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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.

## Serving the Least of Our Brethren

Dear Friends of Catholic Charities,

Please let me begin by thanking you for your support of Catholic Charities, or as Pope Francis referred to it during his 2014 Catholic Charities USA address, "the engine of the Church that organizes love."

It is true that Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans is part of a nationwide network of agencies that acts as the charitable arm of the Catholic Church. Impelled by the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, we strive to serve the most vulnerable in our communities, lift up voices less heard and empower the weak to foster a just society. In these summer months we observe and celebrate Memorial Day, Flag Day, Juneteenth and Independence Day, all holidays which celebrate the achievements and sacrifices made to move this great nation forward. In our recent call-to-action, we asked you to exercise your rights afforded to you under a representative democracy and contact your legislators in support of a state budget that funds care for individuals with disabilities, such as individuals served by our Padua and PACE programs. Thank you for your letters, phone calls and prayers.

As U.S. citizens, let us remember to not take our rights and privileges for granted! I was recently able to attend a naturalization ceremony. As 57 men and women representing 30 countries enthusiastically declared the Oath of Allegiance to the USA, I couldn't help but reflect on my own citizenship. When I speak the Pledge of Allegiance, is it just a recitation? Or am I truly pledging to fulfill the responsibilities that come with being a

U.S. citizen? The men and women receiving citizenship that day all endured unique hardships, days, months and years of paperwork and studying, and still persisted in their goal of becoming a U.S. citizen. I think on this moment when facing political challenges to respond to the call of Jesus to serve "the least of our brethren."



This summer, let us celebrate our forefathers, the fathers and father figures in our families and communities and, as always, our Heavenly Father. In a blessing, adapted from the Archdiocese of New Orleans, for Father's Day we ask –

*God our Father, grant that we, as their sons and daughters, honor and appreciate our fathers always with a spirit of profound respect. May the example and prayer of St. Joseph inspire them to live their vocation with courage. We ask that He grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Thank you, God bless you,  
*Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.*  
Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.  
President/CEO

## How to Help Families Separated at the Border

In the last 6 weeks, nearly 2,000 children have been separated from their parents at the Texas border. As a nation and people of faith, we must speak out for these children. Catholic Charities has been providing assistance to immigrants and refugees for more than 100 years by offering a wide range of social and legal services that help them get established in the community.

We are supporting Catholic Charities USA's campaign to collect donations on behalf of 21 other Catholic Charities agencies who are currently assisting unaccompanied children impacted by the family separation crisis. The president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, Sister Donna Markham, is on the ground assisting these families in McAllen, Texas. To find out more information about or to donate to the "Stop Family Separation" Campaign, hosted by Catholic Charities USA, please visit: <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/stop-family-separation>.

We recognize that protecting and securing our borders is important, yet we must advocate for just and compassionate policies that respect the life and dignity of each person. We hope you will join us in lending your voice, your prayers and your commitment to find ways to ensure the safety of refugee children, some of whom are babies and toddlers.

During this time, let us act with compassion and empathy, remembering Jesus' words:

**"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name, welcomes me."** (Matthew 18:5)

## SAVE THE DATE!

**July 31** Monthly Peace Prayer Walk, 6 PM at St. Louis Cathedral

**August 28** Volunteer Information Session, 4 PM

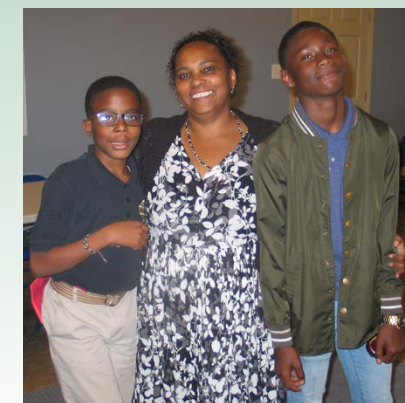
**August 28** Monthly Peace Prayer Walk, 6 PM at St. Cletus

[www.ccano.org](http://www.ccano.org)  
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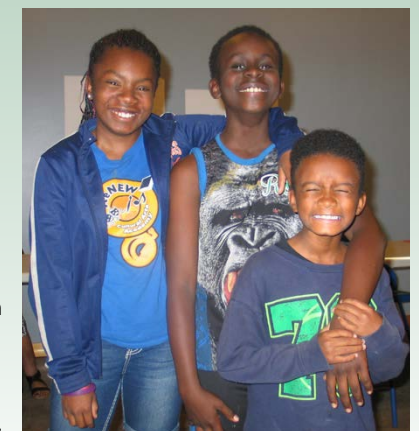
## Mentors Needed!

