

**HOLY CROSS RETREAT CENTER  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Initially approved by the team July 2011, reviewed in fall each year with the Definitory**

*Updated September 2, 2020*

(Yellow highlights are recent changes)

**Mission Statement:**

*Holy Cross Retreat Center is an oasis of prayer, personal growth and hospitality located near Las Cruces in southern New Mexico. While focusing on Catholic spirituality, Holy Cross respects people of all faiths, leading and hosting various retreats and conferences, as well as private retreatants in our hermitage. Through Franciscan Hospitality we welcome those needing temporary lodging during medical treatment and immigrants in transition. Outreach includes parish missions and days of prayer, weekend assistance in parishes, and a prison ministry.*

**Vision Statement:**

*The Gospel and the Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi call us to welcome all in spiritual or physical need. In that spirit, Holy Cross Retreat Center focuses on Franciscan Hospitality and Service. We see Christ in those who come for spiritual enrichment, whether within the Catholic, Christian or other religious traditions. Those coming for planning find a place of peace and comfort. As we are able, we provide facilities that permit a safe, caring space for those seeking personal or physical renewal, and hope for those who are in need. As St. Francis was called to “build my Church”, we through the Holy Spirit will support discernment and strive to expand our outreach to the poor and our capacity for midweek and non profit groups. “If you need and want to come to me for the sake of your soul or for some consolation, come.” (from letter of St. Francis to Brother Leo.) “May we be able to follow in the footprints of your beloved Son Jesus Christ.” (from the Letter to the Entire Order.)*

**I GOAL: We will enhance the relationship with those who come to the Retreat Center and expand our outreach efforts**

**Strategy 1. Staff is to be attentive to the needs and concerns of groups and individual retreatants.**

**Currently and on an ongoing basis we:**

- Interact with each group throughout their stay, have a staff member present each day whenever possible.
- Respond to requests when a group is on site in a timely manner.
- Incorporate suggestions from evaluations, respond to physical plant needs, seek input from groups for future plans.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
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Hold regular training for staff and develop handbook	Business Mgr & Director	After strategic plan is finalized	Staff has a common vision	Retreatants are made to feel welcome and staff is responsive to needs	Tom & Debbie went to national conference, IACCA in Oct. 2019. Started discount buying, could save \$20,000+ per year. Set up regional meetings of retreat leaders.
Diversify the menu based on type of group and length of stay	Business Mgr and Head Cook	Ongoing	Wider variety of foods,	Standard menus for various needs and type of group	A computer is set up near the kitchen to help speed and save menus

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## Strategy 2. To expand and improve communication with groups and individual retreatants

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Continue bimonthly e-newsletter, annual report in early December with appeal, June newsletter mailed to those without email with retreat schedule.
- Prepare and distribute an annual report with progress on projects and other aspects, including finances.
- Distribute evaluations to each group; read and incorporate suggestions where feasible.
- Send out contracts and information at least 6 months ahead of time. Verify that contracts are signed and returned within a month or so.
- Respond with interest to inquiries and initiate contact if needed.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Look for opportunities for positive media exposure for Retreat Center	Director	Ongoing	Articles and news stories	HCRC becomes a community name and destination	We have a contact with LC Diocese Communicaions, setting up Facebook
Continued upgrading of the web site, make web site ready for mobile phones, add new retreats and materials as needed.	Webmaster and Director	Early 2019	More hits and requests	Better communication and easier payments	New web sites designed and being used.

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### Strategy 3. To host public events that will welcome a variety of people to Holy Cross

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Host Transitus each year (a ceremony recalling the death of St. Francis of Assisi) with OSF leaders.
- Work on expanding and improving the Franciscan Festival of Fine Arts each Labor Day weekend.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Day programs and more outreach for Senior Citizens. Consider Days of Recollection during some seasons.	Business Mgr, Director	Fall 2019	Series developed to engage senior citizens, by contacting health & community groups.	Contact with retirees who live in the area	Christian Unity service, Receiving relics, Earth Day
Consider a family picnic day each summer to invite wider community in to enjoy or revisit Retreat Center.	Staff	Summer 2019 or 2020	Fun time for those who enjoy HCRC, an opportunity for people to return	Maintain contact with friends and supporters, renew contact with those who came in the past	Planning a training and picnic day together this summer with staff
Design locations for a Prayer Walk with a guide and reflections	Business Manager	Spring 2020	Locations ready and guide printed	Help for private retreats, others, destination for relics	Two statues prepared and guide printed, consider adding 15 <sup>th</sup> station

#### Past Accomplishments:

- Dedication of new Chapel February 22, 2015
- Installation of stained glass and celebration of artwork for new chapel March 12, 2017
- 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary open house June 18, 2017
- Promote all vocations during 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Tom's ordination July 2019, raised \$9,000, 3 videos of vocations

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### Strategy 4. To expand outreach into the local dioceses and beyond

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Assist in local parishes, on diocesan commissions, and offer Parish Missions, retreats, and weekend calls on site.
- Increase contacts with NMSU and other non-profits to better use facilities midweek.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Work with diaconate programs in Las Cruces and El Paso as requested	Director and	ongoing	Regular groups of LC and 3/year with El	Ongoing ministry to them	We host El Paso and Las Cruces deacons retreats.

