



Annual Dinner
June 09, 2009

Good Evening,

Tonight we celebrate the gift and presence that Catholic Charities is to the Church at Albany. Each year we gather to honor Board, Staff and volunteers within the system of Catholic Charities. It is a celebration of person gifts, as well as the acknowledgement of families, children and individuals who have been served and touched by over 1,100 staff in 166 locations throughout the 14 counties of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

As you read your program booklet please know that you are learning and celebrating the heart of our service, our staff and our volunteers.

This past year we have witnessed a great deal of change in our world, our country and in our community:

1. The peaceful transition of our Presidential leadership on a national basis.
2. The change in our economic, financial and business institutions, the effects that we are just seeing in our lives.
3. The "Called to Be Church" initiative which called us to re-shape, re-image and re-vision the mission and ministry of the Church in the Diocese of Albany.
4. The stream-lining and consolidation of services within Catholic Charities, a process that everyone in this room has been aware of and in many ways actively involved.

Dr. Patricia Kelly, a consultant, that the Diocese worked with in Pastoral Planning addressed the issue of change and highlighted what I believe is very appropriate for Catholic Charities..... “Perhaps the best way to understand change –real change – is to recognize change as a conversion – *to see and relate to an experience or person in a new way.*” “Change typically evokes anxiety or resistance and it is not uncommon for the individuals and groups to cling to the status quo even when it is objectively clear that it will not yield a positive outcome. We cling, that is, until there is an effective component – until we begin to vision a future consistent with our deepest desires, values and hopes.”

The fiscal year 2008-2009 has been a year of significant change for Catholic Charities, and being true to our annual process of evaluating services, programs and strategic plans; the Board of Trustees, Agency Board of Directors and staff answered the challenge and worked together to change structure, never losing sight of the mission and the persons that we serve.

The Board of Trustees, began the process in October with a major convening of all Boards and leadership staff, the Trustees addressed the economic, financial, corporate and quality issues that we were facing within the system of Catholic Charities.

Each agency formed a task force and prepared their local response to the changing dynamics within their funding sources, their personnel and their unique mission within their community. Frequent discussions were held with local leadership and plans were finalized for the restructuring that was necessary. Since April your agency leadership have provided us with detailed strategy and financial streamlining that ready Catholic Charities as a system to move ahead.

The changes in the past year are some of the most significant changes that we have witnessed in the history of Catholic Charities. Change is an inevitable part of the

growth and development: to refuse to change in ways that are constructive only leads to stagnation and death.

Within all this change and uncertainty we must be people of hope. Hope is a value that is tested in tough times. It is so essential that we see the value in one another.

Catholic Charities has always been fortunate to have people of faith, hope and great love on our staff and on our Boards. This evening I would like to mention 4 persons who have embodied the mission, vision and philosophy of Catholic Charities on a daily basis.

First is John Steele who after 41 years ministering in Catholic Charities has transitioned to retirement, in other words, time with family, friends, outdoors and especially his golf clubs. John has been a leader in Catholic Charities not just in Schenectady, but throughout the system. He has been a friend, a mentor and collaborator and he is missed by all his associates at Catholic Charities.

Sr. Anne Tranelli, who could not be with us this evening, has been a true educator, as a teacher, a principal and as one who teaches by her daily life. As Director of Hispanic Outreach Services for 20 years Anne taught us about the rich Hispanic heritage and the importance of family and community in our ministry.

William McGoldrick. Bill has been a member of the Board of Trustees for 9 years. He has a passion for the poor and those struggling in life. Bill and his wife Betsi have been so faithful in caring for families at Christmas time and always set aside a special contribution for the kids at Camp Scully. Bill has been invaluable as chair of the Catholic Charities Fundraising and Development Committee and has challenged me to be a story-teller for we Catholic Charities have a great story to tell and my favorite Bill expression is "No one ever gives away their last million dollars." Bill has agreed to stay on the Development Committee of the Board of Trustee.

Our second Board member who has served selflessly for nine years is Mary Jane Bendon Couch. Mary Jane, who came to us after serving as President of the Catholic Charities Disability Board, brought insight as an agency Board member, brought legal expertise and a great deal of Human Resource knowledge. In addition to her expertise, Mary Jane brought a deep concern for family, in fact hers expanded during her tenure as a Trustee. Mary Jane could not be with us this evening as she is attending her son's baseball game. Mary Jane has agreed to continue to serve on the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Trustees.

As I conclude my remarks this evening there are two groups of people I wish to make special mention of especially this year. The Executive Directors and Administrators who are in the trenches daily and who have never questioned the direction or purpose of our planning. The loyalty, esteem, affirmation and appreciation I have for these men and women are what allows me to make decisions and set direction for the future.

To the Board of Trustees who have stepped up and assumed a great deal of responsibility as agency liaisons, speaking at the system-wide convening, reviewing task force reports, reading and reacting to financial plans and environment assessments in addition to all the regular Trustee responsibility. To President John Murray who by example has urges the Trustees to give of their time to always remember the mission and the purpose of serving.

This year has been a year of challenges and a year of hope. Hope brings forth the assurance that through our creativity and talents we can find solutions. I am so grateful to be on a journey with you all and can think of no one else who inspires me to continue in a spirit of hope and charity.