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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.

More Than a Number

Dear Friend of Catholic Charities, Summer may seem like a time to relax, but we at CCANO have been busy. From high school students participating in S.E.R.V.E.

(Students Engaging in Reflective Volunteer Experiences) to our Head Start staff preparing for another fruitful year of learning, we are fulfilling our mission to serve those most in need in our community.

in such tangible terms of volunteer hours, amount of clients served, and the number of lives we have touched through your generous donations. However, these numbers are not as meaningful as the individuals we serve and their personal stories of struggle, hope, and resilience. We share their experiences so that you can get to know and love them as we have.



While January 1st is typically considered the start of the year, for many, August marks the beginning of a new period as the summer ends and school begins. As a former teacher and principal for Catholic schools, I cannot help but think of this time as a fresh start. In this month's newsletter, we are highlighting stories of emerging professionals, new programs, and young clients.

Join me in praying for renewed energy and giving thanks for our ability to care for each other in this season of beginnings.

God Bless You,

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

Summer is also the mark of CCANO's new fiscal year. While wrapping up our previous year's data, it is gratifying to see the impact we have made

FAITH IN ACTION

Since wrapping up another successful year of S.E.R.V.E. (Students Engaging in Reflective Volunteer Experiences), our high school student volunteers have shared what their experiences this summer have meant to them.



"At Greenwalt Adult Day Healthcare Center, I was out of my comfort zone at first, but my favorite part was getting to help others while also learning new things myself."

- Faith C, rising freshmen at Ursuline Academy



"Even though I had to wake up early on my summer break, I enjoyed volunteering at Ozanam Inn because it was filled with kind people wanting to help others."

- Tyler G, rising sophomore at Brother Martin High School



"This summer at SERVE was my first time volunteering, and my favorite part at Second Harvest was getting to work together as a community to help those in need."

- Hunter M, rising freshmen at Metairie Park Country Day School



"My favorite experience has been at PACE because I met a funny and outgoing woman who is 80 years old but seems 65. She makes me want to be like her when I'm older."

- Lena W, rising freshmen at St. Mary's Dominican High School

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Announcing CCANO's New Division Director

When Orville Duggan retired as CCANO's CAO after forty years of service, we had big shoes to fill. In promoting Martin Gutierrez from Division Director to COO, we started looking for a dedicated, creative individual with years of service and leadership experience to replace him. We are pleased to announce that Shaula Lovera will be our newest Division Director overseeing education, housing, immigration, refugee, domestic abuse, and deaf services.



Born in Colombia, Shaula came to New Orleans to earn a Master's in Public Health from Tulane because she wanted to address the root causes of health and social problems. She then became the director of the Latino Health Access Network, a Hispanic Apostolate program that provided services to increase access to healthcare.

became the Program Director for Spirit of Hope and led the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill response efforts, convening over 22 agencies to mitigate the impact of the oil spill disaster on Louisiana's fishing communities. Afterwards, she became CCANO's Emergency Response Coordinator and oversaw all disaster response, including the 2016 Floods.

Most recently, she has served as CCANO's Integrated Workforce Services Director. Shaula says, "I see my work not as a job but as a ministry and a vocation that allows me to live my Catholic principles while assisting others. I have been blessed to work with extremely dedicated and talented people at CCANO who have mentored and supported me. I look forward to mentoring new generations to support our mission."

After Katrina, she joined the CCANO team and deeply connected to our mission and values. In 2010, Shaula

Join us in congratulating Shaula Lovera on this well-deserved promotion.

# The Importance of Male Mentors

Several of our Cornerstone Kids and Isaiah 43 participants are without mentors because we need more male volunteers. Youth in mentoring relationships have better attitudes about school, fewer

instances of drug and alcohol use, improved relationships with family, and fewer absences from school. You do not need to change anyone's life to be a mentor; all you have to do is care.

*"I don't want to be one more person who disappears in their life"*



**KEVIN SHERMAN,**  
Cornerstone Kids Mentor

Growing up, Kevin did not have positive male guidance. He volunteers because he does not want teens to take the same path he did and emphasizes the importance of any parental figures already in his mentees' lives. "A lot of my kids only have a mom, and she doesn't want them living the street life. I tell my kids that their mom would do anything to keep them safe and happy, so they should honor her with respect and love. Let her be the reason you make better choices," says Kevin.

Kevin attends his mentees' games and school events and jokingly challenges them to "beat the old man" at a round of basketball because many of his mentees have not had joyful experiences with father figures. He shares, "I don't want to be one more person who disappears in their life. When they know you're not just spending time with them because you signed up for a program, they know you truly care for them. All my life, I was a taker. Now, I get to give back and have an impact on the direction of young people's lives. This work has been truly rewarding."

**GREG ROMIG,**  
Isaiah 43 Mentor

Greg has been working with his mentee on his future plans by focusing on Wendell's strengths – the arts – and is introducing him to professional graphic designers. Wendell and Greg made a mock business plan for a graphic design company that makes football jerseys and enrolled Wendell in a glassblowing and metalwork camp. Greg shares, "Last week I took Wendell to see the sculpture garden, ride bikes, and eat snowballs. We talked about which of the sculptures he could make and adjust in the workshop. It seemed like an average outing I've done countless times with my kids, but on the drive home, Wendell told me that it was the best thing he's ever done."

