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CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS CATHOLIC • CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS • P.O. BOX 7565 • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72217 • ISSUE NO. 8 • JUNE 21, 2008

Parish ministry starts with a \$150,000 grant

Parish Social Ministry responds to disasters

The Parish Social Ministry Office is working to develop teams to assist in disaster response and deal with the recent tornadoes that have plagued the state of Arkansas.

Parishes throughout Arkansas have been forthcoming in their willingness to assist in recovery for their communities, and these teams will continue to be fostered for other work regarding PSM.

Once we have developed teams in all the needed areas, the office will work to develop additional PSM programs.

Parish disaster teams are currently helping victims of disasters which have impacted more than 60 counties in Arkansas. These include:

- Church of the Assumption, Atkins, and St. John Church, Russellville (covering Pope County)
- St. Michael Church, Cherokee Village (currently covering Fulton and Sharp counties until additional teams are developed)
- St. Jude Thaddeus Church, Clinton (covering Van Buren County)
- St. Albert Church, Heber Springs (currently covering Cleburne, White and Woodruff counties until additional teams are developed)
- St. Mary of the Mount Church, Horseshoe Bend (covering Izard County)
- Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Little Rock (covering Pulaski County)
- St. Peter the Fisherman Church, Mountain Home (covering Marion and Baxter counties)
- St. Mary Church, Mountain View (covering Stone County)
- St. James Church, Searcy (covering White County)
- St. Michael Church, West Memphis (covering Crittenden County)

These eight other parishes are considering development of teams.

- Our Lady of Fatima Church, Benton
- St. Rose of Lima Church, Carlisle
- St. Joseph Church, Center Ridge
- St. Mary Church, Helena
- St. Mary and St. John churches, Hot Springs
- Immaculate Conception Church, North Little Rock
- Pine Bluff
- Holy Rosary Church, Stuttgart

For more information about parish teams for disaster recovery, contact Jamie Deere at (501) 664-0340 or e-mail jdeere@dolr.org.

Parish social ministers serve in community, advocate for needy

The development of a parish social ministry program is an effort by the Diocese of Little Rock through Catholic Charities to assist parishes in living out the Church's social teaching, which calls us to recognize the fundamental dignity of all human life at every stage.

Sister Mary Stubbs, DC, director of Catholic Charities of Arkansas, felt there was a need for such a program within the

diocese, and she decided to seek funding to develop the program. Funding was available through the Vincentian Fund for Systemic Change's Salt and Light Parish Ministry directive. The Diocese of Little Rock was awarded a two-year grant for \$150,000 to develop the parish social ministry program.

The program officially began April 1.

Parish social ministers (PSM) or volunteers will work within specific parish communities to address social needs and issues. PSMs will be trained for ministry through Catholic Charities and the diocese. PSMs will be encouraged to attend on-going in-service training, which will help them be as effective as possible when working in the

community. With the help of Catholic Charities, PSM positions and opportunities can be created in any parish within the diocese.

"It is designed to de-centralize some of the diocese's responses to unjust situations and structures which put or keep people in poverty, while increasing support and assistance to parishes from the diocesan level," Sister Mary Lou said.

PSMs meet their community's social needs in three main ways:

■ Direct service: establishing tangible assistance programs, such as food banks and respite care programs, and visiting nursing

See **PARISH** page 11



A parishioner from St. Michael Church in West Memphis helps a tornado victim get assistance at the May 15 Disaster Resource Fair in Earle.

New harmonies of the creator's ancient song

God has been serenading us for many years and has always asked us humans to hum along in harmony.

From Old Testament times, through the rupture in time brought by Jesus, and into these New Testament times while we strive to turn the world toward the kingdom, God's song has been the same.

But every era brings new harmonies to accent that song. The song is called, "If you would love me as I love you, love your neighbor as yourself."

The role of Catholic Charities is to be a service arm of the Church in both direct service and advocacy activities.

This usually happens in two basic ways: by facilitating and supporting parish and



From the Director
 Sister Mary Lou Stubbs, DC

diocesan ministries and by directly providing services in those areas which cannot be handled on the parish level but which are needed in a diocese.

