

Featured Alumna: Monica VALDES Creixell, Class of 1991



Volunteering isn't just an activity for **Monica VALDES Creixell '91**; it's a way of life. Since August 2017, she has spent at least four days per week at [Casa Juan Diego](#), a Catholic Worker house in Houston, Texas, which provides hospitality and support to immigrants and refugees. Services include shelter, meals, legal and medical aid, and advocacy.

Monica has always had a heart for the underserved. When she joined Duchesne in grade seven, she found a community that nurtured her compassionate spirit. The Social Awareness program showed her the depth of fulfillment she could find in service. Her time in Campus Ministry (she served as president her senior year) further affirmed her passion for fostering community and creating meaningful experiences for others. Thus, social work was a natural vocational fit: she earned her bachelor's degree from St. Edward's University, immediately followed by an MSW from the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work in 1996.

Her journey with Casa began after “retiring” from the Spring Branch Independent School District, where she ran the district’s mentor program. “I wanted to work closer with those in need.” At Casa, her work has a direct and immediate impact.

Casa follows the principles of social justice, solidarity, and compassion, in line with the [Catholic Worker movement](#). Rooted in Catholic social teaching, the Catholic Worker movement promotes social justice through direct action, voluntary poverty, and solidarity with the marginalized. This means, among other things, that Casa is 100% volunteer-run; no member of the staff receives a salary.

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At Casa, Monica wears many hats, from food distribution to assisting volunteer doctors at the medical clinic as a translator. Her fluency in Spanish (her native language) and her French language skills (honed at Duchesne) have been invaluable in serving Casa's diverse clientele. Recently, she assumed the role of volunteer coordinator, overseeing community groups' service days and ensuring Casa's operations run smoothly.

Since 2023, Monica has served on Casa's board of directors. Her leadership roles as a board member and volunteer coordinator showcase her initiative and dedication to Casa's mission: Matthew 25:31-46 "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

To get involved with Casa, please email Monica directly: monicacreixell@hotmail.com