Greg has seen a marked change in Wendell's excitement about school and an increase in his confidence after learning and trying new things like cooking with Greg. He says, "I've been in Wendell's life for over a year. That consistency is building his ability to trust people despite other experiences he may have had." Greg has been blessed in his life and wants to share those blessings with others. This program is an opportunity for mentors to cultivate their relationship with God and fulfill their own vocation.



*"...Wendell told me that it was the best thing he's ever done."*

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Thinking about volunteering as a mentor? Sign up at [www.ccano.org/volunteer](http://www.ccano.org/volunteer) or call Emily Stieber at 504-310-6960.

Cornerstone Kids requires a year commitment of eight hours a month.

Isaiah 43 requires that mentors be Christian and commit to four hours a month for a year.



At CCANO, education is for people of all ages from all backgrounds, which is why there is an equal chance of seeing grandfathers and seven-year-olds in attendance at Immigration and Refugee Services Family Literacy Services (FLS). FLS is a free, open, and informal tutoring service that helps immigrant and refugee families in English language instruction focusing on schoolwork, Hi-Set preparation in Spanish, financial & computer literacy, naturalization preparation, and workforce readiness.

FLS began after clients expressed a need for a more flexible learning environment and trusted CCANO as an ESL leader. Our ESL classes, offered mornings and evenings in Jefferson and Orleans parishes, are incredibly effective, but the hours and frequency are not necessarily viable for some people who have children, are enrolled in school, or work multiple jobs. By removing as many barriers as possible, FLS creates an approachable environment where families can achieve their education goals together. Since starting in March, attendance has grown exponentially, proving the necessity of these services.

Located in Metairie next to the Hispanic Apostolate, children, teens, and adults can "drop-in" for any length of time on Monday and Thursday 3pm - 5pm and Friday from 10am - 3pm. Students who come to practice English work with tutors in a textbook, practice speaking, and use digital learning programs. Citizenship students work with tutors to learn U.S. History and prepare for their naturalization exam. Children work with tutors to do their written homework, read books, play educational games, and make arts & crafts.

The structure of FLS is unique with students and tutors working together one-on-one

or in small groups. This system is more individualized than most ESL classes, and students have the autonomy to dictate their goals. The majority of FLS students are already learning English but need extra practice, and our staff members have noticed quite a few teenagers in attendance.

Many of the young people who attend FLS are enrolled in public school by day but want to further improve their English skills. Because their parents do not speak English, their schools rely upon them to translate information to their parents. However, they are just learning English themselves, so the burden is even more difficult. FLS' flexible schedule and lack of age limit directly address this issue.

"We invite family members of all ages to participate. We want children to come in with mom and dad so that they can learn together, which means the family won't need to worry about childcare, and they have an opportunity to spend quality bonding time together. This also takes the pressure off of young children to interpret for their parents," says Sharon Moscoso, cofounder of FLS.

No day looks the same at the Family Literacy center in terms of how many students will attend, the age of the students, or what each student will need. However, there is one constant - each day at FLS, happy families grow closer to their educational goals with supportive volunteers by their side in a welcoming space.

To get involved as a volunteer, please contact Lea Robinson at [lrobinson@ccano.org](mailto:lrobinson@ccano.org) or 504-310-6893. If you know someone who could use these services, call 504-310-6860 for times and availability.

## IN HER OWN WORDS: A Head Start Mother Reflects

My relationship with CCANO began before my son was born because my mom worked for Catholic Charities Head Start centers for years. Never did I think that I would be in need of their services.

In 2012, I was accepted into nursing school. During the application process, each student was asked, "Who is your support system?" At the time, I did not understand why that question was important. Now, I realize just how necessary a support system is to success, and I am proud to say that CCANO Head Start has become a part of my family's success.

During my second semester of nursing school, I dropped out because I was 6 months pregnant and exhausted. After Rylee was born, I experienced postpartum depression but ultimately decided that going back to school was best for both of us. When I decided to re-enroll, I had no clue how I would work out childcare.

In 2014, Rylee started at the Uptown Head Start. He cried so much that I was embarrassed and held on to him tightly until Miss Sue came to me and said, "Don't worry about him; we've got him." I can honestly say, they've "had" him ever since. The teachers, my family advocates, my cooks, and administration have all surpassed my expectations. Rylee is exceeding the goals I set for him by writing, identifying sight words, and communicating in complete sentences.

This program understands that it's more difficult for a child to succeed when his basic needs are not being met. You all have offered resources that assist with bills, budgeting, dietary education, counseling, health and wellness, and more without ever asking for a single dime. You all have an exceptional group of educators and an amazing support staff. You became a part of my support system when I needed it the most, and I was comforted by the fact that each day when I left my child with you, I knew that he was in capable, caring hands. Without you, I'm not sure that I would be a baccalaureate-prepared registered nurse employed at the only level 1 trauma center in the region.

Thank you,  
from Brittany Jones, mother of Rylee, a recent CCANO Head Start graduate

Learn more about CCANO Head Start centers at <http://www.ccano.org/head-start-program>.