The needs of people have not changed through the ages, the serenade of God re-

corded in the Old Testament is *a propos* to the things that occur today. However, how those needs are responded to varies by time, location, and the vagaries of life — the harmonies of the song must match the realities of the day.

Catholic Charities of Arkansas assists people and works for justice in the issues that burden them in several areas through its programs. This section is a snapshot of a dynamic system.

We are always striving to find a better way to reach out to Christ in those whom we assist. As we begin a new era in the service of a new bishop, we are tuning up to be ready for the next version of the song.

AT A GLANCE

The mission of Catholic Charities of Arkansas 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.

This is done through the following ministries:

■ **Adoption Services** guides pregnant women who are considering their option for adoption and works with families who are seeking to adopt. Ongoing follow-up with both families maintains anonymity while providing a venue for exchange of pertinent information for the welfare of the child.

■ **Clinics** staffed by volunteer professionals provide assessments, primary care, links into health systems and management of chronic illness such as diabetes. Clinics are provided with both English- and Spanish-speaking providers to assure that diagnosis and patient understanding are accurate.

■ **Development** provides oversight and coordination of all fundraising activities at Catholic Charities in collaboration with the diocesan development office. In addition to grant management, this program provides support to the annual Auction and Cocktail Party and Bishop McDonald Golf Tournament and coordinates the annual St. Nicholas appeal.

■ **Immigration programs** working out of both northwest Arkansas and Little Rock provide assistance to people from more than 100 countries. The programs assist foreign nationals know both their responsibilities and their rights and assist with the complex legal documents that are required to stay in this country on a temporary or permanent basis. Both offices do family-based processes, community education and the VAWA program for victims of violence. The Little Rock office also sponsors religious workers coming to the diocese and the Springdale office provides refugee resettlement.

■ **Parish social ministry** is expanding its scope to providing education, mentoring and support to parishes as they develop the ministries needed, wanted, and possible in their localities through the new Salt and Light Ministries. This department also works with parish teams in disaster response and assists their outreach through parish assistance.

■ **Social concerns** program monitors the consistency of programs and advocacy activities with Catholic social teachings. This is done through education, alerts on public policies and practices that threaten to mistreat vulnerable groups and through legislative advocacy. This department also coordinates the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, awareness of drug and alcohol issues and prison ministry.

For more information, contact: Sister Mary Lou Stubbs, DC Director
Catholic Charities of Arkansas
(501) 664-0340
mstubbs@dolr.org
www.dolr.org/offices/catholiccharities



Coming soon

■ **C²SI**, the second annual Catholic Charities Summer Institute for youth from across the diocese, will be held July 7-11 at St. John Center in Little Rock. Contact Liz Tingquist or Tom Navin for details.

■ **Workshops** on immigration issues are being planned for this summer. Contact Maricella Garcia.

■ **The Parish Respect Life Conference** is Aug. 22-23 at St. John Center in Little Rock. Contact Marianne Linane or Tom Navin.

■ **Catholic Charities staff** is participating in the annual Homeless Outreach Event scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 13 at Riverfront Park in Little Rock. Contact Karen DiPippa for information.

■ **The Bishop McDonald Catholic Charities Auction & Cocktail Party and 14th Annual Golf Classic** will be the last weekend in September. Everyone is invited to the Auction & Cocktail Party on Sunday, Sept. 28 at St. John Center in Little Rock from 6-8 p.m. Tickets are \$20. Mass will be celebrated at 5 p.m. in Morris Hall Chapel.

The next day, Sept. 29, the 14th Annual Golf Classic will be at the Maumelle Country Club with 8 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. tee times. Contact Rebecca Spencer to register or become a sponsor.

■ **The third annual St. Nicholas Fund** will begin in late October with distribution of the second original artwork depicting St. Nicholas commissioned for this program.

For more information on these events, visit www.dolr.org or call (501) 664-0340.

Who we serve

Although the actual staff of Catholic Charities of Arkansas is small, many people are helped and multiple services provided by the staff and volunteers.

■ **Catholic Adoption Services** assists

Volunteers and donations are welcome

Volunteers and donations are needed. If interested, contact Catholic Charities of Arkansas at (501) 664-0340 for the following programs or e-mail Sister Mary Lou Stubbs at mstubbs@dolr.org.

