



Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas Social Concerns Newsletter

VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 2

HOLIDAY 2010

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS
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BEAUMONT, TX 77703

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Dates to Note

12/24 and 12/27/10—Offices are closed in observance of Christmas.

12/31/10 and 01/03/11—Offices are closed in observance of New Year's Day.

01/05/11—Migration Week Prayer Vigil at Central Services, Beaumont at 6:00 p.m.

02/18/11—Immigration Services Outreach Session at Immaculate Conception Church, Liberty, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

03/05/11—Spring Fundamentals of Good Credit series begins.

03/25/11—Immigration Services Outreach Session at St. Joseph Church, Livingston, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

How To Volunteer

To offer assistance as a volunteer, please call (409) 924-4421 or email volunteer@catholiccharitiesbmt.org.

Board of Directors

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Hospitality Center Celebrates its Own Birth at Christmas

On Christmas Day in 1987, Deacon Vernon Drummond opened the doors of the Hospitality Center in Port Arthur, giving birth to one of the best known services of Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas.

Much has changed in the world since 1987, but the consistency of the Center's daily, midday food service has only been interrupted by mandatory hurricane evacuations,

giving the hungry the promise of a hearty meal and the hope of companionship.

Center Director Christina Vara
(see *Still*, page 2)

This Christmas, the Center will mark 23 years of faithful, daily service to the hungry by again serving its daily specials, a heaping helping of food and an ample side dish of good cheer.

The Hospitality Center in Port Arthur operated by Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas will celebrate its 23rd anniversary on Christmas Day 2010.



A Golden Night at the Harvest of Hope

Nearly 400 people attended the eighth annual Harvest of Hope Gala at the MCM Elegante Hotel in Beaumont on Nov. 13. Their participation in Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas' largest annual fundraiser paid tribute to 10 priest honorees and helped generate close to \$155,000 for the agency's seven programs.

years. Three of the honorees, Msgr. Michael Jamail, Vicar General of the Diocese of Beaumont, Fr. Telesforo Blanco, O.S.A., pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Port Arthur, and Fr. George Kalappura, C.M.I., celebrated their Golden Jubilees during 2010.

half of his 66 years as a priest as pastor at Cristo Rey.

Other priests honored were Msgr. Salvador Culotta, Msgr.
(see *Priests*, page 3)

Each of the honorees had attained at least their golden anniversary in the priesthood, having served 50 or more

Fr. Luis Urriza, O.S.A., pastor of Cristo Rey Church in Beaumont is the longest serving priest that was honored. Fr. Urriza has served more than

Fr. Luis Urriza, O.S.A., pastor of Cristo Rey Church in Beaumont and longest serving priest in the Diocese of Beaumont receives an award for his 66 years of service from Board Chair Jim Wade at the Harvest of Hope Gala.



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Leave a legacy of charity.
Remember Catholic Charities
in your will
or through a planned gift.

Contact Dan Maher, Vice President of Development & Communications at (409) 924-4427 to arrange for your spirit of charity to live on and keep giving.

From the President

Waiting for the Son to Shine Brightly



Carol Fernandez
President/CEO

As the days get shorter and darkness lengthens, probably all of us can use a shot of optimism and hope. The early Christians understood that human need when they chose to celebrate the birth of Christ immediately after the shortest day of the year. We receive the heritage of Christmas not only as a feast that celebrates our salvation, but as a symbol that light ultimately conquers darkness.

The message that should shape our world outlook as Christmas approaches is captured in an exchange between two figures in a *New Yorker* cartoon that John Shea used to frame a reflection I recently read. The cartoon depicts two men with their wrists and ankles shackled to the wall of a windowless dungeon. Their hair and beards are lengthy, indicating their imprisonment has been long lasting. Yet, even in the midst of their dire situation, one is leaning over to the other saying, "Now, here's my plan."

We receive the heritage of Christmas not just from our Christian ancestors, but also from ancient Hebrew patriarchs, kings, prophets and priests who waited expectantly for the coming of the Messiah. The flame of faith dating back to figures like Noah, Abraham and Moses was never extinguished, even though many generations passed without the long awaited Messiah appearing.

Those faithful heirs of the promises made by God kept alive a trust that God had a plan. They believed God's plan would release them from the cruel fate of slavery, from exile and from conquest. That faith was rewarded hundreds of years later when a humble child is born in Bethlehem, and their hope is finally realized.

