

Three art contest winners recognized 11
 Local anti-poverty grants range from \$500 to \$2,500 11

CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS CATHOLIC • CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS • 2415 N. TYLER ST. • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72207 • NOVEMBER 26, 2016

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, domestic violence and crime victims services, supporting survivors, 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

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.

CIS unites families, protects victims

Immigration services ministry helps the most vulnerable

By Maricella Garcia

Catholic Immigration Services - Little Rock provides low-cost immigration counseling and support to those who are eligible for immigration benefits. The mission of Catholic Immigration Services is to help people clarify their legal status in the United States and to alleviate the related problems of family separation, economic victimization and social isolation.

The office's work is based on three central areas:

- helping reunite families under amazing circumstances
- helping protect and stabilize the most vulnerable, including victims of severe crimes and human trafficking
- promoting community integration by helping qualified permanent residents apply to become U.S. citizens.

Although it can sometimes be difficult work, we see the overall success of the office through the individual clients who have been able to achieve their goals with our assistance.

In the past year, through screenings, consultations and workshops, CISLR reached more than 7,000 individuals in Arkansas advising



CNS / Eugene Garcia, EPA

A mother and daughter in Los Angeles react after the U.S. Supreme Court issued a split ruling June 23 blocking President Barack Obama's executive actions to temporarily stop deportations.

them of potential immigration remedies for their particular situation. Through partnership with various community groups and parishes, we conducted 21 community presentations. With only one attorney and one Board of Immigration Appeals-accredited representative full-time, we conducted 407 immigration legal consultations and

opened 244 new cases. Most importantly, we provided services to 103 at-risk and vulnerable immigrants.

Over the past year, our office has seen a 30 percent annual increase in our case load, including 198 family-based cases. Helping families navigate the complex process of reuniting with their family members is fundamental to our work.

Each of these stories is unique, but in the case of one family we assisted this year, we faced steep odds and remarkable obstacles. A U.S. citizen, who is a mother, came to our office for the first time in 2003, seeking to apply to bring her daughter, her son-in-law and their

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After the election, where do we go from here?

The late comedian George Carlin had a line. He said, "I used to be an Irish-Catholic, now I'm an American." Although a cultural Irish-Catholic, his comedy had a secular evolution that appealed to the larger society of his day. He found he had to become an American to be successful.

Many of my immigrant friends are concerned with a Trump administration. They take literally his bluster that he will expel all the undocumented. I read in the press the comments of those facing uncertainty. I get a sense

that these concerned immigrants see the challenges facing them in stark racial terms — the Blond America versus the Brown Immigrants. It is not that simple, nor is it a broad truth.



From the Director
 Patrick Gallaher

All Republicans do not hate all immigrants. All Democrats do not love all immigrants. Political parties, when they play identity politics, do not universally protect their constituent elements for all time. They protect each individual segment of their coalition only so long as it is useful to their cause. Just ask a coal miner how well the Democrats

protected the United Mine Workers as the current administration eliminated 83,000 mining jobs despite the popular notion that the Democrats are the party of unions.

At one time, the Democratic Party was believed to be the party of the Catholic Church, but of late, it is only so far as we Catholics reject the centrality of our belief in the dignity and sanctity of the human person and the sanctity of matrimony between one man and one woman. As the writer Kurt Vonnegut said, "So it goes."

In this presidential election, Hispanic citizens comprised a larger percentage of the electorate than ever. But they did not vote as a monolithic block. More than one-third of Hispanic voters voted for Donald Trump. They voted

as Americans. Nearly half of self-professed Catholic voters voted for Hillary Clinton. Disregarding her support for numerous inherent evils, they voted as Americans.

Donald Trump will not be able to deport 11 million undocumented residents. Aside from the impracticality of mass deportation, immigrants are an integral part of our national economy. Trump was elected, in part, based on his belief that government should support economic growth. Mass deportation will lead to significant economic contraction. Arizona's experiment with anti-immigrant legislation has starkly proven this outcome.

