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WHY RURAL
AMERICA
MATTERS

CATHOLIC
RURAL LIFE

DISASTERS
IN RURAL
AMERICA

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
ARCHDIOCESE OF
INDIANAPOLIS



CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA

► INSIDE THIS ISSUE



A BLESSING
CCUSA DEDICATES
ICON OF THE
GOOD SAMARITAN

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Catholic Charities USA is the national office for one of the nation's largest social service networks. Member agencies and institutions nationwide provide vital social services to almost nine million people in need, regardless of their religious, social or economic backgrounds. Catholic Charities USA supports and enhances the work of its members by providing networking opportunities, national advocacy, program development, training and consulting and financial benefits.

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LAST ISSUE: FALL 2017



EDITOR'S

COLUMN

In this issue, we take a look at some of the ways that the Catholic Charities ministry is serving people in rural communities across the United States.

This past May, you may have seen a story on the front page of the Wall Street Journal entitled "Rural America is the New 'Inner City'" (Janet Adamy and Paul Overberg, 26 May 2017). The article presented a bleak portrait: "In terms of poverty, college attainment, teenage births, divorce, death rates from heart disease and cancer, reliance on federal disability insurance and male labor-force participation, rural counties now rank the worst among the four major U.S. population groupings (the others are big cities, suburbs and medium or small metro areas)."

The struggles within rural America are real and disheartening. Catholic Charities maintains a presence and provides services to these communities to meet the struggles and offer hope to the people. You will read in this issue how Catholic Charities agencies in Idaho and San Diego – answering the call of Pope Francis – are encountering and standing with migrants, accompanying them on their journeys to a safe and stable life. You will also get a glimpse of how agencies are providing food, protecting the environment, and keeping newborns safe in rural areas.

In an article written by James Ennis, executive director of Catholic Rural Life, you will be reminded that rural areas in the U.S. not only face challenges but also bring benefits to the rest of the country in terms of food production and energy supply. Jane Crady, coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response for Catholic Charities in Indianapolis, writes about responding to the needs of disaster survivors in rural communities.

For Catholic Charities, the first question is always "how can we love like Christ?" in every situation, no matter the place or the person in need of help. ■

David Werning, Managing Editor

To comment on this issue, please write to David Werning at dwerning@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The call to go forth to the peripheries has become synonymous with the ministry of Pope Francis. Just eight months after being elected, he wrote his first apostolic exhortation – *Evangelii Gaudium* – in which he says that, by God’s love, “we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.”

We in the Catholic Charities ministry can receive the pope’s call as a validation of our mission to serve our sisters and brothers wherever we encounter them. Our work in rural communities across the United States is a vivid example of going out to our neighbors in need, upholding their dignity and walking with them toward wholeness, as the articles in this issue demonstrate.

In particular, I would point out the two articles featuring our agencies in San Diego (page 8) and Boise (page 11), which assist migrants and refugees along the path to full citizenship. Their work – representative of the entire Catholic Charities ministry – in welcoming and assisting those who have been displaced is desperately needed in our country at a time when it seems that the plight of migrants and refugees is met with indifference and even hostility on the part of some, despite these attitudes being contrary to the spirit of welcome our nation has traditionally extended to newcomers.

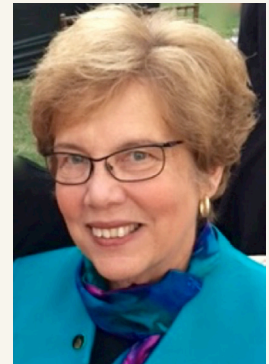
On September 27, Pope Francis initiated a two-year campaign entitled “Share the Journey” through which he intends to draw attention to the plight of displaced persons (#ShareJourney). He is inviting everyone to encounter, welcome, and assist the migrants and refugees in our communities; to see them as our sisters and brothers. Catholic Charities USA, along with its member agencies and with Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is participating in this campaign through advocacy, social media, education and outreach.

Here at the national office, we have a powerful reminder of Jesus’ call to go out and to serve the stranger, the outcast, the person in greatest need: the icon of the Good Samaritan (see opposite page). Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, blessed the icon on June 19, 2017 during a prayer service here in Alexandria. The icon was written by iconographer Janet Jamie, and it tells the story in beautiful imagery of how the Good Samaritan goes out of his way not simply to help a stranger in one particular moment, but to help the stranger from the moment of encounter to the point of full restoration to human dignity.

Catholic Charities takes the Good Samaritan as a model of its service. We are committed to walking with and helping those in need throughout their journeys. ■



Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President & CEO





INTRODUCTION:

CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA

By David Werning, Managing Editor, Catholic Charities USA

One hundred years ago, the Catholic Charities ministry in the United States was in its infancy and served a nation where fewer people lived in rural areas. At the end of the 18th century, 90 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural communities; by 1920 – ten years after Catholic Charities began – the number was less than 50 percent; now it's down to 15 percent. That translates into a little more than 46 million residents living in what the U.S. Department of Agriculture defines as “rural,” areas that constitute about 72 percent of the nation's land.¹

The focus of Catholic Charities 100 years ago – not surprisingly – was on the urban centers where industrialization took root and the influx of immigrants from Italy, Slovakia, Croatia and elsewhere concentrated. Many of the newcomers to the cities were taking jobs in industries like transportation and manufacturing that needed their labor.

As the populations grew, however, so did the common social ills associated with crowded cities. Resentment among the native born rose too, who saw the arrival of immigrants from countries outside the traditional stream as a threat to their own jobs and way of life. Ethnic and religious animus and discrimination were common themes. Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, which greatly reduced the number of people allowed to immigrate to the U.S. and authorized a higher quota of immigrants from northern European countries than other parts of Europe, or other, non-European countries. We are witnessing a reemergence of that same sentiment being expressed today in many quarters of the national immigration debate.

Catholic Charities was there then as it is now to help anyone in need, regardless of ethnic, religious, social, or economic backgrounds. Although cities are still very much a part of the Catholic Charities' outreach, rural areas have entered the picture in a way that might be surprising to some readers.

Despite decreasing populations, rural communities are experiencing big city problems: drug addiction, unemployment, and poverty, to name a few.² Sadly, the reaction of some rural residents to these issues echoes those 100 years ago in the cities: migrants and refugees have become scapegoats once again.³

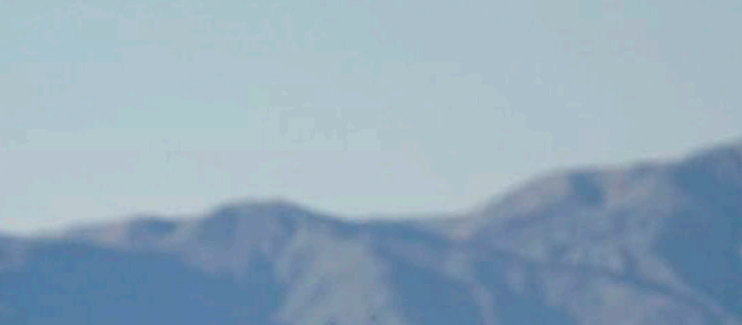
Catholic Charities, always an integral part of the communities it serves, seeks to bring the timeless love of God to all people: those next door or from across the ocean, in cities or on the farms, long-time residents or new arrivals.

The following articles in this section reflect just a glimmer of the services being provided at present. Issues like the opioid crisis and economic development have been addressed widely in the press. Herein attention is placed on serving migrant and refugee communities in rural areas. Pope Francis has made the issue of displaced persons a top priority for his pontificate, and he will launch the Share the Journey campaign from Saint Peter's square on September 27, 2017. The pope encourages everyone not only to encounter migrants and refugees in order to hear their stories and understand their situations but also to help them toward integral human development, peace and security. Other issues covered include food services, infant mortality, and protecting the environment, all within the context of rural America. ■

¹See “Rural America at a Glance: 2016 Edition.” U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=80893; Johnson, Kenneth. “Where is ‘rural America,’ and what does it look like?” *theconversation.com*. The Conversation US, Inc. 20 February 2017. Web. 17 July 2017.

