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LSA Family Health Service Welcomes Pope Francis to East Harlem

*A family will represent the agency at the blessing at Our Lady Queen of Angels
Paper flowers by LSA mothers will be displayed at the school*

September 9, 2015 – LSA Family Health Service, founded by the Little Sisters of the Assumption, is proud to join Catholic Charities of New York in welcoming Pope Francis to New York City.

The Garcia family – Martina Juárez, her husband Manuel Garcia, two of their children and their grandson – has been invited to represent LSA and its work in the community, at Pope Francis' reception and blessing at the Our Lady Queen of Angels school in East Harlem on September 25th. They will be among approximately 200 guests, mostly immigrants and refugees served by Catholic Charities of New York, attending the reception. The family has been a recipient of services from LSA Family Health Service for over 10 years and has benefited from the food pantry, advocacy services, early childhood programs and education programs.

"For over 50 years, we have been carrying out the mission of our founders, the Little Sisters of the Assumption, to uplift the most vulnerable among us," said Traci Lester, CEO of LSA Family Health Service. "We are honored to welcome Pope Francis to East Harlem, and to share with him our commitment to serving our neighbors."

Sr. Susanne Lachapelle, a nurse with LSA Family Health Service who has dedicated herself to the care of mothers and infants in East Harlem, will also be in attendance at the Pope's reception, along with Traci Lester. In addition, other staff from LSA will be on hand to assist on the day of the visit, and paper flowers made by mothers at LSA will be on display as centerpieces for the tables at the reception.

Pope Francis' connection to the [Little Sisters of the Assumption](#) dates back to his infancy. Sisters from the Little Sisters order in Argentina provided care to his mother and to him and his sister when they were infants. He has maintained a close relationship with the order, and in 2010 he presided at the celebration for the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Little Sisters in Argentina.

St. Annette Allain stated:

"Pope Francis has a first-hand appreciation of our Mission and Spirituality from an early age due to receiving home care services from the Little Sisters of the Assumption and also from the involvement of his parents and grandparents in our groups. It is my belief that his sensitivity to the poor and immigrant population grew from his own personal familial experience. We have been called to become family among the very people Pope Francis loves - those living on the margins of society. This is a privileged encounter of mutuality, believing that the power of growth is in relationship. There is no greater gift than Pope Francis' visit to East Harlem as the Little Sisters of the Assumption celebrate our 150th Anniversary."

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LSA Family Health Service (LSA), founded by the Little Sisters of the Assumption in 1958, is a nonprofit, neighborhood-based organization that works with the people of East Harlem and beyond to address the physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual dimensions of family health. Our home-based and center-based programs are designed to empower those who are most vulnerable and who have least access to the basic necessities of life, in the conviction that the entire community grows when individuals and families are affirmed in their own dignity. Learn more at www.littlesistersfamily.org.