



**Brothers of
the Christian
Schools**



EXPERIENCE

Socio-educational ministry: LA SALLE SAN JOSÉ A NEW SOLIDARITY COMMITMENT

Coincidence or Providence wanted that the opening of the Obra Socioeducativa La Salle San José is taking place in the same year that Pope Francis has proclaimed the Year of Saint Joseph (inaugurated on December 8 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the declaration of this saint as patron of the Universal Church).

In the apostolic letter *Patris corde* (With a father's heart), Francis writes some words that set a guide and inspiration for us as we begin the journey of this socio-educational ministry. He states, “every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is “the child” whom Joseph continues to protect. For this reason, Saint Joseph is invoked as protector of the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying. Consequently, the Church cannot fail to show a special love for the least of our brothers and sisters, for Jesus showed a particular concern for them and personally identified with them”.



This socio-educational ministry is located in the neighbourhood of Las Águilas in Madrid, next to the educational ministry Institución La Salle, and intends to be a venue where many people can receive assistance and can find a place where they can serve and give themselves to those most in need.

Certainly, this initiative will enable us to open up to the realities of the neighbourhood and the city in order to commit ourselves to them. We want to make a Lasallian Christian community grow around service and tangible help for those most in need.

We are currently in phase 1. In this phase we have started:



“Nests” area. It is open every day of the week to serve boys and girls in difficulties. This time of social distance is increasing inequalities also in the educational environment. At present we are supporting 35 students from the school. It is coordinated by Carlos Manzano (a former student of the school). It involves 28 volunteers, including Brothers, teachers, alumni, students from the high school and technical section, as well as Lasalians from other ministries.

As soon as the pandemic allows us, we wish is to open this area to students from other schools in the neighbourhood who are in need of help and protection. In recent months, we have created links with Caritas of the various parishes, the official departments dealing with minors, and the neighbourhood associations; we have sensed a great need in this regard. We want, following the pathway set by Pope Francis, to adopt an attitude of going out and searching for the human and existential peripheries.

This summer, during the first two weeks of July, we will also be running an urban camp to take care of these boys and girls during this time.

Service-volunteering area: This area aims at encouraging young people and teenagers to commit themselves in a specific way to those most in need in our society. This year we have consolidated our service to the homeless in our neighbourhood. It takes place on Wednesdays and Fridays, and is generating a beautiful solidarity movement among the senior students of the school, former students and young people from Christian university groups.

In the coming years, this area will evolve into other commitments with the elderly of the neighbourhood, nursing homes and also in the ecological and environmental commitment. Apart from the services, every month there is a formation meeting on different social realities to which all the volunteers are invited in order to grow together in awareness of solidarity.

Provision for basic needs of the families. The pandemic situation has left many families in very difficult situations. We are helping to distribute food and to satisfy their basic needs. We are also accompanying them in their search for employment.



In a later stage, in the coming years, we are planning to open an area for literacy and adult education, as well as that for care and accompaniment of lonely elderly people in our surroundings. The students of Administrative

Management are going to develop an ABS (Access and Benefit Sharing) project within our socio-educational centre, in order to help in the active search for employment in collaboration with some teachers of the technical studies.

Hogar San José, a temporary hospitality house for migrants and refugees at risk in the streets, will also start, in collaboration with the table of hospitality of the archdiocese with the view of welcoming, promoting, protecting and integrating our brothers and sisters fleeing from hunger and war.

We are looking forward to this journey, building a space for solidarity in our neighbourhood. We make our own Pope Francis' call to model our lives on the example of the Good Samaritan, as he states in the encyclical Fratelli Tutti: "By his actions, the Good Samaritan showed that the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions".

God willing, on March 19th, we will hold a simple ceremony for the official inauguration of this new ministry.