One should filter the spin

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BRIEFS

Interns

Catholic Charities of Arkansas welcomed two interns recently. Celina Reyes-Vasquez will be an intern for the 2016-17 school year. She is a senior at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, pursuing her bachelor's degree in social work. Originally from Oaxaca, Mexico, she came to the U.S. when she was 4. She settled in Little Rock 11 years ago.

Reyes-Vasquez helps in almost every department, from screening calls in the family assistance ministry, to helping a client find an apartment to rent and meeting with families who have become parents through Adoption Services.

Rachel Musick, a graduate intern in social work, was an intern for Adoption Services in August. She will graduate in December. Musick grew up in New Orleans until 2006 when she and her family moved to Memphis after Hurricane Katrina. After earning her bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Tennessee, she began her master's degree in social work with the University of Tennessee's Distance Learning Program.

Musick and her husband Addison moved to Little Rock recently and attend Christ the King Church. She worked in various areas of the adoptions program during her internship.

"Of course I love being with the babies, but it's really special to see the birthparents and adoptive



Celina Reyes-Vasquez (left) and Rachel Musick are interns helping the work of Catholic Charities while getting practical experience to further their education in social work.

parents interact," she said. "It is truly beautiful to be a part of two families coming together in the love of a child."

Healthy Arkansas

Westside Free Medical Clinic recently participated in the Mexican Consulate's Binational Week. Each year the Arkansas Health

Department and area health organizations participate in a health event for the Hispanic community. Oct. 15 marked the end of the health week for the community. Flor Lopez, program assistant in the clinic, represented the diocese. She was a medical interpreter for Dr. Tom Cannon, who performed more than 75 glau-

coma exams. Additionally, Lopez was responsible for registering 15 men for the PSA blood test and prostate exams.

New life

On Sept. 24, Catholic Charities office administrator Bridget Lewis gave birth to a son, William "Liam" Lewis. This is the second child for Lewis and her husband Nathan. They are members of the Cathedral of St. Andrew.



William "Liam" Lewis was born Sept. 24.

Services

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children to the U.S. as legal permanent residents. After 11 years, it was finally time to begin the consular process. As we worked to bring her family members to the U.S., it seemed like everything would move along fine until one day we received a call that the mother was very ill and was in the Intensive Care Unit. It seemed that everything we had done to help her reunite with her family would fall apart. Many months later, the mother recovered, was released from the hospital and was able to continue the process. Her family members finally arrived to the U.S. 13 years after we first started.

We have also had an 80 percent increase for people seeking to naturalize. One applicant who was able to naturalize with assistance from our office has been a client from the first moment her U.S. citizen husband petitioned for her to become a resident. When she had her naturalization ceremony, all of their family and friends came to witness her success. Afterward, she and her husband sent a letter of appreciation to the office "for the help, support and encouragement" our office provided

throughout the entire process.

We have also seen a 34-percent increase in cases for victims of crimes, including domestic violence, sexual assault, rape

and human trafficking. These are some of the most difficult challenges we face in representing clients who have undergone the worst trauma imaginable and are

still able to move on and see the bright side of life. One client was referred to our office by local law enforcement in 2012 because she was a victim of human traffick-

ing. We helped her to apply for a T visa as a victim of trafficking.

However, her ordeals were not over. She later found out she had breast cancer and eventually had to have two surgeries and continues to receive treatment today. However, at a recent office visit she reminded us of why we work so hard with these vulnerable populations. She said, "It is only due to the blessing of God that I am alive today, and I don't know what I would have done without the help that Catholic Charities has given me through all these years."

Success stories like these affirm how important our work is. Even though we have seen an increase in need over the past years, we continue to have a 100 percent approval rate in all case types throughout the year. While we anticipate that the need for our services will continue to grow, we are working to meet that extra need and in 2016 we added two new BIA-accredited representatives to help take on that case load.

We intend to continue our work and expand services to even more people throughout the state as we follow the command to "welcome the stranger."

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



CNS / Jim West

Two hands reach out from the U.S. side of the border fence to shake the hand of a person on the Mexican side Oct. 8 during immigration rallies in Nogales, Ariz., and in Nogales in the Mexican state of Sonora. Activists held protests on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border against what they say is an increasing militarization of the border.

