



Notes from the Heart

FEBRUARY 2022

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.

Every Day is Valentine's Day for PACE couple!

Gloria and Raymond have been married for 58 years. Raymond was working at Charity Hospital in New Orleans and Gloria was sitting in the ER with her nephew who had a broken arm. It was love at first sight, and the start of a lifetime together! At 95 years old, Raymond still takes great care of Gloria and the two have both found a community they cherish at PACE Greater New Orleans.. With four children, three girls and one boy along with adopting one of their grandchildren they have had many ups and downs throughout their beautiful journey together. One of their daughters introduced the couple to PACE and they thoroughly enjoy the activities provided. As Gloria says, "Raymond is constantly on the go and needing a project. He has been active all his life and if he had nothing else to do he would build a ladder for a bee." Life hasn't always been easy in the Big Easy. Raymond was abandoned and left as an infant and then raised in an orphanage on Chef Menteur Hwy run by nuns. He eventually went into the monastery in Bay St. Louis then left and accepted a position at a nursing home. Working in the burn unit at Charity and then eventually moving to the respiratory department he has seen much and learned to appreciate life. This has led the couple to want to spend their days together and PACE has allowed them this glorious opportunity to stay together safely, keep busy and remain independent.



...the two have both found a community they cherish at PACE Greater New Orleans.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Anne-Marie Fontenot



Anne-Marie says volunteering with Food for Seniors is fun and easy to do. Grab a cup of joe early on a Saturday morning and you're done by noon after having a great time listening to music and playing what is essentially Tetris as you fill up boxes. If you find yourself with a lot of "me time" or feel like you're in a rut or down, think about volunteering. Trust me, I've been there, and it's not a great place to be emotionally or mentally. In a world of "look at me" or "woe is me" or "I don't know what to do with my life," it's encouraging to do something meaningful and tangible and not for yourself. It's nice to give when we can, and CCANO has great opportunities to help. If you are interested in joining Anne-Marie go to www.ccano.org/volunteer to see what wonderful opportunities are open to you.



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

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Catholic Charities Early/Head Start Pregnancy Program



A healthy pregnancy has a direct influence on the health and development of a newborn child.

Early Head Start strives to have the greatest impact on participating children by offering supportive services as early in life as possible.

My name is Tonya Credit; I am the ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) Coordinator for CCANO Head Start program. I have worked for Head Start since 2006. Currently as the ERSEA Coordinator, I along with my colleague Shatara Williams, PFCE (Parent, Family Community Engagement) Coordinator work with expectant moms who are interested and eligible for our Early Head Start program coordinating services with an Early Head Start Family Advocate in each of our centers.

How does this program help the community?

Catholic Charities Early Head Start (EHS) services to pregnant women and their families is based on the current community needs assessment data as it shows an increase in families with infants in and around our current service areas for each center in Orleans Parish.

- What exactly does this program provide?**
- CCANO Early Head Start serves pregnant women and their families in a variety of service delivery models and in diverse settings through online informational sessions, resources to local agency supports, and due to COVID-19 restrictions individual prenatal classes on the following subjects:
- ☀ **fetal development, including the risks from smoking and alcohol;**
 - ☀ **labor and delivery;**
 - ☀ **postpartum recovery, including information on maternal depression; and**
 - ☀ **the benefits of breastfeeding**
 - ☀ **community resources for families**



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How many people are assisted by this program?

Our Early Head Start/Head Start written grant include at least 10 expectant women for our program for each school year.

How do you feel to be a part of this program?

It has been such an honor to work with both the parents and the local supporting agencies as a cohesive community support. We teamed with AmeriHealth Caritas last year and have built a great relationship with the women in that program. Parents are extremely appreciative of the information given to them and the extra effort presented from each of the staff working with them throughout their pregnancy.

Do you have any specific stories that really meant something special to you within this program? If so please explain.

My personal expectations for the future of the program includes a great increase of expectant mothers enrolled in our program services. I believe that starting early working with these families will create a lasting relationship. This lasting relationship will provide services to pregnant women and their families through the child's first four years of life. Providing a head start to every child and its families is the whole goal of CCANO Early Head Start/Head Start Program.

