



DECEMBER 2021

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.

In the Spirit of the Season



Dear Friend of Catholic Charities,

As we move through Advent towards Christmas, I am pausing to reflect on what the four candles we light on our Advent wreaths represent to us not only as Christians but in our work at Catholic Charities.

The four Sundays preceding Christmas, which is when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, are recognized by four virtues. The candles on the Advent wreath symbolize hope, love, joy and peace. Our 437 staff members work in **love** to give **hope** to those who are suffering in order to bring them **joy** and eventually **peace**. Our effort could not exist without the dedicated donors, volunteers, foundations, guilds, corporations and community partners who make what we do possible with their support. If there were a fifth candle, I would want it to be **gratitude**. Gratitude for the gift of Jesus's birth which gave us our light in the darkness and the basis for our mission which is to act in love and His teachings to serve all people.

In the spirit of that same gratitude, I want to thank each of you who are reading this newsletter for your interest and support of our programs and staff. May you have a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful start to your New Year!

God bless each of you!

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

love
hope
joy
peace

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT?

We are looking for stable homes for children in difficult situations.

Please go to: <https://www.ccano.org/tfs/> to see how you can help.

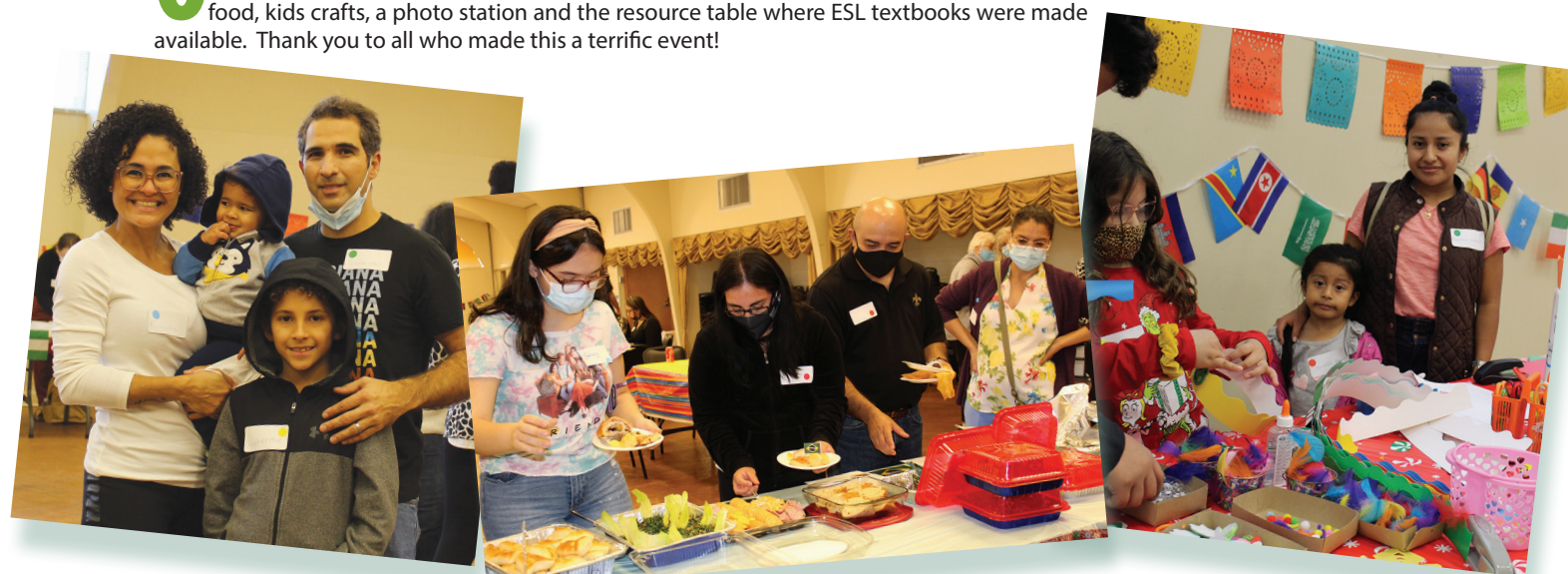


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Archdiocese of New Orleans (504) 310-6939 • www.ccano.org



ESL (English as Second Language) End of Year Potluck a success!

On Sunday, December 12, students in our ESL program were able to come together in person for the first time since Covid restrictions began. It was a wonderful event for all. Participants, teachers and volunteers were able to enjoy food, kids crafts, a photo station and the resource table where ESL textbooks were made available. Thank you to all who made this a terrific event!



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Therapeutic Family Services Provides Help to Vulnerable Kids

During the holiday season, attention often turns to cherubic-faced children whose eyes sparkle and smiles twinkle with the joys of Christmas. Those images often do not reflect children whose lives are impacted by physical, emotional or sexual abuse or whose physical or mental development is seriously challenged.

