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De Queen and Mena . . . 10

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

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AT A GLANCE

Catholic Charities of Arkansas programs

The ministries of Catholic Charities of Arkansas are rooted in the challenge of the Gospel (Matthew 25: 34): to serve persons who are poor or marginalized; to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable and to actively promote charity, justice and the sanctity of life in the Church and the community. This is done through the following ministries:

■ **Adoption Services** guides pregnant women who are considering their option for adoption works with families who are seeking to adopt and facilitates the reunion of families when the adoptee is 18.

■ **Medical clinics** are staffed by volunteer professionals. Clinics are provided with English- and Spanish-speaking providers and certified interpreters to assure that diagnosis, treatment and patient understanding are accurate.

■ **Development** assists other Catholic Charities ministries pursue funding to help support basic operations and program development. This is done through special fundraisers, such as the Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic, St. Nicholas Partners, direct donor solicitations and grant writing. Catholic Charities' most recent administration and fundraising rate is 8.5 percent.

■ **Immigration Services** in Springdale and Little Rock provide assistance to people from more than 100 countries. The mission of Immigration Services is family reunification, helping to bring together families torn apart by circumstances beyond their control. The programs assist foreign nationals know their responsibilities and their rights and assist with the complex legal documents that are required to stay in this country on a temporary or permanent basis.

■ **Parish Social Ministries** provides education, mentoring and support to parishes as they develop the ministries needed, wanted, and possible in their localities through the Salt and Light program. The department also works with parish teams in disaster response and assists their outreach through parish assistance

■ **Social Action** monitors systems and situations that may conflict with the principles of Catholic social teaching and which threaten to mistreat vulnerable groups. The department also raises awareness of drug and alcohol abuse and prison ministry.

Adoption Services celebrates 25th

Catholic Adoption Services is celebrating a quarter century of assisting families who want to adopt or place their child for adoption.

The diocesan agency was licensed by the state of Arkansas on May 4, 1984, and has worked with hundreds of families over the years, director Antje Harris said.

When Adoption Services first started assisting with placements, the national standard was a closed process and often there was no contact between the birth and adoptive families, she said. Even the foster parents did not

get a chance to meet the new adoptive parents to share about the care of the newborn. Young women hid their pregnancies and often went to maternity facilities or other towns to have their babies. Sometimes they received little support from their families or the community for their pregnancy or for their courageous decision to place their child with a loving family. Adoption Services Inc., as it is known legally, was there to help them find a great family who could provide what the birth family was not able to give at that time.

Harris, who has been the director for

more than 22 years, and Rebecca Jones, who has been the child placement specialist for more than 10 years, are grateful for the support of Catholic Charities of Arkansas and the assistance of many departments at the diocese.

The agency has four certified and trained foster families ready to give lots of love to a newborn. A birth mother by law has five or 10 days after she signs consent in which to be sure about her decision to place her child. It

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Adoption Services director Antje Harris (right) shows foster parents how to perform child CPR recently. Three of them hold Baby Think It Over dolls.

Find faith, hope and love in troubled times

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

We tend to turn to each other and to God in times of trouble, and for many, these are troubled times. Let's hope they are also times that make us both more aware of God's loving presence in our lives, more confident in trusting God's plan and more aware of reaching out to help each other. We need to be able to rely on each other, just as we believe and hope in God; what we do to help each other truly expresses the love we are called to in the Gospel.

Catholic Charities of Arkansas exists to

bring a loving response to those in distress because of life circumstances. From those crushed by natural disaster to those whose hearts are broken because they love their unborn child enough to consider adoption, Catholic Charities responds through assisting parishes develop ministry responses and through direct services.



