



Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas Social Concerns Newsletter

VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 3

SUMMER 2011

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS
2780 EASTEX FREEWAY
BEAUMONT, TX 77703

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Dates to Note

06/24—Immigration Services Outreach at Our Lady of Light Church, Anahuac, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

07/22—Immigration Services Outreach at St. Mary Church, Cleveland, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

08/06—First Session of Fundamentals of Good Credit Classes, Port Arthur Public Library, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

08/20—Second Session of Fundamentals of Good Credit Classes, Port Arthur Public Library, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

08/26—Immigration Services Outreach at St. Martin de Porres Church, Corrigan, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

09/10—Third Session of Fundamentals of Good Credit Classes, Port Arthur Public Library, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

09/23—Immigration Services Outreach at Immaculate Conception Church, Liberty, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

11/10—Harvest of Hope Gala, MCM Elegante Hotel, Beaumont, 6:00 p.m.

How To Volunteer

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

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Speaking Out in Austin

Catholic Charities and the Offices of Criminal Justice and Family Life of the Diocese of Beaumont combined forces to send a contingency to the State Capitol in Austin in April to participate in Catholic Faith in Action Advocacy Day.

The event occurs every two years when the state legislature is in session. It provides an occasion for those committed to important social principles of the Church to speak on behalf of the marginalized.

A chartered bus left Beaumont in the pre-dawn hours of Apr. 6, carrying the group traveling to Austin, while others engaged in the project remained home, praying for the success of the activity or contacting legislators to add to the chorus of advocacy.

The Texas Catholic Confer-

ence, which promulgates the Texas bishops' voice on a host of issues significant to the Church, coordinated delegations of visitors from around the state. The Beaumont area group joined more than 500 people who went to Austin for Catholic Faith in Action Advocacy Day.

Participants joined in a rally on the Capitol steps with several

bishops from around the state, then assembled in House or Senate galleries before visiting legislative offices.

Members of the local delegation visited nine legislators from the region and asked for a budget that would preserve social services and laws that would champion life and human rights issues.



Delegates from the Diocese of Beaumont and Catholic Charities meet with Nikki Gonzales (right), Chief of Staff for Rep. Mike Hamilton (R), in Austin during Catholic Faith in Action Advocacy Day on April 6.

Walk-In Green Card Renewals

Catholic Charities' Immigration Services program has recently expanded its wide array of legal services to include Friday walk-in service for those needing Green Card renewal or replacement.

Immigration Services has committed staff to be available every Friday except pre-scheduled holidays from 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. to process Permanent Resident Card (commonly called Green Card) renewal or replace-

ment applications with same day service at the 2780 Eastex Freeway Central Services Facility in Beaumont.

Those requiring this service need a check or money order for \$150 for the agency service fee and a money order for \$450 for the Department of Homeland Security filing fee. Green Card renewals can also be provided for 14 year olds.

Call (409) 924-4410 for more information.

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From the President

Continuing the Plan of a Holy Man



Carol Fernandez
President/CEO

On May 1, the whole world received a gift when Pope John Paul II was beatified by the Church (the first public step towards sainthood), granting him recognition as Blessed John Paul II. As spiritual leader of the Church, he made the papacy much more visible, personally preaching the Gospel in the 129 countries he visited as pope. Blessed John Paul II personally transformed the image of a pope from that of church figure to world leader by his commitment to action.

The beatification ceremonies for Blessed John Paul II took place on the 20th anniversary of publication of a document he wrote called *Centesimus Annus (One Hundred Years)*. This document paid tribute to the 100th anniversary of a social justice document written by Pope Leo XIII and reaffirmed some of the Church's key social action principles. In keeping with his spirit as a man of action, Blessed John Paul II wrote, "As far as the Church is concerned, the social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action."

Catholic Charities is motivated to speak and act on behalf of the poor and vulnerable because justice should not be merely an ideal for those who believe in God, but a reality we try to achieve. Justice fully blooms when those abundantly blessed by God share resources with those who lack them and work to create social structures that promote fairness and equal opportunity. Catholic Charities is able to advance the work of justice when it has sufficient resources to make its services accessible and affordable for the poor. Of our seven programs, only two charge a fee for service, and both of those employ a sliding fee scale to make their services as affordable as possible.

I appeal to all who read this newsletter to express your commitment to social action and justice by generously helping us preserve that model of client service. By doing so, we live out the Gospel and underscore the spirit of Blessed John Paul II, who further wrote in *Centesimus Annus*, "Justice will never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help in order to survive, not an annoyance or a burden, but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment."

"As far as the Church is concerned, the social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action."

-Blessed John Paul II

The Gospel in Action—Parish Social Ministry Programs

Catholic Charities' Parish Social Ministry program exists to support local church congregations and civic groups in identifying ways they can live out the call to Gospel service in their communities.

To better achieve that purpose, in the coming weeks and months, parishes will be asked about their social ministry and social justice activities, in order to develop a comprehensive picture of the wonderful parish social ministry activities across the Diocese of Beaumont.

The Parish Social Ministry program is committed to nurturing, fostering, and supporting Catholic parish leaders who may already be engaged in direct service, advocacy, community organizing and justice education activities. It is our desire to help parishes build on their existing foundations or learn from other parish social ministry models so their path to vibrant social ministry activities is easier.