²See Adamy, Janet and Paul Overberg. “Rural America is the New ‘Inner City.’” 26 May 2017. www.wsj.com. Accessed 17 July 2017. www.wsj.com/articles/rural-america-is-the-new-inner-city-1495817008.

³See Sacchetti, Maria and Emily Guskin. “In rural America, fewer immigrants and less tolerance.” 17 June 2017. www.washingtonpost.com. Accessed 12 July 2017. www.washingtonpost.com/local/in-rural-america-fewer-immigrants-and-less-tolerance/2017/06/16/7b448454-4d1d-11e7-bc1b-fddb8359dee_story.html?utm_term=.b8426568338a.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA



CATHOLIC CHARITIES SAN DIEGO

WELCOMING NEIGHBORS IN RURAL IMPERIAL COUNTY

By Aida Bustos, Associate Director, Media Relations, Diocese of San Diego

The Great Recession was beginning to tighten its grip in this chronically struggling region. With fewer immigrants seeking services, the leadership of Catholic Charities San Diego (CCSD) wrestled with how to keep open the office that served them.

Today, the El Centro immigration office is the busiest of the four sites that Catholic Charities operates in order to serve migrants in San Diego and Imperial County.

Together, the offices assisted a total of 4,273 immigrants last year, 900 of them in El Centro, to apply for “green cards,” DACA, family-based visas, and citizenship. The demand has only increased this year as rhetoric and policies targeting immigrants harden. “Our case managers there are booked more than a month in advance,” said Vanessa Ceceña, CCSD’s director of Immigrant Services.

The office stands as a living example of how a community should encounter migrants, stand with them as they work to adapt to their new land, and build on those relationships to help others just beginning that journey. This process can take a long time, as Pope Francis’s campaign Share the Journey underscores, but it’s essential to opposing today’s culture of indifference.

Around 180,000 people live in Imperial County, which covers 4,200 square miles from the eastern suburbs of San Diego, along the border with Mexico, to the Arizona state line. About 84 percent of



These immigrants, mostly from Mexico, needed a place to go to begin the complicated bureaucratic journey toward legalization. That's when Catholic Charities sought the special training necessary to become accredited by the U.S. government to provide immigration services.

— Aida Bustos, Associate Director, Media Relations, Diocese of San Diego

the population is Hispanic and some 75 percent speaks another language than English at home.

The county is mostly desert, save for the irrigated agricultural fields that have been the backbone of the local economy for generations. Residents endure scorching summer temperatures of more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

The seeds of the El Centro office's dramatic turnaround were planted some 31 years ago, when the U.S. passed the last major immigration reform law in 1986. Among other provisions, it offered a pathway to legalization for special agricultural workers, a significant portion of the county's workforce. These immigrants, mostly from Mexico, needed a place to go to begin the complicated bureaucratic journey toward legalization. That's when Catholic Charities sought the special training necessary to become accredited by the U.S. government to provide immigration services.

To this day, the office in El Centro remains the only non-profit, accredited provider of immigration services in Imperial County. That's significant because without that office, immigrants have only two options. They can use "notarios," notaries with no special immigration training and a history of committing fraud. Or they can hire immigration attorneys, whose fees can climb into the thousands of dollars.

Agricultural work is seasonal and it's common for farmworkers to have two, three or more jobs in a year, if they can even find one. In June, the county's official unemployment rate of 20.8 percent was not only the highest in the California, but also in the country.

The Great Recession never really lifted in the Imperial Valley. Last year, the county's official per capita income was \$16,143, about half the national average, and one out of four people lived below the federal poverty line. "The jobs never came back," said Father Mark Edney, who leads two parishes that form the El Centro Catholic Community.

Francisco Barbosa remembers the economic downturn. He's lived in Imperial County for 10 years, and has been the senior case manager at the Catholic Charities office for nine of them.

A boom in home construction turned to bust, pushing many workers back to the fields. Companies laid off workers or closed altogether. Families that had managed to buy a house, many using sub-prime loans, lost them to foreclosure. The number of homeless soared, among them women and children.

Barbosa said it was difficult for farmworkers and other low-income residents to raise enough money to pay the fees to apply for immigration benefits. For instance, the fee to apply for legal permanent residency is between \$600 and \$800. Fewer people knocked



Families that had managed to buy a house, many using sub-prime loans, lost them to foreclosure. The number of homeless soared, among them women and children.

— Aida Bustos, Associate Director, Media Relations, Diocese of San Diego

on his door. Even so, CCSD committed to keeping the office open and Barbosa and a part-time secretary helped as many people as possible.

“We’re immigrants,” he said. “We have a tendency to understand the difficulty of living out here.” He explained that his father had immigrated to the United States and had struggled to support his own family as well as the one he left behind in Mexico. Ultimately, his father became a U.S. citizen, a process the son now helps others to complete.

In addition, Barbosa processes special visas that help survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, mostly women. When he first meets these clients, he said, they are victims. With his expertise and support, they become legal residents and some eventually U.S. citizens, all the while sharing their journey with him. “Those are the kinds of cases that you can’t forget,” he said. “They motivate me to keep going.”

A few years ago, the U.S. government began allowing people who could prove they had a low income to apply for immigration benefits without having to pay the fee. The so-called “fee waiver” was a game-changer. Poverty was no longer a barrier to becoming a legal permanent resident or U.S. citizen.

Another barrier to applying for benefits was length of continuous residency in the U.S. Many immigrants routinely left the United States to visit their homeland for months at a time, then returned. An update to the immigration law in 1996 imposed a harsh penalty for doing so, which encouraged migrants to settle in the U.S. for good. Time,

too, began to ease another barrier to qualifying for U.S. citizenship: the ability to handle basic English. Immigrants who first had legalized as young people through the 1986 reform law were beginning to reach the age of at least 55 and had lived as legal permanent residents for at least 15 years. Once they reached both of those milestones, they could take the required citizenship test in their native language.

Together, these factors set the stage for more immigrants seeking services, particularly applying for citizenship. And it was natural for them to turn to the trusted office that likely had first assisted them years ago or their family members or friends. As more did so, Catholic Charities responded by beefing up its staffing. Today, the office has three case managers, one full-time clerk and a part-time one.

But it’s more than having the right mix of bilingual staff that makes the office successful, said Robert Moser. He helped immigrants begin their legalization journey after Congress passed the 1986 law and now serves as the executive director of CCSD. Over the years, the office has developed a good relationship with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), he said. In fact, Catholic Charities hosts the bimonthly meeting at its office between USCIS and other non-profit organizations that serve immigrants.

Another barrier to seeking immigration services is fear of being picked up. Law enforcement has a heavy presence in Imperial County. “But because we have a good relationship with USCIS, they have left our facilities alone,” Moser said. “People can feel secure coming to our place.” ■



CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA



CATHOLIC CHARITIES IDAHO

A CULTURE OF CARE IN RURAL IDAHO

By Douglas Alles, Executive Director, Catholic Charities of Idaho

At the close of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI held up the parable of the Good Samaritan as the model of Catholic spiritual and active life. Inspired by this ideal, Catholic Charities of Idaho (CCI) strives to be the “Good Samaritan” to those most in need here in the Gem State. This work of renewal has energized our commitment to poor and marginalized families and helped us better understand and realize our mission as the caring and skilled social service arm of the Diocese of Boise.

