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CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS CATHOLIC • CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS • 2415 N. TYLER ST. • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72207 • JUNE 20, 2020

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, naturalization services, education and advocacy, legal assistance with applications for DACA

■ **Immigration in Little Rock:** Family-based legal assistance, legal assistance with applications for DACA, naturalization services, and education and advocacy

■ **Parish social ministries:** Parish-based ministry development, disaster recovery, family assistance, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, legislative advocacy, Catholic Charities Summer Institute

■ **Westside Free Medical Clinic:** Medical and specialist clinics for noninsured adults, outreach and community education

■ **Prison Ministry:** Acts as liaison between public authorities and the diocese, recruits and supports volunteer prison ministers for county, state and federal facilities

FOR MORE INFORMATION
 Catholic Charities of Arkansas
 2415 N. Tyler St.
 Little Rock, AR 72207
 (501) 664-0340
 www.dolr.org

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.

Virus shuts down free medical clinic

Westside clinic looking at transition to telemedicine

BY KAREN DIPIPPA
 WESTSIDE FREE MEDICAL CLINIC

While the medical field has been aware the world was due for a pandemic any year now, it still came as a surprise how rapidly a virus disrupted life as we knew it. By now, most people are aware of the precautions to take involving hand-washing, physical distancing and the wearing of masks.

As an additional precaution, our Westside Free Medical clinics have been postponed until it seems safer to resume. Additionally, our clinics are held in the same location as diocesan offices which have been closed to the public and that reinforced the decision to postpone medical appointments.

In the interim, with the help of Karla Campalans to interpret, we have been contacting patients to inform them of the postponement by phone or mail. A number of patients changed their phone numbers or residence and we have no way to reach them. However, we have for the past two and a half months been able to reach most patients.

Along with postponement, this has involved the tentative rescheduling of the primary care patients. For these patients, we have also provided written refill orders with a small compensation for some to purchase the more expensive medicines (particularly



Patrick Gallaher

An exam room at the Westside Free Medical Clinic's offices in The McDonald Center in Little Rock sits empty as the COVID-19 lockdown continues.

insulin), because our pharmacy is also closed.

Our specialty clinics — dermatology, physical therapy, ophthalmology, chiropractic and podiatry — are on hold for a while and these patients have not been rescheduled. It was important to

continue the medicine for our established patients to keep them healthy and also to avoid any event which might send them to an emergency room and protecting both patients and the emergency room staff from overcrowding. A majority of our patients are

NOT FORGOTTEN

If you are a Westside patient with a new phone number or address, please leave a message with your new information at (501) 664-0340, ext. 356, to update our charts.

in a high-risk category because diabetes is a high-risk condition.

This is new territory for everyone but particularly charitable clinics because all of the medical staffing is volunteer. We are not a free standing clinic so we share space with other offices. While we have face masks, we do not have the other required protective equipment to return to regular visits.

Now seems an appropriate time to transition to telemedicine, which appears as a good compromise. Patients would be contacted by phone or computer and speak with a medical doctor or provider. Initially, this will be for established patients, but there is a future in telemedicine for our patients in rural areas, which will serve more of the entire state. Telemedicine would allow us to assist those patients who cannot travel to our office and live in an underserved medical area of the state. Much needs to still be worked out but know that Westside Clinic has always adjusted through the years to the needs of the time. Things may be different but we will do our best to serve our patients to the fullest of our abilities. Be safe and remember to wear a mask and wash your hands.

400 families helped this spring because of pandemic

BY PATRICK GALLAHER

The coronavirus shut down the state just in time to cancel this year's St. Patrick's Day parade in Little Rock. Since then, the lockdown has restricted the person-to-person activities of Catholic Charities.

We have treated the coronavirus impact on our parishes as we would a disaster. It is a disaster. In this context, each parish has addressed the particular circumstances in its own community. As usual, each parish has been a Catholic charity.

Our main response has been to solicit applications from parishes for grants to respond to the immediate needs of the communities each parish serves. We have also been able to focus special assistance to groups and individuals brought to



From the Director
 Patrick Gallaher

our attention by parishes.

