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CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS CATHOLIC • CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS • 2415 N. TYLER ST. • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72207 • NOVEMBER 23, 2019

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
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 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.

Border life: Who are the lucky ones?

In dire situations, advocates have been able to show love

I frequently reflect on the summer of 2018 when one of the biggest stories in the news was about family separations at the border.

Many of the parents were bringing their children with them to apply for asylum in hopes of a better life. If the family didn't seem to have a credible fear, federal authorities detained the parents and children separately. I took notice as someone who works in the field of immigration services that even individuals who may not share the same opinion as me when it comes to immigrants in the United States were horrified at what was happening, primarily to innocent children.

While the traumatic impact on these families will last a lifetime, it seemed the government reacted more quickly than usual to stop the separations and to begin the long process of reunification.

I had the experience to speak to families awaiting their credible fear interview outside for days along the Arizona/Mexico border. Once reunifications began, our Catholic Immigration Services entered into a short-term case management program, led by Migration and Refugee Services at the



CNS / Jose Luis Gonzalez, Reuters
Guatemalan migrant Ledy Perez embraces her son, Anthony, while praying to ask a member of the Mexican National Guard to let them cross into the United States in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, July 22.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, to facilitate the integration of families into our local communities. There were four families who accepted our assistance.

Once we began to meet these families and see their dire situations living in extreme poverty, unable to communicate in English

and at a loss on navigating systems within our society, we quickly realized we needed help. We called on many parish communities, schools, fellow co-workers and other individuals. I was touched by the outpouring of love and willingness to serve the newest members of our community and to wel-

come the stranger.

During my times of reflection, I can't help but, in a strange way, think of some of these families as the "lucky ones." While their situations were dire and are still unfathomably difficult, they received

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Name has changed, but their mission is still death

During the past legislative session, a representative introduced a bill to legalize physician-assisted suicide.

The bill failed miserably: it could not even gain enough support for a single committee member to call it for a vote.

Regrettably, this did not end the issue. A national organization, Compassion and Choices, has come to Arkansas with the express purpose of making physician-assisted suicide legal. This organization will stop at nothing.

Compassion and Choices is not the organization's original name. Originally it called itself the Hem-



From the Director
 Patrick Gallaher

lock Society. Hemlock was the poison that the Greek philosopher Socrates was forced to drink to kill himself. Although intellectually clever, the name Hemlock Society was a branding nightmare. Thus the name change to the more palatable Compassion and Choices.

Compassion and Choices is in Arkansas to educate the voting public to change its attitude. It wants voters to value life less and value convenience more at the end of life. It will do so using the familiar vocabulary of "choice." It will do so by redefining words: "compassion," "euthanasia" and "dignity."

All of these re-definitions are intended by Compassion and Choices to change our laws and allow for patients to be killed unnaturally toward the end of life. The approach they will use will be to make an appeal that cancer patients in unbearable pain should be allowed to decide to end their lives early to avoid further discomfort.

If the law is changed, Compassion and Choices will immediately begin a campaign to expand it to include anyone experiencing "unbearable suffering." The definition of unbearable suffering will be exceptionally broad and could eventually include minors with episodes of depression.

It has worked in this way in each of the jurisdictions throughout the world in which this movement has

successfully changed laws making end-of-life homicide legal.

If end-of-life homicide becomes legal, the medical economy will change. It would also change the meaning of palliative care. Rather than seeking end-of-life care, the economics will dictate an efficient end to life. Insurers will deny requests to preapprove costly medical treatments, but will readily suggest coverage of prescription poisons to support assisted suicide. This is already happening on the west coast in states that have legalized physician-assisted suicide.

If Arkansas were to join the other states that have legalized medically supervised homicide, we would start down a path where the dignity and sanctity of human life will not be respected.

BRIEFS



Catholic Charities

Volunteer Tricia Long (left) stands with Parish Social Ministry Coordinator **Rebecca Cargile**

VOLUNTEER

For over a year, Tricia Long has volunteered weekly with the Parish Social Ministries office. She has helped with everything from sorting papers to taking part in disaster response webinars. Long speaks with those who call Catholic Charities for assistance and researches community resources and mental health organizations.

