

MARCH 2024

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Deep into the season of Lent, I see daily affirmations of some of the tenets associated with this time of year, *prayer, fasting, and almsgiving*. Through my fellow sisters in my religious community, through the parishioners that pray alongside me at the church every morning, as well as through the dedication of my nearly 400 co-workers throughout our 23 programs, it's hard to not witness the extraordinary spirituality, dedication to God and benevolence surrounding me everyday.

Featured in this month's newsletter are two versions of almsgiving with people who have chosen two different paths in their journey to give back to Catholic Charities and are sharing their gifts with those in need in our community.

Floyd Simeon, along with his late wife, Karen, are remembering Catholic Charities in their estate plans with the Legacy Society, which recognizes and celebrates those individuals who have included Catholic Charities in their will, or in another form of a planned gift. Their generosity, along with others, is a testament to not only the compassion of our neighbors but also the impact that our programs have had.

Jill Hadley has volunteered her time as a foster parent for Therapeutic Family Services for nearly two decades. Over the years, Jill has provided love and support to dozens of children who have needed someone in their corner looking out for them. Whether it was someone with a severe learning disability or a child who was medically fragile, she set aside her own life to ensure they wouldn't be forgotten.

Almsgiving can take many shapes and forms and both Floyd and Jill are humbling examples of bringing the mission of Catholic Charities to fruition.

I think it's also important, especially during this centennial year, to highlight moments of reflection and prayer that have brought the community together, even when life can seem impossible.

During our work with the Clarion Herald for our centennial issue in January, they shared this photo to the right of student volunteers (with Operation Helping Hands) from West Virginia taking a break following Hurricane Katrina cleanup nearly 20 years ago to receive ashes. It reminds me that even during times of suffering and distress, there's a place for all of us to inspire our neighbors to live a life well lived and reconcile with God.



Photo courtesy of Clarion Herald.

I encourage you to always find your own meaningful way to give back. Your gifts, prayer and time will always be remembered and forever etched in the stories of the work of Catholic Charities.

God Bless,

Sister Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C.

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President & CEO

CENTENNIAL moments



In 1979, Associated Catholic Charities reached out for help in finding foster families for over 30 Vietnamese children who were rescued from boats in the South China Sea. These children, aged 9 to 18, faced unimaginable hardships and found a caring home in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Photo courtesy of Clarion Herald.



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.

www.ccano.org
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@cathcharitiesno

Please remember
Catholic Charities in your will.

 *celebrate* a Century of Service throughout the year

- **MARCH 21** – Official date of Catholic Charities founding. A private Mass will be said for those served by Catholic Charities and all the volunteers, staff, and supporters who share in this mission.
- **APRIL 20** – Volunteer Appreciation Prayer Walk, 10 a.m., Notre Dame Seminary
Join us to help celebrate our centennial and honor our dedicated volunteers with a prayer walk around the neighborhood.
- **NOVEMBER 17** – Anniversary Mass at the Cathedral for all staff, donors, volunteers, and supporters

Stay tuned

More details and information will be shared on **CCANO.ORG**

Heart of Family Lives on in Legacy Society

When Floyd Simeon met his wife Karen growing up in New Orleans, he never would have imagined that their relationship would span decades. Not only did they begin dating in high school, but they both also had prominent careers and raised three successful children through 48 years of marriage. It was a self-described charmed life for Floyd. But when Karen passed away five years ago, it left a hole in the heart of the family.

Strong faith and empathy for all played a formidable part in the Simeon household over the years. Following Karen's passing, Floyd found comfort and solace knowing that both of their legacies would continue to be felt within the community because they had set up a planned gift to benefit Catholic Charities as part of its latest initiative, the **Legacy Society**.

The Legacy Society is a planned giving venture created to honor Catholic Charities' centennial year and its century of service. Not only does



it serve as a way to recognize and celebrate those individuals who have included Catholic Charities in their will or in another form of a planned gift, but it is also a meaningful reminder of the commitment of others to sustain the future of Catholic Charities for the next 100 years.

This is one of the most meaningful ways individuals can give back to the place that means so much to them.

