



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.

What Sets Us Apart

Dear Friend of Catholic Charities,

In February, the entire state of Louisiana will be attending parades; donning purple, green, and gold; and indulging in king cake. The way we celebrate Mardi Gras is something that is so unique to our community – no other place in the world gathers with these specific traditions. This time is also based around Epiphany and Lent, proving that the history of the Catholic Church is uniquely entwined with the history of our state and New Orleans.



This time of year makes me reflect on how Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans stands out from other service providers in the area. Our Catholic identity guides our values and practices and fuels our motivation to love our community well. CCANO's long history in New Orleans gives us deep structural knowledge and a rich network for doing good. Our holistic approach to programming serves the entire community and meets the full range of human needs. Our responsible stewardship of resources sets us apart: 95% of all donations goes directly to the need of the people we serve.

I am grateful to be a part of such a special organization in such a special state. May our community continue to be blessed with a joyful spirit and a determination to take on the challenges we encounter through faith, unity, and strength.

God bless you,

Sr. Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.

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

The Peace Leaders of Tomorrow

Isaiah 43's Young Peacemakers Leadership Council is inspired by the bible verse, "Let peace begin with me." This student-run group is dedicated to becoming the peacemakers of our time. Twelfth grader Brooke reflects, "YPLC is a great opportunity to share my thoughts and opinions with people my age. I believe I made a great choice in joining because I have made life-changing and lifelong friends."

The teenaged leaders dedicate themselves to being informed about current events and Catholic Social Teaching, as well as remaining faithful to a commitment to being a positive role model. Jada, a senior in high school, shared that YPLC helped her feel like she was an active participant in leading her city into a brighter future. She shares, "I want to be a part of the solution to the problems in my community."



Nothing can be solved alone. YPLC is a group of young peacemakers coming up with ways to change the world around us."

This group meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month and stays engaged with the community by participating in service projects, conversations with local leaders, and field trips. Contact Theresa Nguyen at tnguyen@ccano.org to learn more or apply to participate.

Read more about Isaiah 43's programming at <http://www.ccano.org/isaiah-43>.

More than Four Walls at Sacred Heart Apartments

The CCANO team at Sacred Heart Apartments have a special bond. Shayla Kaywood, Ray Davis, Dorothy McKnight, and Ashanti Edwards serve and treat each of their clients with dignity and respect. The coworkers are like a family, supporting each other over the years and facing challenges as a team. Ms. Dorothy and Mr. Ray have been at Sacred Heart since it opened and welcomed Shayla and Ashanti with open arms.

Sacred Heart Apartments provide intensive case management, counseling, client advocacy, life skills, conflict resolution, and more to their clients. The participants face a number of obstacles, including ongoing mental health treatments, adjusting to living independently after being homeless for years, increased relapse occurrences, financial management, personal accountability, etc. "A lot of our clients have mental health issues that are undiagnosed like psychosis with hallucinations and delusions. If they have been diagnosed, it is most likely with depression and anxiety, but we have found that bipolar disorder has been inaccurately overdiagnosed," shares Shayla Kaywood, Program Director.

The team regularly finds themselves confronting misconceptions about the people they work with. "The homeless population is often misunderstood because we take for granted the simple luxuries we overlook in our day to day lives. After being homeless for so long, a lot of our clients have a hard time adjusting even though they now have an apartment. We try to assure



them that they can actually lay in their beds instead of the floor, relax on the couch, or even watch tv. We provide supportive services like budgeting because they have not had enough money in the past to actually have to decide how to spend or save," says Shayla.

For instance, one of the ways staff assists clients with transitioning is with food storage. Sacred Heart Apartment clients have not had access to a refrigerator for so long that staff needs to teach them about perishable versus nonperishable food items. "We have found some of our clients set up their refrigerators as if it is a pantry. A lot of our work is reteaching basic skills," reflects Kaywood.