Asked what she enjoys about volunteering, Long said she enjoys learning about the needs of communities and knowing

that she is helping people.

EXPANDING MEDIA

Catholic Adoption Services is expanding its media presence through an improved website page and repeating its Snapchat advertising in November. The agency first used Snapchat, a social media platform used primarily by teens and young adults, this summer.

"Last June our Snapchat ad was seen by over 200,000 people, and over 3,000 of those individuals visited our website," said



Catholic Charities

An ad for Catholic Adoption Services is appearing on Snapchat, a social media site.

adoption specialist Rebecca Jones. "We decided to evaluate the overall presentation and information provided to our potential clients. We worked with diocesan website expert Tara Little to change the wording and content on our birthmother web pages. Tara was able to make the site more mobile friendly so cell phone users can easily read and scroll through the content."

Catholic Adoption Services also added a dedicated phone line for birthmothers to call, or to text if they are not ready to call.

"We hope these efforts will lead more clients to find and consider our services," Jones said. "We will continue to educate people about the benefits of Adoption Services and the amazing love and sacrifice of the birthmothers that choose adoption."

More information is available at dolr.org/catholic-charities/adoption/pregnant.

ST. NICHOLAS PARTNERS

The annual St. Nicholas Partners Fund Drive is underway. This campaign gives supporters of Catholic Charities of Arkansas the opportunity to donate to specific programs within the organization. A Christmas greeting card is distributed through *Arkansas Catholic* in this issue and through direct mail.

The design of the card is chosen through an art contest conducted throughout the Catholic schools in the state. Cash prizes are awarded for the three best designs and are given to the artist and to the school the young artist attends.

This year's first-place design is by Stella Decker, a seventh-grader attending St. Vincent de Paul School in Rogers. She is the daughter of Javene and Brian Decker. The second-place



Catholic Charities

This portrait of St. Nicholas by Stella Decker, a seventh grader attending St. Vincent de Paul School in Rogers, illustrates the card for this year's St. Nicholas Partners appeal.

finisher was Carson Thomas, an eighth-grader from Sacred Heart School in Morrilton and the third-place finisher was fourth-grader Brody Mustafa, also of St. Vincent de Paul School in Rogers. The artwork was judged by Catholic Charities staff.

Last year's St. Nicholas Partners program raised more than \$13,000 for programs in Catholic Charities of Arkansas.



CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

WORKING ON THE MARGINS

One-quarter of this collection stays in the Diocese of Little Rock to improve the lives of Arkansans. Please give November 23-24. For more information, contact Patrick Gallaher, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Arkansas, (501) 664-0340 ext. 352, or e-mail pgallaher@dolr.org.



Arkansas Knights of Columbus

Doing God's work serving our church and community.

Join us at kofc.org

Westside Free Medical Clinic
a ministry of Catholic Charities of Arkansas

Volunteers Needed

Family Practice Physicians

in clinic once a month or every two months

Specialists

Gynecologists • Pulmonologist

in clinic or your office



Can you share some time?

Contact Karen DiPippa, 501-664-0340 ext. 356, or e-mail kdipippa@dolr.org



Turn your unwanted vehicle into programs helping poor people in Arkansas.



Donate your old car to Catholic Charities

Call 844-534-4483 or visit dolr.careasy.org

It's easy! We'll tow your unwanted car, truck, motorcycle or boat for free.

Catholic Immigration Services

What do we do for low-income clients?

BY JENNIFER VERKAMP-RUTHVEN

We are often asked what services Catholic Immigration Services provides at Catholic Charities of Arkansas. In short, we are a legal service setting recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice to practice immigration law with minimal fees for low-income immigrants. CIS has two offices, one in Little Rock located at St. John Center and the other in Springdale near St. Raphael Church on Sunset Avenue.

We recognize the inalienable right of all persons to human dignity.

Our mission is to work for solidarity in our community by welcoming the stranger in the spirit of the Gospel. We recognize the inalienable right of all persons to human dignity. Therefore, we assist and advocate for immigrants to attain family unity, economic independence and social integration.