The information that we receive from our review of parish programs will also

help us develop comprehensive workshops based on Catholic Social Teaching that will benefit a broad cross-section of diocesan members in Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk and Tyler Counties.

Anyone who would like more information about our program or upcoming educational opportunities should email Parish Social Ministry Coordinator Coquese Williams (cwilliams@catholiccharitiesbmt.org) or call her at (409) 924-4415.

What can \$20 do for Catholic Charities?

Pay for two training manuals for Elijah's Place volunteers helping a child through a period of grief

Provide four meals for guests at the Hospitality Center

*providing help.
creating hope.*

Sponsor financial education for an Asset Building Case Management client

Giving a little achieves a lot



Thank You Motiva!

Employees from Motiva Enterprises in Port Arthur pose after donating materials and time to install new ceiling tiles in the kitchen of the Hospitality Center.

Sensational Seniors



Attendees at the annual Third Age Day celebration at St. Louis Church in Winnie exchange a Sign of Peace during Mass. More than 200 senior citizens from around the Diocese of Beaumont participated in the 19th annual event on April 12. The Third Age Day brings together residents of the diocese over the age of 50 to celebrate the gifts of wisdom and devotion that senior citizens contribute to the Church and their communities. Catholic Charities' Parish Social Ministry program sponsors the diocesan-wide event. The celebration features prayer, lunch, fellowship and fun.

Heaping Helping for Hospitality Center

The Hospitality Center in Port Arthur has been helped by the generous support of a \$32,000 grant from the Beaumont Foundation of America and a \$4,700 grant from the Foundation for Southeast Texas.

The Beaumont Foundation of America is supporting the

Center's food service and the Foundation for Southeast Texas is funding replacement of two failing food warmers and an aging 10-burner range and two-door oven.

These grants will help maintain a high quality daily service that provides more than 40,000 free meals annually.

Elijah's Place KIDS Growing

The newest dimension of the Elijah's Place's program for grieving children is under way and poised to grow.

Elijah's Place KIDS (Kids in Divorce Support) meets two evenings a month, with five families currently participating in the support sessions designed to help children ages 5-

18 cope with changing family dynamics due to separation or divorce. Several other families have expressed interest in joining the program.

Sessions follow the successful peer and volunteer support model used by Elijah's Place since 2003. For more information, call (409) 924-4426.

Financial Hardship Relief in Orange County

The Disaster Response program recently completed administration of a \$15,000 grant delivering financial support to local residents overcoming personal tragedies.

The grant from the H. H. and Edna Houseman Trust administered by the Capital One Trust Group was designated for use in Orange County. The program's future ability to address hardship cases in Orange County and elsewhere will depend on the availability

of additional funds contributed for that purpose.

The Houseman Trust funding permitted 12 families from Vidor, Orange and Bridge City to receive assistance in recovering from circumstances such as house fires, costly medical conditions, domestic violence and abandonment.

Food, furnishings, clothing, rental assistance and medicines were able to be provided thanks to the grant.

Hurricane Season Volunteers Needed!
 Contact our Disaster Response Staff to Volunteer for Disaster Support Training
 Call (409) 924-4426

Save the Date!
Harvest of Hope Gala
 Honoring Kevin and Jill Roy
 Thursday, November 10, 2011 @ 6:00 p.m.
 MCM Elegante Hotel, Beaumont
 Call (409) 924-4421 or visit
www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org for more details



Students from the religious education program at St. Louis Church in Winnie show their support for the Elijah's Place program for grieving children by presenting a donation for that purpose to President/CEO Carol Fernandez (center).

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES
OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS

20th Breakfast with Bishop Honors Mothers

The 20th Annual Breakfast with the Bishop gathered guests from across the region for a delicious meal and a delightful tribute to motherhood. When the event was over, close to \$29,000 had been raised for the benefit of Catholic Charities' programs.

This year's Breakfast occurred on May 7 at St. Anne Church in Beaumont. All mothers were special guests of honor and the event specially honored Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Board member Kara Hawthorn chaired the committee that planned the event and solicited individual and corporate sponsorships to supplement the revenue generated from the sale of almost 200 tickets.

All mothers in attendance received a rosary, and all in attendance heard a reflection about Mary from Bishop Curtis

Guillory and comments about Catholic Charities' support of motherhood from Lori Wenner.

Our Mother of Mercy Church gospel choir provided musical entertainment and guests enjoyed a buffet breakfast.



The Breakfast with the Bishop culminated with Karen Sourdellia's crowning of a statue of Mary. Master of Ceremonies and Catholic Charities Board member Dana Melancon watches.

Special Supporters of Breakfast with the Bishop

Catholic Charities wishes to offer special thanks to the following Breakfast with the Bishop benefactors:

Mary's Angels

John and Linda Duplissey
Gay D. and William F. Scott Family
Foundation

Heavenly Helpers

ADR Solutions
Children of Robert and Laura Blackwell
Joe Broussard, II
Paul N. Hay, A.I.A., NCARB
Regina Rogers
J. S. Edwards & Sherlock Insurance
Agency

Where there's a will, there's a way.

A legacy gift to Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas through bequest or planned giving furthers the agency's mission and strengthens its future financial condition. Contact Dan Maher, Vice President of Development & Communications at (409) 924-4427 today to perpetuate your spirit of charity.