



# McCurdy Ministries *MESSAGE* *A Light in the Valley*

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McCurdy Ministries creates hope and empowers the lives of children, youth, and families through education, life skills, and faith based programs in Española, New Mexico.

## A Spectacular Season At McCurdy



*Oh come, let us adore him*

*Luke 2:10-11 NRSV*

The Christmas season at McCurdy Ministries was filled with joy, generosity, and meaningful moments that brought families and the wider community together. From the beloved Los Posadas tradition and the Christmas Store to special parties, programs, and gifts for families, each event reflected the care and dedication of staff, volunteers, and community partners. The beautiful nativity scene blessed so many as they drove by the McCurdy campus. Manny and the maintenance 'elves' surprised everyone by creating a beautiful **Christmas experience** in the Family Resource Center. They created Santa's outhouse, a North Pole mail drop, the 'Naughty and Nice' stocking wall, and even decorated the Christmas store with Christmas decorations. The community was honestly deeply

touched by this special experience that was a blessing to their families.

The **Los Posadas** event brought together the nonprofits on campus to have a night filled with lights as the community gathered for a delicious home-cooked meal and went in search of the Christ child. The McCurdy Village of Casitas, that houses our nonprofit community partners, and the McCurdy Family Resource Center were open for the special meal and family crafts.

The **Christmas Store** was a huge success. Over 185 people signed up to be able to choose gifts for their children through the store. So many people shared what a blessing this opportunity was for them to be able to choose gifts, especially for their children. We were so blessed to receive generous donations from many area churches, individuals, and the Northern New Mexico toy drive.

A '**White Christmas**' was provided for 20 families thanks to the generosity of White Rock United Methodist Church. Each family received gifts and clothing for each family member.

**Project Cariño and After School Club House had a fabulous Christmas party** where families came together to have frito pies, create gingerbread houses, play reindeer games, and had a special visit from Santa!

**The Pre-K had a wonderful program** and also had a special visit from Santa. The children shared songs and even had a special seat of honor for their special elf who left with Santa for the North Pole.

**The Enchanted Forest of Reading** created a unique Christmas tree made of books!

Thank you to everyone who made this season one to remember!

# McCurdy Ministries Through Photos

See what was happening on campus this winter



The After School Club House/ Project Cariño Christmas party.



Children created hand-made Advent wreaths to take home.



The Christmas Store set up and ready for 185 "shoppers".



Santa came to visit the children in our Pre-K program.



Families celebrated with students at the Pre-K Holiday Program.



Staff enjoyed the community meal at the Los Posadas event.



Families made Gingerbread houses together at the After School/ Project Cariño party.



Santa surprised children in the After School/ Project Cariño program with presents.



The start of the journey during the Los Posadas event.



The maintenance "elves" put up beautiful decorations.



The Pre-K plays reindeer games at their Holiday Program.



Kids crafting at the After School / Project Cariño party.



Gingerbread house fun at the After School Christmas party.



LEER made a Christmas tree from books for KIDSPACE.



Pre-K sent their special elf visitor back to the North Pole.



The Christmas store elves helping "shoppers".

# Father (Father Figure)-Daughter Dance



On Friday, February 14, we gathered for a special Father (Father Figure)-Daughter Dance, hosted in partnership with Nueva Vida and our other nonprofit partners on campus. The Father-Daughter dance was a dream of Sixto Aguirre, a community support worker. Sixto is using his journey in recovery to help others and wanted to provide a way in which fathers could express to their daughters how special they are and to bring a positive experience to this community. Huge thanks to the incredible community who

came together to make this special night possible: Nueva Vida support group, Calianns Creations, DJ Danny, United Way, CASA First, Sandoval Photography, Porchlight Health, La Cocina, La Fonda, and Alonzo Desserts for food, DNA flowers, Fairview flowers, and so many others.

The evening was a joyful celebration of the important role fathers and father figures play in their daughters' lives, and fathers and daughters were able to create lasting memories, through music, dancing, and shared

moments. The event provided a beautiful night for connection, laughter, and quality time, while encouraging fathers to stay actively involved in their daughters' lives and affirming the value of strong, supportive family relationships and the gift of community.

We were grateful to collaborate with Nueva Vida and our campus nonprofit partners to make this meaningful (and fun!) Valentine's celebration possible.