Isaiah 43 Parenting and Mentoring program is looking for a few generous volunteers to step up to the plate so each child enrolled can be matched with an adult mentor! Specifically, we have a number of young men



who are in need of male mentors. The program focuses on building community, strengthening relationships, goal setting and Christian values. Contact K. Patrick Kemmerly at [kkemmerly@ccano.org](mailto:kkemmerly@ccano.org) for more information or to sign up.

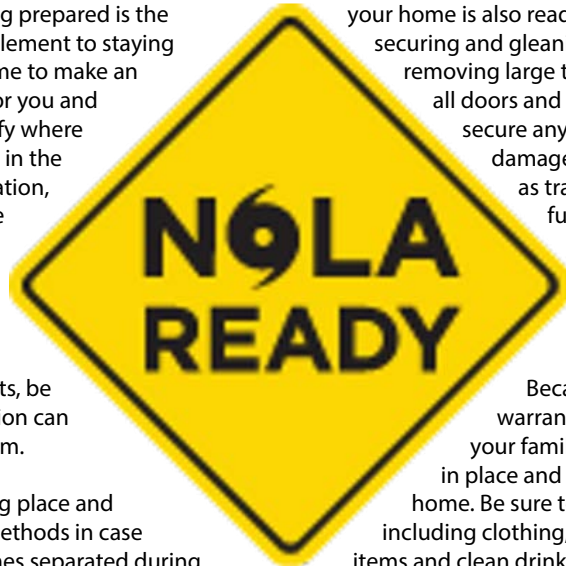
To learn more about Isaiah 43, visit [www.ccano.org/isaiah-43/](http://www.ccano.org/isaiah-43/).



# Be #NOLAReady This Hurricane Season

The 2018 hurricane season is officially here and being prepared is the most crucial element to staying safe. Now is the time to make an emergency plan for you and your family! Identify where your family will go in the event of an evacuation, which may include finding your nearest Evacuspot if you need the City's assistance in evacuating. If your family has pets, be sure your destination can accommodate them.

Establish a meeting place and communication methods in case your family becomes separated during an evacuation or during a storm. Consider designating an out-of-town relative as your family's point of contact. They may be easier to reach than someone who has also been affected by the storm.



Once your family's plan is in place, make sure your home is also ready. You can do so by securing and gleaning gutters, trimming or removing large tree limbs and securing all doors and windows. You should also secure any items that can cause damage in high winds, such as trash cans and outdoor furniture. Take care to dispose of foods that may spoil if power is out for a length of time.

Because not all storms warrant a mandatory evacuation, your family may choose to shelter in place and ride out the storm at home. Be sure to have enough supplies, including clothing, nonperishable food items and clean drinking water, to last each family member three days. Charge necessary electronic devices, such as cell phones and radios, beforehand and limit their use to conserve the battery life.

Additionally, you should prepare a disaster supply kit, including (but not limited to) the following items:

- Flashlight
- Radio
- Batteries
- First aid supplies
- Cash
- Copies of important documents (birth certificates, medical records, insurance forms, etc.)
- Medications

Visit [www.ready.nola.gov/stay-connected/](http://www.ready.nola.gov/stay-connected/) to sign up to receive emergency alerts and stay informed on evacuations orders, school closures, power outages and more. More information on preparing your family and your home for hurricane season can be found at [www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes).

Follow Catholic Charities on Twitter (@catholicitiesNO) and Facebook (Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans) as we share tips, resources and updates throughout hurricane season.

# Recovery Still Underway on the North Shore

In March of 2016, historic flooding ravaged areas of the North Shore, destroying homes and leaving residents with a long road to recovery ahead of them. As soon as the flood waters receded, Catholic Charities case managers were on the ground assessing the damage, distributing food, offering counseling and helping those affected begin to pick up the pieces.

Since then, Catholic Charities Spirit of Hope Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP) has offered more than \$2 million in services to those renovating, rebuilding and working towards recovery. Case managers continue to work with those who are still in need.

North Shore resident Debra Smith, who is elderly, disabled and lives alone, was one of those affected looking for assistance in the immediate aftermath. Wind-driven rain had left the roof of her home extensively damaged, which was in turn damaging the house's ceilings and insulation.

With a limited income and no means of transportation, she was forced to continue living there while mold and further damage began to spread.

