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CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS CATHOLIC • CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS • 2415 N. TYLER ST. • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72207 • NOVEMBER 25, 2017

AT A GLANCE Catholic Charities of Arkansas serves

- **Adoption Services:** Birth parent services, adoptive family services and search and reunion
- **Immigration in Northwest Arkansas:** Family-based legal assistance, domestic violence and crime victims services, refugee resettlement, employer trainings, education and advocacy, legal assistance with applications for DACA
- **Immigration in Little Rock:** Family-based legal assistance, legal assistance with applications for DACA, education and advocacy
- **Parish social ministries:** Parish-based ministry development, disaster recovery parish-based teams, family assistance
- **Social Action:** Prison ministry, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, legislative advocacy, alcohol and drug, Catholic Charities Summer Institute
- **Westside Free Medical Clinic:** Medical and dermatology clinics for noninsured adults, outreach and community education
- **Development:** Grants management, Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic, Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl and St. Nicholas Partners

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES' MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Catholic Charities of Arkansas of the Diocese of Little Rock is rooted in the challenge of the Gospel: To serve persons who are poor or marginalized; to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable; and to actively promote charity, justice and the sanctity of life in the Church and the community.

Fire gets response from disaster relief

CCA serving long-term needs of families left homeless in Mayflower

On the evening of Saturday, Oct. 14, a disastrous fire occurred at one of the apartment buildings of the Queens Manor Apartments in Mayflower.

Of suspicious origin, the fire spread quickly to a number of apartments. Nearly 50 residents were driven from their homes without warning, with only the clothes on their backs.

Immediately, Mayflower's mayor and school superintendent set up a temporary shelter in the town's elementary school. The American Red Cross responded, providing vouchers for hotels for those not able to stay with family or friends. Area churches began raising funds and collecting household items and clothing for the survivors.

Catholic Charities of Arkansas quickly became involved. Disaster preparedness and response coordinator, Tracy Eichenberger, went to the town and began case intake, working long into the night. Fourteen families were displaced by the fire. Of those, eight families were in need of long-term case management. Coordinating with Mayflower's long-term recovery group, the Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery Alliance, Eichenberger triaged the cases, determining a priority of needs,



Tracy Eichenberger / Catholic Charities of Arkansas

This Queens Manor apartment building in Mayflower was destroyed by fire Oct. 14, displacing 14 families.

and then set about obtaining the assistance needed.

Although all of the families have found shelter, not all have found permanent replacement housing. Eichenberger will continue to work with the families until all have found a new normal living arrangement, but there will be challenges. Even before

the fire, a few of the families were struggling with finances. Through case management, she will work with the families and help them to formulate a plan that will allow for a workable future life. This case management requires a team approach, using the assets of the different resources available in the Mayflower community —

churches, the Red Cross, town officials, the Salvation Army as well as Catholic Charities.

Rennie Tarpley, executive director of His Place His Way Outreach, has been instrumental in securing furniture and household items for the families through

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Local, U.S. disasters: Catholic Charities is there

In a preview of the Apocalypse, the end of the summer brought a series of disasters, one after another.

After years of having no significant hurricanes, storms came one after another causing extraordinary damages. Through it all, Catholic Charities organizations were on scene to provide assistance and help with long-term recovery.

The spring floods in Arkansas were the prelude. Catholic Charities of Arkansas established a case



From the Director
 Patrick Gallaher

management office in Pocahontas as a base of operations. This office, staffed by Faye Spurlock, worked with long-term issues involving flood survivors and continues to help restore people to their new normal even to this day. This is on top of the superb immediate response to the flooding provided by St. Paul Parish community in

Pocahontas. Catholic Charities of Arkansas extended help to other areas as well, including Saline, Pulaski,

Faulkner, White and Lawrence counties, all through the efforts of disaster preparedness and response coordinator Tracy Eichenberger.

Hurricane Harvey came ashore in Texas Aug. 25, starting a six-day ravaging of Texas and Louisiana. Catholic Charities USA responded to the area to help coordinate the efforts of the local Catholic Charities organizations in the affected dioceses. Because San Antonio was not subjected to the storm damage, Catholic Charities of San Antonio set up a logistics depot and trucking an estimated \$4 million in supplies to Hurricane Harvey survivors, using Catholic Charities in the Galveston-Hous-

ton area to distribute the relief supplies. Catholic Charities of Arkansas was able to help channel funds and some supplies to the hurricane affected areas.