■ **Catholic Adoption Services** needs new baby clothes and items for infants. Contact Antje Harris.

■ **Disaster Response** has several needs. Contact Jamie Deere about:

- Parish Teams willing to assist people impacted by the floods and tornadoes in their areas.
- Household supplies in disaster areas.
- Disaster relief funds needed for distribution through parish teams trained for long-term recovery.

■ **Immigration** programs need a



Golfers head out for a round of fun at the 2007 Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic in Maumelle. This year, an Auction & Cocktail Party is Sept. 28 and the tournament is Sept. 29.

about 300 people for a variety of adoption needs each year and provides about 600 support services each month.

■ **Catholic Campaign for Human Development** provides grants to about 20 organizations on the state level and facilitates two groups receiving large grants from the national office.

■ **Immigration services** programs in the Little Rock and Springdale offices combined provide immigration services and educational programming to an average of 1,720 people each month (approximately 20,644 people each year).

■ **The parish emergency assistance** program works with parishes to assist about 40 people a month who are in urgent situations.

■ **Parish social ministries** began in April and already has 14 disaster-recovery parish teams operating and plans involving many more parishes.

■ **Prison ministry** serves more than 1,000 people a year in 13 state prisons and one federal prison.

■ **Westside Medical Clinic** serves about 100 people each month and provide 4,120 prescriptions annually. They also do about two workshops each month that reach between 25 and 30 people.

variety of assistance. Contact Maricella Garcia in Little Rock or Frank Head in Springdale about:

- The immigration office in Little Rock needs volunteers to help catalog client files for a technology project.
- **VAWA** (Violence Against Women Act program) needs baby and children's items for domestic violence clients coming to the immigration offices. Contact Bridget White in Little Rock or Maria Miller in Springdale.
- **Volunteer attorneys** are needed to assist with complex immigration cases.
- **Prison ministers** are needed to serve the spiritual and religious needs of Catholic inmates. Contact Tom Navin.
- **Volunteers** who want to assist with the annual Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Auction & Cocktail Party and 14th Annual Golf Classic should

How we are funded

Funding to support programs comes from a variety of sources, some of which is restricted to specific programs.

Grants and diocesan funds, including Catholic Arkansas Sharing Appeal, provide some support to most programs.

Grants and fees for service also help to support some programs. Fundraising activities, such as the annual Bishop McDonald Golf Tournament each fall and the party which precedes it, help fill financial gaps.

Additionally, in times of great need, such as the recent tornadoes and floods, a special collection is sometimes requested.

All funds are used as designated by the donors. For example, grants are only used for the purpose they were requested, donations to particular programs support those programs and general donations help with operational expenses where they are most needed.

Collections for disaster relief and recovery pass through a carefully monitored system directly to the victims of those disasters.



Can YOU help?

contact Rebecca Spencer.

- **Westside Medical Clinic** has several needs. Contact Karen DiPippa about:
 - Physicians, particularly bilingual, and pharmacists
 - A bilingual receptionist once or twice a month.
 - Bilingual volunteers to interpret for patients at medical appointments arranged through the clinic

Parish social ministries are expanding

With the help of a systemic change grant from the Vincentian priests, the parish social ministries program is able to assist more parishes in developing ministries that are custom-fit to their particular realities.

Based on the Gospel passage from Matthew 25:34-40, everyone is called to reach out to others to assist them in times of distress.

Therefore, Catholic Charities is collaborating with the Vincentians, other diocesan organizations and a network of parish social ministries throughout the country to assist parishes grow their specific ministries. Ministries reflect some aspect of the Church's social teachings and grow out of the processes of theological reflection (because they are based on God's presence in our world) and community planning (which helps to identify which ministries to develop.)

Regional workshops on parish social ministries and their rootedness in theological reflection will begin later this year. Parishes can then work with Catholic Charities staff that will provide technical assistance, mentoring and support networks as they grow their ministries.

Parish

Continued from page 9

homes and hospitals.

■ **Advocacy:** supporting the less fortunate in the community by advocating for their rights on a local, state and national level.

