations will be matched; after you have given, please consider asking your family, your friends, and your congregation to give too.

To donate online, please visit the diocesan website's online giving portal at:

<https://www.norcalepiscopal.org/give/>

Click on the red "Give" button and select "The Center at St. Matthew's" from the drop-down menu. You may enter "in honor of" or "in memory of" your loved ones in the "optional memo" field.

To donate by check, please make your check payable to "Episcopal Diocese of Northern California" and write "Center at St. Matthew's" in the memo line. You may enclose a note in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Please mail your check directly to the Center at:

The Center at St. Matthew's  
2300 Edison Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95821-1714

For more information, please contact:

Jim Schaal, Executive Director

The Center at St. Matthew's

Email: [stmatthewsepiscopal@gmail.com](mailto:stmatthewsepiscopal@gmail.com)

Phone: 916-927-0115