

CC Works

Volume 10 Number 4

A Catholic Charities Quarterly Committed To Active Witness

Sister Maureen's Message



Thanksgiving, our national feast, is a wonderful time to celebrate family and country and to thank God for the blessings and challenges we have received during the past year.

We asked our staff and clients throughout Catholic Charities what they were thankful for, and we are pleased to share some expressions of their gratitude below.

"I am thankful to work in such a supportive community, with such caring people." — Tom Mayer, CC of Schoharie County

"My future looks very bright, and I am very thankful for the help of Catholic Charities." — Client, CoNSERNS-U of CC of Rensselaer County

"I am thankful for an opportunity to work in a program and place that fills me with awe at the remarkable capacity of the human spirit." — Kathie Greenblatt, CC of Delaware & Otsego Counties

"I am thankful for working for Catholic Charities. I lost almost everything, but Catholic Charities helped me get an apartment with furniture. An employee can't ask for more." — Henry Corye, Building Services

"I am thankful for the gifts of time and talent brought to us by our volunteers. They are unique and essential to our program." — Donna M. Kankiewicz, Dispute Resolution Center of Chenango, Delaware & Otsego Counties

If we at Catholic Charities do not express our "thanks" who else can?

Sister Maureen Joyce, RSM
Chief Executive Officer,
Catholic Charities, the Diocese of Albany

Caregivers deserve encouragement, support

When we ponder the word "caregiver," thoughts of a person who comforts, protects and ministers come to mind. In a very real sense, these mostly unsung heroes and heroines make significant sacrifices every day to give someone else a better life.

They are deserving of our encouragement and support. Since 1987, Catholic Charities of the Albany Diocese has tried to offer that encouragement and support by sponsoring a unique service that has one simple mission — to improve the quality of life for those who care for friends and relatives in need, and to give them a break.

Catholic Charities Caregivers Support Services is divided into two programs. The ElderCare Services is designed to assist those who care for older spouses, parents and friends. The program offers information and assistance, social work services, support groups, social and recreational activities, and respite, which is the caregivers' most requested service.

The same spectrum of services is offered to those who are in the KinshipCare Program, which focuses on supporting those who are raising relative's children.

Renée Benson, executive director of the agency, points out that the practical application of helping caregivers lies in listening and helping them navigate the system. The elderly need assistance in dealing with Medicare, and legal and financial matters, while those who are caring for children need to become acquainted with school services, and what is available for the child's social, physical and mental health issues.

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Jo Coletti, left, a Caregiver for Bill, a Caregivee.

Bob Flynn

Bob Flynn and the board of trustees of Catholic Charities have been associated for 11 years, which included two years as president. No longer eligible for membership, he is a member of its human resources committee.

Bob's service and dedication are legendary. He began his association with Catholic Charities in Saratoga, Warren and Washington counties. He accepted a nomination to the board because he wanted to give something back in thanksgiving for his many blessings.

He has been deeply touched by the willingness of people to help, their positive attitude and their generosity of spirit when others are in need. He has been impressed by the leadership of the Diocese and of Catholic Charities in responding to monumental catastrophes, such as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in Southeast Asia.

One of his greatest frustrations was the many needs that continually came to Catholic Charities and the necessity to prioritize the financial response because of limited funds. As a result, some legitimate needs could not be met. Prioritizing the distribution of funds was a constant challenge. Catholic Charities is frequently on the front lines when there is a serious need and often ahead of the government in responding to those needs. Bob finds the disparity between the well-off and those who live in poor conditions troubling and criminal.

His proudest moment was when he was selected as president of the board of trustees. To have such a diverse and accomplished group of people place that confidence in him was a great honor and a sacred trust.

As his service as a member of the board of trustees comes to an end, he is grateful for the opportunities that have been given to him to serve in such an important and effective way. **By Sister Nola Brunner**

Gift opportunities for the holidays

Most of us have fond memories of our past Thanksgiving, Christmas, but that is not the reality for children and families who are in crisis situations at this time of year. Most often, these people are the working poor, who live paycheck-to-paycheck with nothing to spare. It is difficult for them to meet everyday needs; and with the increasing cost of living, they are virtually in a crisis situation when the holidays occur. Often, these people have no one to turn to for assistance except Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany.

Please consider offering your assistance to one or more of the Catholic Charities agencies during this holiday season. Contact 453-6650 for more details, or use the information below to contact a specific agency. **By Marge Mineau**

Catholic Charities of Schoharie County — provides turkey and all the trimmings to families of four or more for Thanksgiving (families of three or less are referred to a local community dinner). Turkeys, groceries of all kinds, or grocery store gift cards are needed. At Christmas, volunteers could help by "adopting" a family. Gender, age, and sizes are provided. *Contact: Tom Mayer, 234-3581*

Diocesan Housing and Property Management Services — desires basic items for SRO and Mercy House residents, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, razors, towels, twin-bed linens, gift cards and other holiday gifts. *Contact: Jean Hobbs 434-3531*. Very low-income seniors in DePaul Housing have need of calling cards, stamps, note cards and grocery store gift cards. *Contact: Kathleen Ide, 459-0183*

Catholic Charities of Columbia and Greene Counties — would welcome non-perishable food items, gas cards, phone cards, and gift cards to Price Chopper and Wal-Mart. *Contact: Agnes Donlon, 828-8660*

