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Notes from the Heart

News from Catholic Charities Archdiocese 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 Power of Charity and Compassion

Dear Friends of Catholic Charities,



We come to you this month with a renewed spirit and sense of purpose. Our Catholic Charities Archdiocese New Orleans staff just returned from the

annual Catholic Charities USA conference, hosted this year by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Catholic Charities USA has hosted this gathering of Catholic Charities professionals, volunteers, and partners from across the country for more than 100 years. Attendees share innovative ideas, struggles, resources, and inspiration through our shared Catholic identity.

The theme of the conference – In Charity, a Home for All – could not have been more appropriate for this gathering held in recently disaster-struck Texas. As we all know too well, disaster recovery is an immensely difficult task as an individual, family, or community. Throughout my years of service and growing up on the Gulf Coast, what strikes me every time a natural disaster hits is the willingness of others to help. You all have gen-

erously given to Catholic Charities through your gifts of prayer, monetary donations, or time, even as many of you or your loved ones have been personally affected by these storms. The mobilizing and coming together of individual Catholic Charities agencies across the country shows the true strength and power that comes from charity and compassion. This recent conference facilitated that sharing and reminded us that our work in charity is part of a larger ecclesial mission.

Thank you, again, for your support throughout this challenging summer. My prayers are with you all to maintain your safety through the end of this trying hurricane season. When facing difficult times, I hope it lightens your burden a bit to know that you are a part of a community – In Charity, a Home for All. No one should have to bear their burdens alone and by participating in the work of Catholic Charities, inspired by our Catholic identity, you make sure no one has to.

Let us continue to pray to Our Lady of Prompt Succor for safety and protection for the remainder of Hurricane Season 2017! Your generosity and support are deeply appreciated.

God bless you,

Sr. Marjorie Hebert, m.s.c.
Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.
President/CEO

You're Invited to Share the Journey

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." – Luke 6:31

Pope Francis, the United States Council of Catholic Bishops, Caritas, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities USA have joined together to launch the "Share the Journey" campaign, which invites everyone to share the journey of migrants and refugees forced to flee their homes by walking with them in prayer and support.



You can support the campaign on social media by sharing ways you share the journey of migrants and refugees, posting photos of yourself with outstretched arms and using the hashtag #ShareJourney.

To learn more about the campaign and access resources, visit www.sharejourney.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

- October 20** Symposium for Systemic Change, 8 AM at the Tracy Center
- October 24** Peace Prayer Walk, 6 PM at All Saints Parish
- November 15** Volunteer Information Session, 4 PM
- November 28** iGiveCatholic

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All Souls' Day Prayer Requests

This All Souls' Day we will join our brothers and sisters in prayer to commemorate the faithful departed in our community. We invite you to visit www.ccano.org/all-souls to share your prayer intentions or the names of your loved ones for our Catholic Charities family to remember.

Something Exciting is Coming Soon!

Be on the lookout – we're releasing our annual report for the 2017 fiscal year next month! This year's report will detail how Catholic Charities offered help and hope to more than 76,000 individuals in need last year including the disabled, the addicted, the displaced and so many more. When you receive your copy, we invite you to explore the stories and reflections included inside.

annual report

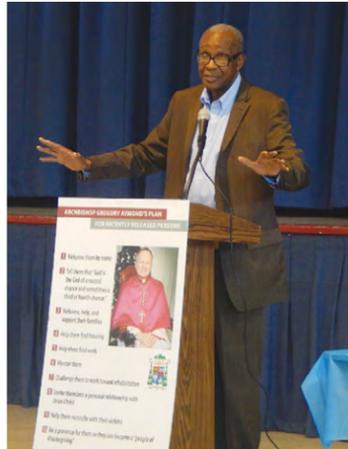
Working for Justice: Annual Symposium for Systemic Change

Currently, the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. With over 2.4 million American citizens behind bars, the issue of mass incarceration bleeds into almost every facet of society. Billions of dollars are spent every year to simply house inmates.

In 2012, the average cost per inmate was around \$31,000. However, high recidivism rates in every state lead many to believe that incarceration in its present form is not truly rehabilitating prisoners.

