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 Free clinic still needed despite insurance expansion 10

CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS CATHOLIC • CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS • 2415 N. TYLER ST. • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72207 • NOVEMBER 23, 2013

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 training, education and advocacy

■ **Immigration in Little Rock:** Family-based legal assistance, domestic violence and crime victims services, supporting survivors, legal assistance for foreign national priests, legal assistance with applications for DACA, education and advocacy

■ **Parish social ministries:** Parish-based ministry development, disaster recovery parish-based teams, emergency 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.

Justice for Elsa and others like her

Office works to get stability for Arkansas trafficking victim

Every year millions of men, women and children are trafficked for sexual or labor exploitation worldwide, including the United States. "Elsa" (not her real name) is one such victim who was exploited for labor in Arkansas.

After fleeing an abusive marriage, Elsa was put in touch with an employment agency for what sounded like a dream come true. The agency was recruiting workers for restaurants that would provide excellent pay and benefits, including meals and housing. Her dream, though, quickly became a nightmare.

Although the agency promised her a generous salary, Elsa was immediately trafficked for the purpose of labor to multiple cities and states. Instead of the salary she was promised, the traffickers would charge her for transportation, a commission for the employment agency and other invented costs so that she would owe her traffickers money just to be able to work.

To repay those fees she was forced to work in very dangerous conditions, without proper breaks for up to 18 hours a day.

Although they did provide her housing, the conditions were horrid. She lived in rooms that were no bigger than a closet and slept on old mattresses on the floor. She was forced to live in homes with many men she didn't know who



Jesse Therrien / stock.xchng

Every year millions of men, women and children are trafficked for sexual or labor exploitation worldwide, including in the United States.

Her traffickers made sure that she had no telephone, no car and was always far away from the closest city so she could not escape.

did drugs, harassed and threatened her and physically attacked her.

Her traffickers made sure that she had no telephone, no car and was always far away from the closest city so she could not escape.

At one point, a worker threw hot oil on her because he was drunk,

and at another place one of the owners often threatened to slit her throat. For seven years, Elsa lived in constant fear of her traffickers and believed that they would kill her if she tried to escape. Elsa's trafficking nightmare finally ended in 2012 when multiple law enforce-

ment agencies conducted a raid on the restaurant she had been transferred to in Arkansas.

Catholic Immigration Services-Little Rock became involved when law enforcement officers con-

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Charity is not only for formal aid organizations

When last I wrote, I used a catchy phrase in the hope it would resonate: "Every parish is a Catholic charity." The intent was to demonstrate that Catholic Charities of Arkansas did not have a monopoly on the charity business in the diocese and that the most productive work could be done and is accomplished by the individual parishes. In any

event, the idea for the phrase is not mine, it was borrowed.

Last year, Pope Benedict XVI issued a *motu proprio*, a letter giving guidance to the bishops on the administration of charitable activities throughout the Church. It covered many important issues, one of which was to point out how important it is for charity action to take place in the parish:

"The bishop is to

encourage in every parish ... the creation of a local *caritas* (Catholic charity) service, which will also promote in the whole community educational activities aimed at fostering a spirit of sharing and authentic charity."

Parishes throughout our diocese take this responsibility as a mission in their communities. Parishes reach out based on their own capabilities and circumstances. Many rely on the efforts of a dedicated core of volunteers and employees to perform essential tasks, while other parishes see large numbers of volunteers engage in

broad initiatives across the community. The important point is that each parish participates based on the gifts God has given.

Two parishes in particular have started activities to help their communities. St. Peter Church in Pine Bluff and St. Augustine Church in North Little Rock each have begun a program to help feed those in need.

During the week before All Souls Day, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

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From the Director
 Patrick Gallaher

BRIEFS

GRANT

The Diocese of Little Rock was recently awarded a small grant from Catholic Relief Services as part of their Diocesan Capacity Building Strategy for Global Solidarity.

For the next three years, Catholic Charities will intentionally focus on increasing the diocese's capacity to engage more people in the social mission of the Church, especially global solidarity.