The legal services we provide are counseling for family-based immigration needs, preparation of family-based immigration applications and forms to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, applications for citizenship for eligible permanent residents, U-Visa/VAWA applications and DACA renewals. Before receiving an appointment to apply for an immigration benefit, the client must first come to the office for a consultation with an immigration specialist.

We also provide immigration workshops for immigrant groups, so they can learn about their rights within society and any changes to immigration law. Presentations are also given to non-immigrant groups to better understand the reality of the legal immigration system.

For more information or to schedule a consultation call (501) 664-0340 for the Little Rock office or (479) 927-1996 for the Springdale office. The Springdale office will accept walk-ins for a consultation on Tuesdays from 8 a.m. to noon.

Jennifer Verkamp-Ruthven is the director of the Little Rock office and interim director of the Springdale office of Catholic Immigration Services.

Bringing joy, Christ to Arkansas' prisoners

I am writing this column from Clearmont, Wyo., about 40 miles east of the Bighorn Mountains. The mountains are snowcapped. The valleys have streams running through them. The alfalfa fields along the streams attract many deer, antelope, turkeys and other wildlife. The contrast to home makes it a great diversion and place to relax.

As I admire the beauty of God's creation, I think about how different this is to my normal routine. Next, I think about the great contrast between my life and those in prison.



Father Phillip Reaves

In some cases, there are no outside windows. If there are windows, there are small and positioned very high. One cannot see much, if anything, but the sky. Prisoners have little or no say in their lives: where they live, what they eat, the clothes they wear, when and if they get time for recreation, etc. Things I take for granted would be a luxury for a prisoner.

One thing prisoners look forward to are visits from the "free-world." On weekends, those approved can visit at designated times. But there are also some who volunteer for religious services and other programs. Hebrews, 13: 1-3 says, "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels. Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you also are in the body."

Prison ministry is mostly one of presence. St. Francis said, "Preach the Gospel always and if necessary use words." A loving, consistent and faithful volunteer can achieve much. In many cases this may be the first relationship of this kind that the prisoner knows.

Volunteers help in many ways. Some help as tutors because many inmates do not have a good education.

Many volunteers assist the chaplains. Some attend or con-



A chaplain distributes Communion to a death-row inmate at Indiana State Prison in Michigan City, Ind. Prison chaplains bring hope to prison inmates as well as sacraments and a witness of faith.

CNS / Karen Callaway, Northwest Indiana Catholic

duct religious services, Bible studies, RCIA or prayer sessions. Others are certified religious assistants, known as CRAs. A CRA has a badge and can move freely in the prison without an escort to visit in the barracks and assist the chaplains with their duties. Others facilitate the PALs program, Principles and Applications for

Life, which uses the Bible as the textbook to teach characteristics of a good citizen.

Many potential volunteers express concern about entering a prison. It can be a violent place, but most violence is inmate against inmate. Violence against volunteers is extremely rare. I have been visiting prisons for 20

years, and I have never known of a volunteer being attacked.

If you are interested in learning more about prison ministry opportunities, please contact me at preaves@dolr.org or (501) 664-0340, ext. 336.

Father Phillip Reaves is the diocesan director of prison ministry.

A Letter from Prison: Kairos shows God's grace in Arkansas inmates

The following is a letter from a man presently in the Arkansas Department of Correction.

Beginning with the work of one priest confronting institutional violence through Christian Fellowship, Kairos has grown to become the largest ecumenical association worldwide addressing the spiritual needs of the incarcerated. Through God's grace, a diverse amalgamation of laypersons and clergy volunteer to answer Christ's call (Matthew 25:36), sharing the joy and love which comes from knowing the Lord to change the trajectory of tens of thousands of men's lives every year. With evident and lasting impact, Kairos is strongly

supported by wardens and prison chaplains throughout Arkansas and across the nation.

The impact on individual inmates can be profound, as I can attest. Though attending Catholic school (Immaculate Conception in North Little Rock) when young, I rejected God when only 11 — and for 27 years. Only following my nearly successful (miraculously not) suicide attempt — a year after my arrest — did I finally re-open my heart to God. I began going to Mass and at long last was confirmed but still felt something was missing.

