Harris marks 25th year in adoptions

Director created blessing ceremony, reunification program

Catholic Adoption Services has been blessed to be directed by Antje Harris for a quarter of a century. Harris, a licensed social worker, was hired by the Diocese of Little Rock on Nov. 3, 1986, and has since brought her client-centered philosophies to the adoption program. She has aided hundreds of adoptive placements and assists the adopted adults she placed now find their birthparents.

The agency was first licensed on May 4, 1984, when the expectations and attitudes of adoption were much different than they are today. Adoption was considered something to keep secret, so there was little communication between the adoptive families and the birthparents. Harris began her journey with adoptions to help it adjust to a more open and interactive process that allows for communication and ongoing support for the birthparents and adoptive families.

Harris encouraged the process by first creating a blessing ceremony to help everyone involved in the adoption process come together to realize their love and support for the infant that is placed for adoption. This creates the groundwork for an ongoing relationship between the two families cemented in love for the child that they have all placed first in priority.

Harris also improved the foster care policies to make it more open and a better support for the adoptive family. When Catholic Adoption Services first began its licensed adoption program, foster families did not meet the adoptive families who would become the infant’s new parents. The agency would arrange for the infant’s transfer. Harris changed the procedure. Now the adoptive families come to the foster parent’s homes, where they share a meal and celebrate the adoption together. The foster parents give information about the baby’s care and preferences. This has allowed positive relationships to form, with adoptive parents calling the foster parents for advice and even babysitting.

Harris created a more supportive system for working with birthparents. She wanted to make sure they know we care about them, so they know we care about them, so they know we care about them.

Catholic Adoption Services always protects birthmothers in their right to decide the best plan for their child.

Government funds put us in a delicate position

A society wishing and intending to remain in service of humanity is a society that targets both the good of all people and that of the whole person. This is the "common good." Although we work for the common good of all, there is a particular concern for the poor and those on the margins of society. The goal of working toward the common good is to eliminate poverty: religious poverty, moral poverty and material poverty.

We Americans are most fortunate among all humanity. In no other place are so many so well off economically, so healthy, so well fed and so comfortable. In relation to the millions of destitute in the Third World, even our poor in America are "wealthy." The greater one’s gifts and the greater one’s abilities, the greater one’s responsibility to work for the common good. When we work for the common good of all, we are said to be in solidarity with all those in need throughout the world.

The Church teaches the importance of the principal of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity requires the state to support — not dominate — lower levels of government by emphasizing and enhancing their initiative, freedom and responsibility. Excessive state centralization, bureaucratization and welfare assistance destroys subsidiarity.

Robust subsidiarity encourages participation at the local level. Broad participation works for the common good by keeping political leadership rotating and preventing the establishment of hidden, entrenched elites.

We live now in a society in which the national government is arguably so intrusive that it destroys local authority. This is a national government that uses its power over the public purse and its power to coerce to exert tremendous cultural control to the detriment of those who wish to follow the teachings of Jesus.

Catholic Charities finds itself in

See ADOPTION page 11

See FUNDING page 10
GOLF TOURNAMENT
The 18th annual Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic will be held Monday, Sept. 17 at the Maumelle Country Club.
Susan Ford is serving as this year's tournament chairwoman.
Player registration brochures will be sent out in mid-July and will also be available on the diocesan website, www.dolr.org.
Entry fees are $150 a player and $600 a team. A variety of sponsorship levels is also available, making the Golf Classic a way to promote one's business while supporting the work of Catholic Charities.
The Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic is CCA's largest fundraiser, with proceeds supporting all of Catholic Charities' programs. More than 20,000 people each year benefit from Catholic Charities services. For more information, to register or be a sponsor, call Rebecca Cargile at (501) 664-0340, ext. 355.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE
On May 2 and 3, Catholic Immigration Services-Little Rock, in conjunction with the Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence, hosted the second annual Victims of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Conference.
The conference was held at St. John Center in Little Rock. More than 40 people from social service agencies across the state attended the conference, which consisted of lectures, seminars, panel discussions and exercises. National and local experts gave presentations.
Reagan Stanford, crime victim services specialist, facilitated a panel discussion on human trafficking within the immigrant community. The May 2-3 conference was one in a series that will be held in several locations around the diocese as a part of the Legal Assistance for Victims Grant, funded under the Violence Against Women Act.

YOUTH CAMP
The Catholic Charities Social Action Office and Parish Social Ministries Office are working with the diocesan Catholic Youth and Campus Ministries Office once again to host two weeks of social action camps for high school students.
From June 11-14, the first camp, called "Catholic Youth Tour of Duty," was hosted in northwest Arkansas. In its second year, the innovative experience saw campers traveling from parish to parish, sleeping outside at night. Activities during the day centered on learning about social justice and performing service in the community. Campers performed acts of charity, such as working in local food banks and homeless shelters.
The second camp, from July 9-13, is called Catholic Youth Charities Summer Institute. C'SI is in its sixth year. The camp is based at St. John Center in Little Rock. Visits to and work at a homeless shelter, day care center and a youth detention facility are planned.
Scholarships are available. Contact the Youth Ministries Office at (501) 664-0340 for more information.