	Program Coord.		Paso	beyond formation	
Organize formation and education for the local area	Retreat dir.		Develop Catholic lay formation opportunities, more religious groups	HCR as locus for LC lay formation program,	Joint Confirmation retreat, at a discount
Offer monthly confessions and mass and occasional retreats at two local prisons, coordinate with Kairos.	Retreat director	Fall 2019	Ministry to those who cannot go elsewhere	Prisoners feeling cared for and spiritually enriched.	Tom goes each month, planning a retreat again. Kairos Outside came for a retreat in 2019

**Past Accomplishments:**

- Co sponsored adult formation series with LC diocese July 2016, LC diocese deacon formation here through 2018.

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**Strategy 5. To maintain a strong volunteer program that addresses a variety of needs.**

**Currently and on an ongoing basis we:**

- Host volunteer groups of students from Las Cruces Catholic Schools to do yardwork.
- Hold regular appreciation dinners or picnics for active volunteers.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Develop volunteer training and coordination, background checks, and books and resources for children as of part the asylum seekers hospitality	Staff plus volunteers	August 2019	Better accountability and service to the immigrants.	Immigrants who are appreciated and refreshed, and volunteers who are more prepared.	Asylum seekers stopped coming in July 2019
Meet regularly with Good Works and other volunteer groups to develop priorities and provide support.	Retreat Director, Business Manager	Ongoing	Orientation Regular Meetings Appreciation	Volunteers who have a sense of the mission and who feel useful, supported and appreciated.	Tom or PD meets with them, and Tom prioritizes & approves projects
Work with the volunteers to raise up more leadership as needed.	Carl and Director	Spring 2020	Confident and reliable leaders	Long term opportunity for volunteers and assistance for HCRC	Carl is training Ruben and Ralph to lead, credit card
Set up workshop for Good Works volunteers to accomplish a variety of tasks	Carl and Good Works	Spring 2019	Solicit donations of tools, set up electrical and other requirements	Workspace that facilitates the successful completion of projects	Many tools and machines donated. Actively used!

Seek out master gardeners and people to assist with caring for landscaping	Staff	Summer 2020	Organized consistent volunteers, NMSU, or Elizabeth Grinell	Landscaping more carefully cared for and beautifully	
Serra Club helps with Art Festival and other events on occasion	Tom	Ongoing	We have volunteers for dining room & beer garden	Trained and pleasant people to greet visitors.	They continue to do so.

**II GOAL: We will expand the range of Franciscan sponsored activities both on campus and in the area**

**Strategy 1. To plan more Franciscan sponsored retreats, events, and interaction with OFS**

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Listen to what people are requesting, consult, and organize spiritual renewal experiences.
- Host Franciscan themed Retreats and Days of Reflection on a regular basis.
- Reach out to Secular Franciscan groups in the region to invite them here regularly
- Place Franciscan materials in the rooms and on the outdoor bulletin board to be more visible to guests.
- Plan and lead pilgrimage to early Franciscan missions in New Mexico each year.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Include promotion for Secular Franciscans on the web site and in newsletters.	Director	Ongoing	Web link and OFS info in newsletter	Lay Franciscan involvement more obvious	Not done yet, but could be soon. David Rall can help.
Develop new Franciscan themed retreats and invite other Friars to lead them. Contact OLG Province.	Director	Fall of 2019 for possible retreats in 2020	New retreats developed for 2020	To have a wider representation of Franciscan Spirituality for retreatants to benefit from	New retreat on Laudato Si! For 2020
Develop training and retreats on Franciscan spirituality for staff and volunteers	Director and Business Mgr	For 2020	During the staff picnic	Better sense of Franciscan charism	

**PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome for HCRC benefactors Sept 27-Oct 7, 2018 led by Fr. Tom with a group of 20 or so.
- Early Franciscan Missions in New Mexico pilgrimage each year since 2011.