Through a small grant from Catholic Charities USA, we were able to assist the food pantry operated out of St. Theresa School in Little Rock. In this effort, 19 families comprising 108 individuals were assisted with food and other necessities.

Using our own disaster funds, we were able to assist El Centro Hispano in Jonesboro to help families affected not only by the coronavirus, but also by the tornado in late March.

Catholic Charities USA came through with another grant — a

\$10,000 emergency grant — which we supplemented with money from our Poor Fund. With these funds, we emailed all the parishes and schools in the diocese asking that any with unmet needs among their communities submit applications for small grants. We received 22 applications and were able to meet each request in full. Through this program, more than 400 families have received assistance with food, utilities and rent to help with the challenge presented by coronavirus. The

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BRIEFS

STUDENT INTERNS

Gisheera J. Jones-Ford and Anna Bock completed graduate social work student field placements in the spring with Catholic Charities. The internships provide an overview of social services work through working with various departments, including immigration, adoption services, the Westside Free Medical Clinic and parish social ministries. In addition the students learned about resources in the community, including Helping Hand where they volunteered their assistance.

Jones-Ford is a graduate student with the LSU online program and Bock is attending UA Little Rock. Both students had their experiences shortened due to the decision of the diocese to close programs to outside clients and students because of the pandemic. Their respective universities assisted them to complete their requirements online.

DACA DECISION

Catholic Immigration Services in Little Rock and Springdale is closely watching what the U.S. Supreme Court will decide on the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Many speculate the Supreme Court will make a final decision on allowing DACA to continue or not by the end of the month.

The office stated, "It is important for everyone to be informed about the DACA program and understand how thousands of DACA recipients are outstanding members of our communities and only consider the United States to be their home. DACA recipients should also be informed and aware of updates within the program. For example, the program is still only accepting applications of renewal and will not accept new applicants. If your DACA expires soon or even within the year of 2020,

it is crucial to go ahead and renew your DACA now. In addition, if you have had any contact with law enforcement, you should first speak with a trusted legal advisor before renewing your DACA."

Catholic Immigration Services can be reached in Springdale at (479) 927-1996 or in Little Rock at (501) 664-0340.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Catholic Immigration Services is continuing to provide low-cost immigration counseling and support to families and individuals who are eligible for immigration benefits and cannot afford private assistance.

The office stated, "While we cannot have clients enter our building during the COVID-19 pandemic, we can still do work virtually and accept new clients. Please email or call one of our offices."

More information is available at dolr.org or by calling the office in Springdale or Little Rock.

PARTNER'S DEATH

Catholic Adoption Services is grieving the death of Ed Appler, who died May 10. Ed and his wife Sharon have owned Grace Adoptions in Conway for the past 20 years.

Director Antje Harris said, "We worked with Ed in our shared pursuit of the best adoptions possible for children and families. Ed was one of the licensed social workers we trusted to do a really thorough home study. Ed contributed so much to the Arkansas Adoption Association on important legislative and educational issues, serving as treasurer and later as president.

"We especially appreciated Ed's knowledge and leadership on the Arkansas Child Welfare Agency Review Board. One of his last acts there was to get the ruling through that allowed us to currently use video technology



The pre-addressed envelope inserted in this issue of *Arkansas Catholic* is a convenient way to support Catholic Charities' Poor Fund. Your gift will help fill the gap to aid people with basic needs like utilities and rent.

with clients for home visits."

FILL THE GAP

A pre-addressed envelope is included this issue of *Arkansas Catholic*. All donations will be deposited in Catholic Charities' Poor Fund. This fund is the source of most of the financial assistance given by Catholic Charities to help people with basic needs like utilities and rent.

The Poor Fund is sustained largely through direct donations. Another significant resource is the 25 percent retained by the diocese each year from Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl campaign. Because the pandemic occurred during Lent, the 25 percent of what Catholic Charities collects this year will fall well short of the normal projection of \$25,000.

Catholic Charities and other agencies are expecting an increase in requests as stimulus money runs out and increased unemployment benefits are reduced. Many landlords depend on rental property for their income and won't be able to defer rent for much longer.