Immediately after, Hurricane Irma cruised through the eastern Caribbean, driving north up the west coast of Florida. The Emergency Management Specialist for the Florida Catholic Conference, Gabe Tischler, had plans in place through the Catholic Charities throughout the state to respond. Because of lessons learned from Hurricane Andrew, Florida was prepared to meet Irma. Again, Catholic Charities USA deployed

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Partners join in the spirit of St. Nicholas

Artwork graces front of Christmas cards sent to prospective donors

As we enter the holiday season, let us not get too caught up in hustle and bustle that comes with this time of year.

Christmas time is a great time of year to remember the spirit of St. Nicholas. He was a well-known saint who devoted his life to sharing his faith and helping those in need. Although his works of charity were performed long ago, he continues to inspire a season of kindness, generosity and joyfulness.

Each year, Catholic Charities sends out Christmas cards as a winter fundraiser. This particular fundraiser is special because the donor can specify which individual programs they would like their donation to go toward.

Programs include Parish Social Ministry, Prison Ministry, Adoption Services, Immigration



St. Nicholas Partners art contest winner Anna Kate Lipin is flanked by her art teacher Kelly Volgelebsang (left) and Our Lady of the Holy Souls School principal Ileana Dobbins.

Services, the Westside Free Medical Clinic and many more. There is also an option to give where the funds are most needed.

Donors also have the unique opportunity to be able to give their gift in honor or memory of

someone, and an acknowledgment card will be sent to that person or their family.

Catholic Charities of Arkansas again held an art contest for St. Nicholas Partners Christmas card. The response to the request

for artwork from Catholic schools was outstanding.

Office manager Bridget Lewis said, "We greatly appreciate all of the schools that send in artwork, and allowed their students to participate."

The first-place winner was Anna Kate Lipin from Our Lady of the Holy Soul School in Little Rock. The second-place winner was Matthew Poland of St. Vincent de Paul School in Rogers. The third-place winner was William Stager from North Little Rock Catholic Academy.

Keep Catholic Charities in mind when thinking of nontraditional Christmas gifts to those you love. If the donation is made before Dec. 15, a card can be mailed to your loved one to be received by Christmas.

What better way to pass on the Christmas spirit, than to give back to those in need. Your donation allows us to better serve the people around our state who need it most. Your donation, no matter how large or small, will make a difference.

'Abandoned' migrant children can get help

Springdale office reaches out to serve kids eligible for SIJS

Over the past five years, as other illegal immigration has almost ground to a halt, scores of young children — some as young as 4 years old — have made their way from Central America, across the dangerous terrains of Mexico, to our communities in Arkansas.

Many of these orphans and abandoned kids are thankful to be apprehended by the immigra-

tion officials of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the Arizona or Texas deserts, trusting that any fate in the U.S. gives them a better chance at survival than life in their home countries.

In November, a Catholic Charities representative met with a young woman who had fled the gang-controlled streets of Honduras to Arkansas to escape the gang's "join-or-die" recruitment tactics.

Catholic Charities Immigration Services' northwest office recently received a grant from The Denver Foundation to help kids

like her, as long as they meet the following criteria:

- The child must be:
 - an immigrant,
 - under the age of 18,
 - living with DACA or without any immigration status at all, and
 - live with only one biological parent or without both biological parents (Minors with a stepfather or a stepmother could still qualify).

Many children could qualify for a path to citizenship through this relatively unknown opportunity called Special Immigrant

Juvenile Status (SIJS). Children who apply for SIJS must not get married until their green card arrives, lest they lose their ability to receive resident status through this form of relief. After five years as a green card holder, these children will be able to apply for U.S. citizenship. This truly is a remarkable opportunity for many of Arkansas' immigrant youth.

Contact Catholic Charities Immigration Services in Springdale for more information at ccsisnw@gmail.com or call (479) 927-1996. Services for these immigrant minors are free.



Disaster

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to Florida to provide assistance. Hurricane Irma first hit areas of the Caribbean outside of U.S. jurisdiction. Those islands were served by the international arm of the U.S. Church, the Catholic Relief Services. Further, the Catholic Charities organization serving Puerto Rico, Caritas Puerto Rico, responded to the U.S. Virgin Islands to lend a hand to Catholic Charities, U.S. Virgin Islands with recovery.