■ **Convening:** bringing people together to educate them on social issues relevant to the community.

"Parishes have been urged by the bishops of this country to become 'communities of salt and light,' referencing Matthew 5:13-4 which encourages us to let the light of our gifts be seen and shared and to let the salt of our sense of justice flavor society," Sister Mary Lou said.

Currently, the PSM program is working to develop teams to assist in disaster response. (See sidebar, page 9).

Jamie Deere, the director of parish social ministry, is working with the director of parish social ministry at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Memphis, Tenn., where they have excellent PSM programs. The national PSM advisor at Catholic Charities USA encouraged Catholic Charities of Arkansas to contact the Church of the Holy Spirit for guidance as it develops programs.

The development of PSM in Arkansas is critical and natural as Catholic Charities transitioned several hurricane recovery teams into disaster teams. Through these parish teams, the office learned that many parishioners felt a desire to continue to serve in their communities.

"I am very encouraged by this program, and I love working with the parishes and parishioners. I am certain that we will develop programs that will benefit those utilizing the programs and also those parishioners and parishes offering the programs," Deere said.

For more information about parish social ministry, contact Jamie Deere at (501) 664-0340, ext. 419 or e-mail jdeere@dolr.org.

Community unites to help Iraqi refugees

BY FRANK HEAD
CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS

SPRINGDALE — Wars, violent struggle and forced migrations of peoples are something most of us only read about in the paper. Or watch on television. In April, Catholic Charities of Arkansas got a glimpse of the human side of war up close, in the form of the Al Azzawi family who are refugees of war-torn Bagdad and were recently helped to resettle in Fayetteville.

The Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement office in Springdale has helped several hundred needy families and individuals over the years to begin a new life in Arkansas. The Al Azzawi family, however, presented a unique challenge. Al Azzawi and his wife, Miyami, are a highly educated couple in

their 60s who arrived with their 28-year-old daughter, Nadine. The family lost everything in the war, including their home of many years and all their possessions. Their neighborhood descended into chaos and violence.

Al Azzawi, a mechanical engineer with a long career as a construction project manager, was held for hours at gunpoint while his family was threatened by masked men. They escaped Iraq, along with millions of their countrymen, to refugee camps in Jordan. Then for several years, they managed to keep the family together in a small apartment in Amman, Jordan — tolerated but not officially sanctioned by the Jordanian government who demanded bribes to avoid deportation.

Through the combined efforts of the Diocese of Little Rock, the U.S. Catholic

Conference of Bishops, Catholic Charities and a coalition of Quakers, Buddhists, Jews, Unitarians and other faith-based organizations as well as civic groups and concerned individuals, more than \$10,000 in cash and services has been raised.

The Azzawis have embraced northwest Arkansas as their new home. They are very grateful for everyone's generosity and overwhelmed with Arkansas' hospitality. At this point, they are authorized to work and are urgently seeking employment. Anyone with leads on jobs should contact me at cisnw@sbcglobal.net for their resumes. Donations for refugees may be sent to Catholic Charities, 2022 Sunset Ave., Springdale, AR 72762.

Frank Head is the director of Catholic Charities Immigrations Services in Springdale.



Washington visitor

Alfonso Aguilar, (third from left) the first chief of the Office of Citizenship within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, meets with the Catholic Charities Immigration Services staff in Springdale May 1. They are Monica Diaz (from left), Frank Head, Maria Miller, Alma Beltran and Laura Awakim.

FRANCISCO AYALA, NOTICIAS LIBRES

Arkansans supporting Catholic Relief Services

The Diocese of Little Rock does a lot each year to support the work of Catholic Relief Services. This year, though, the diocese, parishes and schools have increased their fundraising and integrating CRS activities into existing programs.

Operation Rice Bowl

The parishes, schools and individuals together raised more than \$29,000 to assist CRS in the fight against global hunger through Operation Rice Bowl. This is a 13-percent increase over last year and is the largest amount collected since 2000-2001 (the first year for which diocesan data is available). As always, 25 percent of the amount collected will remain in the Diocese of Little Rock to help the poor throughout the state.

