



# Juan Diego Society, Inc.

Help for Pregnant Women and their Babies



November 12, 2021

Dear Juan Diego Supporters, Benefactors, and Prayer Warriors:

My name is Rafael Betancourt, and I am the Chairman of the Board of Juan Diego Society. I am a member of the Knights of Columbus, and I have been involved with Juan Diego for over 12 years, serving on the Board for the last six years, becoming Chairman almost four years ago. As with many non-profits and businesses, the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown forced us to close our office doors in March 2020. This letter explains the impact of that closure and our plans for the future.

We hope that you've been touched by the efforts of our amazing staff and volunteers that have run the Birth & Beyond Women's Center over the years and with YOUR help, provided a wide range of loving counseling services, financial, spiritual & emotional support to courageous pregnant women not only throughout their entire pregnancy, but beyond as well. For over 35 years, through Juan Diego you supported over 11,000 families with material needs ranging from diapers, clothing & baby furniture; you placed them in shelters & housing; you provided them counseling & education. We have been blessed with more than 1,200 babies born because of your generosity.

**Closing Some Doors, Opening Others** – As non-essential workers, our office was shut down by the County during the pandemic. You see, in California, getting a tattoo or buying recreational marijuana is considered essential, but helping women in a crisis pregnancy situation is not. So, we paid rent for over a year while not being allowed by the County to occupy our own facilities. All the while, as it happened to other non-profits, our income dropped precipitously.

Still, almost overnight, we switched to virtual services (e.g., WhatsApp, Zoom, etc.) to keep serving our community. Although we could not meet in person, we answered their calls for help and remotely counseled mothers considering abortion to give life to their children while they were standing at the door of Planned Parenthood. We kept our weekly Mothers Support group going over Zoom to give them the tools they needed to help their families.

We made deliveries to our moms on Christmas and Mother's Day. We had a drive-through for over 100 women and children to pick up customized boxes of clothing, diapers, toys, and gift cards. We delivered curbside to young ladies & families many times. We blessed other ministries, e.g., *Loved Twice*, *The Lord's Pantry*, *Salvation Army*, and *St. Vincent de Paul* with gifts of clothing, books & guides, prayer cards, rosaries, and diapers.

Even so, the harsh reality was hard to ignore: a physical office was costing us \$35,000+ a year, and for over a year, we could not legally occupy it. As the pandemic continued its grind, we started to view those dollars as a potential investment in our community and outreach. Simply put, we thought the money could be better spent. If we could serve our young ladies, their families, and children remotely, we would be able to re-invest our funds into developing new programs, greater outreach, and more support directly to our clients. With one team member moving out of the area, the economics were also in favor of remote-only work.



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Also, the unexpected happened: the office was empty for so long that in late Summer of 2021 it was ransacked in the middle of the night. Yes, thieves took baby clothes, diapers, pots & pans, coffee mugs, tablecloths, and even boxes of Rosaries and Holy medals. As you can imagine, all of this has taken a heavy toll on all of us.

So, after months of prayerful discernment, the Board of Directors reached the heart-wrenching decision to permanently close the physical office at 12 North White Road in San Jose at the end of August. That was especially hard considering we'd moved into this space over 22 years ago. This wasn't something we took light, and of course it was very tear-filled; we won't lie about that. We now have active forwarding to our secure private mailbox. Here is our new mailing address:

**Juan Diego Society, Inc. / Birth & Beyond Woman's Care**  
2059 Camden Ave, PMB 343  
San Jose, CA 95124

Closing the physical doors was a huge leap of faith in our history. In this digital age, in-person visits had trailed off even in the latter part of 2019, but it was a band-aid that needed to be pulled off. So, when we decided to close the office, we made sure that our virtual presence, i.e., phone, email, text, social media channels were working 24/7, and that we would be even more responsive to a young lady needing assistance. Our continued referral calls are showing us that we can reach even MORE young ladies in need of help, by this decision.

In fact, not only does remote work save money through reduced rent, but it has also helped us be creative in ways to reach our clientele virtually. For instance, we had young ladies join our "Moms Group" who are several states away and coordinated 1:1 video counseling, easing issues with childcare, schedules, or lack of transportation. We haven't merely survived by going remote. We've thrived. The newfound diversity in our ministry is leading to new ideas, new relationships and new possibilities that didn't exist when we were tied to one physical location.

**A New Beginning** – Our COVID recovery plan encompasses rebuilding our donor and volunteer base and re-opening our physical facilities sometime in 2022. For Juan Diego to survive until we can fully re-open, our Executive Director voluntarily stepped down to a part-time role of Finance Director.

We are now seeking our next leader for the Center, someone nimble, with amazing ideas of growing our presence in the Bay Area, someone with a call to the Culture of Life, a Pro-life vocation, and with a servant's heart. So, we launched a nationwide search for a new Executive Director who can help us move forward as we rebuild post-COVID.

So far, we have screened over 75 applicants, and narrowed it down to a few high-potential candidates that we are interviewing and performing due diligence. We ask for your prayers, rosaries, novenas, and Masses, so that the right person hears God's calling to serve the Juan Diego ministry.

**A New Hope** – In the end, it is not about us: our efforts, how brilliant or efficient we are in our execution, or our metrics of success. Juan Diego's *Birth & Beyond* ministry exists to bring education,



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assistance, and the LOVE of Christ to women and families in crisis pregnancy situations. To provide for these women as they get back on their feet and find the HOPE of Christ. To help change the future for these pregnant young ladies sharing the MERCY of Christ with them.

With a legacy of more than 1,200 babies rescued from the altars of abortion we embark in this new chapter, moving forward with the same mission, same undiluted Catholic Faith & faithfulness to the Magisterium, and same spirit of service. Please pray for us at the Juan Diego Society and for the women we're helping.

May God abundantly bless you and may *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, our Center's Directress and Patroness of the Unborn, guide our steps in the Service of Her Son.

In His Service and for the Greater Glory of God, Vivat Jesus!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rafael Betancourt".

SK Rafael J. Betancourt, Chairman  
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P.S. If you need further clarification, or just want to chat please don't hesitate to call me. For more info on Juan Diego's ministry, please visit <https://jdwcenter.org>, [www.jdwcenter.org/donate](http://www.jdwcenter.org/donate)