BLUE ENVELOPE
Donations in the small blue-printed envelopes included in this issue of Arkansas Catholic can help Catholic Charities of Arkansas reach out to a variety of people in need. When people approach Catholic Charities for help, they often have a specific need, such as basic medical care, pregnancy counseling or adoption information, immigration services or assistance with drug and alcohol abuse.
In other cases, however, some people with low incomes approach CCA for help with basic needs such as food, paying utility bills or buying prescriptions. The donations CCA receives through the "blue envelope appeal" are put into the Catholic Charities Poor Fund, which is CCA's primary resource for helping people meet basic needs. Recently, the Poor Fund helped CCA pay an overdue electric bill for an elderly woman; make a mortgage payment for a couple that fell behind after one of them had a stroke; and provide shelter for a woman and her children so that they would not have to sleep in their car over Easter weekend.
For more information on the appeal, call Rebecca Cargile at (501) 664-0340, ext. 355.

OPERATION RICE BOWL
Operation Rice Bowl concluded on Easter Sunday. Many individuals, schools and parishes participated.
With money raised through Operation Rice Bowl, Catholic Relief Services work to ease the suffering caused by poverty and hunger worldwide.
Seventy-five percent of what was raised in the Diocese of Little Rock was sent to Catholic Relief Services to support their work worldwide. The remaining funds stay in the Diocese of Little Rock to help the poor served by CCA.

NEW OFFICE MANAGER
Georgina Pena joined Catholic Immigration Services-Little Rock as the office manager this past winter. She works closely with all of the staff in the immigration office and greets clients coming in to visit the Catholic Charities office at St. John Center.

You’ll get YOUR copy first if you order the 2013 Diocesan Directory now

Catholic Diocese of Little Rock Directory 2013

Send ______ directories at $13 each to:             Amount Enclosed $______

Name __________________________

Address ________________________________

City, State ______ ZIP ________

Phone (_____) __________________________

Parish __________________________

You’ll get YOUR copy first if you order the 2013 Diocesan Directory now

Reserve now at only $13 and get yours as soon as they arrive in September, full of information about your diocese and its clergy, religious, lay leaders, parishes and ministries. Send this order form with your check or money order to Directory, Arkansas Catholic, P.O. Box 2536, Little Rock AR 72203.

Learn about the new School of Spiritual Direction
Have you ever felt like God was calling you to walk with someone else on their spiritual journey? If so, the Diocese of Little Rock School of Spiritual Direction might be for you. See the dates below to find an informational meeting in your area. Please contact Chuck Ashburn at casburn@dolr.org or 501-664-0340, ext. 368, to register for one of these meetings.

❑ Little Rock: Wednesday, June 20, 6:30 - 8 p.m. at St. John Center, Fitzgerald Hall
❑ Fort Smith: Monday, June 25, 6:30 - 8 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, St. Anne’s Hall
❑ Jonesboro: Wednesday, June 27, 6:30 - 8 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament
❑ Hope: Saturday, June 30, 2 - 3:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Good Hope
❑ Rogers: Monday, July 16, 6:30 - 8 p.m. at St. Vincent DePaul, SVDP Hall
❑ Pine Bluff: Sunday, July 22, 2 - 3:30 p.m. at St. Joseph

Funding
Continued from page 9
an untenable position. If it relies on government funding, it must do the things the government chooses for it to do and in the manner the government directs. If Catholic Charities rejects government funding or has it denied and attempts to focus on the traditional core missions detailed in the works of mercy, it risks doing so without adequate funding.

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ARKANSAS CATHOLIC  June 16, 2012
CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS

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Catholic Diocese of Little Rock Directory 2013

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Adoption

Continued from page 9

place. With proper consent, she of-
ten meets birthmothers for lunch
to provide pictures of their child
from the adoptive family.

Catholic Adoption Services al-
ways protects birthmothers in
their right to decide the best plan
for their child. Harris deeply respects
this tenet and feels that a decision
for adoption is one of the hardest
choices a woman can make, and
she has kept this as a foundation for
her work with the women who
seek adoption services.

Agency staff never place any
pressure on clients to make a plan
for adoption. Adoption is present-
ed as a loving alternative. Women
are given the chance to review
families and pick the one they feel
would be best. They almost always
meet the family to decide if they
are the right ones to parent their
child. A birthmother also may meet
or 10 days after she signs an adop-
tion consent to change her mind,
and the agency honors that right.

Harris has been the corner-
stone of the search-and-reunion
program that helps adoptees and
birthparents reconnect. She now
has the privilege of seeing the adoptees she placed as infants
grow into adults and works with
them to find their birth families.
It is not always an easy route as
clients do not always stay in con-
tact and often change their names
when they marry.

Harris has sought training to
help her in her searches and now
has a number of tools to help her
track down old clients. In Arkan-
sas all reunion services are pro-
vided by mutual consent only, so
they can only be offered to clients
and it is their choice to meet or
not. Sometimes a birthmother is
not ready to be “found,” but they
know they have that option and
that the agency will be here for them
when they are ready. When a
reunion does take place both
parties are counseled and guided
through the process so it is as pos-
tive an experience for all involved
as possible.