In February, CRS sponsored a trip to Arkansas by Thomas Awaiapo, senior program officer at CRS-Ghana. Awaiapo visited several schools in central Arkansas and addressed participants at the annual principals' conference. He told how he survived poverty and hunger as a child in his small village in Africa, and the message was clear — Operation Rice Bowl saved his life.

Many who heard Awaiapo speak were inspired by his story and requested that he come back to the diocese next year. Plans are already underway to have him return for a speaking tour, and it is likely that he will be available before or during Lent.



TARA LITTLE

Thomas Awaiapo, senior program officer at CRS-Ghana, tells how Operation Rice Bowl saved his life Feb. 20 in Little Rock.

C²SI: Catholic Charities Summer Youth Institute

Marcos Martinez, youth and young adults program officer for the CRS southwest regional office, is coming to the diocese in July to be a part of the second annual C²SI: Catholic Charities Summer Youth Institute.

C²SI is a collaborative effort between the diocesan Youth Ministry Office and Catholic

Charities to educate youth on Catholic social teaching. Martinez will provide the youth with an overview of CRS and educate them on issues of global solidarity. He will also work with a smaller group to help them develop a plan to promote CRS programs in their parishes and schools.

CRS is also supporting C²SI through a \$5,000 capacity grant, which helps to cover some of the basic expenses associated with the institute, such as lodging, transportation and meals.

Catholic Relief Services special collection

The Diocese of Little Rock collected \$86,530 for the 2008 Catholic Relief Services national collection, which took place March 1-2. As with Operation Rice Bowl, the amount collected was a 13-percent increase over last year.

This collection makes possible the mission of the Catholic Church to combat poverty, provide relief and development, assist refugees and immigrants and advocate for justice and peace in situations of conflict and neglect of basic human rights throughout the world. To learn more, visit www.usccb.org/crscollection.

For more information on CRS in the Diocese of Little Rock, contact Rebecca Spencer at (501) 664-0340.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinic focusing on diabetic education

Westside Free Medical Clinic has undergone many changes since its formation in 1970. Initially it was an acute-care clinic and the only free clinic in the state. It is now a basic screening clinic with limited pharmacy assistance. More than 12,000 services were provided in 2007. However, this is not enough to address the rising incidence of diabetes.

In 2002 the clinic began medical services specifically for Spanish-speaking patients who have a predisposition to diabetes. Basic diabetic educational workshops are provided, with the assistance of volunteers. The current focus is to offer advanced education for Hispanic patients and to reach them in an easy-to-access setting, their parish. The hope is to prevent or delay the

onset of diabetes in the children of diabetic patients and help control the effects of diabetes in their parents.

Joint efforts at education for our English-speaking patients at the Westside Free Medical Clinic continue with the assistance of St. Vincent Clinic East and diabetes educators.

As CCHD donations increase, so do grants

"The Catholic Campaign for Human Development helps people to lift themselves out of poverty" by funding "self-help projects developed by grassroots groups of poor persons..." (CCHD Web site)

Catholics in Arkansas donated a 9.2-percent increase in 2007 over the collection taken up in 2006, and a record number of programs have been funded. Of \$78,644 collected, one-fourth of that was kept on the diocesan level. The diocese was able to keep \$19,661 for local program grants. In addition to this, a total of \$75,000 in national grants was received for two Arkansas programs: Northwest Arkansas Worker Justice Committee and Pulaski County Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, also known as ACORN.

Therefore, close to \$95,000 for programs will be funded by CCHD grants in Arkansas. Each project has the goal of investing "in the dignity of people living below the poverty line." Applications for small local grants are being accepted by Tom Navin at (501) 664-0340.

Adoption program works with Catholic hospital

Antje Harris has energetically directed the Diocese of Little Rock's Catholic Adoption Services program for the past 21 years.

She provides pregnant women with support and assistance. She helps couples discern their current suitability as adoptive parents and assists the birth mother and adoptive family through the process of adoption. For years following adoptions, she commu-



CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS

A volunteer checks a patient's blood sugar during a diabetes education program June 1 at St. Anne Church in North Little Rock.