## Meet the New LEER Director

### Welcome Marcela Casaus to McCurdy Ministries



LEER (leh-EHR, to read), a Children's Literacy Program for the Española Valley, works to improve children's reading proficiency through access to books and with vetted and trained caring adults (Reading Buddies) who read one-on-one with elementary students.

The LEER program welcomes new Program Director, Marcela Casaus. Marcela will be joining Kercida, LEER Director, in this beautiful program which is dedicated to sharing the love of reading with children and youth.

Marcela is a certified elementary school teacher who has worked with children and youth in Northern New Mexico for many years, including as a librarian at the El Rito Public Library, where she ran the Summer Reading Program, and as the Garden Manager/Mentor and Programs Director for the Northern Youth Project. Before teaching, she was certified in Organic Horticulture at UCSC through the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, in which she learned holistic land management and sustainable agricultural practices. She has a passion for connecting her love for children and the natural environment to help them thrive in natural learning spaces, perpetuating curiosity and a desire to learn. She wants to help children discover their gifts, talents, and potential to motivate them to love learning and reading. We are

excited to have Marcela be a part of McCurdy Ministries!

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Kercida McClain for her dedication and hard work in helping launch the LEER program at McCurdy. Her vision, leadership, and commitment have been instrumental in bringing this important program to life and creating new opportunities and resources for the families and community we serve. We are deeply grateful for the time, energy, and passion she has invested to help make this program a success. Kercida and Marcela will make a great team! We pray as Kercida continues to grow LEER with our exciting intern program this summer. This program is a perfect continuation of the McCurdy ethos of raising, mentoring and training young leaders.

# McCurdy Campus News



As McCurdy Ministries moves into the future, we are having to say 'goodbye' to a few buildings which have served the community so well, but are in declining condition. The 'Library Annex' (the original home of the School of Practical Nursing) was demolished thanks to a grant, along with the Wood Shop by the dorm. Each building on the McCurdy campus has lived what seems like multiple 'lives' where ministry really did drive the uses of the buildings. There are countless nurses who have shared that they received their training in the School of

Practical Nursing, which is just one of the amazing ways in which the ministry of McCurdy School continues and lives on through their service. We are moving forward with plans to demolish two final buildings which are important parts of the McCurdy history: Blake and Herrick. We will be offering ways in which we can remember and honor the important history and impact that these places have had in so many lives over the years. Please stay tuned for updates on these projects.

## Keep Pushing, Keep Working, Keep Hoping

### A Historic Reflection By Dee Dee Heffner

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare (good) and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.—Jeremiah 29:11*



Since its beginning in October 1912, what is now McCurdy Ministries has been blessed by women and men who have answered God's call to serve in beautiful Northern New Mexico and who sought God's guidance for how best to share the light of Jesus with the good people who live here.

On our campus (starting in 1915), buildings were erected to meet needs as they arose. Over the years, however, as needs for ministries changed, those leaders sent by God, praying for wisdom to use resources wisely, often repurposed buildings for more current ministries.

It became clear in the 1940s that there was need for medical care at the McCurdy Mission, and a clinic was built and staffed by nurses. In September 1946, Dr. Sam Ziegler and his wife, Isabel, arrived. Sam had just returned

to the U.S. from running MASH units during WWII. Sam wrote, "The clinic building hospital soon became a very busy place, with ill McCurdy students and patients from the community." He shared stories of delivering babies and of emergency surgeries, with Isabel and missionary nurse, Lillian Moffatt, as helpers. Within a year or so, it was clear that a larger hospital was needed, and in 1948, a large mission hospital was built on the west side of Española. Today, that hospital is a full-service, highly-rated public hospital.

Since 1948, the clinic building has been used in many ways: as a health clinic for McCurdy students, site of the Title I reading program, classrooms for middle school students, the high school yearbook lab (complete with darkroom), and the elementary library. Its most significant use was as the home for the McCurdy School of Licensed Practical Nursing (LPS) from 1968–1984, which was one of the first and largest post-secondary education options in the area. When Northern New Mexico Community College was established, the McCurdy LPN program was given to the college.

Soon, our beloved clinic which has served many purposes in ministry will be decommissioned and demolished. God has had and has new plans for good, and He promises a future with hope. May each of you know the good plans God has for you and be assured of a hope-filled future.

