



Notes from the Heart

OCTOBER 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.

AHCA Campaign Committee Chairs: VAUGHN & DOUG DOWNING

Our annual AHCA (Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal) campaign officially began on Friday, September 16, 2022. Vaughn C. Downing along with her husband Doug Downing are the Chairs this year.

Vaughn joined the CCANO Board in 2019 and has been so impressed by the variety of ways that Catholic Charities serves the New Orleans community. Vaughn is a preschool teacher at McGehee's Little Gate. Doug works as the Chief Financial Officer for Canal Barge Company. Serving as co-chairs of the AHCA is a way to ensure that the important programs of Catholic Charities of New Orleans continue to serve those with the greatest need in New Orleans and the surrounding areas.

As a preschool teacher, Vaughn wants to support early childhood education as much as possible. The five Head Start and Early Head Start programs that Catholic Charities run are a big part of why she loves participating on the CCANO Board and a deciding factor in agreeing to help with the campaign. Additionally, in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, it was wonderful to see how Catholic Charities found ways to help those who suffered the most impact from the storm. "When we were asked to chair the AHCA campaign it was easy to say yes to an organization that is there for our citizens not only day to day, but when tragedy strikes."

Vaughn and Doug have three sons who all live out of state so they enjoy visiting them as often as they can. "We hope that people will give what they are able, either through a monetary donation or by volunteering their time with one of the many programs that Catholic Charities runs."



Catholic Charities Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal

Each year, Catholic Charities raises funds through the Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal (AHCA). This annual campaign continues Archbishop Hannan's legacy of service to the poor in our community by raising crucial, undesignated funds which support all of our life-giving programs. Help us reach this year's goal of \$1.75M by donating today!

Visit our website to donate online at www.ccano.org/donate.

**CCANO would like to thank the members of the
Women's Giving Circle of the Catholic Community Foundation
for their support over the past 5 years.
We are most grateful for their current support of
the Therapeutic Family Services Program.**



Announcing Our New Division Director: ANGELA PONIVAS

CCANO has a new division director. The programs she will handle are Counseling Solutions, School Based Counseling, Sacred Heart Case Management, Cornerstone Builders, Ciara Independent and Therapeutic Family Services.

Angela Ponivas is a native of New Orleans. After receiving her Masters Degree in Social Work from Tulane University Angela took a job in California. Angela lived in California for almost 22 years. Beginning her career in child welfare and moving into foster care work Angela started a non-profit food program called Love Little



Children. Love Little Children provided meal reimbursements to home daycare providers.

Angela spent more time working in Child Welfare but had a passion for supporting families and mitigating the risks of abuse and neglect. To that end, Angela served as an Executive Director for a Family Resource Center for seven years. Angela had the opportunity to work at the systems level for the State of California, and served as the Chief of the Office of Child Abuse Prevention for almost seven years. Due to the intense COVID lockdowns of California, Angela, her husband, Scott, and their son, Jonah, decided it was time to return home to Louisiana and live near Angela's extended family. Angela has been home since September 15, 2021 and is living in Slidell.

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"Here at Catholic Charities, each program is tackling a specific issue. I am deeply concerned about the health and well-being of the families in Louisiana. There is a clear and present need for our programs and when we collaborate, we can make the changes that truly affect individuals and families. To move our participants from crisis to stability while respecting the dignity and potential of all people is a mission I am compelled to take on"

St. Mary of the Angels Peace Prayer Walk

The Office of Justice and Peace, in collaboration with St. Mary of the Angels Parish, conducted a Peace Prayer Walk on September 8, 2022, the Feast of the Nativity of Mary. The walk was in the ninth ward for several blocks and ended at Bunny Friend Playground. Participants stopped along the way to pray for peace and reconciliation in our neighborhoods and for an end to crime and violence. Two of the designated prayer locations were CCANO Head Start and the former Marianite Community. Parishioners of St. Mary of the Angels were joined by students from Archbishop Rummel High School and the Micah Project. This was the first Peace Prayer Walk in the archdiocese since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak.



Hear Deacon Martin's Story



Deacon Martin Gutierrez is available for talks. If your organization would like a presentation to help shatter the "myths" surrounding immigration, Deacon Martin Gutierrez is here to help. Let us know if you would like Deacon Martin to share his story and his over 20 years of experience working with our Immigration and Refugee Program at Catholic Charities. Please email Deacon Martin at: mgutierrez@ccano.org.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: Cheryl Strickland Spirit of Hope

Whether at her desk or doing outreach at the SAINTS expo, Cheryl is working to assist those in need of help to fully recover from disaster. Cheryl Strickland is currently on our Spirit of Hope Hurricane Ida disaster response team. "I found this to be my calling after Katrina. First, I was recovering myself after having been relocated to Lafayette and then I joined those helping others recover." This truly is Cheryl's passion as she knows both sides. "I just won't let myself get pulled down into feeling sorry for myself, with three kids I just had to pull it together and work to get our lives back on track." Cheryl does not stop until every possible avenue has been attempted to assist her clients. She



is now training other case managers to do the same. "We have so much to offer, with so many programs at Catholic Charities we can really help move the individuals and families from crisis to stability. Our programs at CCANO are far reaching and can truly set people up for success."

"Always walk in faith," is Cheryl's motto. Although there are many individual success stories Cheryl reflects on one in particular that really stays at the top of her mind. An elderly disabled sister and brother were uprooted due to Hurricane Laura. They were in a hotel here in New Orleans with 136 others in similar difficult circumstances. Cheryl met them and after hearing their story found out there was nothing left in Lake Charles for them to go back to. They needed family support and have family in Tennessee. Cheryl worked to get them to their support system in Tennessee with supplies to get set up and surrounded by family. These are just two people who showed Cheryl immense gratitude for the work she did to help and this is why she continues to work so hard for those recovering from a disaster. "It's truly my passion and my calling."

Spirit of Hope is our disaster response program. Catholic Charities' case managers connect clients to needed services, provide referrals to the appropriate agencies and access government benefits, mental health services, housing, home repairs, transportation and other essential services. For more information on our disaster response go to: www.ccano.org/disaster-response-services



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Marty Kauchak

A parishioner of St. Mary's Assumption Church of Alphonsus Parish of New Orleans, Marty Kauchak has been volunteering with Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans for several years. Currently he volunteers in our food pantry helping to unload the food after it is delivered and then pack the bags for our participants. "In these troubling economic times, it is good to be able to help get families the food they need. You don't need to donate more than 2-4 hours a week to really make a difference for these families." There are many opportunities to volunteer here at CCANO. If you are interested in assisting in one of our warehouses packing food boxes for seniors or assisting pregnancy services with general organizing or knitting baby blankets we have a place for you. Check out our volunteer hub for more details. Go to: www.ccano.org/volunteer-opportunities and click on the Ways to Volunteer link for a calendar to sign up.