Jesus calls us to share his love (John 13:35), but in prison — which should surprise no one — it is difficult for Christians to join together for

fellowship and support. When blessed to attend a Kairos weekend, I found what I felt missing, the inner peace and joy that come when God's love is shared. Meeting so in fellowship, for a brief special time, the walls disappear and the love of Christ reigns.

Kairos is a Greek word found in the New Testament, which succinctly translated means "timely." More fully, in biblical contexts, it is often best understood as "when (according to God's purpose) the time is at hand." To those involved in Kairos, it is simply known as "God's special time." Kairos: it's about time.

For more information, visit kairosfarkansas.org.

Border

Continued from page 9

from most individuals a glimpse of what it means to feel welcomed and even wanted. To put it simply, they received love.

I don't write this to shed a negative light on these families and the support they received from the community, but I think at times, we (including myself) for-

get that family separations have been happening for years and are still happening through deportations. Most likely, the media attention on these families is what prompted the uproar. But what about the others? Maybe their situations aren't as "dire" as being placed in detention away from their children for months, but they may be separated indefinitely.

This can be looked at as "dire" in a different way. During the 2018 federal fiscal year, U.S. Im-

migration and Customs Enforcement removed 256,085 individuals from the United States; the year before that it was 226,119. I wonder if the majority of these individuals left families behind, many of them being U.S. citizen children.

I'm left contemplating what our society might look like if there was an uproar about these not-so-lucky ones, the ones who face a family separation every single day. Would this uproar make the

government react and stop the separations? What an opportunity it would be for me and for others to give love like we did to those in the summer of 2018. I write this as a challenge to everyone and especially to myself, and I pray that we can all be inspired by the life of Christ and the love he gave to the least of these.

Jennifer Verkamp-Ruthven is the director of Catholic Immigration Services.

CCHD local grants benefit every part of state

Pro-life and outreach get more funding through collection

Each year, our diocese participates in an annual collection for the benefit of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development during the weekend before Thanksgiving. This year's collection will be held Nov. 23-24.

Although most of the collection is sent on to the CCHD national office for use in a nationwide grant program, 25 percent of the collection stays in the state and funds the Catholic Charities of Arkansas CCHD Local Grant program. In this fiscal year's program, \$17,230 in grants was distributed throughout Arkansas to local agencies.

One important consideration in making grant decisions is that there be some local parish involvement in the supported charity. Thus, in many instances, the CCHD Local Grant program directly supports parish activities. Examples in the Little Rock area are Feed the Hungry via the Salvation Army by Christ the King Church, the Faith Community Nurse Program of Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church and the St. Theresa School Asylee Scholarship Program.

Outside of Little Rock, grants went to Catholic Christian Women charitable outreach and the Legion of Mary charitable outreach, both of Mary Mother of God Church in Harrison; Immaculate Conception Church soup kitchen in Blytheville; Golden Rule Clothes Closet and More in



Catholic Charities

Tim Kelly (left) hosts Catholic Charities executive director **Patrick Gallaher** for a visit to the Yellville Food Closet Association May 16 in Yellville. The Food Closet received a local grant funded by donations to the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Fort Smith; Magnolia's Immaculate Heart of Mary Homeless Outreach; Southern Arkansas University Catholic Campus Ministry outreach; and Camden's St. Louis Parish Outreach.

As in the past, CCHD Local Grants went to a number of pregnancy resource centers, all of which had participation from local Catholic parishes. The Hannah Pregnancy Resource Center in El Dorado is supported by Holy

Redeemer Church and the local Knights council.

In Little Rock, Birthright of Greater Little Rock has board members from local parishes and has a strong tradition of working closely with Catholic Adoption Services. Further, the Arkansas Pregnancy Resource Center (known also as St. Joseph's Helpers) is unabashed in its Catholic roots.

Additionally, CCHD Local

Grants provided funds to feeding programs including Yellville's Food Closet and Backpack for Kids, the Mountain Home Food Basket and Jacksonville's Fishnet Mission. Funding these programs allowed for tons of food to be purchased for distribution to those in need.

CCHD Local Grants, funded by the generosity of Catholic parishioners, went to 28 organizations spanning Arkansas.

Turnabout

When the clinic director becomes an infirmary patient

BY KAREN DIPIPPA

Recently, riding my road bike I had an "unplanned dismount" on a popular bike trail. I understand that is what is said in dude ranches when there is a fall.

