



# Social Concerns Newsletter

Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas

Spring 2013

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## LET YOUR LEGACY LIVE

Your will is a powerful way to support Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas. To help the agency benefit from your estate or other forms of planned gifts, contact Dan Maher at (409) 924-4427.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Every Friday—Walk-In Green Card Renewals, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m., 2780 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont

Tuesday, June 18—Collaborative Food Distribution with Feed the Children

Friday, June 21—Immigration Services Outreach Session at Our Lady of Light Church, 2207 S. Main, Anahuac from 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Friday, July 19—Immigration Services Outreach Session at St. Mary Church, 702 E. Houston, Cleveland from 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Friday, August 23—Immigration Services Outreach Session at St. Martin de Porres Church, 104 Gossett Road, Corrigan from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 5—Harvest of Hope Fundraiser Honoring Dr. and Mrs. Mark Kubala, MCM Elegante Hotel, 2355 I-10 South, Beaumont from 6:00—9:00 p.m.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY VOLUNTEERING

We constantly need volunteers, especially for our Hospitality Center daily feeding site and Elijah's Place grief support groups. To become a volunteer for any of our services, please call (409) 924-4410.



## Volunteers Give Heart and Soul

During National Volunteer Week in late April, Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas staff paused to pay tribute to the agency's heart and soul — its volunteers.

More than 100 volunteers, representing the various works several hundred volunteers contribute time to during the course of the year, came together in Port Neches for a tribute of gratitude in a Volunteer Appreciation event.

Volunteers were saluted for donating more than 19,400 hours of service during the last complete fiscal year. That equates to close to \$440,000 in donated personnel costs.

Most of those service hours helped feed the hungry at the Hospitality Center in Port Arthur, but volunteers also play a

key role in helping youth involved in the support groups of Elijah's Place, as well as the activities of Parish Social Minis-

try, Asset Building Case Management and Disaster Response. Thank you volunteers for all you do!



Lucie Murphy, who continues to volunteer at the Hospitality Center daily feeding site in Port Arthur at age 92, was honored as the Deacon Vernon Drummond Volunteer of the Year at the recent Volunteer Appreciation event. She is pictured with Hospitality Center Director Christina Green.

## Speaking for the Voiceless

Catholic Charities and several ministry offices of the Diocese of Beaumont worked together to recruit, educate and train a

contingent of travelers to the state capitol in Austin on April 9. Their mission was to urge legislators to be mindful of the

poor and vulnerable when enacting laws during the biennial legislative session lasting from January through May.



On that day, people with passion for causes dear to the heart of Catholic Charities came from all corners of the state to visit their legislators and appeal for just laws. Among the matters prioritized with (see *Speaking*, page 2)

Some of the 88 members of the Diocese of Beaumont who traveled to Austin for the purpose of legislative advocacy pose with Bishop Curtis Guillory on the steps of the Capitol Building.

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(409) 924-4400 or Toll Free (855) 924-4400

[www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org)

# From the President Your Gift of Hope is Reason to Rejoice



**Carol Fernandez**  
President/CEO

At our Breakfast with the Bishop fundraiser in mid-April, those gathered for the event got a rare treat. Two clients who had received assistance during the last year spoke briefly to offer personal thanks for the blessings received. So often, those of you who support our service to the community do so without knowing who you will impact or exactly how their lives might be changed by your generosity. On this occasion, though, 350 supporters in the room came to their feet and erupted into applause, because they heard how the lives of Tosha and José, two residents of Southeast Texas, were improved through the programs administered by Catholic Charities.

The audience did not respond so enthusiastically because the words shared were eloquent speeches. In fact, Tosha made sure to inform the audience that she was very nervous and had never given a public speech before! But the heartfelt words shared made it clear that two people who faced struggles had found solutions to their problems through Catholic Charities...or most accurately, through people like you.

Tosha told how her work with our Asset Building Case Management program is helping her with budget management and a matched savings plan, paving the way for her to become a first-time homeowner. Her pride in her accomplishments thus far and her gratitude to those who have helped her were evident. Similarly, José spoke about the work opportunities opened to him by his successful application for the relief granted him by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigration policy. Helping young people qualify for the benefits associated with DACA has become a staple of our Immigration Services during the past year.

Those at Breakfast with the Bishop knew themselves to be blessed by God. And, when they stood to applaud Tosha and José, they knew our community is also blessed because two young people have been given hope for brighter futures. Providing help to the poor and vulnerable of Southeast Texas creates hope for all those served and for all of us who will share in the joys of a stronger community. In God's providence, you offer hope to people often hidden from your view, people whom you may never meet. But most assuredly, you are a source of hope for them.

I hope you read this entire newsletter, but I wish to call your attention specifically to page 3, where you can get more information on ways you can multiply your gifts in support of our community services. As you consider giving options, know that a common thread among all of them is the gift of hope you give!

**In God's providence, you offer hope to people often hidden from your view, people whom you may never meet. But most assuredly, you are a source of hope for them.**

## This Meal Will Keep on Feeding

The annual Breakfast with the Bishop fundraiser occurred April 13. It honored Karen and Mike Fuljenz (pictured with son Jake). The event raised close to \$37,000 for the programs of Catholic Charities to feed the hungry, provide emergency aid, and conduct other charitable works.



