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Lemonade Day Makes a Big Splash for Head Start Children!



Lemonade Day at our Head Start locations was the culmination of a week of activities designed to help the students develop and practice their social and emotional skills. The children had the opportunity to develop their own lemonade recipe and were introduced to some basic financial literacy skills.



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.

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Faith in the Future



JUNE 2025

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



As an employee of Tulane University School of Medicine for the better part of the last 30 years, I spent the end of each spring semester surrounded by medical students wrapping up their coursework and preparing to graduate. It was always an exciting season watching them get ready for the next phase of their medical training. There was a feeling of anticipation in the air that almost made it feel like they were my own children.

Six months have passed since I began my new chapter as President and CEO of Catholic Charities. Although I didn't get to witness students walking across the stage this year at Tulane, I still had a chance to experience a graduation ceremony, one that spanned generations.

As is usually the case at the **Head Start** transition ceremony, some of our volunteers from the **Foster Grandparents** program came to show their support for students inside Schulte Hall earlier this month. These volunteer seniors from the community are partnered with different classes throughout our four Head Start locations. These bonds not only benefit the kids and teachers, but also help keep the seniors active and engaged. It was bittersweet watching them bid farewell to the children who have been a significant part of their lives.

But it's also inspiring to witness the commitment of the Foster Grandparents.

For instance, at age 97, Foster Grandparent **Hazel Harris**

takes the bus every day from her home to the St. John the Baptist location of Head Start on Clio Street. Her powerful story was recently shared by WWL-TV's Meg Farris for a story about mental health and seniors staying active. Her commitment is a testament to serving by example. **Essie Theyard**, a Foster Grandparent at the Incarnate Word Head Start location, has been in the program for more than 25 years.

I hope that the families of the Head Start students know that they are not alone on this journey. Their little ones are supported by amazing senior mentors who bring wisdom, warmth, and encouragement into the classroom.

Finally, as we begin hurricane season, I underscore this agency's mission to help our neighbors meet immediate needs. Be sure to check in on your friends next door, especially the seniors in our community like Hazel and Essie. I ask that you join me in asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, calling for her protection over all.

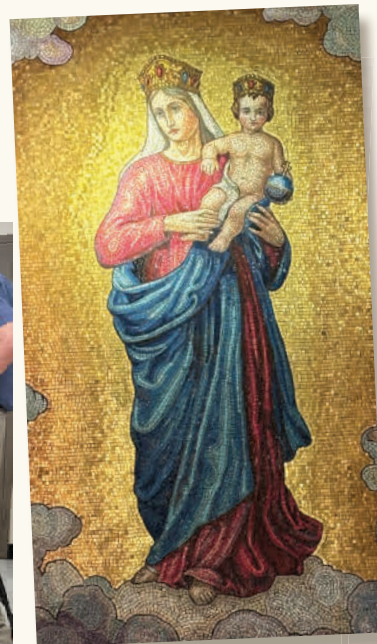
With gratitude and blessings,

Cynthia T. Hayes

Cynthia T. Hayes

President and CEO

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans



Our Father in Heaven,
through the intercession of
Our Lady of Prompt Succor,
spare us during this hurricane
season from all harm.
Protect us and our homes
from all disasters of nature.
Our Lady of Prompt Succor,
hasten to help us.
We ask this through
Christ our Lord.
Amen.



WWL-TV reporter Meg Farris talks to 97-year-old Hazel Harris at St. John the Baptist Head Start.

Spirit of Hope Helps Alleviate Weight of Disaster Recovery

The Spirit of Hope Disaster Response Services program at Catholic Charities, re-activated nearly four years ago following the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, has been a lifeline to so many like Robert Green. With the start of hurricane season this month, Robert's story is a reminder that together we can always rebuild while uplifting each other during some of the hardest times. Although he's endured a lot since Hurricane Ida, the reserved Robert often shifts the conversation back to others at Spirit of Hope who have helped him. His humility is a reflection of the spirit of community and recovery that Catholic Charities embodies. Cheryl Strickland was assigned to Robert's case. "Ms. Cheryl was my lifesaver. I ran out of options, and I was



thinking of going back to Arizona. She's been an absolute angel since day one. She practically saved my life. I'm humbled and very grateful to know her," Robert said. Residing in Ama, Louisiana, just across the Mississippi River from St. Rose in St. Charles Parish, Robert is a Louisiana transplant. He spent many years traveling the globe for his work in oilfields, including Brazil, Egypt, and India. Robert hunkered down with a friend during Hurricane Ida, returning to find his home destroyed. Due to some restrictions regarding mobile homes, Robert's options were limited with some organizations.

Spirit of Hope was a lifeline for Robert and many others in his neighborhood, which saw many mobile homes destroyed. Semi-retired due to a back injury, Robert lives on a fixed income, which made his recovery from Ida all that much more imperative. Under the tenacious eye of Cheryl and Spirit of Hope, Robert eventually was able to purchase the temporary FEMA trailer provided for him. Spirit of Hope worked with the St. Charles Parish Long Term Recovery Group and The Salvation Army to provide funds for the purchase. "I can't rest easy until each client is made whole again," Cheryl said. "I've been in their shoes before, and I know how overwhelming the rebuilding process can be. I'm committed to doing everything in my power to ensure no one has to navigate their challenges alone. It's the promise of Catholic Charities, the only way I know."

Hamilton Visits PACE

Understudy stars Alexandria Hairston & Elvie Ellis from the touring musical *Hamilton* brought their talent (and baking skills) to the Shirley Landry Benson PACE Center this spring. They made cookies with seniors, then ended the morning with some amazing performances. Scan the QR code to watch!

Thank you, Alexandria, Elvie, and the PACE staff, for creating such a heart-warming (and delicious!) experience.



English as a Second Language Registration Now Open

Registration for **Free English** classes is now open. Enroll for our summer session today. Scan the QR code to book your slot.



CCANO Staff Speak at Mount Carmel Academy

Deacon Martin O. Gutierrez, Vice-President Mission & Community Engagement (right) and Samuel Rottman, Director of Institutional Advancement (left), were special guests at Mount Carmel Academy in April. They spoke about Catholic Charities' work with immigrants in the community. Huge thanks to the students for their warm hospitality and to longtime teacher Cindy Bowman for making this important talk happen.



Field Day at PACE



Our dedicated staff at PACE hosted seniors and their families for a fun day of music, games, and delicious food (courtesy of Chef Andrew LeDuff!) at both locations.



Tonya Credit Named New Director of Head Start

After 13 years with Catholic Charities' Head Start / Early Head Start program, Tonya Credit has been appointed Director, overseeing four locations. Her extensive experience, including attending the program as a child, demonstrates a strong commitment to the organization. We congratulate Tonya on her new leadership role.

