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Notes from the Heart

News from Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

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Archbishop of New Orleans

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Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans provides life-giving programs that deliver health and human services to the most vulnerable and needy throughout 8 civil parishes in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. We serve people regardless of race, religion, age, ethnicity or economic status.

The Engine that Organizes Love

Recently, I attended the Annual Gathering for Catholic Charities USA in Charlotte, NC. Catholic Charities from across the country convened to advance our work, strategize about poverty reduction, and celebrate our shared identity. The theme of the conference was "Setting the Pace: Changing the Course." It is an action oriented theme and one that our local agency takes to heart. Our work must set the pace for positive change in our world.

A surprise speaker via video message opened the conference – none other than our Holy Father, Pope Francis himself! In a candid message, he spoke directly to those in ministry with Catholic Charities in the U.S.! His friendly and pastoral tone struck my heart and brought me close to tears. Seated at his desk from the Vatican, he spoke to us as if he were truly in the room with us. Pope Francis thanked us for our service but more importantly, he challenged us to go out into our world to serve the least of our brothers and sisters. "You are the engine that organizes love," Pope Francis remarked. "See leadership as service, practice mercy... Keep the poor before you in all that you do." He again reminded us that he would rather have a Church that is dirty from being out in the world helping those in need, than a Church that is sickly from remaining cloistered.

Upon returning from the conference, I have encouraged our staff and board members to listen to Pope Francis' message and share it. His message is directed to those working in Catholic Charities, but really can be applied to all of us. We are all part of the engine that organizes love and good works in our world. Engines only work when all parts work in harmony - they are made up of many moving parts that in turn move us forward



in the call to serve those in need. Through our interactions with one another, we must challenge ourselves to act courageously and justly, and keep the momentum of love going! You can watch and listen to Pope Francis' message he shared with us here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzxhS2JbcA0>. I hope this message will inspire you to join us as we continue to "Set the Pace" and "Change the Course" in our local communities and our world.

As we approach the holiday season and we begin to count our blessings, please be sure to pray for those in ministry with us, those being served by us and those who support our work. I count you, a supporter of Catholic Charities, as one of our many blessings. Thank you for being part of our mission to organize love in our world, our archdiocese and amongst one another. May you and your family be blessed this holiday season!

Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.

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President/CEO

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News from Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

INSIDE:

- Small Blessings Make the Holiday Season Bright
- AHCA Hits Halfway Mark!
- Celebrate Adoption!
- Meet Catholic Charities: Food For Families/Seniors
- And More!

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Activists and Angels at the St. Elizabeth's Guild Luncheon

St. Elizabeth's Guild honored twelve Volunteer Activists at their annual luncheon on October 23, 2014. Proceeds of this wonderful event are dedicated to Catholic Charities programs serving our youth, including St. John the Baptist Head Start, Independent Living Skills Program and Padua House, demonstrating once again, that the members of the Guild are truly angels to so many in need in our community. Many thanks to the Guild for their continued support and congratulations to this year's Volunteer Activists, pictured above: Steve Gleason, with (in back from left to right) P.K. Scheerle, Louie Roussel, Faye Young, Kay Mitchell, Mary Ellen Miller, Michael Maenza, Ana Eller, Lana Duke, Ronnie Briggs. Pictured at bottom left: Hall of Fame Inductees Phyllis Taylor and Jimmy Fitzmorris.



Small Blessings Make the Holiday Season Bright



For many families served by Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans, the holiday season is made brighter by the generosity of Holiday "Angels" right here in our community. Through our Thanksgiving Food Basket and Christmas Gift Drive, the holiday wish lists of families being served by Catholic Charities' programs

are fulfilled by individuals, families and local businesses who know that a little help at the holidays can make a big difference.

"When you think about if you had to choose if you are going to get groceries or go to the doctor or buy Christmas gifts, this kind of help really makes

a difference," said Cheryl Cabes, a long-time donor to our Christmas Gift Drive with her volunteer group, the DEB Homemakers Club of Metairie, La. Founded 40 years ago, DEB Homemakers Club looks forward to helping fulfill a family's Christmas Wish List every year at this time.

"We like giving through the Christmas drive because we know exactly where the gift is going," Cheryl says. **"By the grace of God, we have been blessed. We feel it is our calling to help those less fortunate and make Christmas a little happier for them."**

The club members will take up a collection or host an auction or a community sale in order to raise the funds to purchase all the items on their family's list. They enjoy putting together this annual donation, and although they feel there is little stress to putting this together, they believe when everyone does something small, big changes can be made.

"What you give doesn't have to be large – a small token from a lot of people makes a huge difference," Cheryl said. "It's a great way and an easy way to get involved in the spirit of Christmas!" **Thank you to the many individuals, families, community groups and businesses who join us in this effort year after year! You are truly a blessing to our families in need at this special time of year. For more info on our Holiday Gift Drives, contact Volunteer Services at 504-310-6961.**

AHCA Hits Halfway Mark!