On Sept. 20, the monster Hurricane Maria made a direct hit

People affected by Hurricane Maria wait to receive food aid in the headquarters of Caritas Puerto Rico Oct. 20 in San Juan.

CNS / Bob Roller

on Puerto Rico. Destroying the island's entire electric infrastructure, severely damaging the water and sewer utilities, damaging roads and severely damaging or destroying as many as 250,000 homes, Maria leaves a legacy that will require years of rebuilding. Caritas Puerto Rico is on the ground aiding the recovery effort, assisted by Catholic Charities USA, Caritas Internationalis and Caritas de Espana.

After special collections were taken nationwide, Catholic Charities USA was able to deliver significant funding to local Catholic Charities organizations: \$2 million in Texas, \$2 million in Florida and \$2 million in Puerto Rico.

All the while these major storms raged, Mexico recovered from a significant earthquake that damaged, among other areas, Mexico City. Caritas de Mexico was the leader in responding. Catholic Re-

Fire

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donations. Tarpley said he has crews who can pick up donated furniture, but an appointment will need to be made by calling Tarpley at (501) 514-1426. He asked that the items be in good condition.

Tarpley said an Adopt a Fire Family program has been started for the displaced residents, and sponsoring individuals, families, churches or organizations are needed.

"We need families or civic groups or churches to adopt them, love them, encourage them and help them get the things they need

"Thanksgiving and Christmas will be difficult for many of the families."

Rennie Tarpley, executive director of His Place His Way Outreach

and just be there for them. This is especially important with the holiday season approaching, Thanksgiving and Christmas will be difficult for many of the families," Tarpley said.

According to Eichenberger, some of the families are now living in efficiency apartments, until larger units become available. These efficiency apartments do not have kitchens and the families are not able to prepare home-cooked meals.

The Adopt a Fire Family program will make a significant difference for these families during the coming holidays.

If you are interested in sponsoring a family, contact Eichenberger at (501) 664-0340, ext. 420. Monetary donations or gift cards may be mailed to the Interfaith and Partners Disaster Recovery Alliance, P.O. Box 983, Mayflower, AR 72106.

Relief Services brought U.S. Catholic relief funds to assist with recovery efforts.

The fires in northern California created special challenges. The local diocese, the Diocese of Santa Rosa, suffered damage to schools, diocesan offices and the homes of staff and parishioners. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa worked in conjunction with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to find housing for those displaced by the fires.

Tragedy came to our country in the form of shooting incidents. Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada was on hand to offer assistance to survivors of the horrible shooting in Las Vegas with in-kind relief items and funds. Further, Catholic Charities of San Antonio has offered its help to the survivors of the most recent mass shooting in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

CCHD local grants help parishes support communities

During the weekend before Thanksgiving, parishes are given the opportunity to participate in a second collection to support the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), the anti-poverty program of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Twenty-five percent of the funds collected are kept in the diocese for the Catholic Charities of Arkansas CCHD Local Grant Program. Any group in Arkansas can apply for one of these micro grants, which range from \$200 to \$2,000 for projects helping people in need. Of special note this year were the number of grants awarded to groups having links to local Catholic communities.

Three grants went to pregnancy resource centers to protect the unborn. The Arkansas Pregnancy Resource Center in Little Rock applied for the grant to help fund office systems for their new mobile medical unit. Birthright of Greater Little Rock was another pregnancy center receiving a grant, for the direct needs of women coming for help. Both of these organizations work closely with Catholics and Catholic groups and are supported by area parishes. A third entity, Informed Choices Women's Center, received a grant to help women in the Mountain Home area.

Catholic Charities awarded grants to two parishes operating food pantries from within parish buildings to help with food pur-



Ron Blackburn stands in front of the Sacred Heart Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul storefront outreach in Jonesboro, which received a CCHD Local Grant to assist area families in need.

chases. In total, the grants will allow these pantries to purchase more than five tons of food.

The City of Hope is an archetype of small town Arkansas. Rural, dependent on agriculture and with a poverty rate of 27 percent, Hope relies on the Our Lady of Good Hope Church Food Pantry to help the

town's poor make ends meet.