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**Strategy 2. To increase a sense of service to those in need in light of our Franciscan charism. Currently and on an ongoing basis we:**

- Provide free room and board for medical patients, asylum seekers and immigrants fearing deportation.
- Host 2 Recovering Alcoholic Retreats annually.
- Provide discounts for those who want to use HCRC and have limited finances.
- Support CAFé community organizing to respond to local justice issues.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Explore possibility of retreat for volunteers involved in Asylum seekers ministry	Director and Program Coordinator	For 2020	Speak with volunteers here and with Annunciation House in El Paso	To provide respite and appreciation for volunteers	Cancelled because no more asylum
Continue to provide discounts to groups and individuals as needed	Staff	2022	Discounts are given to those groups and individuals who need them and are reviewed annually	Ministry to those who can't otherwise be served	About \$36,000 last fiscal year
Develop outreach to the homeless through NM Family Services to provide temporary shelter for those who have been vetted	Director	2020	People in need will be stabilized and in their own low income housing after their stay	10-15 per year	We have had 5 as of August 2020
Tithe 10% of our income for discounts, donations, and value of free hospitality.	Director	2020	About \$70,000.00 worth of contributions	Share what we have with those who are in need, in Franciscan spirit	\$70,000.00+ last fiscal year.

**Past Accomplishments:**

- Hosted over 1,213 asylum seekers from 2016-2019
- Hosted medical patients 594 days from 2016-2019
- Hosted 2 Recovering Alcoholics retreats annually since early years of the retreat ministry
- Have provided \$85,155 in discounts from 2016-2019

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**III GOAL: We will establish a sound financial base and will continue to upgrade the buildings and grounds**

**Strategy 1. To maintain the buildings and property and make improvements**

**Currently and on an ongoing basis we:**

- Make repairs and additions to facilities by Good Works and other volunteers when possible.
- Use evaluations to pinpoint areas of concern and have maintenance address those concerns.
- Work with HCRC Foundation to identify projects which can be funded.
- Assess, utilize and adapt current spaces to our changing needs.
- On a regular basis inspect rooms, flip mattresses and note any repairs needed.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Pave parking lots	Frank Chavez	2022	All gravel portions paved	No erosion and better safety	Paved close in lot to the loading dock. \$77,000.
Put in place technology and office infrastructure that supports growth.	Business Mgr	Fall 2019	Stable network and computers	Ease of operation	David Rall has installed a central disk, new computers for Debbie & Tom, helping with web page.
Investigate the feasibility of adding solar panels for the retreat center	Staff	Summer 2020	Check options with the Province or on our own	Using more sustainable energy	Province paying for 180 solar panels, operative as of August 2020.
Investigate the feasibility of building a second hermitage.	Director, Business Mgr. and Good Works	Fall 2019	Those who seek solitude will have adequate space	Provide for present and future needs of retreatants	Money is saved, could be projected for fall '20. Delayed because of COVID19

**Past Accomplishments:**

Please see list of projects and improvements at the end of this document.

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**Strategy 2. To accent the beauty and sense of hospitality and peace of the property**

**Currently and on an ongoing basis we:**

- Plant new flowers annually in flower beds, paint as needed, keep sidewalks and outdoor areas clean and presentable.
- Decorate Hacienda during fall and Advent.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Paint the railings, support, and windows of retreat building	Volunteers and staff	Dec. 2019	Old paint removed and new paint done	Maintain good care for property	Windows cleaned and painted, railings and

					stair steps painted 8/20
Plant roses near OLG garden	Tom Brumbaugh	Spring 2020	New roses planted and maintained	Enhance beauty of that area	
Investigate landscaping middle of parking lot across from Chapel	Director, Business Manager, Frank Chavez	Spring 2020	Look at different options and attach costs to each plan	Make a decision by Spring of 2020	
Create a compost system to utilize waste which can then be added to beds and landscaping	Tom Brumbaugh, Good Works	Spring 2020	System to collect green waste from the kitchen and grounds in place	Compost system creates soil amendments that are beneficial to grounds and reduce the waste sent to landfill	Operational but sporadic because of COVID – not enough organic matter available
Upgrade irrigation zones in front of Hacienda, courtyard between conf. rooms and courtyard around gazebo	Good Works, Director	Spring 2020 – Fall 2020	Design zones, trench, lay pipe, test system and begin usage	Grass is watered regularly and stays green.	Completed on east and west sides of the Hacienda/office summer of 2020

**Past Accomplishments:**

- New signs installed to guide people to the property and various areas were placed in Fall of 2017
- New bulletin board was constructed by Good Works volunteers in 2017.
- St. Francis statue repainted and relocated to gazebo in 2020
- Mary, Undoer of Knots grotto in place 2019
- Prayer Walk brochure created 2020

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**Strategy 3. To increase income and use of the facility**