That second group of children are the ones that [Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans](#) (CCANO) supports and nurtures through its [Therapeutic Family Services](#) program. This service places children from birth through age 18 with foster parents who are specially trained to care for children who have been traumatized or with severe developmental issues.

Several foster parents who have been in the program for 15 to 20 years and are getting ready to retire and will make way for new people willing to parent them. Averaging 12 cases at all times, Therapeutic Family Services needs people who are up for the challenge of fostering children who the courts have removed from biological families.

"Most of these kids have had multiple placements and are not just coming into the system. We only accept children who are already in custody of the Department of Children and Family Services," says Shacidy Hadley-Bush, program director of Catholic Charities Therapeutic Family Services. "We want to make sure people understand these cases are difficult. Most of the children have suffered some type of abuse."



There has been a recent influx of teenagers into the system. According to Hadley-Bush, that adds an extra need for the program to recruit younger foster parents who are adept at relating to teenagers.

"We need 30-somethings who know their language and what they're talking about," adds Gilda Johnson, a caseworker with the program. "There's an inherent stigma with teenagers. But mostly, these children just want to be loved. We want foster parents who will go the distance and not just do what is required."

Therapeutic foster homes are different from a regular foster home because of the children's increased emotional and physical needs. Therefore, potential foster parents undergo 36 hours of special training conducted by the Therapeutic Family Services staff. The staff also provides 24 hour support for parents who may be having issues with a child. A person must be at least 21 years old and less than 65 years old to be eligible as a therapeutic foster parent.

Hadley-Bush says people often show an interest in wanting to give back and help those who are less fortunate, but she cautions that fostering these children is a serious commitment.

Johnson, a caseworker for more than 25 years, expounds on that responsibility. "It has to be a calling from God. You need the patience of a saint, and you have to really pray about taking on this challenge. We're talking about kids' lives."

"Some of these children come into our care just because no one wants them. That's traumatic for any child to be rejected," Johnson continues.

Therapeutic Family Services works to place children from throughout Louisiana in homes within the greater New Orleans metropolitan area. Efforts are made to certify all homes for at least two children, as they try to keep sibling groups together.

Anyone interested in becoming a therapeutic foster parent can find eligibility criteria on the website <https://www.ccano.org/tfs> or contact Hadley-Bush at (504) 310-6939 or by email, shadley@ccano.org.

Foster Grandparents Program Looking Bright!

Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for seniors age 55 and over to stay active through volunteer service with children and youth in their communities.

The pandemic did affect the ability to meet in person, so program leaders

Annette Gibson and Brian Broussard, coordinated a drive-through packet exchange with current Foster Grandparent's every other Saturday at our Incarnate Word campus. These packet exchanges allowed program staff and participants to physically check in with one another. Supplies that could be used to write letters to their classrooms and make cheery cards and pieces of art for their children along with activity logs and any new correspondence or supplies needed were distributed. Not only did this enable our coordinators to get to know the Foster Grandparents better but it also allowed program staff to get to know their extended family members as well. The virtual volunteerism model was a success!



The program was able to identify new needs of our volunteers and they realized that many of the Foster Grandparents had been relatively isolated during the pandemic. A solution was required! The Foster Grandparent team accomplished this by securing a qualified personal trainer to conduct 15 minute yoga/exercise sessions with the volunteers. To further the goal of helping volunteers stay healthy and mobile they will be including a 15 minute presentation from a representative of the LSU Ag Center that covers a range of topics including senior nutrition, food safety, food storage and tips on how to eat in the season and find healthy food resources within our community.



Looking forward, Foster Grandparents is partnering up with our Food for Seniors program to sign those up that qualify for the monthly box of food provided by this program. They have also secured an artist who will be donating her time to engage our volunteer staff in "art therapy" a few times a year! SO much to look forward to including creating an annual cookbook created by our Foster Grandparents using their own recipes. These wonderful cookbooks will be distributed at the annual appreciation luncheon.

ARCHBISHOP HANNAN COMMUNITY APPEAL

Thank you to everyone who has made a gift to our 2021 Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal Campaign! **We are currently at \$711,645 of our \$1.88 million goal!**

Archbishop Phillip Hannan created this appeal as a response to Hurricane Betsy as a way to help the community recover. Since then, the campaign has continued to raise crucial unrestricted funds that allow Catholic Charities to respond swiftly, effectively and compassionately in times of everyday crisis and natural disasters.

For more information or to Donate, visit www.ccano.org/ahca.



Christmas is upon us and we are so grateful to our donors for supporting our efforts to provide toys, clothing, food and more to those in need this season!