Joking aside, it was a fairly significant fall. I wasn't racing or drafting my husband's bike in front of me or being reckless. Apparently I hit a pothole and over the handlebars I went, hitting my head, breaking my elbow, requiring surgery along with fractured orbital bones in my face. With no recollection of the fall, obviously I didn't see the culprit and don't remember potholes on that section, which we frequent.

The point of this is not sympathy for the fall but rather gratefulness for the kindness of strangers: from the dog walker who called for an ambulance, the ambulance attendant, caring ER medical hospital staff and capable surgeons along with the good wishes, cards, prayers and flowers whether in actuality or thoughts. In our current climate of unrest and perceived selfishness and meanness, I find people are genuinely good.

A second point is that I much prefer being on the other side of the hospital bed. I like to be the one reading patient charts and suggesting the course of action. These past weeks I had to release control of much and had to ask for things too. While not always successful at either, it continues to be an exercise in humility, this needing assistance for daily activities like dressing, driving, cleaning or making coffee. My husband has been a great caretaker and maybe could start a second career as a home health aide.

Being home did not make me stir crazy, but I did have a lot of time to just rest and clear my head, read books, do crosswords and discover daytime TV. Mostly though, I've had time to reflect and time for prayer. Many prayers were gratitude that, as serious as it was, my fall was not worse. Thanks be to God. Gratitude also that people, many complete strangers, genuinely seemed to care what happened and tracked my progress.

Things like the way sunshine hits the trees at different times of the day or the laughs of our grandchildren like little chimes bring back the wonder of each day. We make our lives so busy these daily things do not have time to be fully appreciated.

So, remember to take more time for the little things since they really are the glorious ones. Continue being kind and mind the potholes. Meanwhile, it would be OK to feel a little sorry for me.

Parishes can support those with mental illness

BY REBECCA CARGILE

The need for far-reaching, comprehensive education on mental health education is ongoing. It is a primary function of well-known, national organizations such as National Alliance on Mental Illness and National Institute of Mental Health. At the local level, smaller organizations provide education on mental illness and its effects on families.

Such organizations and individuals also advocate for mental health when laws are proposed that adversely affect this population.

Mental health education and awareness are important because mental illness exacerbates social problems, such as homelessness, drug abuse and recidivism. Solving these problems effectively isn't possible without acknowl-

edging all contributing factors — mental illness being one. Little action has been taken to remedy this, and resources directed toward it are diminishing.

MINISTRY MODELS

Issues concerning mental illness are varied and complex. We do not need to wait for them to be resolved though, in order to support people with mental illness. As Catholics, parishes bring people together to worship in community. Through parish life, people enjoy fellowship. They get to know each other, socialize and help each through rough patches. Every parishioner should feel welcomed and embraced in this fellowship. For some people with mental illness, it isn't easy to step forward, no matter how much they wish to.

Mental illness isn't always easy to spot. Stigma is still attached to

mental illness and people who are struggling may conceal it.

Models exist for establishing comprehensive faith-based mental health ministries. The National Catholic Partnership on Disability's "A Pastoral Response to Mental Illness" is an excellent starter resource for the Catholic community. Additionally, organizations have produced faith-based material, such as National Alliance on Mental Illness' (NAMI) FaithNet.

Not every parish has the resources to go full speed ahead with something like Pathways to Promise's Companionship Series. But there's no reason a parish can't pick and choose from the various models to create a ministry that works for them.

If resources are limited, simple steps still can be taken to ensure a parish is welcoming to parishioners who may have a mental illness. St. Dymphna's feast day on

May 15 can be recognized, and information on mental health resources can be included in the bulletin and posted throughout the parish. Contacting the Parish Social Ministry office at Catholic Charities is also a great way to go.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups don't need to be faith-based to be helpful. NAMI has several throughout the state, including groups for family members only. Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance does not have a chapter or support groups in Arkansas, but they have online support groups.

Faith-based groups offer perspectives that many find necessary. Catholic Charities hosts a peer support group, the St. Dymphna Society, a place for people to bring their Catholic faith and a safe space to express doubts, fears, apathy and anger.