

Dignity & Hope

Domenica Foundation 2024 annual report

Domenica Scholars learn about health careers

We love connecting community partners for their mutual benefit! In October, we took 15 Domenica Scholars to a career fair sponsored by Virtua Health. Our scholarship students were exposed to a variety of healthcare careers, and Virtua connected with a motivated group of high school students from varied backgrounds.

Virtua President and CEO Dennis Pullin welcomed the group. Other Virtua leaders, from the chief operating officer (a physician) to the head librarian and security director (pictured here with Domenica Scholars), made the point that you don't have to be a doctor or nurse to work in healthcare.

Our students really enjoyed the hands-on experience with medical training equipment. Several said they wanted to explore internships and shadowing opportunities with Virtua.



Class of 2024

"Not only have you helped my family guide me to a higher education, but you also have helped me pursue my dream." Daisy, who graduated in June 2024 from Gloucester Catholic High School, expressed her gratitude for her four-year Domenica Scholarship. Daisy is now attending Rowan University—one of the colleges we visited in 2023 and 2024 with groups of Domenica Scholars.

Domenica Scholars have a 100% on-time graduation rate. Every one of this year's 17 graduates planned to go on to higher education. Sal Morales, pictured here hugging his mom at his graduation from Cristo Rey, is attending Xavier University on a full scholarship. Together, this year's grads garnered \$3 million in college scholarships and awards.



Spring into Action volunteer event

Our annual Spring into Action brought together 120 volunteers to donate their time and effort to eight Domenica Foundation community partners. There was a lot of gardening going on, including planting 20 trees. Volunteers also made PB&J sandwiches, baked cookies, served meals, started rehabbing a house, and helped with spring cleaning and organizing.



Save the date!

Spring into Action 2025
is April 12.



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Dignity & Hope is our annual report
to our friends and supporters.

JAN GALLAGHER
editor

Summer fun and learning

When school's out, our support for education and youth switches to summer camps.

YMCA Camp Speers

For the second year, Domenica Foundation sponsored 10 camperships to send Camden-area children for a week at YMCA Camp Speers in the Poconos. We love seeing how these city kids thrive outdoors! Camp Speers offers all the traditional camp activities, from outdoor crafts to kayaking to rock climbing and other challenges.



LUCY day camps

We supported seven-week summer camp programs run by our longtime partner LUCY Outreach. Day camps for "littles" and day-to-evening drop-in activities for teens kept participants safe and engaged in a wide variety of educational and fun activities.

Younger children enjoyed day trips to Grounds for Sculpture and a wildlife refuge. Teens had an overnight trip to visit colleges, worked on a farm, and spent a day at the beach. Both groups loved their pool days.



New grantees

The Domenica Foundation funded two new grantees and a new program and partnership in 2024.

Raise the Bar



Camden-based Raise the Bar provides age- and ability-appropriate activities for children with disabilities and offers support groups and referral services for caregivers.

We're sponsoring Kids' Club for children ages 3 to 11. Once a month on Saturdays, staff and volunteers provide safe, engaging activities while giving caregivers a break.



Revive South Jersey

In our first foray into adult education, we funded Revive South Jersey for its high school equivalency (HSE) program. Revive also offers primary and secondary education, certified by the Mexican government, for learners who aren't yet ready for HSE. All programs are offered in Spanish.



Estela Cruz, pictured here with her daughter and the Mexican consul, earned her primary certificate in fall 2024. She is now working on her secondary certificate and then plans to get her high school diploma.



Fresh produce for food distribution

We sponsored a pilot program to add fresh produce to grocery bags distributed by Wholesome Riches at local elementary schools. We brokered a connection with Sharing Excess, a Philadelphia nonprofit that rescues produce to deliver to food pantries like Wholesome Riches.

In the four-month pilot, we helped Wholesome Riches distribute 13,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables.



We collect reusable grocery bags for Wholesome Riches. Pepe Piperno, Domenica Foundation founder and president, handles the bag delivery.

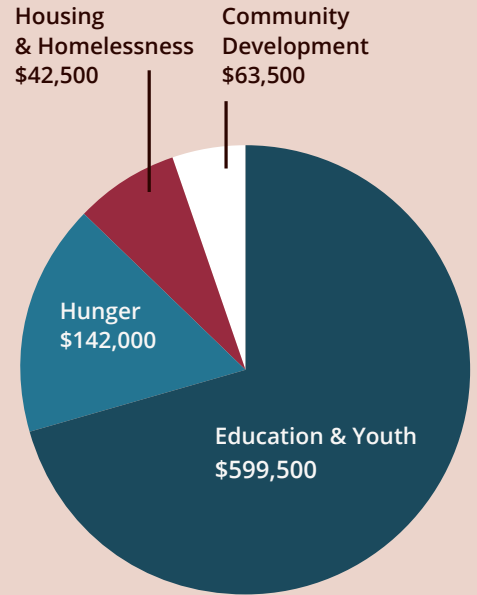


Thank you for supporting our mission to improve the quality of life for underserved communities in South Jersey!

—Pepe & Elena

Financials

Altogether, the Domenica Foundation provided \$847,500 in grants to 25 organizations in 2024. As always, education and youth is our largest philanthropic focus. The smallest category is housing and homelessness. Read "Housing for Veterans" to see how we're expanding our efforts in this area in 2025.



New kitchen for SSJ Neighborhood Center

With support from the Domenica Foundation, the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Center renovated its kitchen in spring 2024. The Sisters of St. Joseph are using the kitchen to prepare meals for fiestas that bring together neighbors from varied cultures and backgrounds. They will also offer community cooking classes. We invested \$25,000 in the renovation.



Housing for Veterans

Big news for 2025! We are partnering with the Patriot Fund to launch a transitional housing program for war veterans. The project will convert a former rectory in Burlington, NJ, into dormitory-style housing for five or six residents at a time.

"Returning veterans face incredible challenges," said Pepe Piperno, Domenica Foundation founder and president. "Some of them have health

issues. They struggle to find jobs. And then they end up on the street! It's a crime."

Housing is a first step toward recovery. The next step is services to help veterans cope with their challenges and find stability. Catholic Charities will provide wraparound services, including counseling, job training, and financial education, at the transitional housing facility.

We're investing \$500,000 over three years to support this project. Reconstruction is underway now and should be completed in late spring 2025. "It's the least we can do for these patriots after all they've done for us!" said Pepe.