From the Director
Sister Mary Lou Stubbs

Adoption Services is a family-love-based service and has had a licensed program for 25 years in this diocese (See story on this page). It provides a caring response to pregnant women considering adoption, assistance those seeking to expand their families through adoption, and ongoing support to those families. This is truly a love-driven program: it is love that supports a woman who cares for her unborn child enough to recognize her current inability to parent; it is love that urges families to seek a child to parent; it is love that propels adult children to reunite with birth families while still holding

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Office responds to tornado victims in Mena, De Queen

The Parish Social Ministry Office is working in Mena and De Queen to assist victims of the April 9 tornado.

Arkansans in Ashley, Howard, Miller, Polk and Sevier counties suffered devastating blows during one of the two tornado seasons.

The tornado flattened much of downtown Mena. St. Agnes parishioners retreated to the parish basement where Father Norbert Rappold continued Holy Thursday Mass. The following days were filled with confusion and heartache as people came to terms with the reality of the devastation.

When volunteers from Hot Springs Village heard about the turmoil, they drove more than 100 miles to provide assistance to them. Case managers provided individual assistance in locating resources and beginning the recovery process; clean-up crews removed trees and other debris from the church grounds and from the properties of individuals overwhelmed by the wreckage left in the wake of the storm.

Further south, many families in De Queen also lost their homes to the same tornado. Parishioners of St. Barbara Church formed their own disaster response team. The English-Spanish bilingual team is now working on the case management aspect of De Queen's disaster recovery effort.

On May 17, 622 parishioners attending Mass at St. Barbara Parish received information in English and Spanish regarding the process for registering for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Small Business Administration.

Several counties in Arkansas were declared federal disaster areas by President Barack Obama. A federal disaster declaration ensures that federal funds can be used for public and individual assistance in the affected county.

Assistance is provided based on actual households, not individuals. Because of the high Spanish-speaking population in De



CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS
Catholic Charities of Arkansas staff and trained parish volunteers help victims at a "one-stop" disaster assistance event at St. Agnes Church in Mena, two days after April's tornado strike.

Queen, the staff informed the parishioners that households with at least one family member having citizenship may be eligible for disaster assistance. Children born in the United States are citizens and are eligible for assistance, even if their other family members are citizens of another country.

FEMA, while an agency within the De-

partment of Homeland Security, is not a law enforcement agency and the FEMA staff who assisted with the training at St. Barbara assured those in attendance that providing disaster assistance was their purpose and that they did not want disaster victims to be fearful of contacting FEMA for assistance.

More than 30 parishioners were trained

Be prepared when Arkansas disasters strike

It seems like every year Arkansas is plagued by thunderstorms, floods, tornadoes and other disasters, and this year is no exception.

Being prepared for a disaster often determines how well an individual or family will weather the storm. For that

reason, parish teams are being developed around Arkansas. These teams are being trained in case management and in disaster preparedness because action is needed to minimize the effects of those disasters.

Teams were recently trained in Mena, De Queen, Waldron and Heber Springs. To form a parish team, contact Bridget Barcenas or Jamie Deere at (501) 664-0340.

their beloved grandchild was with a good family; and adoptive families requested more medical and background information to be able to better raise their children. The veil of secrecy has been lifted in a healthy way, and adoptions are more open, in the way that best suits the needs of the child.

Today, birth parents choose from profiles of waiting families and then almost always meet with the potential family before placement. Both sides can share important information and get to know each other for more peace about how the child will be raised and loved by everyone. There is usually a meaningful blessing service to acknowledge God's work in every adoption and to give thanks for the life of the child. Ongoing contact through photographs, letters, e-mails, calls and visits are available on a case-by-case basis.

Now many of the birth parents and children who were placed for adoption before it

was more open are coming back to the agency for search and reunion. No, this does not happen like it does on a soap opera where a stranger comes to the door and announces they are the long-lost relative.

Adoption Services provides a comprehensive process to help assure the best outcome for all involved. Sometimes the reality is that a birth parent is not ready to be "found" yet by their child, for example if they have not told their subsequent children or spouse that they placed a child for adoption when they were younger.