Miriam Gallaher

Catholic Charities of Arkansas executive director Patrick Gallaher (right) tours St. Mary of the Springs Church food pantry in Hot Springs May 13. Pantry director Bonnie Newman shows how the pantry serves both the parish families at St. Mary and St. John the Baptist, and the community, even after other local food pantries have closed because of COVID-19.

Aid

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great majority of these recipients are immigrant families who are not entitled to any of the government relief programs available to our population at large.

Presently, we are processing our annual Catholic Campaign for Human Development Local Grant applications. We will consider these grants with a special view toward meeting the needs generated by the coronavirus in the communities of the applicants.

In particular, food programs will receive special attention. Consequently, a second round of funding to communities in need will be distributed within the diocese by the first part of July.

We have begun planning for a third round of assistance and are seeking funds to implement it. Any donations for this third effort are deeply appreciated.

Please send checks to Catholic Charities of Arkansas, 2500 N. Tyler St., Little Rock, AR 72207, with the notation that they are intended for the Poor Fund for coronavirus relief.

Scholars: Health, wealth both integral to managing pandemic

BY LAURA IERACI
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

CHICAGO — Americans must move past the health-wealth dichotomy that dominates public debate about how to manage the current pandemic to find a way forward, said a panel of Catholic scholars during a webinar June 2.

"Either you want to kill Grandma or you want to destroy the economy and leave millions of people unemployed, and people fight and they polarize, but we don't ask, 'What is the wealth for?'" said Mary Hirschfeld, associate professor of economics and theology at Villanova University.

"And on the health side, it's just a very thin idea about health"

that doesn't consider the importance of social interaction, work, productivity and human relationships, she said.

Consensus is absent in liberal, present-day society about what goods to pursue and tends to emphasize "instrumental goods," such as health and wealth, she said. However, a "thicker conception" of the common good is needed and is precisely what Catholic social teaching can contribute to the public conversation.

The online event was organized by the Lumen Christi Institute at the University of Chicago as a follow-up to an event it held last month that addressed the COVID-19 response mostly from an economic perspective. Much

of the June 2 discussion, moderated by Joseph Capizzi, moral theology professor at The Catholic University of America in Washington, hinged on the principles of Catholic social teaching.

Dr. Daniel Sulmasy, a physician and professor of biomedical ethics at Georgetown University, underlined competing conceptions of the common good that emerged during the public debate, including the utilitarian, neo-liberal and totalitarian perspectives.

He contrasted these views with the Catholic understanding of the common good, which he described as "integral," where the good and flourishing of the individual is in part constituted by the good and flourishing of the whole

and vice versa. This "integral" approach seeks both to protect the vulnerable from COVID-19 and to act in solidarity with the poor, he said.

Kirk Doran, associate professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame, also emphasized that "there is no dichotomy between health and wealth." Rather, health and wealth are "intimately related."

"What we're trying to do is to understand a very subtle set of responses that are rippling through our economy, rippling through people's emotional lives, rippling through everything and they're all affecting each other at the same time, and that's what makes this super complicated,"

said Doran. "If it was simple tradeoffs between health and wealth, it would be easier."

Doran's observation of the social movement that emerged online — what he called "a viral desire" — to protect others by not engaging in usual economic activity, opened the discussion on the principle of solidarity in Catholic social teaching.

The "strong sense" of solidarity that played out in social distancing was "really very moving," said Hirschfeld. However, she wondered whether it "could have been extended" to consider the "downstream effects" of people's individual and collective decisions on local businesses, as well as on the poor around the world.

Follow-up adoption visits made by video

BY ANTJE HARRIS

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered our daily lives and the scope of our work at Catholic Adoption Services. Our hearts go out to all those who have fallen ill or have lost someone they loved to this terrible disease. We know that many others are suffering due to job loss, financial stress, separation from family and friends, educational challenges, child care problems, fears of what might come next and myriad other concerns.

The Diocese of Little Rock made the difficult decision March 17 to close our doors to outside clients and visitors, but adoption services have continued. We appreciate the support we have received to work safely from home to the extent possible. The staff also has the option to come to the office part-time and in staggered shifts to limit risks. Those who choose to come in use social distancing, wear masks and, of course, lots of hand-washing.