As of November 1, 2014, our volunteers have helped us raise \$868,317 to support the programs and services of Catholic Charities through the Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal (AHCA) – that's 54% to our \$1.6 Million goal! We're more than halfway there and we couldn't do it without your prayers and support! Please continue to pray for our volunteers and the people served through the many services and programs our annual campaign supports!

AHCA Fast Facts

- >> The Archbishop's Community Appeal (ACA) was started in 1966 by Archbishop Philip M. Hannan in the aftermath of Hurricane Betsy, and in response to the overwhelming needs of the poor in New Orleans.
- >> In 2012, the ACA campaign changed its name to the Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal (AHCA) to honor the life's work of the late Archbishop Hannan.
- >> The AHCA raises undesignated monies to fund the health and human services programs of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans. Undesignated monies are critical to Catholic Charities because they allow us to respond nimbly and effectively to the needs of the community in the wake of disasters.
- >> Catholic Charities is COA (Council on Accreditation) accredited. We deliver quality, professional health and human services that adhere to the nation's best practices standards.

\$1.6 Million



Pictured: "Coach" Eteldridge Sanders and Melisa Jack of Independent Living Skills Program with NOCMCA's Adam Graff, Doug Tillman and Mark Plaideau.

Catholic Men's Clubs Unite for ILSP

Every year, the New Orleans Catholic Men's Club Association (NOCMCA) brings together Men's Clubs from across our archdiocese for a day of family fun and fundraising through their annual softball tournament. When Mark Plaideau, current president of NOCMCA, saw a report by WWL-TV's Bill Capo on Independent Living Skills Program's (ILSP) need for donations to help teens transition out of foster care, he knew where he wanted proceeds from this year's tournament to go.

"Many of us didn't know about this program and didn't realize the challenges these foster kids face," said Doug Tillman, Board Member and Past President of NOCMCA. **"NOCMCA is so very proud and humbled to help with such a worthy cause."** NOCMCA donated \$3,000 raised through the softball tournament to the Independent Living Skills Program as well as a van full of household items like pots, pans and blankets for the young adults in the program! NOCMCA is currently planning their 2015 softball tournament. For more information on NOCMCA and how to get involved, contact Doug Tillman at 504-208-0125.

Celebrate Adoption!

November is Adoption Month



Pictured: Danna Cousins, Director of Adoption Services, with baby Grace!

Please join us in remembering birth parents, adoptive parents, individuals that are adopted, and everyone that is touched by adoption this November during National Adoption Awareness Month!

Over the years Adoption Services of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans has experienced many changes in regard to domestic and international adoption. One prospective adoptive family, Shannon and Kevin, contacted Adoption Services in 2006 for adoption home study services to prepare to adopt a child from China. They anticipated receiving a referral for a child within a year. However, China began to face many changes and families began to experience longer waits for referrals. No one knew how long these delays would be, but Shannon and Kevin remained committed to the child that would one day call them mommy and daddy. Adoption Services updated their adoption home study every year with hopes of a referral coming very soon.

Finally, in January 2014, the news that Shannon and Kevin had antici-

pated since beginning the home study process in 2006 was received – their child could come home with them! In May, 2014, Shannon and Kevin travelled to China where they met their daughter, Grace. Yes, 8 years after Adoption Services began the original adoption home study, Shannon and Kevin became parents to sweet, beautiful Grace!

Kevin and Shannon share that they feel very blessed to be Grace's parents and knew the moment they saw her that God picked the perfect child for them.

Since January Adoption Services has placed 10 infants with adoptive families and more than 400 individuals touched by adoption have received direct services through the program. Adoption Services of Catholic Charities offers placement and assistance with both domestic and international adoption with support and services for both birthparents and families considering adoption. To learn more about Catholic Charities Adoption Services, visit www.adoptnola.com or call 504-885-1141.



Meet Catholic Charities!

Going to work every day at Catholic Charities is more than a job – it's a ministry of the heart! Meet the people serving in our many programs providing hope and help each day.

Meet Donald Molizone, Driver for Food For Families/ Food For Seniors! Donald has served with this Catholic Charities program for the past 3 years, first as a food box packer and now as a driver.

"I'll make four years on Febraury 2nd!" Donald remarks.

A native to New Orleans, Donald's home-base with Food For Families/Food For Seniors is the Townsend Warehouse in New Orleans East. Daily, he makes his rounds to distribution sites throughout New Orleans and Jefferson. He not only transports the food boxes, but Donald and his fellow team members also individually pass out hundreds of food boxes to the seniors and mothers with infants this program serves each day.

Seeing the difference the food boxes make to the people really makes the difference for Donald. "I like being able to put smiles on their faces," Donald says. "You can see that the food really helps them out a whole lot!"

Food for Families/Food For Seniors has over 300 sites throughout the state of Louisiana providing monthly supplemental food boxes to low income seniors and mother's with infants. Last year, Donald and the Food For Family/Food For Seniors staff distributed over 30 million pounds of food to those in need. As thoughts turn to holiday foods and feasting, we are thankful for the tireless efforts of our Food For Family/Food For Senior staff providing food and nutrition assistance all year round!



Pictured: Donald Molizone of Food For Families/Food For Seniors distributes a food boxes to a client.