ACORN director Neil Sealy (left) and staff member Luis Gutierrez receive a grant check from diocesan CCHD director Tom Navin.

nicates on behalf of Catholic Charities with birth parents and adoptive families who request this.

Catholic Adoption Services continues working with St. Vincent Health System as they move from St. Vincent Doctors' building to their expanded labor and delivery services in the new Center for Women and Children in Little Rock. The Catholic values system and sense of respect is critical in all areas touching adoption.

St. Vincent Health System President and CEO Peter Banko said, "We are proud of the

person-centered care that we have developed ... a one-of-a-kind unit in Central Arkansas for labor, delivery, recovery, nursery and neonatal intensive care."

A part of that care is a working relationship with Catholic Charities which "celebrates the miracle of new life by attending not only to the needs of the baby and parents, but also by involving all significant people influencing the life and health of a new baby." St. Vincent and Catholic Charities will continue to develop ways to share in the care of families in the future.

What do you think of when you hear the word 'immigrant'?

BY MARICELLA GARCIA
CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS

Most people hear the word "immigrant" and think "illegal." This is an unfortunate connotation that doesn't take into account the millions of immigrants who are here in the United States with permission.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) is the government agency responsible for controlling immigration to the United States. USCIS reports that in 2006, the most recent year for which data is available, 1,266,264 people became legal permanent residents, 67,263 refugees and asylees were admitted to the United States, 702,589 people became naturalized U.S. citizens and 33,667,328 people came as temporary visitors to the United States, including business travelers, students and tourists. This group of more than 35 million people is often forgotten or marginalized in discussions that center only on "illegal immigration."

By using the word "immigrant" as a catch-all negative phrase, we deny the importance of immigrants to our society. We are a nation of immigrants, part of the global society, and while we do not need to have open borders, we also need to recognize the importance of our American identity in defining an immigration policy.

We are a country that values helping others, that is why more than 60,000 refugees and asylees applied to the United States to protect them from persecution and abuses in their home country.



Maricella Garcia

We are a country that values diversity and that is why more than one million people a year from more than 72 countries become legal permanent residents. We are a country that values the exchange of ideas and knowledge, which is why more than one million people entered the U.S. on exchange visas. These are all critical stories in the larger story of immigration that never gets told: all immigration is not bad, and not all immigrants are the same.

Immigrants' needs and wants in coming to the U.S. are diverse and cannot be lumped all together. Some come as children, having no say in their parent's decision to uproot their life from their home country and begin a new one, in a new language, in the United States, a country they most likely

know nothing about.

Others come as adults because of persecution, abuse, war, famine, natural disaster or other socio-economic driving forces that make them leave their home country in search of survival. Others still come because of family ties to the U.S.; they have a husband/wife, father/mother, brother/sister, etc. who lives here and they wish to reunite their family.

Far more often, what the office of Catholic Charities Immigration Services hears is the story of parents who came to the United States seeking a better life, not for themselves, but for their children. They are people who in their home country made less than \$200 a month on average and couldn't afford the basic necessities like running water, school supplies and food for every mouth at the table. They are people who knew their children's future was bleak because no matter how hard the parents worked, there were not enough resources to go around and there was little opportunity to get ahead.

In looking at how the term "immigrant" has become such a negative connotation, we have to look closely at the immigration debate and at the current immigration system. All sides can easily agree that the current immigration system does not work. It does not effectively serve our security or eco-

nomic needs, and it does not efficiently process legal immigrants or stop unauthorized persons from coming into our country.

Instead of turning our back on the "other" we should do as the Bible commands us in Leviticus 19:33-34: "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God." We should welcome them with the same love we have for ourselves.

Immigration is not an "us and them" issue as it is too often portrayed. Nor is it a criminal issue. Primarily it is a humanitarian issue and we are losing the face of our humanity by talk of "illegals." The next time you hear the word "immigrant," I would ask you to think, "What does it really mean to you?" Look to the person, not the action and try to judge each individual fairly. Here at Catholic Charities Immigration Services, "immigrant" usually means families reuniting, regularization of status for people who have waited patiently (sometimes for years), and most importantly service to those who desperately need us the most: strangers in a strange land.

Maricella Garcia is the director of Catholic Charities Immigration Services in Little Rock.