# Blessing Our Community

The ministries and programs of McCurdy Ministries continue to make a meaningful impact in the lives of families throughout our community, and that work is made possible through the generosity of supporters, partners, and generous donations. From urgent household needs to ongoing donations that support multiple programs across campus, there are many ways to help provide essential resources and opportunities for the families we serve.

## Prom Pop-Up Event

We are also gathering prom dresses and men's suits for our upcoming Prom Pop-Up Event with United Way, which will give local students the opportunity to choose formal wear for their special night at no cost. These donations help ensure that every student can attend prom feeling confident and celebrated. United Way will be offering hair and makeup services for youth!

## Urgent Needs at the Family Resource Center

The McCurdy Family Resource Center continues to serve many families in our community and several essential items are currently in urgent need. Donations of toiletries (shampoo, soap, dental items, and deodorant) are especially helpful right now. We are also seeking everyday household necessities including toilet paper, paper towels, and cleaning supplies. These simple items make a meaningful difference for the families who rely on the McCurdy Family Resource Center for support and resources. New underwear and sock donations are always needed.

# McCurdy Foundation

## A meaningful way to leave a legacy through giving

The McCurdy Ministries Foundation is another way to help continue the ministries and programs of McCurdy Ministries. The McCurdy Ministries Foundation was originally created in 1971 to support students at the McCurdy Mission School. It has continued to be active through McCurdy Ministries by currently supporting students in the Española Valley. The Foundation is managed by a 10 member Board, 7 of whom are volunteer board members and 3 staff members.

One of the services provided by the Foundation is to provide an annual scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 to a student in the Española Valley. There is also a fund to help staff with emergency needs.

Scholarship information has been sent to the three

## Ongoing Donation Needs Across Campus

Our ministries rely on the generosity of supporters year-round. The **Light House** is always grateful for donations of clothing (all sizes), shoes, and household items to help families who are rebuilding and stabilizing their homes. The **Diaper Bank** welcomes donations of baby and adult diapers, wipes, and cloth diapers to assist families caring for infants and loved ones. We also offer formula and baby/ toddler feeding items.

The **Enchanted Forest of Reading** is always looking for books for readers of all ages to help inspire a love of reading in children and families. Our **Food Pantry** continues to collect canned goods and shelf-stable foods to help meet the growing need for reliable meals in the community. In addition, **Scrappy Sewing** and **Children's Ministries** welcome donations of fabric and craft supplies that help power creative projects and learning opportunities for children.

## Shop Our Amazon Wish List

Another easy way to support McCurdy Ministries is by visiting our Amazon Wish List, where you can find specific items that are currently needed for our ministries and the Family Resource Center. Your purchase will be sent directly to support the programs and families we serve, making it a simple and impactful way to help meet real needs in our community. To shop the items on our Amazon Wish List, visit our website: [www.McCurdy.org/GIVE](http://www.McCurdy.org/GIVE).

church-related private schools in the Española Valley, the McCurdy Charter School, and Española High School. The Scholarship Committee will review applications and make a selection by April 30. The winner of the scholarship will be announced at the appropriate school's Awards Assembly. The foundation is another wonderful way in which to support the ministry of McCurdy Ministries with your gifts.

Interested? Please email Tiffany Hollums at [thollums@mccurdy.org](mailto:thollums@mccurdy.org). Visit our website for more information about a zoom with McCurdy Ministries with Texas Methodist Foundation on ways to leave a legacy through the McCurdy Foundation. The Foundation is a meaningful way to leave a legacy with giving.

# Nonprofit Community on Campus



One of the most exciting developments on campus continues to be the growing "Village of Casitas" of partner nonprofits. Our nonprofit partners meet monthly to coordinate services, share resources, and collaborate on events. Partners consistently express gratitude for the opportunity to serve families together in one shared and supportive environment. Current Campus Partners include:

## **NEW: DreamTree**

Serving transitional youth from Taos, DreamTree has moved into two offices in the Teacherage and will offer meeting space for professionals helping to support youth who are in transitional living situations.