Harris has worked hard in the
past 25 years to celebrate the gift
of adoption and encourage commu-
nity awareness. She has reached
a majority of the population
as possible.

Catholic Charities of Arkansas
sponsors our Westside Free Medical
Clinic in the diocese. It is
for persons without
access to full health
care and treats basic
family practice condi-
tions. These past few
years we have experi-
enced an increase for
patient services due
to the economy, espe-
cially for persons who have always
had the benefit of our medical
system and now have nowhere
to turn. We now have a two-month
backlog.

My experience as the clinic
director since 1989 has led me
to heartily encourage the introduc-
tion of reform for a new delivery
system of health care and cost re-
form. This is a different focus from
current health care reform efforts
where a large portion of the debate
centers on who will pay for health
care. That is insurance reform and
not health care reform.

The cost of health care has
elevated astronomically in the
last 20 years. If cost containment
is a main goal, I would like to see
more discussion surrounding the
actual cost of medical care. There
has been some headway with the
recent grouping of treatment
plans at one flat cost instead of
separate little costs and while it
is a first step, there are other cost-
saving measures.

Charitable clinics are often
backlogged several months for
diabetic chronic disease care. Some of the
patients we see cannot afford the
charge of $100 or more to be seen
in a private practice and are trying
to avoid the emergency room for
non-emergency care. They also
cannot afford the $60 fee for the
new walk-in clinics either. How-
ever, they might afford a sliding
cost of $25 to $35. In Pulaski
County we only have two sliding-scale clin-
ics and they are also
backlogged. We need
more low-cost clinics
across the state with-
out sacrificing the care
given at these clinics.

Reforming the standard trend to
over-test and over-
treat patients with
insurance would be
designed by those in the medical field, but
other considerations might also
work to lower costs. For example,
a lesser means of testing could
provide the same necessary in-
formation for treatment in a
majority of cases. Hospitals and
offices could share equipment
to offset the costs of the medical
testing and subsequent lesser
volume of testing. Standard-
ized hospital pricing alone would
ensure reasonable pricing for like
procedures.

High-priced pharmaceuti-
cals hinder patient well-being
also. Pharmaceutical companies
base their prices on the cost of
research, but costs for newly de-
developed medicines sometimes
outweigh the benefits if insured
persons cannot afford the co-pay
or uninsured patients cannot ob-
tain lifesaving medicines.

Have we priced our medical
system out of reach to meet the
Catholic social teaching tenet of
adequate health care?

True health care reform would
also put responsibility for one’s
health on the individual as much
as the medical profession or insur-
ance companies. We cannot pre-
vent conditions beyond our con-
trast or will or choose our genetics,
but we can take responsibility for
our health with more conscien-
tious daily choices whether we
have insurance or not. It could
make a difference in high blood
pressure, diabetes, stroke and
heart attack incidents.

Until then, clinics like Westside
will continue to serve patients lost
in the middle as well as those
persons who truly cannot afford a $4
medicine.

Karen DiPippa is director of Catho-
lic Charities’ Westside Free Medical
Clinic in Little Rock.

Have we priced our medical system out of reach to meet the
Catholic social teaching tenet of adequate health care?

For more information on
how you can help Catholic
Charities of Arkansas as a volun-
tee or to make a donation, call
(501) 664-0340 in Little Rock or
(479) 927-1996 in Springdale.

Supporting Survivors of
Domestic Violence: Care bag
items for children and families
including new or gently-used
stuffed animals, toys and art
supplies; hygiene items (soap,
shampoo, conditioner, deodor-
ant, razors, feminine products,
toothpaste, toothbrushes);
women’s and children’s shoes/
clothing of all sizes or funds
to purchase them. Contact

Marcella Garcia.

Disaster Recovery: Parishes
willing to develop teams to
assist their neighbors through
long-term recovery activities
can receive training. Contact
Tom Navin.

Immigration Services
Offices in Little Rock and
Springdale: Clinics where
lawyers and attorneys to assist
with complex immigra-
tion cases; attorneys for civil
legal issues, help to catalog files
for digital storage; five-drawer
lateral file cabinets for storage
of paper files. Contact Marcella
Garcia in Little Rock or Frank
Head in Springdale.

Westside Free Medical
Clinic: Volunteers are needed,
including medical specialists
willing to take referrals in their
private practice, physicians,
pharmacists, bilingual recep-
tionists, bilingual dieticians and
bilingual diabetic educators.
Day volunteers are needed to
interpret for patients at appoint-
ments arranged through the clinic. Contact Karen
DiPippa.

Donated used cars are needed
by families as they settle into
their new homeland and move
toward citizenship. Contact
Frank Head.

Wester Free Medical
Clinic: Volunteers are needed,
including medical specialists
willing to take referrals in their
private practice, physicians,
pharmacists, bilingual recep-
tionists, bilingual dieticians and
bilingual diabetic educators.
Day volunteers are needed to
interpret for patients at appoint-
ments arranged through the clinic. Contact Karen
DiPippa.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS

June 16, 2012

ARKANSAS CATHOLIC

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