Catholic Charities Hawai‘i

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Our Mission: Helping people in need to help themselves, regardless of their faith background, to become self-sufficient.

Our Core Values:
- Social Justice
  - calling us, as sisters and brothers, to be present with others in their suffering and need and to serve with a caring spirit.
- Compassion
  - The hope and dignity of each person calls us to reverence the God-given life and advocate on behalf of those with the greatest need.
- Dignity
  - Each person calls us to respect the God-given life and advocate on behalf of those with the greatest need.
- Commitment to Excellence
  - We strive to serve competently and collaboratively.

Our Vision: Caring and collaborative relationships for individuals and families working toward self-sufficiency.

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Lexie’s Story

Lexie is the definition of the word resilient. Her biological mother had her when she was 16 years old and struggled with substance use, mental health issues, poverty, and could not care for her. From birth, Lexie experienced various forms of abuse and neglect. At age 4, Lexie’s family moved in with her maternal grandparents.

When reports of abuse and neglect surfaced, Lexie and her younger brother were placed in the custody of the child welfare system. Eventually, Lexie was referred to a transitional family home (TFH) program at Catholic Charities Hawai’i.

At age 8, Lexie had lived in seven different TFH homes and was even hospitalized several times. Due to ongoing concerns with her maternal grandparents, Lexie became a ward of the state. She remembers feeling scared, not knowing who to trust, feeling abandoned, and always thinking “why me?”

Shortly thereafter, Lexie was placed with the Faufata family, a family who has worked with CCH for the past 15 years providing a TFH home to kids. Lexie received individual therapy and consistent support and structure within the home. Over the next couple of years, Lexie continued to respond to services and made significant progress.

Today, Lexie continues to thrive. This fall, she will be a junior in high school and her goal is to graduate from high school and go on to college to become a social worker to help other kids like her.

Finding Love and Hope for a Brighter Future

Seven years ago, Janny and Bronson met at Hina Mauka, a treatment center for alcohol and substance use. They both came from dysfunctional homes – Janny, raised by a single mother, remembers a cycle of homelessness and domestic violence with her four brothers, a memory she is rather not think about. Bronson came from a family of seven children. His dad was a drug dealer and his mom was a drug user and made Lexie and Bronson's second chance to turn her life around. Janny said, “I hit rock bottom” and knew that something had to change.

That’s when they found Catholic Charities Hawai’i and started meeting with their Paraprofessional, Elliott, who helped them take the first step toward recovery and self-sufficiency.

In 2018, Janny was arrested and her children were taken away. When her case was dropped she was given a second chance to turn her life around, Janny said “I hit rock bottom” and knew that something had to change.

Today, Janny and Bronson are working toward self-sufficiency. Bronson said, “I just want a normal family that I can be a part of.” Both were living apart – Janny in a homeless shelter and Bronson at a clean & sober house. They weren’t sure if they could be together but thanks to hard work and Catholic Charities Hawai’i, they were able to get a 2-bedroom apartment at Hale Hālualā, a transitional apartment building for individuals and families working toward self-sufficiency.

Now that they have made significant changes in their lives and have a stable home, their sons were returned to them in May.

When asked how they feel about their future, Bronson said “hopeful” and Janny said “prosperous.” “All we want is to give our kids a better foundation in life. In five years, I would like to be a nurse and own my own home,” Janny added. Bronson said: “I just want a normal family that I can go to sporting events with or to practice with my boys.”

Bronson and Janny pictured in front of their new apartment.
In the early 1990s, Larry Rodriguez was a partner at Ernst & Young and one of his partners was Catholic Charities Hawai‘i (CCH) board member who introduced him to CCH. Larry was initially drawn to our senior service programs and our work with families. As his involvement with CCH increased, he agreed to co-chair the CCH Capital Campaign with Bishop Larry Silva. The campaign was a success and his involvement with CCH increased his commitment to helping those in need.

Larry has stayed involved with CCH all these years because he values the commitment CCH staff have to its mission, as well as all of the important and efficient work CCH provides. He believes that CCH continues to make a significant impact on the community it serves.

When Larry first came to Hawai‘i, he had only planned on being here for a few years. That was 38 years ago! He stayed in the islands because he was drawn to the culture and people. Being in the islands was different from his experiences living and working in other places. He appreciated the way in which people work together to get more done and accomplish great things.

Catholic Charities Hawai‘i knows it is a privilege to have the support of Larry Rodriguez. He is a long-time philanthropist and supports numerous local organizations. We are incredibly honored to be counted as one of them!