Louisiana, known as the world's prison capital, is particularly affected by mass incarceration. With 78 percent of the Louisiana State Penitentiary's prison population being black and 16 percent of all state offenders being jailed for drug-related charges, it's clear there are structural injustices adding to the issue of mass incarceration.

Ronnie Moore, Program Director for Catholic Charities' Cornerstone Builders, a re-entry program based on rehabilitation through service, believes, "Mass incarceration is the final chapter in the struggle from slavery to this day."



Imprisonment hurts individuals, but also hurts those around them. Families grow distant, finances suffer and children can be scarred for life. Further, when a prisoner is released, the challenges they face immediately upon release are sometimes more challenging than imprisonment. Homelessness, drug abuse and joblessness will all influence the potential for an individual to re-offend.



The first 72 hours of an individual's release are perhaps the most crucial period in rehabilitation. More often than not, prisoners are released with little to no resources.

Catholic Charities' Re-Entry 72 program aims to immediately give emergency housing, employment and support to prisoners re-entering society so as to keep them from re-offending. With over 60 individuals being helped every year, the Re-Entry 72 program sees how direct support and rehabilitation can chip away at the recidivism rate.

Along with the Re-Entry 72 program and other justice and employment services, Catholic Charities and program coordinators work tirelessly to bring legislative change to the Justice System.

Every year, Catholic Charities hosts a symposium that brings together individuals who are passionate about changing the world we live in through restorative justice.

Symposium for Systemic Change & Criminal Justice Reform

On October 20, 2017, Catholic Charities of New Orleans and other community partners will host the annual Symposium for Systemic Change & Criminal Justice Reform.



Various esteemed community and spiritual leaders will lead talks about how to implement structural change, while open discussions will allow for passionate attendees to engage with others.

By the end of the day, we hope to attain an actionable plan for systemic justice.

The symposium will have sessions for both community leaders and students who

wish to become engaged in the fight for criminal justice reform. All sessions will take place at the Tracy Center, which is located at 1800 South Acadian Thruway in Baton Rouge.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Angela Wattler at 985-966-3846 or SystemicChangeSymposium@gmail.com.

To learn more about Cornerstone Builders and Re-Entry 72, visit www.ccano.org/cornerstone.

Respect for Life Begins at Home

In October, we celebrate Respect Life Month and recognize the dignity of life from conception to natural death. In order to create a culture of dignity and respect for every human life, we must also create a culture of peace, understanding and forgiveness.

Catholic Charities' Isaiah 43 Parenting and Mentoring program seeks to do just that. The program's mission is to strengthen and support families to bring about change in the culture of our society. By building attitudes of respect, understanding and cooperation, Isaiah 43 is also building an inherent respect for all forms of life in families, churches and communities throughout the area.

The mentoring component connects youth and young adults ages 10-18 with a role model who addresses their emotional and spiritual needs. The mentors and their mentees work together toward a culture of respect for human life by respecting themselves and treating others with dignity.

The parenting component offers parents a supportive environment to share and learn from each other, building a network of support. Each parenting workshop is based on building respect and cooperation among family members. Topics explored during the sessions include the purpose of parenting, active communication, parenting styles, non-violent discipline, cultivating a spirit of forgiveness and more.

A small group of parents at St. Rita School in New Orleans have seen the positive effects of this program first hand. For the past three years, Isaiah 43 has been working with school administrators and teachers to hold parenting workshops there.

The school's philosophy is to build up the whole child by educating them as well as offering opportunities to grow emotionally, socially and in their faith. Working hand in hand, Isaiah 43's parenting workshops help parents grow in the same way. This allows families to work together, build each other up and treat each other with dignity and respect, which promotes respect and life first and foremost in the home.

Last school year, Acquanetta P. Spears, a staff member at St. Rita, stumbled upon an Isaiah 43 parenting session and asked about the program. Interested in their mission, she came to another meeting.

Now, she attends every meeting and has become the program's biggest advocate on St. Rita's campus. She's learned better ways to communicate with the children, specifically to help them hear rejection without feeling rejection. The program, she says, makes families stronger by helping both the parents and the children individually.