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projected by the popular media — they got this election wrong and they do not understand our nation. One should not be persuaded by the rioters disrupting the peace in our larger, politically liberal cities. We should stand together in solidarity for justice, and work for the common good of all. We must work in our communities and in our state to emphasize the principle of subsidiarity; all politics is indeed local. We must not slavishly follow the centralized planning of some entrenched national elite, an elite that has assumed privilege to which they are not entitled. We must participate in the political process.

Participation is a virtue. It brings graces. Participation should be peaceful, respectful and constructive. The default in politics today is to use the language of war and violence. Politicians, even soft, pudgy, old politicians say, "I'll fight for you." They won't. They can't. Save the language of violence for real war. Participate in local government, at the parish level or higher. But do so respecting others. Do not refer to your opponents as "enemies." They are your fellow citizens. Throughout the Civil War, Confederate General Robert E. Lee is never recorded as calling his Union adversaries "enemies." He called them, "those people." Recognize the humanity in adversaries. Strive to see the face of Jesus in all.

Insurance and prevention not exclusive

By Karen DiPippa

This is the time of year that begins enrollment for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act and Nov. 1, 2016, started the enrollment period to register for health insurance if you do not currently have a policy in Arkansas.

With the new presidential administration coming in January, we do not know how this will affect the Affordable Care Act (known commonly as Obamacare) or the Arkansas Works. It seems prudent to enroll until we know what and when definite changes will occur.

The current types of coverage include Marketplace insurance plan, Medicaid and CHIP, (Children's health insurance program) as well as expanded Medicaid if your income is under \$27,000 a year. Arkansas Works, previously the private option, may provide free or low-cost coverage then if you qualify. If, however, your income is higher there are many plans available which aim to meet health and budget needs, which you may buy through what is called the "marketplace."

For now, you can access most information about what plans might work for you at healthcare.gov. This site provides charts explaining the various plans based on income and family size.

At Westside Free Medical Clinic, it is business as usual since most of the patients continue to be without insurance or cannot qualify for insurance. For our immigrant families, there is not a provision at this time for government coverage. Moreover, for those people with insurance, even though the plans aim to fit into budgets, the premiums or costs can still be a hardship.

Medical costs continue to escalate in spite of these new insurance plans. While the Affordable Care Act did provide more health coverage for more individuals, it remains more of an insurance reform than medical reform.

While it exists, Affordable Care Act coverage provides a chance at health, which is a very pro-life approach and the Westside Free Medical Clinic will attempt to keep patients on a healthy track with the help of our loyal volunteer staff.

Additionally, individuals can do their part by getting flu shots for themselves and family and immunizations for their children. Prevention goes a long way for healthy families and perhaps lower insurance premiums. With these rising medical costs, it just makes sense to focus on prevention.

DiPippa is director of the Westside Free Medical Clinic.

Local CCHD grants work to end poverty

The annual second collection to support the Catholic Campaign for Human Development was taken up in parishes Nov. 19-20.

CCHD is the Church's anti-poverty program, designed to help local people organize a response to conditions that cause poverty in their own neighborhoods. In this respect, it is the embodiment of the principle of subsidiarity — allowing local challenges to be solved by local people — complemented by our solidarity in giving to help people to help themselves.

Last year's collection in Arkansas was a success, raising \$84,838.59 for national and local grants.

Through Catholic Charities of Arkansas local grant program, 25 percent of last year's collection stayed in the Diocese of Little Rock. Catholic Charities solicited grant applications from across the state, finally approving the awards of grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,500.

The local grant winners were:

■ In Little Rock, a grant was awarded to the diocesan youth ministry office to help fund the annual Catholic Charities Summer Institute. This week-long summer camp hosted nearly 100 high school students and gave them an intense immersion into



Heart to Heart in Fort Smith used CCHD grant money to help women in crisis pregnancies.

the world of charitable outreach and confrontation with thorny social issues facing our society.

