

A young boy with curly hair, wearing a white school uniform over a blue and white checkered shirt, is sitting at a table. He is smiling broadly and waving his right hand towards the camera. In the background, other children are seated at tables, and there are colorful lights, suggesting a festive or social gathering. A red plate with food is visible on the table in the foreground.

# FRIENDS OF CARITAS CUBA

## 2018 Impact Report

Improving the Lives of Cuba's Most Vulnerable

Friends of Caritas Cuba (FCC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and the official U.S. representative of Caritas Cuba, the only independent, multi-service, country-wide provider of critical social services on the island. This report details our impact in 2018.

# In 2018, We Served



**4,699**

at risk youths



**1,277**

adults with HIV/AIDS



**3,877**

youth and young adults  
with disabilities



**12,536**

humanitarian assistance  
& health services



**18,193**

senior citizens



## THE NEED

By any measure, Cuba is a poor country that struggles to provide housing, transportation, and other necessities to the majority of its citizens. More than 70% of families in Cuba live on less than \$1,000 per year.

Cuba's challenged economy, diminished trade and subsidies from Venezuela, aging population and frequent hurricanes stress the nation's ability to care for its most vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, disabled children and adults, and at-risk youth. The humanitarian needs of the Cuban people are severe, and have continued to rise in the last few years.



## THE ROLE OF CARITAS CUBA

Caritas Cuba was established by the Catholic Church in 1991. While Caritas Cuba is the humanitarian and social services arm of the Catholic Church in Cuba, programs are available to anyone in need, regardless of religious affiliation, political beliefs or sexual orientation. The 2019 annual budget of Caritas Cuba is \$1.2 million. It has regional offices in all 15 provinces of Cuba, and counts on the support of more than 3,500 trained (unpaid) volunteers.



## SENIOR CITIZENS PROGRAM

**Caritas served 18,193 elderly persons at 703 sites.**

This program serves thousands of seniors who are very poor and often live alone. Their monthly pensions average \$8 to \$10 per month in U.S. dollars. This vital program provides seniors with hot lunches, laundry services, sewing workshops, gardening and exercise classes, and special outings. For those too sick to attend a program location, Caritas volunteers deliver food to hundreds of bedridden seniors each week.



## **DISABLED CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS PROGRAM**

**Caritas served 3,877 disabled children and young adults (and family members) at 102 sites.** This program is focused on children and young adults who are challenged by physical and mental disabilities, including Down syndrome, autism, Prader-Willi syndrome, cerebral palsy, and other physical or motor disabilities. The workshops and classes help participants learn skills to live as independently as possible and to achieve their maximum potential. Workshop topics include cooking, hygiene, social relations, computing, art, dance, music, sports, and theater. Services also include therapy and family training sessions, assistance with basic needs, at-home meals, and transportation. Individual autism spectrum-specific educational programs and training for family members are also provided. Caritas Cuba also works to raise awareness about these issues and advocates to fully integrate the disabled into their local communities.

# AT-RISK CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS PROGRAM

**Caritas served 4,699 at-risk children at 243 sites in marginalized neighborhoods.** This program serves children, adolescents, and young people at risk of social exclusion and their families. The aim is to support the development of their values, habits, and skills and help them become positive agents of change in their own communities.

All programs include family meetings and other activities encouraging positive experiences in human relationships, both with peers and with people of other generations; developing skills that enhance relationships within the family; and finding healthy ways to spend free time and have an impact on others. The after-school program includes: music, dance, theater, art workshops, sewing, embroidery and computer classes. English as a second language is also offered, along with tutoring, spelling, and homework help. In the town of Colon, the after-school program also offers dinner every night during the school year plus laundry services and access to shower facilities.



## PERSONS WITH HIV | AIDS PROGRAM

**Caritas served 1,277 individuals (and family members) at 35 sites.** The program organizes regular workshops, mutual help groups, and English and computer classes. Caritas also distributes information on prevention with families where one or more members is living with HIV/AIDS.

## HUMANITARIAN & HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAMS

**Caritas served 12,536 persons.** The program provides emergency assistance to thousands of families when the island is struck by hurricanes or tornadoes. This includes first responder activities such as emergency food, water, transportation, hygiene products and blankets. Second stage response includes providing families with construction and roofing material, mattresses, tarps, clothing, and cooking supplies. In addition, Caritas volunteers and staff help rural families clear their land after a natural disaster.

The program also serves persons who **urgently need** medicines, transportation to a hospital, food, wheelchairs, hygiene products, beds, bedding, and clothes. Many of these cases are referred directly to Friends of Caritas Cuba in the U.S. and we work with volunteers to deliver the needed medicine or other resources to Cuba.

## THE ROLE OF FRIENDS OF CARITAS CUBA (FCC)

FCC was established in 1999 as a committee of Catholic Charities in Boston, and today is the **primary funder** of Caritas Cuba. In 2005, Friends of Caritas Cuba (FCC) incorporated as a U.S. 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. In 2018, Friends of Caritas Cuba provided Caritas Cuba with **\$653,940**, representing **more than 50%** of its operating budget and impacting the daily lives of tens of thousands of impoverished and marginalized Cubans. Answering needs that are both chronic (for the elderly, disabled and at-risk children) and acute (from hurricanes and natural disasters), FCC's support is vital to Caritas Cuba and the people of Cuba.

## FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Friends of Caritas Cuba send funds to Caritas Cuba through the Vatican Bank. FCC has a twenty-year history of success, operating with total transparency and complying with all laws and regulations of both the United States and Cuba.



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