The trained staff at Adoption Services can provide guidance and counseling to help in the reunion process. One of the most common misunderstandings is that a child was placed for adoption because they were not loved — and that is the furthest from the truth. Sharing and reassuring the adopted person that the decision was made

the precious gift of new life has been a treasure beyond all other considerations.

Lives are also consoled, assisted and cherished through other direct and parish-partnered programs. The imperative of Matthew 25 to care for people experiencing the problems of loneliness, pain, fear and hopelessness is the mandate that drives Catholic Charities. By assisting people to rebuild their lives, or by bringing comfort and support, we are reaching out to our sisters and brothers in Christ; whatever we do for them we do for him.

Whether it is helping a pregnant woman seek assistance, praying with people in prison, providing care for the medically indigent, helping immigrants stabilize their legal status, supporting victims of violence, facilitating recovery from natural disasters, or mentoring parishes as they develop ministries in their parish — each of us is called to share our gifts as a part of the body of Christ, the Church.

Faith, hope and love — in troubled times it's important to focus our faith on the presence of God in our lives, to maintain hope that



CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS
Sister Gisela Rivera, CMST, entertains parish disaster team members wearing her Catholic Charities' Disaster Response shirt and hat during the team training at St. Barbara Church in De Queen May 17.

by Catholic Charities' Jamie Deere and Bridget Barcenas in how to assist victims through the process of recovery and volunteer case management.

On May 27, the St. Barbara Parish Disaster Team met to organize their disaster team and begin assisting disaster victims from the area. Disaster recovery is often a slow process and teams have been established to help families recover during the next 18 to 24 months.

Both teams have been provided with financial assistance from the Catholic Charities Disaster Fund. Assistance to the teams comes in \$10,000 grants, which are used for direct assistance to the survivors. The teams work to find the best solution for each family. This assistance is coupled with case management to ensure success and progress in each individual's recovery process.

because they were loved can be healing for all involved.

"We are here to help you," Harris said. "Maybe you are now ready to proceed with a reunion. Or perhaps you know someone who is experiencing a problem pregnancy. We have incredible adoptive parents waiting to add to their family and love a child with all their hearts. Our services are still free to birth families."

Catholic Adoption Services has received great encouragement and support from people throughout the Diocese of Little Rock over the years as expressed in volunteerism, prayers and financial support. For example, a recent request in the local parish bulletins for additional foster parents brought two new families from Christ the King Parish in Little Rock into the adoption team.

For more information, contact Harris at (501) 664-0340 or aharris@dolr.org.

God will guide us along even the most crooked path, and most importantly to reach out to our sisters and brothers with loving assistance.

Some of the activities of our current programs are highlighted in this edition of Catholic Charities Connections. As we continually identify unmet and emerging needs through the parishes and diocesan programs, Catholic Charities will help to develop and to support care-centered and effective responses to our sisters and brothers in Christ who need our love in troubled times.

Adoption

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may be in the best interests of all involved for the baby to be in short-term foster care during that time. Donors, including the Ladies of Sacred Heart Parish in Hot Springs Village, help to supply the agency with the baby items used by foster parents and for other needs.

Over the years, adoption practices have changed slowly, not only here in Arkansas but all over the United States. The people involved have caused this evolution. Women demanded to know more about the families who would have the joy and responsibility of raising their child. Birth fathers more often wanted to be included in the process; grandparents also needed the reassurance that

Faith

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on to their parenting families.

As we celebrate the year of this 25th anniversary of Catholic Adoption Services, a variety of gatherings will celebrate the multiple family and community relationships that have made this program possible. We will salute and celebrate these families for whom

Chairwoman: Even non-golfers have spot in tournament

BY MALEA HARGETT
EDITOR

Alice Dennis got involved in the Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic because of her love for golf, but she has stayed active in organizing it each year because of her love for Catholic Charities.

The diocesan agency has hosted a tournament each fall for the past 15 years to benefit several programs, including Catholic Adoption Services, the Westside Free Medical Clinic and Catholic Immigration Services.

