

Grateful Journeys

GRATITUDE IN ACTION

Volume V



Juan De La Cruz, M.Ed.

President – Charitable Foundation

Juan was born and raised in Boyle Heights and holds Adventist Health White Memorial in the highest regard. His youngest son was born at White Memorial, and he is determined to work with the medical center to further health care access and the quality of care.

Juan holds a Bachelor of Arts from University of California, Los Angeles and a Master of Arts in Education from Whittier College.

Feel free to reach out to Juan directly at delacrjc01@ah.org or 323-260-5739.

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Letter from the Foundation President

This latest edition of the Grateful Journeys Newsletter highlights stories of our shared commitment, resilience and the enduring power of community support.

Caregiver Spotlight

Serving with heart and dedication for over 10 years at Adventist Health White Memorial, our Homeless Health Navigator Sandra Arzola exemplifies resilience. I invite you to [dive into her inspirational journey](#) and discover how helping behavioral health patients and the unhoused, despite personal challenges, deeply connected her to her purpose and our mission.

Philanthropic Partner Support

Countless young talents in our community grapple with choosing between their professional passion and immediate financial needs. However, Bank of America's generous \$70,000 grant to fund the new Healthcare Workforce Development Paid Stipend Internship is changing that narrative. [Read how dedicated intern Karen Melendez's dream of becoming a doctor found a new lifeline with Bank of America's help.](#)

Patient Spotlight

Victor Prado's health took a sudden turn for the worse when he was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes by Nilem Patel, M.D. in 2019. [See how Prado transformed his lifestyle](#) thanks to the support of Dr. Patel and the nutrition education he received from Diabetes Educator José Duran. Today, Victor is more determined to cherish life alongside his wife and nine grandchildren.

I hope that you feel as inspired and proud as I do to be part of the Adventist Health White Memorial community. The resilience, dedication and generosity shown by our caregivers and partners on behalf of patients and community residents is what our shared mission is all about.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.

Warm regards,



Juan De La Cruz, M.Ed.



White Memorial
Charitable Foundation

The Enduring Power of Community Support



Caregiver Spotlight Homeless Health Navigator Sandra Arzola's journey to fulfilling her purpose

As the Homeless Health Navigator, Sandra Arzola aids unhoused patients for 90 days post-discharge and bridges their needs to available resources, often encompassing behavioral healthcare. Reflecting on her journey and career, she says, "As you get older, you question, am I really doing what I need to do? Am I living my purpose? Recently, I realized that I really am living my purpose, and I'm living it here because I'm helping others here at White." However, working in a demanding field isn't easy. [Read more about how Sandra overcame personal challenges to remain deeply connected to her purpose and our mission.](#)

Philanthropic Partner Support Bank of America transforms lives through the Healthcare Workforce Development Paid Stipend Internship Program

Karen Melendez, a 24-year-old El Sereno resident and California State University, Northridge (CSUN) student, is a Healthcare Workforce Development intern at Adventist Health White Memorial, where she was also born. "I'm a pre-med student studying to take my MCAT and apply to medical school," Melendez shares. "My dream is to become a forensic pathologist." And after one conversation with her, it's obvious that one day she will be a fantastic doctor. [Read about how Karen overcame barriers to her dream thanks to Bank of America's support of the Healthcare Workforce Development Paid Stipend Intern Program.](#)

To learn more about the Healthcare Workforce Development Program fall paid internship, please [visit the webpage](#) and email [Alicia Román](#).



Patient Spotlight Victor Prado dedicates himself to health after sobering diabetes diagnosis

Shortly after Victor Prado retired, he was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes by Nileem Patel, MD, our exceptional endocrinologist at Adventist Health White Memorial.

He remembers entering the waiting room that day, seeing people struggling with the impact of diabetes. "That first day looking around at the other patients...like, wait a minute, is that me? Having to be held up, they were no older than me. I never pictured myself being handicapped like that." [Read how Victor transformed his life thanks to the support of Dr. Patel and the nutrition education he received from Diabetes Educator José Duran.](#)