## **Gerard's House**

Gerard's House is a nonprofit which provides free grief support for children, youth, and families. They offer weekly grief support groups on

Monday evenings for children and adults. This fall, Gerard's House also offered a grief group with elementary students at the McCurdy Charter School. Tiffany worked with Gerard's House to provide a grief group for kids and teens at the Charter School. She will be working with Gerard's House to offer a grief group and summer camp at the Española High School.

## **New Vistas**

This disability advocacy organization meets with families twice monthly and offers classes to support families navigating disability services.

## **Northern Youth Project (NYP)**

NYP is a nonprofit focused on encouraging youth to return to the land and cultural roots of agriculture, ecology, and renewable practice. Located in the CASA Casita, the NYP partners with McCurdy on the State Trails Grant, supporting campus-wide planning for trails, gardens, orchard renewal, acequia use, and Kidspace. NYP also planted a starter wheat garden near the Family Resource Center. NYP and McCurdy recently were awarded a Trails Grant through the State of New Mexico and a Youth Advisory Council has had its first meeting with youth from each organization on campus to help dream and plan trails and green spaces on campus.

## **National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA)**

The NLBHA office is in the Family Resource Center Building and supports interns and advocacy work. NLBHA has created a welcoming and cool space with a popcorn machine and couches for teens and young adults.

## **CASA First**

Located in the Development Building, CASA First has offices, a child resource room, and hospitality space. CASA continues to actively refer families to the McCurdy FRC. The FRC staff is thankful to refer youth and children to the CASA Abregio mentoring program. There are many families who are supported by both CASA and FRC.

## **Las Cumbres Grandparents Raising Grandkids (GRG)**

The GRG casita is open nearly daily, offering consistent support to grandparents raising grandchildren. They also offer weekly support groups for Grandparents.

## **United Way**

The United Way organization offers multiple weekly classes including Youth Leadership, art workshops, tutoring, and the Future Leaders program.

# Ambassador Program Kickoff

## **Be a part of our inaugural volunteer Ambassador Program!**

The McCurdy Ambassador Program is preparing to start in 2026! The first training for the program will be happening Saturday, June 20th. There is still time to sign up for this exciting new program.

These new McCurdy Ambassadors will visit local churches in their area and display information at their

respective Annual Conference Meetings. The shared information will help increase knowledge and support of McCurdy Ministries throughout the country. We need people like YOU to help us continue to be the "light in the valley" for the children, youth, and families in the Española Valley.

If you are interested in learning more about this program or possibly volunteering to serve as a McCurdy Ambassador, contact Sarah Allen at 928-691-6471 or via email at s.k.allen2227@gmail.com. Visit our website for more information: <https://www.mccurdy.org/ambassadors>.

# Volunteer at McCurdy This Summer

There are so many ways to use your gifts



New Mexico United Women in Faith volunteering in the Enchanted Forest of Reading, leveling and organizing books.

Summer is a wonderful time to make a difference at McCurdy Ministries and volunteers are a vital part of the life and work of our campus. Whether you have a single day to give, a few weeks, or are looking to serve as part of a Volunteer in Mission (VIM) Team, there are meaningful opportunities for everyone to get involved.

Volunteering at McCurdy can take many forms. Individuals may serve daily, short-term, or long-term, depending on availability and interests. For congregations and groups, VIM Teams offer a powerful way to serve together in mission. Teams can be large or small, young or old, and shaped around the gifts and skills of those who participate. There

is a wide variety of ways to support this vital ministry.

Several areas where volunteers are especially needed, include:

- A new painting project to give this campus an update! We will be painting almost every building!
- Leveling books for the Enchanted Forest of Reading
- Serve as a Reading Buddy for a child during Camp Stars
- Sorting and organizing clothing for the Light House
- Sewing book bags and blankets
- Assisting with the food and diaper pantry
- Helping with maintenance of campus buildings

- Mowing and caring for campus green spaces
- Serving as a volunteer Librarian for the Enchanted Forest of Reading
- Every act of service—big or small—helps support McCurdy's mission and strengthens the community we serve.

## Get Involved

To schedule a volunteer team for 2026, please contact our Volunteer Registrar, Eufemia Romero, by phone at 505-753-7221, ext. 210 or by email at [eromero@mccurdy.org](mailto:eromero@mccurdy.org). We invite you to prayerfully consider how you or your group might serve at McCurdy Ministries this year.

