



### **Mission Statement**

Responding to Christ's message to love our neighbors as ourselves, Catholic Community Services offers immediate help by providing food and other assistance to anyone in need and seeks to instill hope by helping Lane County families take positive steps to move out of poverty.

### **Service Center Hours**

M/T/W/F 8am-4pm  
Th 9am-4pm

### **Food Pantry Hours**

M/W/F 8am-12pm

### **Clothing Room Hours**

Mon-Fri, 9am-12pm

**Your Gifts Help Free Neighbors from Hunger!  
Donate Here**



# Freedom from Fear

## CCS Special Edition Newsletter

*"We seek to create loving communities of kinship precisely to counteract mounting lovelessness, racism, and the cultural disparagement that keeps us apart."*

- Fr. Greg Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart



Greg Boyle Keynote Address  
June 26th, 2023



World Refugee Day  
June 20th, 2023

Catholic Community Services of Lane County has dedicated over 70 years to the cause of freedom. Many in our Eugene and Springfield communities struggle with hunger and poverty on a daily basis; liberating our neighbors from these strains and lending them tools to access a better life is always on our minds. But even we can sometimes forget that many of the stigmatized and unfamiliar in our society fight for a different kind of emancipation: **freedom from fear**. We received some

moving lessons on the journey from fear to freedom in the form of two incredible events this month: **World Refugee Day** and Homeboy Industries founder **Greg Boyle's Keynote Address**.

## World Refugee Day

Thanks to the help of a diverse coalition of volunteers from our refugee and immigrant communities, on June 20th we were able to host **our first World Refugee Day celebration since the Covid-19 pandemic**. The expanding Refugee and Immigrant Services Program (RISP) at CCS has helped resettle **over 30 Afghans** since the Taliban takeover of Kabul in 2021, so we felt it was only appropriate to honor their arrival in Lane County by shining a spotlight on their culture, community, and journeys. It was a night of celebration: women posed for pictures in dazzling traditional dress, music flowed from a twanging Afghan rubâb, spontaneous dancing broke out on a crowded floor, and **over 250 guests** enjoyed an endless buffet of tender lamb, steaming ash soup, and countless other Afghan dishes.



However, while there was much joy, there was also solemn reflection. **Maryam**, a 2021 arrival whose husband is still in hiding in Afghanistan, described the restrictions and indignities women now face there. **Zubair**, a 14-year-old boy who fled to the U.S. with his father, described the pain of being separated from his mother and siblings. And **Nasratullah**, a media expert in the former Afghanistan government before its collapse, shared a documentary film on the Afghan refugee experience here in Eugene.

**"The language barrier, cultural differences, and difficulty finding work and housing... it can be overwhelming and isolating."**

Nasrat spoke at length after his film's premiere, offering some reflections on the fears new refugees face. "The language barrier, cultural differences, and difficulty finding work and housing... it can be overwhelming and isolating" he shared, drawing from his own experience. Although the journey was daunting, he also made clear that those who were denied an avenue of escape or separated from their families live in a different kind of fear: "The recent evacuation of Afghanistan has left many behind, including those who were at times promised safe passage to the United States. It's heartbreaking to think of the families torn apart, the lives lost, and the dreams shattered."

RISP can't cure the devastation victims of these tragic world events experience, but World Refugee Day was a profound reminder of the program's impact. Answers to legal questions, financial assistance, access to English courses, rides to appointments, cultural lessons, friendly faces, a sense of acceptance—every effort helps free a new friend and neighbor from the fear of an uncertain future in an unfamiliar home.

[Click here to donate directly to RISP](#)

## Father Greg Boyle's Keynote Address

Just six days after that spectacular evening, a nonprofit captain and guru of compassion gave us another perspective on the positive influence we can wield in the world. **Fr. Greg Boyle** is a gifted speaker with a unique background; serving as pastor of the Dolores Mission Church from 1986 to 1992, he worked in the poorest Catholic Parish in Los Angeles surrounded by the highest concentration of gang activity in the city. Law enforcement reacted to the lawlessness of the time with force, relying on suppression and mass incarceration to prevent crime. Fr. Boyle reacted with acceptance, training and employing former gang members in an effort that would eventually grow into the largest gang rehabilitation program in the world. Today, **Homeboy Industries helps 10,000 people transform their lives each year**, and the **Global Homeboy Network** now includes over **250 organizations** in **more than 20 countries**.

Eugene residents came out in droves on June 26th to see Fr. Boyle's keynote address at The Shedd Institute, many recognizing him from his ***New York Times* bestselling book *Tattoos on the Heart***. His speech did not disappoint. A gifted storyteller, Fr. Boyle moved the audience to both laughter and tears. He embraces the comedy of the misunderstandings and culture clashes that are inevitable when you accept people from different backgrounds into your life. The audience erupted when he told his story of the Homeboy who gave him public speaking advice, saying "You take yourself too seriously, you need to be more self-defecating up there." Fr. Boyle's response: "No shit." But he also embraces the empathetic principle that we are all one, regardless of our appearance or our past, and looks on with "affectionate awe" at the burdens his Homeboys and Homegirls carry. He recounted the story of a young man who wore three shirts to school each day to hide the wounds his mother had inflicted, fearing that he would be rejected by his classmates if they could see his blood seeping through the cloth. That same young man, now a Homeboy who speaks at events, wept after recalling a day when he tried to convince a gang member on the street to come see Father G. It was the reaction from onlookers that moved him to tears; they looked at him with respect as he later boarded his bus, and he recalled tearfully that "It was the first time I ever felt admired."