The Diocese of Boise is a Catholic Extension “mission Diocese”, described colloquially as “the Church in frontier America” at the time of this designation many years ago. In many ways that description still holds. Eighty-five percent of our counties are rural and economically distressed, with 23 percent of rural residents receiving public assistance and over 17 percent earning incomes below the poverty level. The agricultural heartland of our state is the Snake River Plain that sweeps across southern Idaho. There we produce our famous potatoes, as well as beef cattle, hay, wheat, milk, barley, and sugar beets. It is also home to our most diverse and disadvantaged residents. Nearly 30 percent of the residents in this region are Latino, and many are still newly arriving migrant workers. Approximately 25 percent of the Latino population in rural southern Idaho is undocumented.

Even though we are still a “baby” Catholic Charities, founded just 17 years ago, and we work in a low-resourced mission diocese, we



“...while our work with the immigrant community is not always well understood in a politically conservative state like Idaho, we’ve made inroads by reaching out to the farming community, forming an alliance around common goals: constructive immigration reform, support for the unique needs and issues rural farming communities face, and recognition that our immigrant brothers and sisters are hard-working, family-oriented individuals who are assets to our communities and critical to the economic success of our agricultural sector.”

– Douglas Alles, Executive Director, Catholic Charities Idaho

seek to have real and lasting impact in the lives of those we serve. Our work is expressed succinctly in our Framework for Service and Ministry that was approved by our Board of Directors in December 2016, which sets the course for our services and ministries well into the next decade. This Framework mirrors many of the initiatives of our sister agencies across the country and commits us to alleviating, reducing, and, if possible, permanently ending poverty for those we serve. More importantly, it calls us to an awakened sense of the dignity, resourcefulness, and resilience of those we assist and the importance, if our work is to be authentic, of the virtue of hope. To be apostles of hope means to encounter, accompany and empower persons in need, not simply “doing for them.” Only in this way can our mission properly express Christian love, a love that is generous, respectful, and free of condescension or patronage.

Let me share briefly about the tangible progress we are making. Last fall, Bishop Peter Christensen dedicated a new Catholic Charities office in Boise, designed for professional clinical and legal services that meet today’s urgent need for high quality advocacy and support. In addition, in January, we opened a small but beautiful center in Idaho Falls. These two locations, which anchor our work at both ends of the Snake River agricultural region, exemplify a welcoming, attentive and skilled service environment. They are, I’m proud to say, bright centers of care, trust, and affection for all who come seeking assistance. These offices are now open every day to individuals and families seeking assistance of any kind. CCI Client Assistance and

Resource Advocates (CARAs) provide linkage to critically needed emergency assistance and basic resources like housing, utility assistance, clothing, food, and other essentials. In the past year more than 3,000 such linkages were made. Our staff are multi-lingual and bring diverse cultural competencies that enhance our effectiveness with clients from other countries.

As a new and small Catholic Charities, we don’t yet have the resources to open permanent service centers all across the 250 miles of rural Idaho between Boise and Idaho Falls, nor up the long northern panhandle of our state. But true to our frontier spirit (and the wonders of the modern Interstate) our staff travel to parishes, missions, and community centers embedded in small, remote communities across Idaho that call us to service. Here we offer information “charlas” before and after local Spanish Masses, provide parenting classes while children attend religious education instruction, and facilitate evening and weekend services (Know Your Rights presentations, basic immigration classes, and citizenship preparation instruction). We facilitate immigration group processing workshops in places like Blackfoot, Fruitland and Jerome that allow us to reach deep into the poor, rural areas of our state. We also make generous use of phone consultation services for immigration clients who live in isolated areas. Bishop Peter Christensen of the Boise Diocese has stated that “the best, most foolproof sanctuary we can offer others is to help them make this their naturalized home if they so choose.” We aim to make that invitation real and achiev-



able for our immigrant and refugee neighbors who choose the path of U.S. citizenship.

These are especially unsettled times for Idaho newcomer communities. Changes in U.S. immigration policy and enforcement procedures have excited anxiety, passion, and alarm and have made lack of legal status a particularly vulnerable way of life for many in rural areas. Recognizing that this is a reality for a large segment of people with whom we share a common community life, we're "thinking outside the box" as we search for ways to cost-effectively engage with and reach immigrant families in need across our service area: 83,000 square miles. Thinking outside the box is part of our frontier identity!

We're presently expanding outreach efforts to include language and culturally-appropriate abuse awareness information, substance abuse prevention, and financial literacy classes and coaching services. Plans are underway for the introduction of Spanish language adult basic education (Plaza Comunitaria services common to many Catholic Charities) and English for non-native speakers' instruction. We're building on a new Fatherhood initiative in Idaho Falls by working with diocesan clergy to offer group services – pastoral and clinical – for Latino men to address issues like cultural identity, self-esteem, depression, alcohol addiction, marital and relationship challenges, pornography, and stress. We are also intro-

ducing onsite Spanish language counseling services in a parish located in high need Canyon County. Finally, while our work with the immigrant community is not always well understood in a politically conservative state like Idaho, we've made inroads by reaching out to the farming community, forming an alliance around common goals: constructive immigration reform, support for the unique needs and issues rural farming communities face, and recognition that our immigrant brothers and sisters are hard-working, family-oriented individuals who are assets to our communities and critical to the economic success of our agricultural sector.

Our Holy Father invites all of us to promote a "culture of care" with hearts that are filled with compassion and eyes and ears that are attentive. His challenge to "be in the streets" and in solidarity with those suffering, by way of encounter and accompaniment, speaks to the heart of the Catholic Charities mission and our work here in the Diocese of Boise. A great splendor and vigor in the Church is the ministry of walking alongside of those in weakness and need, especially the rural poor and marginalized. Let that be so! Let it continue to be true for the Diocese of Boise and for Catholic Charities of Idaho. ■



CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA

CATHOLIC CHARITIES NORTHERN NEVADA

FINDING RELIEF FROM HUNGER IN DESERT AGRICULTURE

By Yvette Myers, Director of Human Services, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada & the St. Vincent's Programs

The Nevada desert may not seem like the perfect location for a university research farm and a Catholic Charities organization to tackle the region's hunger and nutrition deficits. As it turns out, Nevada is the perfect location.

Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada and the University of Nevada, Reno Desert Farming Initiative have teamed up to increase access to fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables for hungry people in Northern Nevada. Desert Farming Initiative grows fresh vegetables such as lettuce, carrots, beets, cucumbers and tomatoes in their hoop houses, and delivers a portion of them to the food pantry at Catholic Charities. The food is then distributed to individuals and families in need at SNAP Farmers Markets and the like.

Last year, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada (CCNN) distributed 6.2 million pounds of food to more than 60,000 people within 95,000 square miles of rural Nevada.

"We started with just one hoop house," said Yvette Myers, director of Human Services for CCNN. "As soon as that got started, we saw the potential of expanding the growing space and our relationship with the Desert Farming Initiative program." Now totaling seven hoop houses, the two organizations additionally collaborate on volunteer programs and outreach.



“Hoop houses allow us to protect the plants from weather elements that make it difficult to grow in our region. It reaches above 95 F for several weeks in the summer, and in the winter we can get several inches of snow in a week. Hoop houses allow us to grow 12 months a year.”

— Jennifer Ott, Director of the Desert Farming Initiative (DFI)

Hoop houses are similar to greenhouses in that fruits and vegetables grow inside a covered structure. However there is no artificial heating or cooling systems.