"I knew that it needed to be repaired, but I just didn't have the money. I didn't know what to do – only to pray," Debra said.

About a month after the floods, FEMA representatives assessed the damage and added her information to a list of those looking for help. Luckily, she was then referred to Catholic Charities case manager Connie Bovington.

Connie worked with Debra to assess the damage and begin searching for both someone to fix it and a way to pay for it. Thanks to Connie's

persistence, Debra's prayers and a construction crew's hard work, Debra's roof was soon repaired.

"The construction crew they sent to do the work did a fantastic job," Debra said of the repairs to her home.

Soon after, it rained again. Debra anxiously sat in her newly renovated home and waited for the rain to come through her roof; when it didn't, she was thankful and overjoyed and all the work that had been done for her.

Debra was so moved by the generosity shown to her that she wrote a letter to Catholic Charities thanking the organization, Connie, the construction crew and all those involved in her recovery process!

"Working with this client was a joy," Connie shared. "She's just a sweet lady that is grateful for the help she's received."

To learn more about Catholic Charities' immediate response and continued long-term recovery efforts on the North Shore, visit [www.ccano.org/disaster-response-services/](http://www.ccano.org/disaster-response-services/).



Debra Smith (L) and Connie Bovington (R)

*Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us!*

## Head Start Students are Moving Up!

Last month, we celebrated our St. John the Baptist, Incarnate Word, St. Paul the Apostle and St. Mary of the Angels Head Start students

who are going on to kindergarten! Schulte Hall, where each Center held their own promotion ceremony, was decorated with balloons, flowers and banners.

Friends and families of the graduates watched them process under a beautiful archway and take their seats on stage. Younger students from other Head Start and Early Head Start classes performed songs and dances for the crowd.

The graduating classes also performed poems and songs, demonstrating all the things they've learned during their time in the Head Start program.

Finally, it was time to hand out the diplomas! Each student was called by name to receive their diploma from Rhonda Taylor, Catholic Charities'



Director of Early Childhood Education Services, and Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C., President and CEO of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans.

During their time in Catholic Charities' Head Start program, these students received quality early childhood education as well as health, social, mental health and nutrition services. Their parents were able to volunteer and participate in activities at the center.

It was wonderful to see how far each of these students has come, and we can't wait to see how far they'll go thanks to the education and services they received through Head Start!

To learn more about our Head Start and Early Head Start programs, please visit [www.ccano.org/head-start-program/](http://www.ccano.org/head-start-program/).



## PACE GNO CELEBRATES NURSING ASSISTANTS WEEK

Observed since 1977, National Nursing Assistants Week celebrates the selflessness, hard work and dedication that nursing assistants provide to their patients. At PACE (Program of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly), nursing assistants provide special care and attention to each participant, helping make the most of their time at the center. We are so grateful for the service of our nursing assistants and hope they enjoyed their National Nursing Assistants Week treats!



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT: ESL Instructor Claire Brooks

A few years ago, Claire Brooks, a now-retired Presbyterian pastor, was the pastor at a Chinese church in Kenner and wanted to do more for the immigrant population there. Already aware of the presence of an English as a Second Language (ESL) program at Carrollton Church of Christ, Claire began shadowing Catholic Charities ESL instructor Jenny Garrison after she retired from the church.

This experience provided Claire with a chance to hone her teaching skills and the encouragement she needed to dive in and start volunteering as an instructor herself.

For the past year, Claire and Jenny have been co-teaching a level one English as a Second Language class at Church of Christ. There are times that one will teach while the other walks around taking questions and offering help; there are other times only one is able to present and will teach alone.

Teaching the classes is exhausting, but exhilarating. "I come home from class and I'm drenched in sweat. You can't stand still; there's too much going on," she shares. "I get so energized – it's just the greatest experience."

Like most teachers, she enjoys watching students who were puzzled by a topic suddenly make the connection and understand the material. But the best part, she says, is watching students who speak different languages and come from different cultures speak to each other in English. Last year, an Arabic-speaking student and a Spanish-speaking student in Claire's class were discussing recipes and ingredients in English – their new common language.

Many of Claire's students work a full day at their job, sit through two and a half hours of ESL classes and then still have a long bus ride home.

"If people understood how hard our immigrants work at their job, at learning English and at learning more about the community and the culture, it might change some of their opinions," she says of her students.

To learn more about our English as a Second Language program, including how you can volunteer, visit [www.ccano.org/english-second-language-classes/](http://www.ccano.org/english-second-language-classes/).