



LSA Family Health Service Welcomes Pope Francis to East Harlem

A family will represent the agency at the blessing at Our Lady Queen of Angels and paper flowers made by LSA mothers will be displayed at the school

September 9, 2015 – LSA Family Health Service, founded by the Little Sisters of the Assumption, is proud to join Catholic Charities of New York in welcoming Pope Francis to New York City.

The Garcia family – Martina Juárez, her husband Manuel Garcia, two of their children and their grandson – has been invited to represent LSA and its work in the community, at Pope Francis' reception and blessing at the Our Lady Queen of Angels school in East Harlem on September 25th. They will be among approximately 200 guests, mostly immigrants and refugees served by Catholic Charities of New York, attending the reception. The family has been a recipient of services from LSA Family Health Service for over 10 years and has benefited from the food pantry, advocacy services, early childhood programs and education programs.

[See press & coverage, learn more about the Juárez-Garcia family .](#)

Additionally, 225 paper flowers made by mothers at LSA will be on display as centerpieces for the tables at the reception.

“For over 50 years, we have been carrying out the mission of our founders, the Little Sisters of the Assumption, to uplift the most vulnerable among us,” said Traci Lester, CEO of LSA Family Health Service. “We are honored to welcome Pope Francis to East Harlem, and to share with him our commitment to serving our neighbors.”

In addition to the Garcia family, Sr. Susanne Lachapelle, a nurse with LSA Family Health Service who has dedicated herself to the care of mothers and infants in East Harlem, will also be in attendance at the Pope’s reception, along with Traci Lester. Other staff from LSA will be on hand to assist families throughout the event.

LSA has posted a video to <http://charityhasnoboundaries.org> , offering a welcome message to the Pope from our staff and families. The website was created by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York to celebrate Pope Francis' visit to the United States and his universal message of charity.

Pope Francis’ [connection to the Little Sisters of the Assumption](#) dates back to his infancy. Sisters from the Little Sisters order in Argentina provided care to his mother and to him and his sister when they were infants. He has maintained a close relationship with the order, and in 2010 he presided at the celebration for the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Little Sisters in Argentina.

Sr. Annette Allain, LSA Coordinator, U.S. Territory, stated:

“Pope Francis has a first-hand appreciation of our Mission and Spirituality from an early age due to receiving home care services from the Little Sisters of the Assumption and also from the involvement of his parents and grandparents in our groups. It is my belief that his sensitivity to the poor and immigrant population grew from his own personal familial experience. We have been called to become family among the very people Pope Francis loves - those living on the margins of society. This is a privileged encounter of mutuality, believing that the power of growth is in relationship. There is no greater gift than Pope Francis’ visit to East Harlem as the Little Sisters of the Assumption celebrate our 150th Anniversary (1865 Paris, France). ”

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About LSA Family Health Service's participation in Pope Francis' visit to Our Lady Queen of Angels:

1. LSA Family Health Service, founded by the Little Sisters of the Assumption in 1958 is a Catholic Charity that serves the community of East Harlem.

1. As a Catholic Charity, the organization was invited to send guests to the Pope's reception at Our Lady Queen of Angels in East Harlem. LSA is a long-time partner with Our Lady Queen of Angels; a number of children from LSA families attend the school.

1. People attending the Pope's reception at Our Lady Queen of Angels on behalf of LSA Family Health Service:

1. Martina Juarez, her husband, their two children, and their grandson. Martina is originally from Mexico, of indigenous origin (Mixteco). The family has benefited from a number of LSA services, including food pantry, early childhood programs, homework help, and tutoring. Martina's daughter, who is now in middle school, just started in LSA's Girls' Mentoring program. The family was chosen because they represent so many of LSA's services and the organization's mission to strengthen and empower families.

1. Traci Lester, CEO of LSA Family Health Service

1. Sister Susanne Lachappelle, LSA. Sr. Susanne is a member of the Little Sisters of the Assumption order and a nurse who has provided care for mothers and children in East Harlem for decades.

1. Pura Cruz, a Client Advocate at LSA, has been asked to provide assistance to families at Our Lady Queen of Angels. Pura was a key member of the outreach team that assisted families in East Harlem after the 2014 gas explosion.

1. Mothers that are a part of the Parenting and Child Development program created 225 flowers, which will be used as centerpieces at Our Lady Queen of Angels. Pope Francis will

bless each of the arrangements.

1. The flowers are a traditional folk art of Mexico. LSA offered to make the flowers for the pope's visit as a representation of the vibrant spirit of the East Harlem community.

1. A video of the flower-making will be shown at the events with the Pope at Our Lady Queen of Angels and Madison Square Garden.