**Currently and on an ongoing basis we:**

- Maintain good rapport with current groups and seek out others.
- Find ways to use the facilities more during the week and weekends by booking multiple groups and finding midweek groups

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Visit with Chamber of Commerce, White Sands, other non profit organizations.	Business Mgr, Program Coord. and Director	Ongoing	3 more multiday retreats, eg for seniors, and other day groups	Less down time with no one here.	More multiple groups on weekends,



Develop a matrix for analyzing guest days	Business Mgr.	Spring 2020	More accurate awareness of how we can use space	Ability to budget better and use facilities more fully	
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**Strategy 4. To have diversified sources of income to augment the income of the retreat operations**

**Currently and on an ongoing basis we:**

- Sustain good relations with the Holy Cross Retreat Foundation with solid proposals, good communication and reporting.
- Sustain Franciscan Festival of Fine Arts as a means of income and good promotion.
- Have an annual appeal in December and Raffle ticket sales during Franciscan Festival.
- Expand and maintain gift shop.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Submit grant requests to other sources	Business Manager and director	Each year	As needed	More new income	Received \$20,000, Federal grant, \$2,000, Save the Children in 2019; PPP grant 68,000, Anthonian 6,000, Federal grant \$3,600 in 2020
Rental of room to Steven Taborda during college and Tina Stanley for 5 months for writing sabbatical	Director				Income as of 8/20 is \$4,200. Going forward \$350 per month

- Recent grants of \$3,000 over two years from National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, \$10,000 from Estrellas Brillantes, \$18,000 from Anthonian Association, \$20,000 Federal grant, \$2,000 Save the Children grant
- Holy Cross Foundation has provided grants to improve infrastructure, remodel retreat rooms and other buildings, purchase new equipment and pave the road among many other projects.

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**Strategy 5. To prepare for the stable operation of HCRC in the years to come.**

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Update operational manuals and job	Business	Summer	Manuals created or	Good records for	Many done but still need

descriptions	Mgr and each area	2019	revised	upcoming years	some
Develop a succession plan to be sent to the Province to assist in choosing Director.	Staff and advisors	Feb.2018	Description of the vision and goals here and needs for a Director	A director who can sustain the vital ministry for years to come.	Fr. Tom Smith was approved as director till 2022.
Evaluate essential functions of current office staff and train to reallocate duties performed by the current Director and determine whether additional staff will be needed	Staff	2019	Better sense if another person is justified and what the job description would entail by 2020	Adequate staff in preparation for transition to a new director by 2021	Position offered to Gino Correa OFM, waiting for response. David Rall is helping with IT.
Contribute surplus funds to the Province each year	Staff and volunteers	August each year	\$75,000.00 per year	Financial assistance for province needs	Sent \$70,000 in fiscal year 2019-2020
Meet as with advisors to consider five year plan for HCR Foundation grants to upgrade and expand as warranted.	Staff and advisors	Fall 2020	Plan will foresee needs and be ready	Building and operations well funded.	
Project trends in hosted and sponsored retreats to better prepare for future needs	Director and Business Manager	Fall 2020	Have a plan in place for decline or increase in certain types of retreats	Seamless transition to more or less income from different types of retreats	

### Strategy 6. To respond to the Corona Virus interruption

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Cooperate with the Province and other retreat centers on safe practices	Director & business manager	Summer 2020	Good communication and careful planning	Ideas interchanged	At least four for five discussions with leadership, more advisors
Sustain contact with hosted groups	Margaret	Fall 2020	Support for them and rescheduling when possible	Groups return as soon as possible	Personal calls by Margaret and Fr. Tom
Revise sponsored programs to meet the need and reality of distancing	Director	Summer 2020	Outreach during time when groups aren't	8 Hybrid retreats	4 online retreats as of 8/1 and 5 more planned. One

			coming		in-person retreat in July 2020.
Accurate and interesting communication	Office Staff	2020	Enhanced contact	Those on our data base and in area are informed	Facebook postings, two newsletters to all emails in our database, raffle tickets and donation request
Special projects while we have time	Staff and volunteers	2020	Railings and poles around retreat rooms painted, deep cleaning, irrigate lawns evenly	Fresh look when people return	Basement cleaned for the first time in 50 years!!! Railings painted, and many smaller projects
Develop health and safety protocols for housekeeping, cooking and retreats. Stay informed about changes to state policy and adjust as needed.	Director and Business Manager	Mid 2020	Prepare for people to be here	All plans by the state are implemented	Protocols established, revised as recommended by state
Identify areas where expenses can be reduced	Staff	Late 2020	AC off or adjusted, walk in refrigerator and ice machine shut off, projects delayed,		Reduction of expenses to ease costs