■ In Jonesboro, a local grant went to the Hispanic Community Service Office, run by Blessed Sacrament parishioner Gina Gomez. This office helps immigrants in

northeast Arkansas integrate into the local communities.

■ Also in Jonesboro, a grant was awarded to a new organization: Reclamation House. Reclamation House helps women on the margins of society find their way back to the productive life.

■ In the western part of the state, grants went to Audrey's Home of Hope in Bella Vista and Heart to Heart in Fort Smith. Both of these agencies help women in crisis pregnancies, giving the expectant mothers options other than abortion.

■ In the southwest part of the state, a grant was approved for the St. Edward Outreach in Texarkana. This program feeds hundreds of people lunch each week.

■ In Hot Springs, a grant went to the Samaritan Ministries Men's Shelter. The ecumenical operation cares for the spiritual as well as the physical needs of men going through hard times. Samaritan Ministries is supported by many of the churches, including St. John Church, St. Mary Church and Sacred Heart of Jesus Church.

■ Conway's City of Hope Outreach also received a grant. The organization has a shelter, community center, after-school tutoring and summer programs for children. The CCHD grant was

earmarked for the Hope Home Initiative, a transitional house for men moving toward independent living.

■ In Little Rock, grants helped many groups. Literacy Action of Central Arkansas was a recipient. The organization sponsors English as a Second Language programs at a number of parishes in the Little Rock area. Another recipient was El Zocalo Immigrant Resource Center. St. Theresa School received a grant to help with a tuition scholarship for a student. Depaul USA received a grant to assist with its efforts at the Jericho Way Homeless Day Resource Center. Birthright of Greater Little Rock, a pregnancy resource center, benefited from a grant to help with its work to assist mothers make a decision to allow their unborn babies to live. Grants also went to the Center for Women in Transition, a prison reentry program, and the Greater Little Rock Organizing Committee, a group dedicated to increasing community participation in solving community challenges.

These grants go far to initiating local solutions to poverty in the state. And it was accomplished solely through the generosity of parishioners who donated to the annual CCHD second collection.

Children's art beautifies St. Nicholas Partners

Every year Catholic Charities of Arkansas has a Christmas fundraiser called St. Nicholas Partners. It includes sending a Christmas card to *Arkansas Catholic* subscribers (see *Nov. 19 issue*) as well as mailing to donors.

This fundraiser is special because it is easy for the donor to specify what individual programs they would like to support. The programs include Parish Social

Ministry, Prison Ministry, Adoption Services, Immigration Services, the Westside Free Medical Clinic and many more. The donors additionally have the option to donate to where the funds are most needed. Also, the donors can give their gift in honor or memory of someone.

This year the staff of Catholic Charities decided to take a different approach to the Christmas card and hold an art contest

in the state's Catholic schools. The contest included students in sixth to 12th grade. Students were asked to create artwork about St. Nicholas and his works and it had to be colorful.

The staff of Catholic Charities and another panel chose the top three entries. The first-place winner is Isabel Hortelano, a seventh-grade student at St. John School in Hot Springs. Her design graces this year's card. The sec-

ond-place winner is Anna Constantino from St. Joseph School in Paris and the third-place winner is Drew Lewis from St. Joseph School in Conway.

If making donations in honor of loved ones, please mail donations before Dec. 15. The recipient will receive a Christmas card from Catholic Charities acknowledging the gift. Mail donations to 2415 N. Tyler St., Little Rock, AR 72207.



Isabel Hortelano, a seventh-grade student at St. John School in Hot Springs, holds a card made from her first-place design for Catholic Charities' annual St. Nicholas Partners appeal. She stands with art teacher Gina Cate (left) and principal Angela Isaacs.



This artwork won second place for Anna Constantino, a seventh grader at St. Joseph School in Paris.



Third place in the art contest went to Drew Lewis, a 10th grader at St. Joseph School in Conway.

Questions people ask about Adoption Services

What is the actual name of the agency?

Our legal name is Adoption Services Inc., but we are generally known as Catholic Adoption Services.

Do you have to be Catholic to work with the diocesan agency?

