



# Notes from the Heart

JULY 2015

## 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.

## Retreat from the ordinary—to reflect, renew, rejoice, return!

Dear friends of Catholic Charities,

During these recent weeks several people have asked, "Are you taking some time off from work? Are you taking some vacation time? Are you going to 'get away' for a few days?" Different questions but the same purpose—taking time away from the ordinary work day or the work week!

To date my answer has been "yes". I have taken time away from the ordinary, time to reflect, to renew, and to rejoice!

Vacation and retreat have similar meanings. To retreat and to vacation are both important forms of taking time, to spend time released from the responsibility of daily obligations.

My spiritual retreat was my time to spend most of the hours of a given day in quiet, in prayer and meditation, listening for the voice of God. During this time I came to realize how much 'noise' there is in most of our days. I rejoiced in the absence of those noises, often distractions, and the sheer sounds of hearing birds sing or leaves blowing softly in the breeze. And, yes there was the 'voice of God' answering my prayer, confirming His presence in my surroundings.



And yes, I have enjoyed some time away with a trip to visit family. This vacation time was spent joyfully catching up on family news, celebrating birthdays and holidays, enjoying summertime baseball, barbeques or cook outs, and even traveling to the beach.

Jesus offered us the example, **"He retreated from the crowds, and went fishing with the apostles". Jesus went to visit His friends, "Martha, Mary and Lazarus". Jesus, "went to Cana for a wedding feast"!**

I encourage each of us **to make time, 'to get away from the ordinary'** which can become burdensome. **Get away to reflect** on all the good and the many blessings that are ours. **Get away to renew** yourself so that you can **return rejoicing** in God's blessings!

*Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.*  
Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.  
*President/CEO*

## SERVE Reflection by Haley Pettingill and Zoe Venezia

Since the summer before our eighth grade year and up to now, the summer before our junior year, we have volunteered for Catholic Charities through their SERVE Program at Faith Bible Camp in Covington. Each summer has brought new experiences with the incredible children at the camp. Working with the campers has been extremely enjoyable and has opened new doors for personal self-discovery. Spending time with large groups of children has taught us how to handle stressful situations more adequately. We give our time by teaching them basic math, science and reading and these activities have also improved how we communicate with others. Working with SERVE has helped us make connections with students from different high schools and the campers from different social and economic backgrounds. We are constantly and happily surprised by how many new friendships we form through this experience. The SERVE experience brings its volunteers together, and we continue those relationships outside of the program.

One fond memory from this year is when we were

both placed with a dancing activity with kids of all different age groups. All of the kids were getting along, dancing together, and the older ones were helping the younger ones learn new dances. For the last song, they taught us how to perform new moves...including the "pin drop". Throughout the day, the entire camp gets together to pray and praise God before meals, encouraging us to grow stronger in our own faith.

Each child we have worked with over the years has profoundly touched our lives, and we hope that they feel the same way about us. Every year we take a day out of volunteering to gather with the SERVE Program Directors to reflect upon our experiences at Faith Bible Camp and to nourish our faith and to grow as young adults in God. Through our dedication to the SERVE Program, we have learned to respect, love, and treat all people with integrity.



## Peace Summit

On July 1 and 2, Isaiah 43 Parenting and Mentoring Initiative partnered with other community youth groups to sponsor the 2nd Annual Peace Summit and Basketball Tournament at Loyola. Four teams participated in the tournament and one youth leader and Isaiah 43 member Arriel Hollingsworth was honored with the Hebert Tennessee Leadership Award. For more information about how you can get involved in Isaiah 43, go to [www.ccano.org](http://www.ccano.org).



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### INSIDE:

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- CCANO and United Way
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*Congratulations  
to all of our 2015  
Head Start graduates!*



## United Way Donor Champions Catholic Charities

Ms. Ava Wichser Romair began her charitable giving through her employer's United Way campaign nearly a decade ago simply because she felt it was the right thing to do. "As a nurse, I have always been interested in working with people and giving back to the community," Ms. Romair continued, "I participated in giving programs throughout my early years and adult life. I wanted to inspire my children and help them understand what it means to be part of something greater than themselves."

Catholic Charities is a proud partner agency of the United Way and recipient of funds from their annual campaign. Ms. Romair, Clinical Coordinator of Regional Markets with Peoples Health, which also very generously supports the work of Catholic Charities, said she chose to give through her workplace United Way campaign because the automatic payroll deductions made it simple. She chose to designate her gift to Catholic Charities because she appreciated the diversity of programming and felt Catholic Charities

supported the most pressing needs in our community, Ms. Romair added that she "trusted the money was being used appropriately."

"You really don't know the value of these services until they are needed," said Ms. Romair. She never expected that after six

services he needed." Two years later he began to work with Catholic Charities Ciara House which provided him with permanent housing, case management, and mental health services. "It was wonderful!" Ms. Romair exclaimed, "I tell my story often during campaign time."

*"I wanted to inspire my children and help them understand what it means to be part of something greater than themselves."*

years of giving, it would be she and her loved ones benefiting from Catholic Charities' life-giving programs. In 2009 a close family member was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and living alone in a gutted house. "It was a very difficult time for him after Katrina. Unable to keep a job, moving from place to place, and unable to get the mental health

If you would like to designate a gift to Catholic Charities through United Way, ask your employer if they participate in the annual campaign, if they do not – start one! You can reach United Way of Southeast Louisiana at 504-822-5540 or Catholic Charities at 504-523-3755.



## Amerigroup volunteers bring joy to Baronne Street

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, a group of thirty-five enthusiastic volunteers from Anthem Government Relations team (known as Amerigroup in Louisiana) joined us for a Kick-off to Summer Celebration with the residents at Baronne Street Housing. The volunteers played games and shared stories with the children and parents. The volunteers also brought with them some wonderful new toys, a new DVD player with child-friendly movies, and much needed sports equipment for the 26 children currently residing at Baronne Street. Every child also received their own cinch sack filled with fun summer supplies including a hat, flip flops, sunglasses, a towel, and games. It was a lovely afternoon of building bridges and fostering understanding through play.