“Hoop houses allow us to protect the plants from weather elements that make it difficult to grow in our region. It reaches above 95 F for several weeks in the summer, and in the winter we can get several inches of snow in a week. Hoop houses allow us to grow 12 months a year,” explained Jennifer Ott, director of the Desert Farming Initiative (DFI). The farming program grows fruits and vegetables to train students in production agriculture, address research needs for the university, and work with farmers and ranchers in the state to produce more successful crops.

“When our two programs started working together, we didn’t realize how big the potential could be,” said Myers. “We now partner with the Desert Farming Initiative on many of our programs, including CrossRoads.” The CrossRoads program, which offers services to formerly homeless, chronic inebriates, allows clients to work at the farm two days a week.

Crossroads, which opened in 2011, is a collaboration between CCNN, Washoe County Social Services, several arms of law enforcement and the local judiciary. The program provides a refuge and

permanent supportive housing to men and women battling homelessness and addiction. Offering a home and wraparound supportive services, CrossRoads has so far helped more than 700 individuals seeking to rebuild their lives after prolonged addiction and life on the streets. Rehabilitation into the workforce is one of the main thrusts of the program and residents are required to learn new job skills through volunteering.

Farming is hard work, but the aim is to give the CrossRoads residents exposure to many different types of jobs while also giving back to the community. Their work produces fresh vegetables which are then delivered to the Food Pantry, St. Vincent’s Dining Room (which feeds over 500 homeless men and women every day), and the Senior Nutrition “Meals on Wheels” Program.

“We love working with Catholic Charities. Not only have we expanded the ability to provide fruits and vegetables to those in need, but we have the opportunity to demonstrate where food comes from; a critical part of our outreach mission”, said Ott.

Providing fresh, healthy food out of the desert doesn’t seem like an easy endeavor, but it’s a whole lot easier when you have great partners. ■

CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA



CATHOLIC CHARITIES NORTHEAST KANSAS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By Denise Ogilvie, Vice-President of Outreach and Grants, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas

Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas (CCNEK) began its Summer Food programming in partnership with Harvester's in the summer of 2015. Under the leadership and support of Harvester's, the CCNEK Food Bank staff learned the fundamentals of overseeing a summer food service program, including the training of staff and creating valuable partnerships and relationships to build a successful program.

This summer Catholic Charities sponsored its own program and it has been a wonderfully successful year. CCNEK thanks Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) for its support, which allowed our agency to make an impact on childhood hunger across 21 counties of Kansas, including many rural and remote areas not typically supported by social service programs. Partners such as CCUSA and other local organizations made it possible to increase the sites available for summer foods and the availability of summer food, which made an impact on children and hunger during the summer months.

The number of sites offering summer food has increased from 18 in 2016 to 31 sites in 2017. It is anticipated that over 12,000 children and 1,500 adults will benefit from the program by the end of August. Catholic Charities has also stepped up within Wyandotte County to keep three summer food sites open an additional two weeks. These sites were being served by the school district, but they stopped serving in order to prepare for their school year. CCNEK is also in the process of expanding our service by providing meals to at-risk students in Wyandotte County in after school programs during the school year.

New relationships have been established with libraries, which has created clean, safe, trusted and air-conditioned sites for children to interact, eat and learn. The greatest accomplishment is that of 13 libraries hosting food sites, and 11 of these libraries were established in rural areas where there is a greater need. When we began summer food programming in 2015, the majority of our sites were outdoors. Now the majority of our sites are indoors. Indoor sites create more consistent service because weather is not an issue, and libraries are a place where children already gather. Creating these relationships, transporting and storing food for rural sites and building trust in remote communities will continue to be a challenge and goal for the agency.

In addition to providing the required lunch we also offered every site additional fresh produce such as carrots, apples and oranges. These were not part of the meal requirement, so children could take a fresh item home. We continued to provide an adult lunch option at every site at no cost to an adult who accompanied a child. We believe this contributed to maintaining attendance throughout the summer. It is uncomfortable for a child to eat knowing his or her parent is hungry and not allowed to eat.

CCNEK continues to address the challenges of supplying foods to rural sites. The simple physical delivery of food to a rural site, which may be three hours away from our warehouse, and limited food storage at each site are examples of issues to be resolved. Also included are efforts to continue building trust with the communities and engaging volunteers to help with the summer food sites. We do not have staff in most of our rural communities so we rely on volunteer site coordinators. We need to address these challenges in order to increase the access and use of congregate sites for children and adults needing summer meals. We also recognize that congregate sites present their own challenges in rural communities. Many children who are in need of food do not have transportation to the site and presents an advocacy role for our agency. Our agency has two resource buses that travel into the rural communities and we would like to incorporate them into a rural summer food plan in the future.

The goals and achievements of the program continue to grow as the agency recognizes the value and need for the program, especially in rural areas. Catholic Charities wants to celebrate our successes with those who support our efforts to keep children fed during the summer months across 21 counties of Northeast Kansas. We are humbled by the generosity of those who support our efforts to combat chronic poverty in our community and to assist families and children. We appreciate your consideration and dedication to the community, especially to the children whose futures we are helping change. ■



Impact and outputs of the Catholic Charities Northeast Kansas Summer 2017 Food Service Program

- **Goal:** Augment food availability for students facing food insecurity during summer months when free school lunches are not available.
 - Output: 31 sites served Summer 2017
 - Outcome: 51% increase in Summer Food Service Sites from Summer 2016 to Summer 2017
- **Goal:** Create a group of safe, trusted, clean, productive and air-conditioned spaces to enjoy summer foods.
 - Output: 11 Rural Sites established in libraries
 - Output: 13 total libraries participated
 - Outcome: 43% of sites were established in cooperation with local libraries.
- **Goal:** Increase the number of children and adults benefitting from the Summer Food Service Program from 2016 to 2017
 - Output: 11,129 children have been served
 - Output: 1,469 adults have been served
 - Outcome: It is anticipated that over 12,000 children will be served this summer, a 30% increase over last summer.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA



CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF TYLER

THE INFANT SAFE SLEEP PROGRAM

By Kathy Shields Harry, Executive Director, Catholic Charities Diocese of Tyler

Northeast Texas is home to more than 1.5 million people in a 33-county region. It is a beautiful part of the country with lush green trees and bountiful flowers, but its infant mortality rate stands in bold contrast to its scenery. For every 1,000 live births, seven infants die. This statistic is both shocking and tragic, especially when the leading cause of post-neonatal deaths (after 28 days of birth) is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS; Northeast Texas Health Status Report, 2016).

To get at the core of the problem, Catholic Charities-Diocese of Tyler took a look at demographics: Half the population in Northeast Texas lives in rural areas. There is racial health disparity in Northeast Texas. The infant mortality rate for blacks is more than double than that of whites or Hispanics. Awareness of the importance of prenatal care is lacking. Forty-seven percent (47%) of Northeast Texas women did not have a prenatal visit in the first trimester of their pregnancy. Smoking during pregnancy or in the presence of an infant can be a contributor to SIDS. Fourteen percent (14%) of Northeast Texas women smoked during pregnancy, more than triple than that of Texas overall. Throughout the region, the median household income is below the state average, exacerbating social ills like poverty, low educational attainment, and food and job insecurity. The situation is ripe for SIDS.

As a result, the Infant Safe Sleep project was born.

Catholic Charities-Diocese of Tyler, in collaboration with CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Foundation and the Baby Box Co., a national corporation, established the Infant Safe Sleep Project to combat SIDS. The program was established to provide a safe place for infants to sleep. If the baby is unable to move about and breathe

freely in his or her own space, the child may be vulnerable to SIDS. The program also offers outreach and community education for at-risk infants and families in the Diocese of Tyler. The approach is multipronged:



1. Providing a Safe Place to Sleep

In some rural households, mothers with no cribs often place a newborn in a dresser drawer lined with a blanket or in bed with adults or other children. A safer solution is a mini-crib box designed by The Baby Box Co. Inspired by the maternity packages that all expectant mothers receive in Finland, baby boxes are new baby starter kits with a safe sleep space for newborns. Distributing baby boxes in conjunction with community health education helped Finland achieve one of the world's lowest infant mortality rates, saving countless infant lives over the years.