## McCurdy Awarded Trails Grant

We are thrilled to announce that McCurdy Ministries, in partnership with the Northern Youth Project (NYP), received a \$49,500 Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant from the State of New Mexico.

Initially, this grant will be used for a planning/engineering phase to look cohesively at our campus to see how we might enhance the trails, utilize our acequias, renew current remnants of the orchards, and begin a kid's garden as well as planting sustainably and educationally. NYP also planted a starter garden across from

the Family Resource Center which is currently growing wheat and will become a wonderful garden this spring!

One important aspect of this grant is that a Youth Council is formed with two representatives from the partner organizations on campus to help with research, planning, and design of this project. The youth will be helping to complete an oral history with former staff, alumni, and the community to help preserve the history of this special place. They will help to design new trails, gardens, and green

spaces. They will also be working to catalog trees from the former orchards on campus while learning about the rich history of the McCurdy campus and the Española valley. The first meeting of this Youth Council was Saturday, March 21st with nine youth/young adults. Sessions will be facilitated by Juntos Consultants and on this first meeting the youth were taken on a guided tour of campus. It was a deeply meaningful day as the youth were guided to dream about the future of this important place and history.

# A Letter from a Project Cariño Family

I am writing because my son had the privilege of being in the Project Cariño Program. He was referred to the program in second grade when his father and I separated. Separation can have negative effects on children, including increased risks for emotional and behavioral problems, and lower academic performance. My son was most definitely experiencing all of the above.

The prior Director, counselor Amanda, began seeing my son consistently and continued to work with him until her departure in 2023. After Amanda's departure, Bill, the Project Cariño Director and therapist, gladly stepped in and took over in counseling. Bill worked closely with my son and continued the therapeutic work that he needed. After 5 years in the program, my family felt that my child was ready to exit the program and allow the amazing counselors to work with other students who needed their support. The road was rocky and there were many times that we felt hopeless, but with Bill's support we continued to push forward. As my son matured, he began to utilize the skills and strategies taught by the counselors in

the Project Cariño Program. The convenience of having this program in our school was key. Bill was able to collaborate with teachers to monitor my child's progress. Bill always went above and beyond to ensure my child was seen, heard, and understood. He taught my child how to effectively advocate for himself and know when to disassociate from uncomfortable situations.

Project Cariño was a vital instrument in my child's success and ability to exit the program. We are forever grateful for the patience, support, and endless care Bill poured into our family.

Although the five years were a rough time, we are grateful and blessed that Project Cariño was an available resource for us. This program proves to be a crucial resource for McCurdy Charter School and its students.

Respectfully,  
A Grateful McCurdy Parent

## Sign Up Your Child for Camp Stars

What if your child did not just have fun this summer, but also returned to school better prepared for a great year? What if your child's reading improved this summer? Camp Stars can make that happen!

Camp Stars is a 7-week summer camp for rising **1st-6th graders**, run by McCurdy's LEER Literacy Program. This year's camp will run from **June 9th-July 23rd**. Camp will be held Monday-Thursday from 9:00am-3:00pm. Extended care is available from 8:30am-4:30 pm.

Each day is filled with hands-on arts experiences with crafts, music, and drama; recreation and outdoor play with games and team-building activities; and free-play

adventures that spark imagination and friendship.

Campers will also benefit from one-on-one Reading Buddies (trained volunteers), literacy-focused activities to strengthen academic skills, and fun lessons on healthy habits, nutrition, and self-care.

The cost is **\$150 for the entire summer**. Scholarships are available.

Registration opens March 14, 2026. Visit our website to learn more, and to register your child online:

<https://www.mccurdy.org/campstars>

## VIM Volunteers Needed This Year

There are just a few weeks remaining this year where we are still in need of support from Volunteer In Mission (VIM) Teams. These teams play a vital role in helping us continue our work and serve the community in meaningful ways. Teams are able to stay in our campus dorms and live on our beautiful campus! Interested in bringing a team or volunteering? Please email Eufemia Romero at [eromero@mccurdy.org](mailto:eromero@mccurdy.org).

Available weeks include:

- May 17-23

- July 5-11
- July 12-18
- July 19-25
- August 16-22
- August 23-29
- August 30-Sept 5
- September 27-October 3
- October 25-31

We would be grateful for any groups able to join us during this time!