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Thorntons to provide hundreds of workers for a day of service at Catholic Charities

IMMOKALEE, Fla. -- April 10, 2015 -- Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Venice, Inc. has been selected by Thorntons Inc. as the recipient of services from a team of nearly 600 employees, spouses and vendors who will take part in their annual day of service. Thorntons is a chain of convenience stores long recognized as one of the top in the nation with locations in six states, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Florida.

As part of their ongoing community-giving program and annual General Managers Conference, Thorntons has partnered with Projects With Purpose, an organization founded in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Juli Miller-Hart, founder and CEO of Projects With Purpose said her company "produces philanthropic team building and humanitarian events and programs for groups and corporations who have a desire to give back to communities in need."

When her organization was contacted by Mike Woerner, COO of Thorntons, Miller-Hart said she spent several weeks reviewing the work of the many not-for-profit organizations in the Naples area. "While each organization we visited makes a significant contribution to the community, Thorntons leadership decided the mission and clients served by Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities best meets its criteria for this year's event," Miller-Hart said.

On Saturday, April 18 Thorntons managers, spouses, vendors and leadership, who will be participating in a three-day conference on Marco Island, will travel to Immokalee where they will spend the day working. Projects include:

- Creating 867 square feet of cooled food storage space
- Renovating a clothing room with new shelves, storage racks and small item display cases
- Packing 1,000 bags of food to be distributed that day and throughout the month.
- Building benches and picnic benches for clients to sit on while they wait for services
- Painting the dining room of the Casa Maria Soup Kitchen
- Painting and repairing the public restrooms and showers
- Painting the exterior of the building
- Building eight trash receptacles
- Building raised flower beds to aid in the beautification of the building and grounds

James Thornton formed the convenience store company in 1971 in Louisville, Kentucky and has seen it grow to 181 locations. He believes strongly in giving back to the community. "It is that part of our

corporate philosophy that drives our desire to provide assistance to organizations such as Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities," said Woerner.

"Giving back to the community allows companies to build team morale and to have the competitive edge," Miller-Hart said. "When we come to Immokalee, we partner with locals in supplying all of the tools, equipment and staffing necessary for volunteers to complete the wish list of the organization, but it is Thorntons that funds the project in its entirety."

Bishop Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Venice, expressed his gratitude to those who will be participating in the day of service. "We are honored that Thorntons has chosen our Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities to be the recipient of its annual day of service," Bishop Dewane said. "We express our heartfelt thanks to all those who will be giving of their time to help with the important work of Catholic Charities in the Immokalee area in service to those who are less fortunate. May God bless you for your kindness and generosity."

Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities provides basic services to needy individuals and families through the Casa Maria Soup Kitchen, a food pantry, financial and prescription assistance, certified immigration services, a clothing room and shower program as well as English classes for mothers.

According to Tricia Yeggy, program director for Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities, nearly half of the current population in Immokalee lives at or below the poverty level.

"It is not uncommon for us to serve up to 150 meals a day to those in need in our community," Yeggy said. "We also provide a clothing room where clients are able to come for clothes and small household items, a shower program for the homeless or those without running water, and even provide financial assistance to pay for utility and/or rent costs, thus stabilizing the lives of those we serve. Having the tremendous assistance of Thorntons in tending to our facility needs and contributing to our food pantry will allow us to use the scarce resources we have to better serve our clients, enhancing what we do each day to serve the poor in Immokalee."

For more information about Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities, please contact Tricia Yeggy at 239-657-6242.

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