For our Infant Safe Sleep project, parents receive a free baby box. Each mini-crib includes a safety-rated custom mattress with fitted sheet and can accommodate infants from birth to about three months of age. The baby boxes include new parent essentials such as diapers, breast pads, brain-boosting activity cards for infants and more.

2. Prenatal and Post-natal Education

The online educational component of the Infant Safe Sleep project is invaluable to the success of the program and key to combating SIDS. Mothers are required to participate in a 15-17 minute online course entitled "Intro to Parenthood 101." The educational program consists of brief vignettes about one to two minutes in length. Parents log onto the baby box site via computer, tablet or smartphone to begin the program. The program provides educational information with tips to ensure a healthy pregnancy including medications during pregnancy, ways to bond with the new-

born, benefits of breastfeeding, vaccinations, tummy time, the risk of smoking and SIDS, perinatal mood swings and other maternal mental health practices.

Step-by-step instructions on the safest sleep environment are shared along with specific instructions on how to appropriately use the baby box. After the parents watch the vignettes they complete a brief, simple quiz to receive a certificate for the free baby box. The box can be mailed directly to the parent's home or picked up at the Catholic Charities office.

3. Spreading the Word

Catholic Charities initially established relationships with numerous health care providers who could help identify families at greater risk of SIDS, but ultimately we determined that every expectant and new parent could benefit from the Infant Safe Sleep program.

In order to spread the word, a registered nurse was hired to coordinate the program by making personal visits to obstetric health care providers and nonprofit agencies that provide medical services for new parents. The nurse coordinator promotes Infant Safe Sleep by demonstrating the ease of the online program for both the patient and the provider. Brochures with patient guidelines for participation are left with the providers. Physicians and service agencies often encourage the parent to access the program on a smart phone while sitting in their waiting room. If needed, Catholic Charities will furnish an electronic device to the provider or agency for patient use. New parents may also visit the Catholic Charities office for assistance in accessing the online program.

Parish Nurses working with Catholic Charities-Diocese of Tyler promote the Infant Safe Sleep project through their health fairs and work with the participants. Additional marketing efforts to community groups and public service announcements have helped spread the word about the Infant Safe Sleep project.

Our goal is to prevent SIDS for hundreds of children of new parents in Northeast Texas. But if we prevent just one death, then the program has been a priceless success. ■



CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN RURAL AMERICA



CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEST VIRGINIA

IT IS EASY BEING GREEN IN WEST VIRGINIA

By Elizabeth Paulhus, MPP, Director of Program Development and Evaluation
Catholic Charities West Virginia

Even before the release of Pope Francis's *Laudato si*, in which he challenged "every person living on this planet" to think about his or her consumption practices and responses to environmental concerns facing our common home, the staff in the Northern Region of Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) had begun to address this very call. In a rural state known more for coal and "Take Me Home, Country Roads" than for green initiatives, CCWVa wanted to be part of the growing movement in West Virginia trying to change this narrative.

In 2014, while serving in my previous role as the Northern Regional Director, I noticed that we were producing a significant amount of garbage at the Neighborhood Center in Wheeling, the largest outreach office of CCWVa. Each day, the Center's kitchen churned out hundreds of pounds of food for breakfast and dinner served on-site as well as for meals delivered to more than 150 homebound clients. And each day, the two dumpsters behind the Center would fill with waste: food scraps, spoiled leftovers, disposable plates and utensils, cardboard boxes, and more. The staff and I began a discussion about this waste and sought ways to reduce it.

By implementing some small changes like preparing less food and offering more leftover nights if necessity dictated, the amount of food waste began to decline. In addition, the Center replaced Styrofoam and other disposable products with ceramic plates and bowls, utensils, glasses, and other housewares purchased from local thrift stores and were given a second life. These steps began to decrease the amount of waste produced by the Center each week.

The next step in reducing waste was to introduce recycling. Since the city of Wheeling did not provide curbside recycling for business-



es, I reached out to a local recycler to see if his company would contract with CCWVa to pick up the Center's recyclables several times a week. Although it took staff, volunteers, and clients some time to adjust to sorting and separating recyclable materials from trash, the initiative eventually began to take off. Cardboard, cans, glass jars, plastic bottles, and other recyclables were left in a collection area behind the Center and hauled away by Scrappy Pappy's several times a week. This initiative not only diverted materials from the landfill but also saved the Center money by reducing the frequency and cost of dumpster service. Additionally, it enabled CCWVa to support the local Wheeling economy by contracting with a company owned and operated by someone from the area.

The quest to find ways of reducing consumption continued on a larger scale in early June 2015 after I heard a report about a new social enterprise in West Virginia called Solar Holler. This organization was founded by Dan Conant, a West Virginia native who had recently returned to Shepherdstown to start this enterprise. With energy costs at the Center increasing year over year, I reached out to Dan to begin discussions about installing solar panels on the Center's roof. I loved the idea of supporting a West Virginia company and investing in green infrastructure all at the same time. In addition to the solar panels, Dan recommended replacing all lights in the Center with high-efficiency LEDs to reduce energy consumption. The combination of LEDs and solar panels would maximize the economic benefits of the project for CCWVa.

With a proposal from Solar Holler in hand, I approached two local funders to see if they would back the project. My pitch was not simply about the environmental benefits of these infrastructure improvements. The LEDs and solar panels also would reduce the

Center's utility costs, thereby freeing up funding that could be used toward programs and services. This measured approach won over the funders, and the project was green-lit. Installation of the 17kW solar panel system occurred in December 2016. Solar Holler partnered with Coalfield Development Corporation in Wayne, WV, to hire a crew of installers comprised of formerly unemployed young adults and laid-off coal miners from the southern coalfields of West Virginia who had been trained as certified solar panel specialists by Coalfield.

The final project was a win for all involved. With the new LED lights and the solar panel system, the Center succeeded at reducing consumption on yet another front and benefited from lower electric bills and cost savings as a result. In addition, the project was an investment in two social enterprises in West Virginia that seek to forge new opportunities for the people of this state, particularly in some of the most rural parts.

Although there are still more steps to be taken as an agency and as individuals and families, I believe that CCWVa has helped demonstrate that green initiatives like the ones undertaken at the Neighborhood Center serve many functions. They benefit the environment as well as the bottom line. They educate people who otherwise may have been skeptical about recycling or solar panels. They promote and support the local economy and provide employment for workers in new fields. They begin to change the narrative about West Virginia.

Reducing consumption. Investing in people. I think Pope Francis would be proud. ■



CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE

WHY RURAL AMERICA MATTERS

By James F. Ennis, Executive Director, Catholic Rural Life

“Today, approximately 60 million people live in rural America, making up 18 percent of the population. So, rural communities are not insignificant; but the people living in rural communities are often out of sight and out of mind of the typical American who lives in the city or suburbs.”



When you think of “rural America”, what comes to your mind? When I asked this question to a group of students in a class I teach every year on rural ministry, the answers varied widely: from “open countryside” to “fields of corn and soybeans”, from “peaceful rivers” to “Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm”, from “cows grazing out on pasture” to “miles and miles of wheat as far as the eye can see.” These idyllic views of rural America have a grain of truth in them, but they do not paint the whole picture. Just think about a few headlines in the New York Times over the past several months: “Is Rural the New Inner City?”; “Inside a Killer Drug Epidemic: A Look at America’s Opioid Crisis”; or the title of a bestselling book, “Hillbilly Elegy”, by JD Vance. In each example, the writer tells another story of what is happening in rural communities, and the picture is not always pretty—from high crime rates and food insecurity to an opioid epidemic and perennial poverty.

