

Grants break down application fee barrier to young dreams

Little Rock church aiding young adults who qualify for DACA but can't afford \$465 fee

Through Catholic Immigration Services grants, some young immigrants are making their dreams come true.

On June 15, 2012, President Barack Obama announced a new initiative to allow some young people to remain in the United States provided that they meet certain criteria.

In order to qualify for the "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA) program, applicants must meet certain requirements, including be between the ages of 15 and 30, be in school, graduated from high school or obtained a GED, came to the United States prior to age 16, have been continuously residing in the United States since at least June 15, 2007, and must pass a criminal background check.

DACA does not confer lawful status upon an individual or provide a path toward citizenship. Instead, it simply allows certain qualified individuals who meet strict standards to receive a work permit and remain in the U.S. for as long as the program is in effect.

Catholic Immigration Services - Little Rock provides high-quality, low-cost immigration legal ser-

vices and support to families and individuals who are eligible for immigration benefits, but who otherwise are unable to afford private representation because of the high cost. Its mission is to aid people in clarifying their legal status in the United States, and thereby to alleviate the related problems of family separation, economic victimization and social isolation.

The announcement of the DACA program provided the Little Rock office with an opportunity to help some of the estimated 5,000 young people who have grown up in Arkansas and may be eligible for DACA.

Director Maricella Garcia said, "We soon came to realize that there were many challenges for young people who apply for DACA — the most difficult being the cost of applying. Although CIS provides its services at low or no fee, the U.S. government set an application fee of \$465 a person and there are no fee waivers. Many families could only apply for one child and their other children would have to wait to apply."

Through grants from Catholic Legal Immigration Network and

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Maricella Garcia, director of Catholic Immigration Services - Little Rock



CNS / Karen Callaway, Catholic New World

Young immigrants and their supporters gather for Mass at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine in Des Plaines, Ill., in July 2012. During the service they gave thanks for the White House policy that aims to halt the deportation of undocumented young people brought into the United States as minors.

Christ the King Church in Little Rock, CIS has been able to assist some low-income families with the application fee. Seven young people have received fee assistance so far, and of those, two have already received their work permits.

The goal of DACA is to help otherwise qualified young people be able to work, go to college and give back to their communities.

"Our students who have re-

ceived fee assistance have very specific goals — one wants to become an elementary school teacher, another a pediatrician, and yet another, a social worker," Garcia said. "These young people want to help give back to the communities that they have grown up in and the country that they love. And they are extremely grateful for the opportunity to have received assistance from these organizations to help

them achieve their dreams."

One student stated, "Without this scholarship we could not afford to apply but with your help DACA will change my life because I will be able help support my family and go to college to improve my opportunities."

To inquire if you qualify for DACA and the grant, contact Catholic Immigration Services at (501) 664-0340.

Thoughtful words spread healthy attitudes about adoption

National Adoption Month a good time to think about it

By **Rebecca Jones**
Child Placement Specialist

November is National Adoption Month and we are committed to reaching out in Arkansas with a supportive message for adoption.

Catholic Adoption Services is joining with Arkansas Right to Life who is partnering with numerous agencies across the state to fund television ads through the Choose Life Adoption License Plate Grant. We hope these commercials will encourage positive dialogue in our state about adoption as a resource for creating healthy, happy families.

We never know all the circumstances that affect the people around us. Every day we enter



Jason Nelson / Stock.xchng

the world to accomplish our daily activities like work, church, or social events, and we often cross the paths of people who have been touched by adoption. Many of your conversations could potentially be with an adoptee, birth parent or

adoptive parent — and an opportunity for you to be supportive of adoption.

We always encourage our clients to be careful with their words when they meet potential birthparents or adoptive parents, but it is some-

When we call a birthparent the "real" parent, that can be hurtful to an adoptive parent who is and feels like a very "real" parent to their child.

thing we could all consider. There are many instances where changing a single word in a sentence can make a world of difference to the person hearing it.

For example, when we call a birthparent the "real" parent, that can be hurtful to an adoptive parent who is and feels like a very "real" parent to their child. The same applies if we ask if a child is their "real" child, as it implies a child might be of secondary importance. There are a number of terms that are casually used to describe adoption that may not be the best choice of words.

You never know who might have placed a child for adoption, so it's helpful to avoid words that have a negative feeling to them and use positive ones to prevent unin-

tended slights. When we talk about birthparents that place a child for adoption it is important not to use words like "give up" or "give away." We "give up" bad habits and failed projects, not children. We also "give away" things we no longer have a use for, which is not the same as choosing the right family for a child.

When we say a child was the result of an "unwanted" pregnancy, one could instead use the word "unplanned." A child is a precious gift. While a mother may not have planned for that child and may be unable to care for him or her, the child is loved.

Join us in celebrating National Adoption Month and in promoting healthy ideas and attitudes about adoption in our community.