Recently, six clients completed a ten week program addressing spiritual wellness, physical health, nutrition, exercise, medication management, and meal prep. The clients received certificates of completion at a culminating celebration. "I was so proud of how committed our group was to attending each session and following through on meal prep and nutrition. There were two women in the program who really struck me with how significantly they changed. They became so much healthier, they lost weight, and became so much more confident. One of them really opened up and came out of her shell. I saw her grow more sociable because she was consistently getting to know the other participants in a supportive environment," says Shayla.

A fellow Sacred Heart staff member was able to coach one of the participants, "Janet," in regards to her hygiene. Janet had been homeless for over five years and considered a traveller, so she did not have access to running water. Ms. Dorothy talked her through a hygiene routine and even bought a Bath and Body Works kit of shower gel and lotion out of her own pocket.

"Something I want others to understand is that our clients didn't necessarily choose to live on the street and be homeless. Our staff here goes above and beyond for the residents. We take pride in all of them and extend ourselves to help out even if we are not the primary case manager in charge of their case. We love being able to support participants with maintaining housing and self-sufficiency so that they can live their best lives," concludes Kaywood. Sacred Heart Apartments play an important role in addressing homelessness in our community, and the CCANO leaders appreciate the dedicated staff members who honor our clients' strengths, help them grow in areas of need, and celebrate each small victory.

Training for Financial Health

Just like building muscles with weights and cardio, our financial health needs to be exercised as well, but through education and training. Catholic Charities' Money Matters program in St. Charles Parish is a financial gym for participants to work out knowledge and skills regarding budgeting, credit scores, and how to open checking and savings accounts. Funded by the United Way of St. Charles, Money Matters provides individuals with financial assistance for training to advance their workforce skills and develop a fit financial life.

After hearing about Money Matters' CNA class from a friend at work, René Markey was immediately excited by the prospect of becoming a certified nursing assistant to advance her career. René says, "I could hardly wait to get started! I have always wanted to take a CNA class but never had the money to pay for the training. I figured

that having the certification would help me get a more stable job with an agency or facility."

Sherry Rhodes, Money Matters Case Manager, was incredibly helpful through each step of the process, watching as René flourished. "While I was the oldest student in my CNA class, I enjoyed

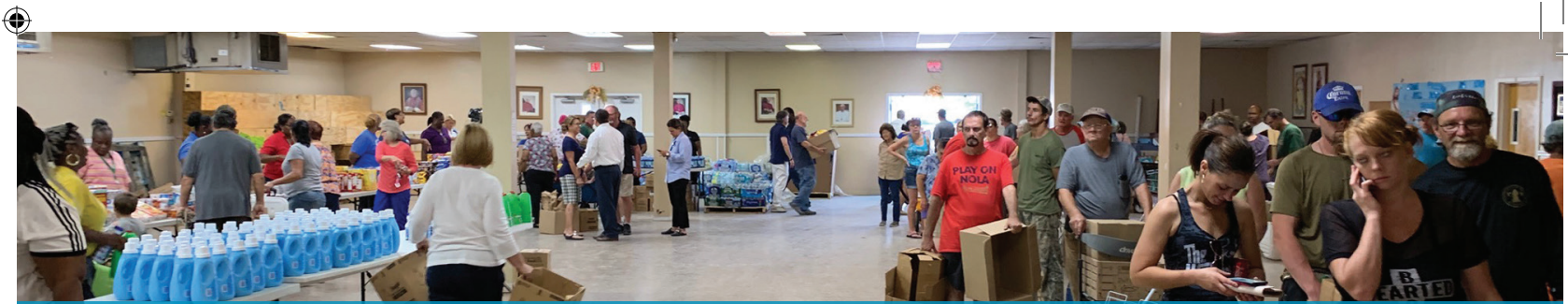
how to manage her finances, Rene reflects, "I would like to thank Catholic Charities and Ms. Sherry for giving me the opportunity to get the CNA training I have always wanted."