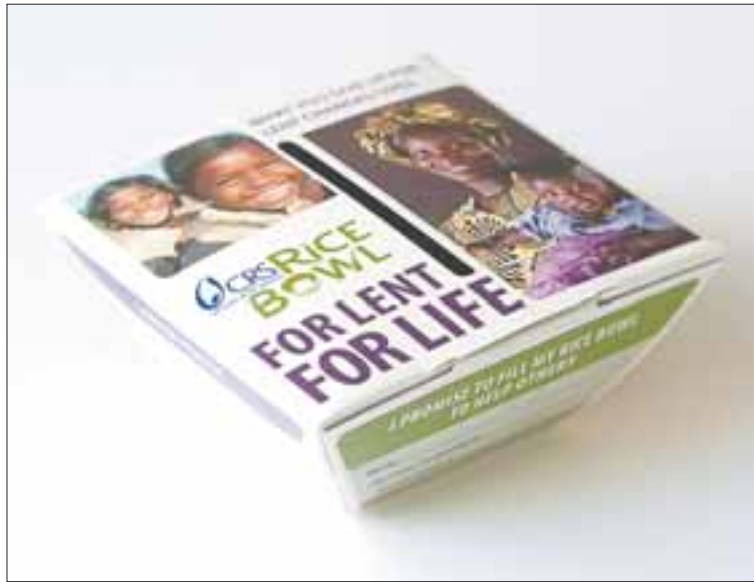
CRS hopes to help the Diocese of Little Rock create structures that will sustain the work for the long term. Part of this involves finding, recruiting and forming leaders to participate in this ministry.

If you are interested in promoting global solidarity and working with the diocese's Capacity Building Strategy, contact Rebecca Car-gile at (501) 664-0340 ext. 355.

RICE BOWL

Catholic Relief Services will be sending a special mailing to all parishes and schools for Lent 2014 that will help them efficiently return donations of participants and successfully conclude their Rice Bowl experience.

This "collection mailing" will include a poster to advertise collection information, helpful tips for collecting Rice Bowls and a return envelope. The mailing will be sent in mid-March 2014.



The Rice Bowl collection is the largest single source of funding for Catholic Charities' Emergency Assistance program. The program provides limited short-term help on a case-by-case basis for urgent expenses like prescriptions, utilities, medical bills and emergency transportation.

This year, the Diocese of Little Rock is asking that all parish and school Rice Bowl donations be sent directly to CRS rather than to Catholic Charities or the diocesan Finance Office. It is the first time that the collection has been handled this way.

The diocese still will receive its usual 25 percent share of the collection, as CRS uses ZIP codes to determine from which diocese the money is sent.

Catholic Charities uses the 25 percent of the Rice Bowl collection to fund the Emergency Assistance Program. It is the largest single funding source to be used for that purpose. The Emergency Assistance Program provides limited financial help on a case-by-case basis to people unable to meet basic living needs. Types of assistance provided include prescriptions, utilities, medical bills and emergency transportation.

Trafficked

Continued from page 7

tacted the office to see if they could help Elsa. CIS helped Elsa apply for a T-Visa, which is available for victims of a severe form of trafficking; it protects victims of human trafficking and allows them to remain in the United States to assist in an investigation or prosecution of human traffickers.

Soon after Elsa was saved from her trafficking situation, she faced another nightmare when she was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to have a double mastectomy. She continues to require treatment and takes daily medication.

However, Elsa hasn't let these tragedies dim her spirit. In fact, she has said many times that she leaves everything in God's hands because it is only with the help of God that she is still here.

In October, Elsa finally received justice when her T-Visa was approved and her first thought was to thank God for all that he had done for her and that she knows it was his blessing that brought her to the immigration office.

CIS is able to provide free legal

immigration services for immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking through a Legal Assistance for Victims grant from the federal Office on Violence Against Women.

Over the past fiscal year, CIS was able to file 101 petitions on behalf of immigrant victims and their families who have suffered domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking or other violent crimes. Of those, 43 have been approved while the others remain pending.

"However, we are not able to provide direct financial assistance for clients through this program and as a victim of trafficking Elsa needed much more than just legal services," director Maricella Garcia said.

"Her medication costs more than \$100 per month and Catholic Charities of Arkansas through a generous donation from St. Joseph Church in Conway has been able to pay for her medication for the past six months," she said. "Donations to our program go to provide these types of direct, personal, necessary assistance to the victims we serve."

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Christmas, my child, is love in action
— Dale Evans Rogers

There are many who need our "love in action" this holiday season. Please help them by becoming a St. Nicholas Partner and supporting Catholic Charities. Complete the form below and mail with your check payable to "Catholic Charities" to:

St. Nicholas Partners
Catholic Charities of Arkansas
2500 N. Tyler St.
Little Rock AR 72207

More information? Visit www.dolr.org or call (501) 664-0340, ext. 355



Katherine Verdaris, a junior at Mount St. Mary Academy, created this cut-paper image for the 2013 St. Nicholas Partners campaign.

Serving Catholics Throughout Arkansas

A Lifetime of Thanks

When a loved one passes on, we wish for one more chance to say thank you. We can provide that opportunity. For a lifetime of giving. A lifetime of thanks.



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