Local news personalities James Brown (front), Dana Melancon (center) and Greg Picazo (rear) joined in the fun as celebrity pancake flippers.



*(Photos taken by Randy Edwards, Beaumont Enterprise.)*

## Speaking

*(continued from page 1)*

legislators were placement of limits on predatory lenders, protection of the rights of immigrants, restriction of the use of the death penalty, and creation of an atmosphere of better cooperation among patients, physicians and family members that respect the rights of all parties in end-of-life health care.

all local collaboration to prepare for the event.

The Parish Social Ministry program of Catholic Charities led

**“We are called to promote the well-being of all, to share our blessings with those most in need ...and to protect the lives and dignity of all, especially the weak, the vulnerable, the voiceless.”**

*From Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*



**Members of the Diocese of Beaumont contingent advocate for the poor and vulnerable with an aide of state representative Allan Ritter (R).**

## Creative Giving Can Multiply Your Gift

As we head into a new budget year, the creative support of our donors can be a huge boost that strengthens our services in the community. Above and beyond standard cash gifts, here are a few other ways you can give back to the community as you support Catholic Charities.

### Corporate Matching Gifts

Many corporations offer matching gift programs to incentivize their employees or retirees to support charitable activities in their communities. Often a dollar-for-dollar match is available for gifts made to a charity or a financial gift to a charity is available to reward an employee or retiree's volunteerism. Major local corporations such as ExxonMobil, ChevronPhillips and Motiva are examples of companies that support us in this way.

Ask your employer if a matching gift program is available to you and start multiplying your gifts. Usually it is as simple as completing a standard company form, and then the company and Catholic Charities do the rest.

### Estates and Planned Giving

Remembering Catholic Charities in your will or working with us to establish a planned giving vehicle that can generate income for the later years of life before converting to a gift to the agency upon death are great ways

to make a gift. These gift plans allow your spirit of giving to endure, even after death.

Speak with legal or financial counsel and Catholic Charities about some gift options that might suit your circumstances.

### Shopping for a Cause

We participate in online and in-store programs that grant us a small portion of proceeds from items you buy, if you designate us as a chosen recipient. This is an easy way to give back because the vendors reward your loyalty to them and to us by benefitting our services at no extra cost to you!

Our website ([www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org)) has links and basic information about these shopping programs.

### In-Kind Gifts

The gifts of time and talent as a volunteer or donations of specific items that match up with particular client needs are great assets. These non-cash gifts allow the agency to minimize staffing costs and reduce our need to purchase items for clients.

### Contact Us

Call Dan Maher, Vice President for Development, at (409) 924-4427 to discuss giving options. Thank you for your support!

## Feed the Children Coming June 18— Please Help

Two truckloads of items from Feed the Children, an Oklahoma City-based charity that distributes food and other essentials to the needy, are coming to Beaumont on Tuesday, June 18. The resources for distribution will be given to pre-qualified families by Catholic Charities, which Feed the Children selected as its partner for this distribution.

Daytime volunteers to unload the trucks will be needed on June 18. We could also benefit from donated funds to help us absorb costs associated with this unbudgeted opportunity. To help, please contact Randi Fertitta, Director of Disaster, Trauma & Loss at (409) 924-4426 or [rfertitta@catholiccharitiesbmt.org](mailto:rfertitta@catholiccharitiesbmt.org).



## Helping Others—The Cardinal Rule



Children and Lamar University athletes pose with shoes donated to clients of Catholic Charities through the generosity of Lamar's student-athletes, who conducted fundraising to purchase shoes for children in need. Lamar's Athletics Department partnered with Catholic Charities on May 4 to distribute the shoes, as well as other Catholic Charities and Lamar paraphernalia to 39 children from 18 families. We extend our thanks to Lamar Athletics for a great gift!

**SUPPORT US  
BY SHOPPING!**



Link to a broad array  
of retailers through  
[www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org)  
(Home Page or  
Fundraisers Tab).  
We receive a portion  
of your shopping proceeds  
at no additional cost to you!

*providing help.  
creating hope.*

#### **Board of Directors**

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## **Elijah's Place in Liberty County**

Elijah's Place, a children's grief support group for children ages 5 to 18 who have been affected by the death of a parent or sibling, is making plans to expand by establishing group support sessions in Liberty County. Currently, all support sessions for the program are held at the Beaumont service facility of Catholic Charities.

The Elijah's Place program hopes to replicate its twice a month support sessions for youth by recruiting and training volunteers capable of serving in Liberty County and identifying a critical mass of families willing to enroll children in the free grief support sessions. A key need for the program's success is a licensed counselor willing to donate time to supervise and support other volunteers who facilitate the children's groups.

To volunteer or to enroll a child, contact Randi Fertitta, Director of Disaster, Trauma & Loss at (409) 924-4426.

## **Seniors Celebrate the Third Age of Life**

Annually, Catholic Charities convenes senior citizens within the Diocese of Beaumont to celebrate their status as members of the Third Age of life. Those in the Third Age have life experiences which equip them with wisdom to be shared with others. This year's event was held on May 14 at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Orange. Close to 300 senior citizens gathered for prayer and fellowship, along with a meal, an educational session and entertainment.