This year's event will be held Sept. 21 at the Maumelle Country Club.

Dennis started playing golf about 20 years ago and plays "off and on" with her husband, Bill, and friends.

"I play mostly in the summer, a fair-weather golfer," she said. "My husband is an avid golfer. ... I love the integrity of the game and the challenge of the game. I can go out there for four hours with my girlfriends and play golf and forget about everything else. It's a great relaxation. That's a lot of our social life and entertainment."

About six years ago Dennis, a member of St. Edward Church in Little Rock and Maumelle resident, came to the tournament when it was located at the Country Club of Arkansas in Maumelle and watched her husband play.

"It was a lot of fun," she said. "One year I was out there and I started helping Roz (Rector, the tournament chairwoman). She invited me to play on a team with her. ... I liked the event. I met some of the people from Catholic Charities. It intrigued me. I really didn't know anything about Catholic Charities and what they did. I thought it was really neat and interesting. I could see it as a way to get involved."

She officially joined the committee in 2006. The next year she was asked to co-chair the tournament with Rector.



MALEA HARGETT

Alice Dennis' backyard overlooks the Maumelle Country Club, site of the Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic.

"She was trying to ease out (as tournament chairwoman). She was doing it a long time," Dennis said.

For the 2008 tournament, Dennis coordinated the tournament on her own with the assistance of three committees — one for the tournament, one for the cocktail party the

night before and one for auction donations. "It can be time consuming," Dennis admits, "but we have it down to a science now. This is the 15th year. So we have all of the framework in place. We have a number of people on the planning committee."

Once the final hole was played at the

2008 tournament, Dennis and the committee members begin to plan for next year's event, looking for ways to improve the tournament, to get more involvement and to raise more funds.

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BRIEFS

■ **HONOR:** The University of Arkansas William H. Bowen School of Law chapter of the Hispanic Law Students Association honored Maricella Garcia, director of Catholic Immigration Services in Little Rock, for her service to the Latino community at their annual banquet in March.

■ **NOVICE:** Jesuit novice Daniel Napolitano did his "pilgrimage" experience in Arkansas, primarily assisting with parish assistance and disaster clean-up in Mena. Napolitano arrived in Mena April 24 and spent two weeks assisting pastor Father Norbert Rappold, and he returned to Washington, D.C., to complete his pilgrimage May 6.

■ **NATIONAL RECOGNITION:** The Parish Social Ministry Office announced that its parish-based disaster response teams were chosen by Catholic Charities USA as a "best practice" example in parish social ministry and was highlighted in the Spring 2009 Koininia newsletter and on the CCUSA Web site.

The agency credits the office for training parishes to respond immediately and in long-term recovery during local natural disasters.

■ **DONATION:** In May the Westside Free Medical Clinic was one of the ministries selected to receive a \$500 donation from the annual Lenten "penny drive" at Mount St. Mary Academy in Lit-

tle Rock. The money was used to help pay for medications and laboratory tests.

■ **DIABETES:** Diabetes patients at the Westside clinic will have an opportunity to foster better maintenance and control of their condition because a registered nurse, Dona Dorman, developed a checklist for their care in addition to the individual education she provides at the clinic twice a month.

■ **NEW EMPLOYEES:** Three new team members have joined Catholic Charities this spring. Bridget Barcenas, who formerly worked with victims of violence in Immigration Services, is now the parish disaster team coordinator. Venus Valdez relocated from Colorado to become the Violence Against Women immigration specialist in Little Rock. Jennifer Corbin became the office manager for the Little Rock immigration office.

■ **COLLABORATION:** The Northwest Arkansas office of Catholic Charities



Bridget Barcenas



Venus Valdez



Jennifer Corbin

will enable Catholic Charities Immigration Services to better serve immigrant domestic violence victims.

CCIS will also use the facility for increased outreach to the immigrant community for promotion of U.S. citizenship.