■ This is a Love Story: Fannie Scott a Foster Parent through Therapeutic Family Services

By Lauren Combel

Fannie Scott has always dreamed of having a house full of children that needed a safe and loving environment. It's Fannie's way of giving back to thank all those who have helped her throughout her life when things were tough..

Fannie was a mental health counselor who just wouldn't accept that she couldn't do anything to become a part of the solution to assist children in troubled homes. In particular those with medical issues that are not being cared for properly. As Fannie said during our heartwarming conversation, "I can't save the world but I can save someone." This is just exactly what Fannie does. After Hurricane Katrina's damage and destruction, Fannie moved to Colorado where she continued her dream of being a foster parent and took in Eve who soon became her daughter through adoption. Once her biological children were adults and doing well, she really felt it was time to return to New Orleans where she opened her home to those children in need.

She takes in children like Tim. Tim has autism and is non-verbal. One of the

challenges that Fannie has worked to overcome with Tim is that he runs away. Tim was malnourished and unable to communicate which Fannie believes is the reason for his occasional destructive behavior. Along with a considerable list of



"I can't save the world but I can save someone."

medical ailments Tim needs 24 hour care. With the assistance of Catholic Charities Therapeutic Family Services, Fannie has enrolled Tim in school, gotten him to Occupational and Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy and is working on getting him into a behavior clinic. The improvement has been astounding. As Fannie says, "All things truly are possible", when she sees his smile and knows that her voice makes him feel safe and her love and care has made it possible for Tim to smile. That smile is all the reward she needs.

Al's Story: Cornerstone Building Program Reunites Family

When Al was released after five years of incarceration he was seventy years old. It was Al's first time being incarcerated and it had taken a toll on him physically and emotionally. He was incarcerated in a facility in the northeast corner of Louisiana, far from the neighborhood of New Orleans East where he was from. Al had lost fifty pounds, was very frail and had to be hospitalized while incarcerated. His doctors said that he was suffering from low iron, prescribed medication and he was released back to the facility. Al also had poor eyesight from worsening cataracts and suffered from high blood pressure as well.

Al had been on disability before his incarceration for cognitive and developmental issues and had a somewhat childlike naiveté about him. He had a fifth grade education and very poor reading and comprehension skills. Al had several siblings, but was very close to his older sister who was his protector and whom he lived with before going to prison. Unfortunately during his incarceration Al lost contact with his sister and the rest of his family.

When we first met A, it was through the virtual intake process from the correctional facility where he was incarcerated. Though having lived at the same address for many years, due to his cognitive deficits he was unable to recall his address and contact information for his family. Al had nowhere to live and could not find his family. Upon his release, he was put on a bus to the Greyhound terminal in Orleans Parish with a ticket and 20 dollars in his pocket. When he arrived at the bus station, our program transported him to his new residence.

Because of Al's involvement in our program we were able to house him,

provide a cell phone, clothing and food. We also applied for the necessary benefits such as SNAP (food stamps) and began the reinstatement of his disability payments. Al was also connected to medical care and was escorted to all of his appointments to ensure that he was being advocated for and would receive the necessary medical attention. As well, a search began to find and reconnect Al to his family which was his number one priority.

After several months, our program was able to locate and reconnect Al to his family and most importantly his sister. With the assistance of the program, he began the process to transition him back home. It was an exciting and joyful day when Al finally went home and reunited with his family. Unfortunately, a few months after the reunification it was discovered that Al was suffering with stage four cancer and died shortly thereafter. Without our program's assistance Al would have ended up in a homeless shelter after his release and his health would have deteriorated much more quickly. And he most likely would never have reconnected with his family which was his ultimate goal.

Because our program is so unique in providing assistance and resources that most would not have available to them, we are able to facilitate and enhance the reentry process, allowing people to reestablish themselves, reconnect to their networks of support and thrive with dignity. It is our hope that programs like ours will expand allowing many others that same opportunity. By helping formerly incarcerated individuals to thrive it decreases the likelihood of returning to prison, reduces crime and makes them a more productive member of society.