Today, approximately 60 million people live in rural America, making up 18 percent of the population. Of the 178 territorial dioceses in the U.S., approximately 130 dioceses have some rural areas in their oversight. So, rural communities are not insignificant; but the people living in rural communities are often out of sight and out of mind of the typical American who lives in the city or suburbs. Still, rural matters and here are few reasons why.

Food Security and the Importance of Family Farms

All of us need food to live. No farms, no food. Our rural communities are still the backbone of the U.S. in terms of providing food, fiber and energy. Agriculture products and services provide \$985 billion to our U.S. economy (a 5.7 percent share of U.S. GDP), and the number is much higher when you include all food, fiber, and energy-related sectors. All of us depend upon our rural communities to sustain life. Supporting our rural communities and keeping family farmers on the land is a priority for the Catholic Church. Rural matters because we need a robust and secure agricultural sector that provides food for our country and our world.

But many farmers and ranchers are facing some significant headwinds. National Farmers Union (NFU) President, Roger Johnson, in a recent Senate Committee on Agriculture hearing said, “...family farmers and ranchers are enduring a severely depressed farm economy, with projections pointing to a prolonged period of depressed commodity prices...We continue to witness pressure in the countryside as commodity prices remain low and farmers and ranchers struggle to adjust...We are three years into this downturn, and forecasts by USDA point to a prolonged period of depressed prices.”¹ The pressures are leading some farmers and ranchers to dejection, anxiety, financial worries, burnout and marital difficulties. Moreover, many farm laborers and workers in food processing facilities are also vulnerable because of low wages or inadequate healthcare, housing and transportation. These situations often put pres-

sure on the families and underscore the need for human services in rural communities.

Energy Security and the Importance of Rural Communities

Rural communities also provide many services beyond food and fiber. Most of the U.S. energy supply comes from rural areas: oil, gas, coal, nuclear and renewable sources. Regarding the total U.S. energy consumed in 2016, natural gas contributed 38 percent; crude oil 22 percent; coal 17 percent; renewable energy 11 percent; and nuclear 9 percent.² Sources of renewable energy include hydropower (35 percent), wood (24 percent), biofuels (20 percent), wind (9 percent), biomass (6 percent), geothermal (5 percent), and solar (1 percent). The U.S. Department of Energy in its Annual Energy Outlook for 2016 projects consumption of renewable fuels contributing 13 percent of the total energy consumed in the U.S. by 2035.³ The growth and expansion of natural gas and renewable fuels is expected to positively impact rural communities. The combination of increased demand for natural gas and biofuels/biomass products, the building of new refineries, wind turbines and other related manufacturing facilities in rural areas, will help strengthen rural economies. For example, a new biomass refinery employs on average approximately 50 skilled people, not including many additional ancillary jobs.

But along with this projected growth for energy sources, as well as the growing demand for food from agriculture, there are increasing questions and concerns about the effects on the environment. For example what are the impacts to soil, water and natural landscapes? How do we exercise a “responsible stewardship over nature”, conserving natural resources, while at the same time enjoying the fruits and cultivating the earth in new ways to accommodate the needs of our community? How do we care for the land in such a way as to “pass on to our children’s children and generations after them a land richer than was entrusted to us?”

A Call for an Integral Ecology – Human and Natural

Pope Francis in his groundbreaking encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, spoke to the need for an “integral ecology” among Christians. Faith informs both human and natural ecology. The Catholic Church through its ministries of Catholic Charities and Catholic Rural Life (CRL) are reaching out to family farmers both to support them in their struggles and to affirm them in their vocation. So, for example, in Ohio, each year Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio serves more than 43,000 people in their community providing mental health services—regardless of income—and family services such as classes, workshops, counseling and training for parents, children, expectant mothers and counselors. The same is happening in dioceses around the country. In the Diocese of Stockton, Catholic Charities has a Health Care Access Program that assists eligible uninsured children between the ages of 0-19 for health care coverage.

CRL recently published a document entitled *Vocation of the Agricultural Leader* and presented it to Pope Francis in December 2016. The document speaks to the heart of how faith informs agricultural work. CRL has made presentations to more than 1,200 U.S. farmers and ranchers and eight Catholic dioceses about the important role farmers and ranchers serve in the U.S. and around the world to both feed the world and to care for the environment. CRL is planning presentations in more dioceses and universities over the next year. One of the purposes of the *Vocation of the Agricultural Leader* project is to help people see how to work as co-workers with our Creator in creation, not against creation; and to see farming as a vocation, a way of life, a calling, not simply an occupation.

Rural communities are the backbone of America, and the Catholic Church understands this better than anyone. But there are challenges. And that is why ministries such as Catholic Charities and Catholic Rural Life continue to apply the Church’s social teachings for the betterment of rural America. ■

¹Senate Agriculture Committee Hearing Testimony, Roger Johnson, President, National Farmers Union, July 25, 2017

²Annual Energy Outlook, 2016, U.S. Energy Information Administration

³Ibid



By Jane Crady, Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Rural America: rolling, green pastures; fields covered in corn, wheat and soybeans; woodlands with a nearby babbling brook; white farmhouses with big red barns and silos. This is the picture of rural America. But “rural” is hard to define. Even the U.S. Census Bureau definition differs from the federal Office of Management and Budget, and most states have their own guidelines. For instance, Shelby County Indiana, a county of 40,000 residents, is counted in the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) of Indianapolis, even though 233,059 of the 264,064 acres that make up Shelby County are farmland. Serving disaster survivors presents issues wherever they occur, this article will share some of the factors that create challenges of doing so in rural communities.

Housing values are often much lower in rural areas, especially on small, generational farms. This factor, plus less

dense populations, along with other variables such as the economic status of the county and state, result in frequent “low-attention” or “low visibility” disasters.

What does a low-attention disaster mean to a community? It means no FEMA dollars, probably no Small Business Administration home repair loans, and often no State funding to help the individuals and families recover. Recovery efforts then fall to the communities themselves and especially to the local churches and non-governmental agencies. It also means little to no press coverage, which results in very few, if any, monetary donations being collected to help with recovery.

Nevertheless, in many ways, much of rural America is more prepared for and resilient from disasters than urban populations. People in rural areas tend to know their neigh-



bors. Indeed, neighbors are often family members. Farms usually have generators, food supplies and extra fuel on hand. Of necessity farmers have construction skills, and they are accustomed to helping their neighbors. Yet, while personal information recorded on a Disaster Case Management financial sheet may show that a farm family is self-sufficient, the effects of the disaster that destroy crops, livestock, fences, and barns, may devastate the family's finances as well. Unfortunately, the decline of the family farm has put many in the same position as vulnerable populations in other areas of the country, and they are forced to choose between insurance and necessities such as food and medication. To top it off, they are not only uninsured or under-insured, but also have lost their source of income to the disaster.

Sandwiched in between the acres of farmland are small towns and villages, the families of which are more urban in nature by their skills and trades. They run the local hardware stores and restaurants; they work at the local gas stations, shops and churches; and they own the local funeral home. These families are not much more prepared for disasters than their big city counterparts. In fact, because they are rural other problems arise.

When shelters are opened following disasters, very few show up. Instead, survivors are taken in by their families and neighbors. This seems like a good thing at first glance, but locating families later becomes a major challenge. Lacking specifics – such as “Do you

own or rent? Is your property or personal property insured? How much damage was done?” – makes it next to impossible to get any kind of grant or to justify a declaration from the federal or state government, which again limits resources.