Every generation has much it can point to that is wrong with the world around it. Our times are no different. Yet, since we know Christ was born for us and Christ has died for us, our outlook should not focus on all that is wrong with the world, but should sense all that is right with God's plan for the world.

The First Letter of Peter (3:15) tells us, "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." For us, our hope should be easy to explain. Christ has come to save a fallen and frail humanity. We are heirs of that promise and beneficiaries of God's gift.

We wait in joyful hope for the birth of Christ. My prayer is that the hope and joy of this holiday season will fill your hearts and homes!

Still Going Strong After 23 Years

(continued from page 1)

Green is the only employee of the Center, but is able to keep up with the demanding task of planning and preparing a daily meal for 100—200 guests through the support of approximately 75 volunteer cooks and servers who help regularly, as well as hundreds of others who pitch in occasionally throughout the course of the year.

Volunteers contributed a remarkable 22,654 hours of service to the Center during the fiscal year that ended June 30. Many of those volunteers are

ter with school or church youth groups and go home with eyes opened to the issue of hunger.

Thanks to significant grants received from the United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County and the Beaumont Foundation of America, as well as smaller contributions from Port Arthur's Community Development Block Grant, FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program and individuals and corporations, the Center was able to feed a total of 43,363 meals to 3,595 guests last fiscal year.



Demand for the Hospitality Center's daily midday meal service has been high during the recession. During the last fiscal year, 3,595 guests ate more than 43,000 meals prepared by one paid staff member and hundreds of volunteers.

Wish List of Items Needed by the Hospitality Center

The items listed below are gratefully received as donations to benefit guests served by the Hospitality Center in Port Arthur. To make a donation of a needed item, please call (409) 982-4842. Thank you for your generosity!

Canned Goods

Corn
Green beans
Mustard greens
Spinach
Beans
Yams
Peaches
Fruit cocktail
Pears
Apricots

Produce

Onions
Bell peppers
Potatoes
Cucumbers
Tomatoes
Lettuce

Meat (30 pounds or more)

Chicken
Pork
Sausage
Ground meat

Other Items

Rice
Pasta (spaghetti, noodles)
Sugar
Family size tea bags
Garlic powder
Steak seasoning
Salt
Chicken flavored bouillon
Napkins
Metal forks and spoons
Serving spoons
Pot holders
Plastic 12-ounce drinking cups
Plastic bowls
Plastic serving trays
Heavy duty foil
Large towels and kitchen towels
55-gallon garbage bags/cans
Commercial mops and brooms
Bleach
Liquid dish detergent
Liquid hand soap

Christmas Items (accepted only at the holidays)

Small children's gifts, adult t-shirts, knit gloves, scarves, caps, rain ponchos, hygiene products, socks, sleeping bags and blankets, children's or adult jackets (used or new).

Extra, Extra, Read All About It!

Funding from Friends

The agency has recently received several grants supporting our charitable initiatives. We thank those benefactors for their generous support.

The United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County announced a \$43,000 grant will be awarded in 2011 to help the Hospitality Center feed the hungry and to expand Asset Building Case Management's financial education.

The Texas Bar Foundation has awarded \$11,500 to Immigra-

tion Services to assist in its advocacy for immigrants victimized by certain crimes.

The Hospitality Center also received a \$1,000 grant from Air Products and Chemicals and a \$2,500 award from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation (check presentation pictured below).



Helping with Hardships

The Disaster Response program has begun to emphasize assistance to those facing hardships. The program has helped the City of Port Arthur in its fight against homelessness by administering \$93,885 in funding from a Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing grant. In the first year of the three year grant,

Disaster Response has expended \$35,472 to help 25 families pay security deposits and rental expenses.

Similarly, a recently received \$15,000 grant from the H. H. & Edna Houseman Charitable Trust has permitted nearly \$4,000 in assistance thus far to four needy families in Orange.

Elijah's Place

Pictured at right are children preparing messages for a balloon launch that concluded the children's grief support program's memorial service on Nov. 11.



We Wish to Offer Special Recognition to the Following Harvest of Hope Sponsors

Heavenly Benefactor

Reaud Foundation, Inc.