Fr. Boyle's keynote underscored how the abuses many of these young people face at home shape their lives. Raised in a state of fear, their hardships cement the idea that society will treat them as they have been treated by their abusers. They feel an impetus to reject the world around them before they can be rejected, to hurt others before they can be hurt. Fr. Boyle has chosen to offer them acceptance instead, with wonderful results. Christian, a homeboy who spoke alongside Greg Boyle in Eugene, said that "G" visiting him in juvenile detention made him feel like someone was genuinely invested in his life and happiness. That influence caused him to seek out Homeboy Industries later on, where he found a welcoming environment that gave him the tools to achieve a year of sobriety. He was ecstatic on stage as he described the joy of texting his children each day, knowing that he is a loving presence in their lives. He feels free from the fear of rejection and gets to pass that freedom on to his kids.

**"What we hope to do is inch our way out to the margins so that we can stand with the poor, and the powerless, and the voiceless. So that we can stand with those whose dignity has been denied."**

Father Boyle closed by asking that we think of his address not as an event we went to, but an event we're going from. The power to speed others along in their journeys from fear to freedom lies with us. Only we can open ourselves to all our neighbors, offering acceptance and compassion where they've received indifference or rejection in the past. We at CCS

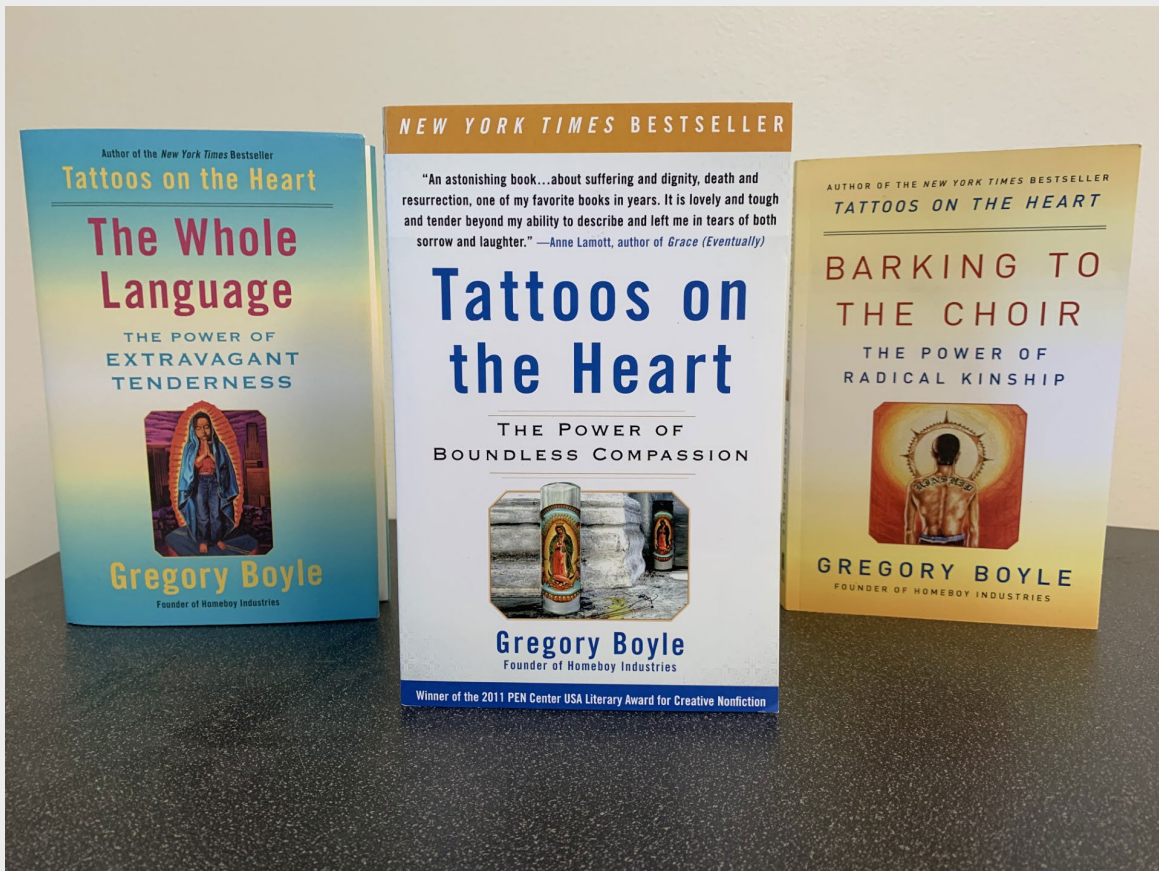
were grateful to receive that message this June, and we hope you will “go from” this newsletter carrying it in your heart as well.

## Signed Book Auction!

Fr. Greg left behind some signed books from his Eugene visit, and we're auctioning them off! If you would like to place a bid for one of these books, you can:

- Reply to this email with your best offer by the end of the week.
- Include your book of preference in your email if you have one.

At the end of the week, we'll announce the highest bidders and their prizes! The proceeds from this auction will help us cover the costs for Father Boyle's address and fund the important work CCS does every day--thank you in advance for your generous support!



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## Independence from Hunger Food Drive



The annual Independence from Hunger Food Drive has officially launched, and you can **make a FREE DONATION!**

Every year the Springfield Grocery Outlet partners with CCS to help keep our food pantry full. This year we desperately need the help--we've distributed almost 7,000 food boxes in 2023 alone at our Springfield campus, the highest demand in recent memory!

You can **donate directly** to CCS's Independence from Hunger fund **by clicking the image**, or you can **donate for free at the Springfield Grocery Outlet at 160 14th Street**. If you give \$5 to Independence from Hunger at the register, you'll get \$5 off your next purchase of \$25 or more!

[Click here to donate to our Independence from Hunger Food Drive!](#)



#### Locations

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