A “disaster after the disaster” often shows up about 30 to 60 days following an event, when new problems begin to emerge because of the lack of resources being readily available. Domestic violence, child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse and even suicide all increase when extended families or neighbors are crammed into a home for more than a few weeks. These issues affect the entire family, triggering the need for mental health and spiritual counseling. The Catholic Charities Disaster Case Management approach to recovery positions us well to address these issues, but resourcing the services needed is a creative and demanding process.

Issues surrounding the housing needs of disaster survivors result from all disasters, but they are more acute in rural communities. There are few, if any, hotels in rural areas for temporary housing. There are no high-rise apartment buildings, and more often than not, no extra rental homes in which to relocate families. This raises the question: should we help landlords make repairs? In thinking about this question, there are several things to consider: the family in that rental had jobs in the community, paid local taxes, had children in the school system, had family nearby who looked after those children while mom worked, had an elderly parent for whom they



care. Relocating this family outside of the community will affect not only the disaster-affected-family and their extended family, but also the local economy. In Indiana this is an issue with nearly every disaster, and we in the disaster response and recovery fields have had lengthy discussions on the subject. We feel it best to help keep communities intact in any way possible, which often means helping to repair one and two family rental homes. We do put some restrictions on the landlord, however. For instance, the landlord must agree that the pre-disaster family is offered first chance to rent the home once repairs are made, and the rent cannot be raised for at least one year. The topic is a sensitive one, and one which the Catholic Charities network should discuss in order to come up with a policy recommendation.

Another housing-related issue acutely felt in rural communities concerns manufactured housing, which are more prevalent than in urban areas and do not withstand disasters as well as conventional homes. While our volunteers have repaired many flood-damaged mobile homes, it often means fully gutting, inside and out, down to the metal frames. Most often replacement mobile homes cannot be found at affordable pricing. And be aware: many that are offered as replacements have themselves been flooded and plagued with mold, which is hidden by cosmetic repairs. Relocating the family to a conventional home is not often a choice since it would stress the already tight family budget beyond its limits.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, with advice and guidance from the CCUSA Disaster Operations Team and the CCUSA Disaster Network, has been working with our partners in disaster response and recovery, and with local and state government to address these issues. Collectively we are organizing the Disaster Operations Community of Practice which can also be a forum to develop consensus on best practices for low-attention disasters.

The resources and challenges are different in every rural community, and there are no easy answers. Our goal at Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Indianapolis is to tackle these challenges from the ground up instead of from the top down, prior to a disaster, by forming COADs (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) in every county. This effort has shown encouraging results in helping communities to be self-sufficient and resilient in recovering from low-attention disasters. A major part of the community plan relies on its churches and other non-governmental organizations for resources. When disaster strikes we are able to ask CCUSA for a \$10,000 emergency grant and commodities, like clean up kits as well as visibility kits which identify our Catholic Charities staff. But monetary needs are high in low-attention disasters, and disasters can happen anywhere, anytime. For our agencies, in conjunction with the churches and dioceses, the time is now to have a fundraising plan in place and a rainy day fund set aside to support efforts in disaster recovery. ■



CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA MOBILE RESPONSE CENTER



The Ford Motor Company on August 22 presented CCUSA with a Mobile Response Center (MRC), a vehicle designed to bring relief and recovery to people affected by disasters across the country. When not deployed in response to a disaster, the MRC vehicle will be used by Catholic Charities member agencies in Washington, D.C., Arlington/Northern Virginia and Baltimore to serve people who are homeless, homebound, and without ready access to Catholic Charities facilities.

During the presentation, Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD, president and CEO of CCUSA, said, “We are grateful to Ford for their support of our mission to provide service to individuals and families in need. The Mobile Response Center vehicle will allow Catholic Charities to reach people who need basic necessities during times of disasters, as well as people in the D.C., Baltimore and Northern Virginia regions who struggle with homelessness every day.”

Pictured above: Sister Donna Markham thanks the Ford Motor company for Catholic Charities USA's new Mobile Response Center vehicle during a press conference held at CCUSA. Photo: Jaclyn Lippelmann/Catholic Standard

Catholic Charities USA's Board of Trustees Welcomes New Members and Appoints New Officers

CCUSA is pleased to announce the appointment of four new officers and welcome seven new members to its Board of Trustees.

CCUSA's Board of Trustees includes independent members, agency representatives elected by its Council of Diocesan Directors, participating observers and non-voting trustees, including an episcopal liaison from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The new officers and their positions are:

- **Chair: Charles Cornelio,**
Retired President & CEO, Retirement Plan Services, Lincoln Financial Group, Philadelphia, Pa.;
- **Vice Chair: Gregory Kepferle,**
CEO, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, San Jose, Calif.;
- **Secretary: Robert McCann,**
Executive Director, Catholic Charities Spokane, Spokane, Wash.; and
- **Treasurer: Michael Connelly,**
Retired President & CEO, Mercy Health, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The new members are:

- The Most Reverend Oscar Cantu, Bishop of the Diocese of Las Cruces, N.M.;
- J. Antonio Fernandez, President & CEO, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas;
- Patrick Fisher, CEO, Creation Investments Capital Management, Chicago, Ill.;
- Tara Kenney, Senior Vice President, Boston Common Asset Management, Winchester, Mass.;
- Joanne Natrass, Executive Director, Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Richmond, Va.;
- Patrick Raglow, Executive Director, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Okla.; and
- Peter Vogel, CEO, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, Reno, Nev.

CCUSA will officially commission the new members of its Board of Trustees during the 2017 Annual Gathering, which will take place September 28-30 in Houston, Texas.

Catholic Social Ministry Gathering

Catholic Charities USA is a major sponsor of the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, to be held February 3-6, 2018, in Washington, DC. The theme of this annual event by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is Building Community: A Call to Serve the Common Good. Many Catholic Charities staff from across the U.S. are expected to attend, and Sister Donna Markham OP, President of CCUSA, will address the assembly.



Chair
Charles Cornelio



Vice Chair
Gregory Kepferle



Secretary
Robert McCann



Treasurer
Michael Connelly

2017 BISHOP JOSEPH M. SULLIVAN AWARD WINNER:

MONSIGNOR MICHAEL M. BOLAND

Bishop Joseph Michael Sullivan (deceased) served as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn and was revered nationwide—in and out of the Catholic community—for his concern for the poor and marginalized. Throughout his ministry he championed the needs of children.

Through the Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan Award CCUSA recognizes a person in the Catholic Charities ministry who has distinguished him/herself for dedicated service and leadership in the field of helping children, youth and families. The winner of the 2017 award is Monsignor Michael M. Boland, president and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Msgr. Boland will receive the award at the 2017 Annual Gathering in Houston, Texas.

Msgr. Boland has been the Director of Human Services for the Archdiocese of Chicago for the past 19 years, overseeing Archdiocesan residential programs for children and adults, nursing homes, hospitals, the Office for Persons with Disabilities, and the day-to-day operations of Catholic Charities. Monsignor has been the president and CEO of Catholic Charities for the archdiocese for the past 20 years.

Celebrating its centennial anniversary this year, Catholic Charities is the largest provider of social services in the Chicago area, and one of the largest Catholic Charities in the nation. Msgr. Boland has grown the agency to assist nearly one million people each year at more than 150 locations in Cook and Lake Counties through a staff of 3,000 people, a 700 member Board of Advisors, the 400 member Junior Board, and 15,000 volunteers.