No, we work with birthmothers of all faiths, though many choose us because they are Catholic and are looking for Catholic families. Some birthparents prefer a family that is not Catholic and an effort is made to help them find a family of another faith. We welcome inquiries for information.

Where do your birthmothers come from?

Birth parents find out about our services in a variety of ways. Many of our clients are referred by pregnancy resource centers or local hospitals. Often they hear about us through a friend or family member who has worked with our agency. Referrals from priests, religious and deacons are welcomed. Some birthmothers will find us through our website or other sources online. We are always trying to get the word out about our licensed adoption agency. We do not pressure birthparents to choose adoption as we respect that this is their difficult



TanteTati / pixabay.com

decision to make and they need to choose what is best for them and for their child. We will provide information, counseling and support.

What fees are there for an adoption?

Agency services to birthparents are free. Referrals are made for medical services and Medicaid, if necessary. Reasonable fees are charged to adoptive parents for actual services delivered prior to a placement. This generally includes the application, homestudy, background checks and profile fees.

Placement fees are due at the time of the legal adoption and are based on a sliding scale depending on the adoptive parents' income. Generally, the medical costs and legal fees are included in this placement fee. Many families may be eligible for state and federal tax credits, which can cover a lot of the expense.

How does a family get selected?

Prospective adoptive parents complete their homestudies and are then ready and waiting. Birth parents let us know what they are looking for in a family for their

child. Birth families then choose the new parents by looking at confidential profile books that the adoptive parents create to show what they are like, individually and as a family. Most of the birth parents choose to meet the pre-adoptive parents prior to or soon after the birth of their child. A staff member from Adoption Services is present to assist with these confidential meetings. Both parties need to have peace about working together toward an adoption plan for us to proceed.

What is "cradle care" or short-term foster care for an infant awaiting adoption?

Birthparents generally do not sign a consent to an adoption until after the birth of their child. Then the birth mother chooses either a five or 10-day waiting period to be sure about the decision to place her child. She may change her mind for any reason during the waiting period. If the adoptive parents care for the baby during this time, they are doing so under legal risk. Some adoptive parents choose to have our licensed foster parents take care of the child for this period of time. Our foster parents are trained volunteers who love children and respect and appreciate the gift of adoption. Foster

parents are not eligible to adopt from our agency.

Are the adoptions open or closed?

At this time we conduct semi-open adoptions, which means we do not exchange last names, addresses and phone numbers. Most of the birth and adoptive parents choose to meet each other and often participate in a very meaningful blessing service all together. Adoptive parents are required to send pictures and updates of the baby through the agency for the birth families once a month for the first year. Pictures, updates and further contact are handled on a case-by-case basis in the following years. Adoptees age 18 and older and their birth parents can choose to participate in an adoption reunion by mutual voluntary consent. For more information on this service for our previous placements, feel free to contact the agency.

Do you take donations?

We always gratefully appreciate any type of financial donation, memorial or honorarium. Your monetary contribution can be made by check or credit card. For more information, call Antje Harris at (501) 664-0340 or visit catholicadoptionsservices.org.

Toys for Christmas Needed

New toys for babies and children up to age 10: Balls, board games, dolls, hair accessories, crafts, beads, books, building blocks, bicycles.

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For more information, contact Dianne Brady, Director of Stewardship and Development for the Diocese of Little Rock, at (501) 664-0340.

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Photos: (foreground) Sister Rita Polchin, SSCM, 87; (background) visit retiredreligious.org/2016photos for a list of names. © 2016 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved. Photographer: Jim Judkis.

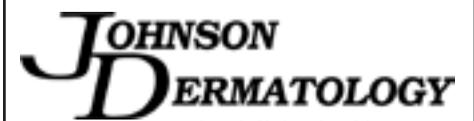
Last year, three religious communities in Arkansas received national grants through gifts to this collection: Olivetan Benedictine Sisters of Jonesboro, Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Little Rock and the Benedictine Monks of Subiaco.

Roughly 95 percent of donations help senior religious.

Please be generous in your parish collection **December 3-4**



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