"When Karen was still here, we decided to give a large part of our estate to both the church and the poor through Catholic Charities. We were fortunate in our lives, and after doing some research, we decided we could help out those in need while still providing for our own family," Floyd said.

Memories can often serve as a loved one's most unwavering legacy. Whether the Simeons and their three beloved children were traveling to different parts of the world, enjoying Karen's delicious cooking or watching movies during their downtime on the weekend, every milestone in the household revolved around the quality of family spending time together.

By telling the stories of people like the Simeons, who were inspired by Catholic Charities to leave a tangible part of themselves to those in need, it is hoped that it will open the door to conversations in your family about what your legacy will be.

To be anonymously included in the Legacy Society or for more information, contact Samuel Rottman at SRottman@ccano.org.

Foster Parent Answers Calling for Children in Need

It's not often that someone brings a photo album to a meeting. But that's exactly what Jill Hadley did when she arrived at PJ's Coffee in Mandeville recently to talk about her nearly 20 years of volunteer service to children in need with Therapeutic Family Services (TFS).

TFS contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services to provide therapeutic foster homes for children in foster care. The need for foster parents is greater than ever. As the children in the program are often medically or emotionally fragile, requiring specialized care, finding parents that can devote the time, energy and patience to giving the children their full attention can be challenging.

"You have to have a calling to do this. This is not normal foster care. These kids have behavioral or medical problems and really need help. We take cases that normally nobody takes," Jill says.

Jill's photo album is full of pictures of the more than a dozen children she has fostered since 2005. Details of the children and their lives with her spring back to life for Jill as she flips through the book and shares memories of them. The calling to begin fostering children came to Jill in 2005. She has always loved children and had her own daycare for a while. After

learning about some of the traumatic backstories and specialized needs of the children coming through TFS, Jill was confident she could help.

Her first set of foster children were Michael, 11 and his 12-year old brother. Both boys were removed from their home after reports of living in squalor-like conditions came to light. Her love for the children is evident. So much so that Jill would eventually adopt Michael, who is now 28 with special needs. He works with the Arc of Greater New Orleans, which also supports him to live an independent life in the community. It can be difficult though when it's time for the children to return home.

"I fall in love with all of them and I put that love in the child so the parents can see it when they return. It's hard, though. I cry when they leave," Jill says.

When possible, TFS works to reunite children with their families via an 18-month plan.

Other foster children that have come through Jill's home have had cancer, been non-verbal, had anger issues, or even come from situations where both parents were living on the street. No matter the circumstances, her goal has always remained the same: to make a positive difference in the lives of the children.

Jill added, "The best part about fostering is seeing the change. I love the progress. Once you come into my home, you might be broken, but you'll be in a much better place when you leave."

To learn more about becoming a foster parent with TFS, visit www.ccano.org/tfs.



Jill and Michael, a foster child she adopted.

TEAM UP! Program Builds Bridges for Understanding

The Office of Justice and Peace at Catholic Charities was the first of 32 organizations to complete work on **Team Up**, a pilot program from Catholic Charities USA, which brings together people of differing backgrounds to engage in meaningful conversation to effect change in a polarized society.

With a special emphasis placed on including people who have been marginalized in society, four formerly incarcerated people partnered with members of the Race, Equity, and Reconciliation Committee of the Jefferson Community Foundation. They gathered for three luncheons during the last few months of 2023.

The goals were to build compassion and empathy for returning citizens among the Committee members of the Jefferson Community Foundation, and to encourage Committee members to advocate on behalf of formerly incarcerated men and women for better access to housing, jobs and services.



L to R: Kevin Fitzpatrick, Director of OJP; Carnell Wright (front); Martin Gutierrez, CCANO VP of Mission & Community Engagement; Roxelle Verdin; Kiana Calloway (front); and Earl Hagans.



Thank you to everyone who helped us surpass our \$1.75 million goal for the AHCA.

Your support will truly transform lives in our community forever. Your gift stays right here where it is truly needed.

Together we are making a lasting impact.



Pregnancy Services Needs Your Help

Pregnancy Services, which distributes more than 15,000 diapers every month, is struggling to meet the demand and needs donations of diapers (sizes 4-6) and wipes. Click the QR code at right to find out all the ways you can donate or visit ccano.org/access-pregnancy-services.