Heavenly Benefactor Individual

Dr. & Mrs. Mark Kubala

Loretta B. Casey Mineral Trust

Russell Coco

Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word

Grand Benefactors

The Modern Group

Martin & Chris Broussard

Dr. & Mrs. J. Denton Harris, IV

Priests Saluted for 543 Years of Selfless Service

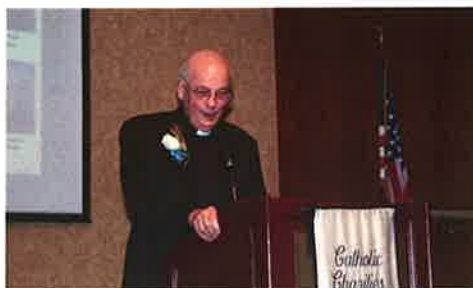
(continued from page 1)

James Dempsey, Msgr. John DiStefano, Fr. Clement Iglesias, Msgr. Walter Montondon and Msgr. James Vanderholt. The clergy honored has served the Church for a combined total of 543 years.

Bishop Curtis Guillory concluded the evening by commending the honorees for their enduring service and fidelity to their vocation. Recalling that Scripture remarks Christ "did all things well", Bishop Guillory applauded the priests for their commitment to fulfilling the demands of their vocation well.

None of the honorees could avoid being skewered by the sharp wit of Msgr. Jamail, who earlier delivered words of

gratitude in the name of all honorees, but liberally sprinkled in self-deprecating humor and a roast of his fellow honorees that delighted the audience.



Msgr. Michael Jamail, Vicar General of the Diocese of Beaumont, expresses thanks on behalf of the 10 priests selected as Harvest of Hope honorees.

Gala Chair Martin Broussard and President/CEO Carol Fernandez opened the program by thanking attendees and the planning committee for their support. Board member Randy Cashiola then addressed the honorees, thanking them and all priests for accepting God's plan.

Local news team Jackie Simien and Kevin Steele hosted as Masters of Ceremonies, while Suzanne Maloney and Janey Phelan spearheaded decorating tasks, including centerpieces of non-perishable food collected for the Hospitality Center by Monsignor Kelly High School.

In its eight years, the Gala has raised over \$1.1 million for the agency.

Did you know a gift to Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas can have tremendous impact on our seven different programs and the more than 10,000 people we serve annually?

\$10 is enough to pay for the training manual for an Elijah's Place volunteer who supports children through a period of grief

\$50 could subsidize two individual counseling sessions to help improve a client's mental health

\$25 can help provide five meals at our Hospitality Center

\$100 makes financial education affordable for five clients

providing help

creating hope

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Find more on our website.....
www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS

Giving A Helping Hand into Housing

The Asset Building Case Management (ABC) program recently played a role in helping 13 families obtain housing, bringing its total number of families gaining access to housing through its services to 39. The ABC program began in 2008. ABC helps families achieve home ownership goals as part of its continuum of long-term financial education and case management services.

ABC's basic services for clients often begins with participation in the Fundamentals of Good Credit series, a popular introduction to the establishment of sound credit to create the potential for home ownership. Annually, close to 150 clients complete the Fundamentals of Good Credit series and then develop a savings plan for key financial goals like home ownership or advanced education.

One of the 13 families moving into a home was among the participants in the first-ever Fundamentals of Good Credit classes offered in late 2008. Eight other families recently helped have been approved for purchase of a Habitat for Humanity home, while four more have qualified for a Beaumont Housing Authority home.

The case management process conducted by ABC gives families continued financial lessons

through monthly group meetings and also offers one-on-one case management services tailored to personal circumstances. ABC Director Stephanie Lundgreen offers long-term case management up to several years to give lower income families time to achieve home ownership goals.

To learn more about ABC or its Fundamentals of Good Credit classes, call (409) 924-4425.

Save the Dates

Third Age Day Celebration for Senior Citizens
Third Aged Harvesting Hope and Faith
Tuesday, April 12, 2011 @ 9:00 a.m., St. Louis Church, Winnie
Call (409) 924-4415 to get a ticket or get more details.

20th Annual Breakfast with the Bishop
A Tribute to Mary and to Motherhood
Saturday, May 7, 2011 @ 9:00 a.m., Location TBD
Call (409) 924-4421 to get a ticket or get more details.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Thanks For Your Support!