And while Russellville is a thriving town, it still has a sizeable portion of its population living in poverty. The St. John Harvest House Food Pantry in Russellville provides monthly food supplies to families struggling to cope.

Many CCHD local grant recipi-

ents receive support from Catholics in their communities. In Hot Springs, the Project HOPE Food Bank and the Samaritan Ministries Men's Shelter receive support from and help to support St. Mary of the Springs Church, St. John the Baptist Church and Sacred Heart of Jesus Church.

In Benton, parishioners from Our Lady of Fatima Church assist in providing food, clothing, and financial assistance through the Churches Joint Council on Human Need. In Maumelle, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church of North Little Rock (Marche) helps sustain the Hope Ministry Alliance to distribute food and clothing.

In Jacksonville, St. Jude the Apostle Church supports Fishnet Missions to distribute food to the poor, the elderly, veterans and the homeless. In Jonesboro, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul provides financial assistance to those in need.

Literacy Action of Central Arkansas operates successful English as a Second Language programs in conjunction with St. Edward Church and St. Theresa Church in Little Rock. Also in Little Rock, area Catholics help the homeless through Settled Souls of Arkansas and Jericho Way.

In McGehee, parishioners from St. Mary Church volunteer at the McGehee Desha Alumni Community Center to run a school after-care program. In Conway, St. Joseph Church supports the City of Hope Outreach Program, which operates a men's homeless shelter and a school after-care program.

The CCHD Local Grant Program effectively assists Catholics to help meet a wide range of needs within their communities, working to help each parish to be a Catholic charity.

Rx for better health: Plant more trees

BY KAREN DIPIPPA

When people think of health care, usually the words sickness, wellness, exercise or dietary plans come to mind. While all of these are essential components to health and health care, there is another aspect of health that is ephemeral, essential and critical.

Nature has a role in the well-being of all of us and our Church teaches us that we also have a responsibility to protect the natural world. Most recently, Pope Francis emphasized our role in protecting green space, which is essential to optimal health, particularly in urban areas.

The Catholic Church has a tradition of caring for creation. One example is a USCCB statement: "We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the Earth is not just an Earth Day slogan; it is a requirement of our faith ..."

Recent months make it apparent how nature affects every as-

pect of life. Who could avoid the news of the hurricanes, wildfires and flooding? Our lives as well as lifestyles are being challenged by the forces of nature. According to a summary statement in Funding Trees for Health by the Nature Conservancy with the Analysis Group and Trust for Public Lands, "new tree planting isn't keeping pace with the mortality of existing trees either from natural causes or clearing of trees for new development."

Citing the positive influence of trees, this document also includes a study "Green for Good" "which reports the measurable healthy outcomes when trees and green space were planted as a buffer between a busy highway and an elementary school in Kentucky. The green space acted as an air pollution filter. Data was collected before and after the buffer was in place. It showed healthy persons decreased their inflammation levels and increased their immune system function after the planting of green space.

More healthy outcomes en-

sue. Trees help promote clean air, which in turn reduces asthma and other respiratory health as well as improves cardiovascular health. There was a correlation between the number of parks near a student's home and a lower BMI later in life at age 18.

This report lists more benefits from trees. "Trees can help regulate water quality, water quantity and water flow." Lastly, trees and green space reduce temperatures by cooling the air by acting as shade screens.

Although we don't need a financial gain to protect creation, on the business side of things, a study in California shows that every \$1 spent on a tree provides a \$5.82 return. Nature connects life in interchanging ways. We need to protect this life, our planet and the lives of the forest. Because we cannot always prevent natural disasters, we need to take this longstanding tradition in Catholic Social Teaching to heart: be pro-life, be pro-all living creations, trees and otherwise.

Karen DiPippa is the director of West-side Free Medical Clinic in Little Rock.

Giving back



The student council at Christ the King School in Fort Smith donated \$2,000 to hurricane relief from money it raised on Fridays during lunch by selling candy and holding the annual Father-Daughter Dance. Sixth-grader Ryan Crable, student council president (right), presented the check Nov. 2 to Rebecca Cargile of Catholic Charities of Arkansas. Overall, Catholic Charities USA has donated \$2 million to each of the major hurricanes this fall: Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Louisiana, Hurricane Irma in Florida and the Caribbean and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.