Thanks to technology we are able to stay in contact with many individuals and families through texts, calls, emails and video conferencing. Rebecca Jones,

the child placement specialist, recently conducted a homestudy update with a waiting adoptive family through the Zoom video conference app. She will do a virtual post-placement "visit," also on Zoom, with a family who adopted a baby girl earlier in the year. Follow-up contact can be made this way and no one will have unnecessary exposure.

We are not able to do initial application or homestudy visits with new clients as we do not feel we gather the needed information through remote contact alone. It is a great way to keep up with families we already know well.

We are allowed to have these virtual meetings through a Child Welfare Agency waiver in place at least until July 1.

We recently earned our annual required continuing education units with a live four-day webinar conducted by the MidSOUTH Center for Prevention and Training through UALR. We look forward to when it will be possible for us to meet with our clients again, but we will continue to do all we can while staying safe.

Antje Harris is the director of Catholic Adoption Services.

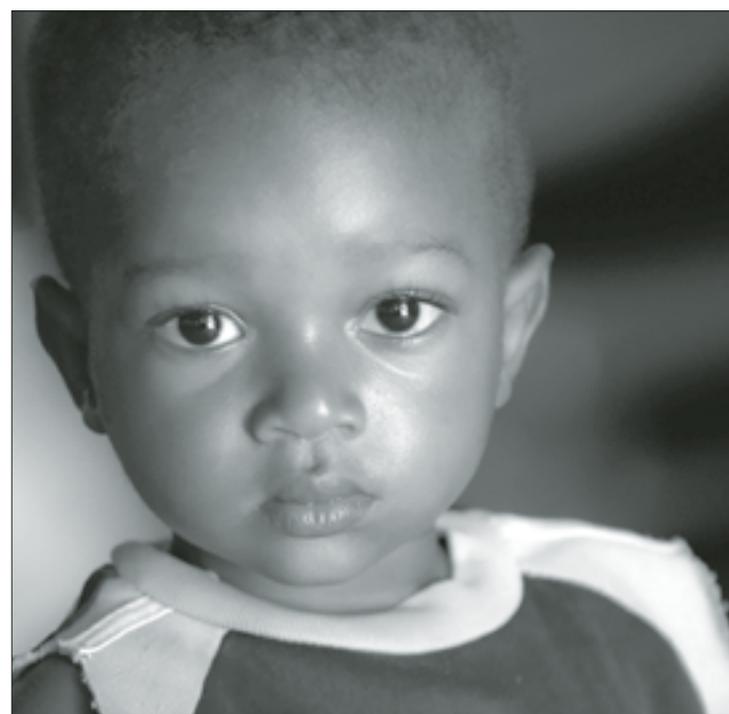
Racism concerns us all

We are experiencing the tremendous tragedy of generations of racial injustice which have culminated in the murder of George Floyd. Despair, grief, anger, frustration and a desire for change are fueling national responses.

Bishop Anthony B. Taylor's statement on racism is an important part of the dialogue and adds the support of the Catholic Church in Arkansas. We appreciate his speaking out to condemn systemic racism and to call upon on all of us to work together toward solutions that follow God's commandment of loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Catholic Adoption Services has been a licensed agency for over 36 years. We have placed African-American children in Arkansas and other states. We are connected through our shared adoption experience and the love that anchors us.

We are deeply concerned about the adoptees and all of the children who were not placed for adoption. No child or adult should ever be afraid of physical harm because of their



No child or adult should ever be afraid of physical harm because of their race or the color of their skin.

Antje Harris

race or the color of their skin. Now is the time for real change, true justice and deep healing in our hearts and in our world. — Antje Harris, director of Catholic Adoption Services

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Westside Free Medical Clinic
a ministry of Catholic Charities of Arkansas

Volunteers Needed
Spanish-speaking
Diabetes Educator
in clinic, schedule to be determined
Registered Nurses
2-3 hours monthly or per your schedule

Can you share some time?
Contact Karen DiPippa, 501-664-0340
ext. 356, or e-mail kdipippa@dolr.org

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*Honoring fathers
who care, this
Father's
Day —
and always*

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