The creativity and excellence that Monsignor Boland shows each day as the faithful shepherd of Catholic Charities comes from his profound dedication to the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ to care for the poor with respect and dignity. Through his tremendous leadership, he ensures that each person who comes to Catholic Charities feels the unconditional love and mercy that Jesus showed, and he is constantly developing new and creative ways to provide our impoverished brothers and sisters with opportunities for a better life and hope for the future. He is, indeed, a model recipient of the Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan Award.



“The creativity and excellence that Msgr. Boland shows each day as the faithful shepherd of Catholic Charities comes from his profound dedication to the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ to care for the poor with respect and dignity.”



Tamar's Sisters Training

CCUSA hosted the first Tamar's Sisters cohort of licensed behavioral health clinicians and facilitators with Dr. Larry Graham and Susan Hawk of Mercy Health, Lima, Ohio on July 19 and 20. The two day group psychotherapy training focused on a new approach to serving women who have experienced trauma in the form of infant and child loss and/or physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The name Tamar's Sisters originates from the biblical story of Tamar found in 2 Samuel 13: 1-22. ■



By Jennifer Buell Development Director, Catholic Charities, Terre Haute

Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank is a program of Catholic Charities in Terre Haute, Ind. The Foodbank serves as a warehouse and distribution facility providing the equivalent of more than 2.5 million meals each year to more than 32,000 individuals by working with a network of 90-95 nonprofit emergency food assistance agencies in seven west central Indiana counties. Over the past several years, we have partnered with Refreshment Services Pepsi and local high schools to create the Friday Football Food Drive. The schools compete to raise the most food and funds throughout the football season. The top three schools receive money from Pepsi to be used however they wish. A few of the schools have really gotten competitive with this. Our largest year raised the equivalent of more than 53,000 pounds. To see a promotional video of the program, visit the following link: www.archindy.org/cc/terrehaute/commercial2017.html. ■

Pictured above: Representatives from participating teams and sponsors of the Friday Football Food Drive during the 2016 award ceremony



HELP THE HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN HELP:

► PRAY

God of hope and mercy, we lift up to you all victims of Hurricanes Harvey & Irma, and those responding with assistance and aid. Protect all who are in any form of danger; provide practical help to all those in need; strengthen the weary; console the grieving and heal the suffering; and bless those engaged in disaster relief efforts with safety and courage. Help all people of goodwill to respond with compassion and generous hearts. Amen.

► GIVE

To give a donation, text **CCUSADISASTER** to **71777** or go to app.mobilecause.com/public/peer_fundraisers/375237/peer_fundraiser_donations/new. You can also give by calling **1-800-919-9338** or by mail: **PO Box 17066 Baltimore, MD 21297-1066** and put "Hurricane Relief" in the memo line of the check. Funds raised will go towards Catholic Charities agencies' efforts to assist families and individuals with shelter, food, and other immediate and long-term recovery needs.



www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org



By Renee Mazurek, AmeriCorps Member, Strengths-Based Refugee Resettlement Case Manager, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Before joining AmeriCorps, I spent a year-and-a-half graduating from college, backpacking internationally, and then working a seasonal job as a whitewater raft guide in Tennessee. These were good experiences, but I came home to Texas feeling aimless. I decided to take a year to stay in one place and gather myself before embarking on my next adventure. I planned to work in retail, or maybe as some kind of administrative assistant. My life plan at the time only extended a few months into the future.

One afternoon, I walked into Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, where I had volunteered before, to drop off some donations for refugees. An hour later, I walked out with an AmeriCorps application. I had never seriously considered serving with AmeriCorps before, but I guess the stars aligned and divine intervention put me where I needed to be.

I am currently serving as an AmeriCorps State and National member under the title of Strengths-Based Refugee Resettlement Case Manager as part of Catholic Charities USA's Refugee Resettlement AmeriCorps Program. One of my primary duties is intensive case management for newly-arrived refugees. Over the past year, I have served refugees from different parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, but none have had quite the effect on me that my first case did.

My first client was a 21-year-old refugee who came through the Central American Minors (CAM) program, which means his mother applied for him to join her in the U.S. He's been deaf since birth, and since he grew up in a rural part of El Salvador, he never learned any kind of formal sign language. Although he's sharp and aware, he is illiterate, even in Spanish, and he can communicate only basic concepts through home signs to those familiar with him.

Since I did not have the case load of other case managers, I fortunately had time to devote to helping his family navigate deaf resources in Houston. By coming to the United States, this client suddenly had an opportunity he never would have had in his home country—the opportunity to learn a language. I wanted to make sure he did not lose this opportunity simply because he could not access the appropriate resources.

As it turns out, it's rare for an adult deaf person in the U.S. to not know American Sign Language (ASL). And, since there was no knowledge of deaf resources in the collective memory of the refugee resettlement staff, I struck out to find the path myself. As I collected resources and information for the client, I came to know more about the deaf community. Many of those who work in deaf resources professions are also deaf or hard of hearing, so the family and I came into contact with different types of interpreters. For example, since the client's family speaks only Spanish, we learned about a trilingual interpreter. I had never considered that few people speak all three languages—English, Spanish, and ASL—and even fewer have professional interpreting proficiency in all three. I was fascinated.

Finding resources for this client took months of dead ends and loops back to avenues we had already explored. At the same time, back at Catholic Charities, I took on more clients. I discovered the challenges of speaking through an interpreter. Since I speak Spanish, I had no problem communicating with my deaf client's family. As the months passed, I came to appreciate how valuable it is to have a good interpreter. I also got experience interpreting for other case managers who do not speak Spanish, and interpreting became one of the highlights of my service.

I am moving to San Antonio when my AmeriCorps term ends. My family is from San Antonio, and I am ready to settle down and stop wandering. Providentially, San Antonio College has a strong ASL interpreting associates program, with the only trilingual certificate program (ASL/English/Spanish) available in the U.S. I plan to enroll in this program, and since it's a community college, the Segal Education Award I earned through my AmeriCorps year of service should cover most of the cost. In the meantime, I intend to get certified as an English/Spanish medical interpreter to continue to gain interpreting experience. Also, both refugee resettlement offices located in San Antonio happen to be within walking distance of the college, just in case I miss volunteering with refugees.

In addition to giving me the opportunity to serve, my AmeriCorps experience helped me to focus my career and personal aspirations, gave me the time and space to gain experience, and left me with the resources to work towards my goal. I cannot verbalize the many ways my service has changed me, my perceptions, and my priorities, but starting me on the path to becoming a trilingual interpreter is perhaps the most obvious impact the past year has had.

As for my first client, I was finally able to connect him to just the right person at the Texas Workforce Commission, who connected him to a program where he will be fully immersed in an ASL environment. He will be starting "school" around the same time I will. Maybe in a couple of years, we will be able to see each other again and communicate directly, for the first time. ■

2017 UPCOMING TRAINING & EVENTS

October 23-24

Microbusiness and Matched Savings

Atlanta, Ga.

Jane Stenson

jstenson@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

Matt Zieger

mzieger@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

November 6-8

New Diocesan Directors Institute Catholic Charities USA

Alexandria, VA

Kristan Schlichte

kschlichte@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

November 13-17

Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence

Lake Junaluska, NC

Disaster Operations

DisasterOperations@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

April 30 – May 4, 2018

Leadership Institute

Lutz, Florida

Scott Hurd

shurd@catholiccharitiesusa.org

September 12–14

Annual Gathering

Buffalo, NY

Bea Lewis

events@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org



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▶ PRAY

REMEMBER THE HURRICANE VICTIMS

God of hope and mercy, we lift up to you all victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, and those responding with assistance and aid. Protect all who are in any form of danger; provide practical help to all those in need; strengthen the weary; console the grieving and heal the suffering; and bless those engaged in disaster relief efforts with safety and courage. Help all people of goodwill to respond with compassion and generous hearts. Amen.