Through partnerships, Money Matters also assists clients with employment, housing, SNAP

...Money Matters provides individuals with financial assistance for training to advance their workforce skills and develop a fit financial life.

it and did not have problems with the training materials. I am proud of myself - I had a 94 average for the 3 tests I took," René shares. Now engaged in the Financial Boot Camp where she is learning

applications, Medicaid enrollment, budget counseling, and more. All of these services result with CCANO clients graduating from the program with a strong financial future.



Hurricane Barry Relief Update

While it has been several months since Hurricane Barry impacted the residents of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Pointe, CCANO has been actively working with Father Luke Nguyen of St. Anthony Church and local officials and agencies to provide 25 families with direct assistance thanks to funding from the Greater New Orleans Foundation and Catholic Charities USA. As of December 1, 2019, we have provided those affected with \$11,000 of appliances, replacement clothes, bedding, household goods, tools, cleaning supplies, and food. After the emergency food and cleaning supplies drive coordinated by CCANO, St. Anthony church, Second Harvest, and Jefferson Parish in July, we have been helping people on the ground like "Mary" and "Jake."

A single mother living in an unraised single-story home in Barataria, Mary took on 20 inches of water due to Barry. CCANO assessed damage to her home, where she lost two beds, clothing, and multiple appliances. Her family and neighbors mucked and gutted Mary's house within three days of the water receding. After replacing damaged clothing and household items, CCANO was able to help with finding household goods and appliances once

Mary's insurance company concluded their findings.

Jake, a 63 year-old disabled man, was renting a slip for his houseboat at a local Lafitte marina. He supplements his disability income by charging other marina tenants a small amount to do their laundry in his machines. Unfortunately, his fridge, washer, and dryer all flooded due to Barry storm-surge. We assessed the damage to his property and enrolled him in case management. Jake attended the emergency food distribution and later received a gift card to replace lost clothing and household goods. CCANO arranged for A-1 Appliances to deliver a replacement washer, dryer, and fridge to his home.

Barry was not the first storm South Louisiana has seen, and it will not be our last. Thankfully, our community rises to the occasion and takes care of each other, pitching in when we hear of a neighbor in need. Learn more about our Disaster Recovery case management at <http://www.ccano.org/disaster-response-services>.

Transitioning Back Into the Workforce

A true strength of CCANO is the depth and breadth of our programs. If a participant connects with us through our homeless and housing program, we can much more easily refer them to education for their children through Head Start, mental health services through Counseling Solutions, and career readiness through Integrated Workforce Services to address any and all needs. When Doug, Parish and Community Ministries staff member, met Regina she demonstrated a strong desire to be a role model for her five children and provide for her family. He was then able to connect her to CCANO's Integrated Workforce Services.



By enrolling in the CCANO Transition to Success Pilot, Regina was eligible for extra coaching and a pool of developmental funding. This plus her continued relationship with Doug meant that she was on the road to success. He still keeps in touch with Regina and is a source of accountability, encouraging her ambition to re-enter the workforce and keep up with job appointments. Additionally, Regina started working with Andrew Romaner of Integrated Workforce Services at the same time CCANO began collaborating with City Sightseeing of New Orleans, an employer referral initiated by Carol Fascio from New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries who works with many local tour companies.

City Sightseeing was looking for new candidates for front line roles in their operations like tour bus drivers, tour guides, and ticket sales. Andrew helped Regina develop a new resume to submit to the hiring manager at City Sightseeing. Friendly and outgoing, Regina immediately attracted attention as a strong candidate for a sales position. Only two weeks into her job search, she was offered the position, which included base pay and the opportunity to earn commissions. She has been employed at City Sightseeing for almost six months now, drawing consistent praise for her work. Consequently, this steady income has reduced her family's dependence on public assistance programs. While transitioning back into the workforce can be intimidating, Regina is proud to be earning an income, and we are proud to be a part of her journey.

Learn more about our workforce services at <http://www.ccano.org/workforce-development>.

SAVE THE DATE

February 25
Mardi Gras Day

February 26
Lent Begins

March 19
Volunteer Information Session,
1000 Howard 2nd Floor
4PM

March 31
Peace Prayer Walk,
Divine Mercy
6PM