"If I had known what this program was all about and what they could do, I'd have invited people sooner to be involved and engaged. As a parent or an adult, it's a place where you can go when you don't know where to go for help," she says.

Valincia Joseph echoes Ms. Spears' praises. Ms. Joseph is a 62-year-old single grandmother raising her granddaughter, a seventh grader at St. Rita, by herself. She also works and attends classes at Delgado to receive a degree in retail management.

"I have a lot going on, and I needed a new out-

look," she says of herself before attending Isaiah 43's parenting workshops. "I needed to learn more about who I was so I could be a better parent – a more active parent."

Ms. Joseph has been part of Isaiah 43 at St. Rita for three years now, and she firmly believes the program is God at work in her life. The biggest lesson she's learned is how to be an open, active parent. Instead of scolding her granddaughter, she speaks softly, but firmly. This leads to open discussions and deeper understanding.

"She's a teenager now so she tries me every day," Ms. Joseph says of her granddaughter, laughing. "But I don't turn my back on her. We're doing this together."

Another lesson from Isaiah 43 that she believes is vital to her success is to simply listen. "The more I listen, the more I learn and it makes me a better person, a better parent," she says. "I still have a lot of listening to do – to my granddaughter, to these sessions, to God."

As this 6-week parenting series comes to a close at St. Rita, Kristina Gibson, the program's Director, hopes the parents will take what they've learned to heart and bring the values of understanding, forgiveness, respect and open communication into their home lives.

In this way, we can start to build a culture of peace and a respect for life one family at a time.

To learn more about Isaiah 43 Parenting and Mentoring, visit www.ccano.org/isaiah-43.



Project SAVE: Offering Protection and Peace of Mind

In the United States, more than 20,000 calls are placed to domestic violence hotlines daily. An average of twenty people are physically abused by an intimate partner every minute, equating to over 10 million domestic violence victims each year.

For the past ten years, Louisiana has ranked in the top ten most dangerous states for women. Yearly, over 5,000 women living in the state, including Jane, experience some form of domestic violence.

Jane, a college student, suffered physical abuse at the hands of her boyfriend. Even when she became pregnant, the abuse continued. Finally, Jane had enough and fled her abusive relationship, seeking help from Catholic Charities' Project SAVE (Stopping Abuse through Victim Empowerment).

Project SAVE assists Jane and other survivors of domestic violence residing in Orleans Parish to obtain free emergency legal representation. Services include temporary restraining and protection orders, temporary child support, custody, use of property and more.

Jane came to Project SAVE seeking help to acquire a civil restraining order against her abuser. Project SAVE attorney Allyson Tuttle helped Jane through several court appearances and hearings, finally obtaining a temporary restraining and a protective order for both her and her child.

Now full of hope, Jane is on her way to finishing her college education. Thanks to Project SAVE, she and her daughter can live a safe, peaceful life.

To learn more about Project SAVE and the services they offer, visit www.ccano.org/domestic-violence-services.

CCANO Video Featured at New Orleans Film Festival

With the help of New Orleans photographer and filmmaker Claire Bangser, Catholic Charities recently released a short video entitled "Really Human," which details the journey of Ihsan Sharbah. Ihsan served as a translator, linguist and interpreter for U.S. forces in Iraq until the work became too dangerous. After he and his family were approved for refugee visas, they fled to the United States. They were surprised by what awaited them here but are now adjusting to their new life.

We are excited to share that the video will be shown at the 2017 New Orleans Film Festival! The video will be shown as part of the *Louisiana Shorts: Portraits* portion of the *Made in Louisiana* series, taking place at the Prytania Theatre from 5 – 6:45 PM on Saturday, October 14. Tickets are available to the public for \$13 and can be purchased at www.neworleansfilmsociety.org.

If you're unable to attend the festival, you can also view the video on our website at www.ccano.org/refugee-services/#really-human.



Holiday Help for Those in Need

You can be an angel to someone in need this Thanksgiving! During this season of giving, you can provide families in need with food baskets. Visit www.ccano.org/holiday to download the family adoption form and help someone in need have a wonderful Thanksgiving this year.