Through a \$50,000 grant provided in April by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, CCIS will offer a program to encourage more permanent residents to file for U.S. citizenship.

Immigration Services will continue to operate its office in Springdale.

■ **RICE BOWLS:** Operation Rice Bowl has surpassed the \$30,000 mark for this year's Lenten campaign. According to the diocesan finance office, the official total as of June 6 was \$32,431.18. Development specialist Rebecca Spencer said it is the most the Diocese of Little Rock has ever collected to help Catholic Relief Services in the fight against global hunger. It represents a 9-percent increase over last year's collection.

Because the diocese retains 25 percent of the collection, at least \$8,107.95 will go to Catholic Charities' parish emergency assistance program, which helps the poor throughout Arkansas.

By the numbers

■ 59,898 services offered by the staff of Catholic Charities of Arkansas in 2008.

■ 24,003 people helped. Many people received more than one of 19

categories of services because they had a combination of needs.

■ 289 volunteers and parish team members made many of these services possible.

■ 20 paid staff members — Annual Catholic Charities USA survey

Parish Social Ministry offers summer and fall workshops

The Parish Social Ministry Office was created last year by the Diocese of Little Rock to assist and support parishes to live out the Church's social teachings. These teachings call us to live the Gospel by recognizing the fundamental dignity of all human life and by reaching out to assist people in a variety of situations.

The Parish Social Ministry Office is currently providing workshops in the Central Deanery on the fundamentals of Catholic social teaching and the process of ministry development. These workshops will be repeated throughout the diocese, and customized workshops for individual parishes will be scheduled as needed over the next few years.

Parish social ministers and volunteers will serve within parish communities to address social needs and issues specific to that location. They will receive training and mentoring for ministry through Catholic Charities

and will be encouraged to attend on-going in-service trainings to help them become increasingly effective in their communities.

Parish social ministries meet their community's social needs in many ways, including direct services, such as respite care programs, visiting nursing homes and hospitals, tutoring, transportation assistance and food banks; by support ministries for exercise, grief-processing, spiritual development and social activities; and by social justice awareness and advocacy.

The program staff at Catholic Charities is available to consult with the pastor and staff, appropriate committee members, and the pastoral council in order to assist parishes to prayerfully and wisely develop the approaches that meet the particular needs of each situation.

For more information, contact Jamie Deere at (501) 664-0340.



Deacon Tim Massinelli of Little Rock is ready to hit the course with more than 150 other golfers in two flights at the 14th annual Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic in September 2008.

C²SI: Bigger and better and still growing fast

Not many programs can boast a 100-percent growth rate over three years, but that is exactly what has happened with the Catholic Charities Summer Institute. Known as C²SI, the program is a collaboration between the Catholic Youth Ministry Office and Catholic Charities of Arkansas.

For one week in July, youth share in an immersion experience that teaches them about Catholic social teaching and enables them to put their faith in action with volunteer opportunities at various work sites in Little Rock. In 2007, the first year of the program, 25 students participated. On July 6-10, 50 students will come to St. John Center in Little Rock.

This year's C²SI has already reached maximum capacity, but the youth ministry office is maintaining a waiting list.

"When kids call to inquire whether space is still available, it is because they have been told by other youth who

have attended that this is a 'can't miss' experience," said Liz Tingquist, director of Catholic Youth Ministry Office. "Word-of-mouth has been our best form of advertising."

Tingquist works closely with Tom Navin, director of Catholic Charities' Social Action Office, to determine the week's events and coordinate the work sites. This summer youth will interact each day with residents of the Youth Detention Center, visit the day resource center for the homeless in North Little Rock, work at Stewpot and provide tutoring at Universidad de Promesa. Catholic Relief Services' Marcos Martinez will be back again this year conduct workshops on global solidarity, hunger and how CRS responds to those in need worldwide. Bible reflection and time for socializing also are built into the schedule.

On the last day, Bishop Anthony B. Taylor will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m.

Because C²SI has been such a success, there is interest in replicating the program in northwest Arkansas.

Golf

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The committees meet monthly until a month before the tournament. During the four weeks before the tournament, the committees meet more often to finalize the details.

Because Dennis is a volunteer as well as the committee members, they are always looking for more helpers to organize the tournament as well as people on the days of the events.

Dennis said parishes can easily get involved by encouraging four-man teams to sign up. Last year about 200 golfers participated, but there is enough room for at least 250 to 300 participants.

Dennis said she became more committed to Catholic Charities after seeing and hearing about their programs and who they benefit.

"Being involved in it, it is very, very rewarding," she said. "Catholic Charities is such a worthy cause and they minister to such a wide range of people throughout the state. The tournament and auction are ways to raise awareness of what Catholic Charities does. We probably all know someone who Catholic Charities has helped."

This year's goal of \$60,000 is an increase over last year, Dennis said. "This event is the main fundraiser for Catholic Charities," she said. "That is why it is so important for it to be successful."

Dennis said there are four ways for Catholics who don't golf to get involved in the tournament. First, they can attend the cocktail party Sept. 20. Second, they can donate a product or service for the auction. Third, they can be a hole or tournament sponsor. Last, they can volunteer on one of the committees.

Information is available at www.dolr.org/offices/catholiccharities/golffpage.php. For more information, call Dennis at (501) 681-8445 or Rebecca Spencer at (501) 664-0340.

Bishop McDonald-Catholic Charities Golf Classic

■ Sept. 20: Cocktail party and auction at Cathedral of St. Andrew in Little Rock. Mass at 5:30 p.m., followed by party in McDonald Hall. Open to the public, \$20 a ticket or free to golfers and their guests.

■ Sept. 21: Tournament at Maumelle Country Club. Two tee times, with top awards given in each flight. \$150 a person or \$600 a team.

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

Volunteers

■ The Parish Social Ministry Office is available to do trainings for parishes to support or develop ministries. Contact Jamie Deere.

■ The Disaster Response Office needs volunteer parish teams to assist with long-term recovery of victims and financial donations to support the work of those teams. Contact Bridget Barceñas.

■ The development staff needs volunteers to assist with the 15th annual Bishop McDonald Catholic Charities Golf Classic and party in September. Sponsors and donors are needed to reach the \$60,000 goal for funds to support the services provided through Catholic Char-

ities programs.

■ Immigration Services in Little Rock needs volunteers and financial support to help catalog client files for digital storage.

■ Immigration Services in Little Rock needs volunteer attorneys to assist with complex cases, especially in court. Con-



Aylce Haley, a longtime volunteer at the Westside Free Medical Clinic, assists the clinic during the week to run errands and help the staff before and after clinic sessions.

tact Maricella Garcia.

■ Immigration Services in Springdale needs volunteer attorneys to assist with complex immigration cases. Contact Frank Head.

■ The Prison Ministry Office needs volunteers to serve the spiritual and religious needs of Catholic inmates. Contact Tom Navin.

■ The Westside Free Medical Clinic needs medical specialists, particularly otolaryngologists and endocrinologists, to see patients either at the clinic or in their private office(s). The clinic also needs pharmacist volunteers and bilingual volunteers to interpret for patients at appointments arranged through the clinic. Contact Karen DiPippa.

Donations

■ Contact Rhonda Pritts to donate items for the annual golf classic auction.

■ Immigration Services in Little Rock needs lateral, five-drawer file cabinets.



Can YOU help?

The office also needs three computers for a lab for clients who need access to their information online without having to have an appointment.

■ The Violence Against Women Act program needs baby and children's clothes, toys and diapers, women's clothes, toiletries, backpacks or large totes for domestic violence clients. Contact Maricella Garcia.

■ The Westside Free Medical Clinic needs insulated drapes for four windows in the pharmacy. Contact Karen DiPippa.