Catholic Charities of Delaware and Otsego Counties — wishes to provide clients in a variety of programs with men's/women's gloves and socks, watches, new single-bed linens, towels, dish and laundry detergent, toilet paper, paper towels, and cleaning products for floors, toilets and windows, flashlights and batteries, small personal calendars, phone cards, coffee and tea, and hard candies. Also, OPT bus passes for public transportation in Oneonta, Wal-Mart and grocery store gift cards, postage stamps, business envelopes and pens, phone cards, gas cards to Stewart's and Hess stations, children's new paperback books, crayons, magic markers, wooden puzzles, board games, and decks of cards. *Contact: Kathie Greenblatt, 607-432-0061*

Catholic Charities AIDS Services — personal care items are needed to be provided to individuals with HIV/AIDS and their families, including diapers, feminine hygiene products, toothpaste/toothbrushes, shampoo/conditioner, soap, lotion, mouthwash (non-alcoholic only), household cleaning items, laundry detergent. Also, the Christmas Adoption Program needs volunteers to adopt a family and provide gifts for each family member. *Contact: Keith Brown, 449-3581, Ext. 106*

Community Maternity Services — is looking for donors/volunteers to adopt a CMS client at Christmastime. Gift ideas for children are: toys, clothing, games and books; for teens: phone cards, movie passes and gift certificates to nail salons, record stores, grocery stores or department stores; for parents: household or personal items, grocery store gift cards, and department store gift cards. *Contact: Matt Newman, Sally Tedesco or Maura Callahan, 482-8836*

Catholic Charities of Rensselaer County — accepts donations of any kind year-round. During the holiday season, we have an increase in clients. We provide Christmas for families by giving them holiday dinners and toys. We gratefully accept the following donations: toys for all ages, food and hygiene products. Volunteers are welcome to help in the office, pick up gifts or work at the Christmas store. *Contact: Diane Reed, 463-8571*

Catholic Charities of Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties — would be able to help clients with donations for gift cards to various stores such as Target, Wal-Mart, Price Chopper and Stewarts. *Contact: Kathy Klim, 587-5000*

ECHO Award: one way of saying “thank you”

It's always nice to say, “Thank you,” and that's exactly what the Catholic Charities Housing Office (CCHO) did recently in honoring two area families who are dedicated friends and partners.

On a daily basis, they work directly with the CCHO in providing services for homeless families and individuals in Albany and Rensselaer counties. The “thank you” was to be formally conveyed at the CCHO's Fifth Annual Hope for the Homeless event, November 5, in conjunction with Homeless Awareness Month.

Jill McLellan Phelps, coordinator of the event, explained that the event recognized several generations of the Holodak and Smith families under the leadership of Susan Holodak of Menands and Elena Smith of Loudonville. They were honored with the agency's award for volunteerism: the ECHO Award (Encouraging Community and Hope for Others).

Recognized with the Partners in Hope Award were Raymond Lammon and R. Scott Lammon of Lammon Architects, a father-and-son firm located in Troy.

Presenting both awards was Bishop Howard J. Hubbard.

Deborah Damm O'Brien, executive director of CCHO, said, “The Holodak and Smith families give countless hours of service to the CCHO, demonstrating their fire, dedication and commitment to serving the homeless. Website design, home makeovers and kids' clothing shop are only a few examples of their efforts. The entire Lammons architectural firm has been a true partner to the CCHO and the Diocesan Housing & Property Management organization.

“They go that extra mile to provide technical consultation, large-scale project design, and interpretation of complicated codes and regulations that must be followed by the various Housing Office programs each and every day. Their commitment and dedication to responding to the needs of our organization are unparalleled.

“The recipients of these awards truly reflect the appropriate theme of this year's fundraising event: ‘Families helping families.’”

Along with providing permanent housing and what is generally perceived as temporary housing, CCHO also offers many of these families and individuals with the resources designed to help them gain the skills necessary to turn their lives around, so that eventually they can transition into their own residences. These services include but are not limited to needs assessment, counseling, referrals, crises intervention, employment opportunities and meal assistance.

Thomas Coates, director of operations at CCHO, explained that, despite all their efforts, the CCHO still has difficulty in keeping up with the increasing numbers of homeless families and individuals who turn to them for help. Their facilities, as well as those operated by other non-profits and public agencies are usually filled to capacity, leaving many poor families and individuals to fend for themselves, he said.

That happens because “even working families who earn above the minimum wage still can't afford housing,” Mr. Coates said. He noted that, four years ago, CCHO might have received an average of 20 to 25 applicants for housing each month. Today, that figure has doubled to 45 to 50 a month.

Ms. McLellan Phelps, who serves as director of affordable housing for the DePaul Housing Management Corporation, said the Hope for the Homeless event, which is the only fundraiser held each year to cover the costs of administering the CCHO, provided those in attendance with displays and presentations that featured all the various services, programs and program sites operated by the CCHO.

Annually, that agency serves over 1,000 men, women and children through its various programs, including emergency shelters, Single Room Occupancy programs, and the Families Apartment Program. **By Ken Goldfarb**

Celebrate the Harvest

Catholic Charities AIDS Services held its fifth Annual Celebrate the Harvest event in October. The event, relocated from Saratoga to Albany, was held at the Albany Country Club and sponsored by Dorfman & Robbie, Fuller and O'Brien, Joseph Carr Fine Wine, Lane Press of Albany, MJ Technical Solutions and Town Total Health.

The setting of the country club overlooking the Hilltowns of Albany was spectacular with the changing autumn leaves. The warm night allowed the nearly 160 guests to wander onto the terrace for eating and networking. Guests were serenaded to the jazz music of Grand Central Station and acoustic guitarist Richard Donnelly. The food was plentiful and showcased the country club's chefs. Bidding was active on the many baskets and gift items donated by area businesses, and guests waited in anticipation to see if they were the lucky winners.

All funds raised from this event benefit the service delivery of Catholic Charities AIDS Services. One highlight of the event was a poster display of six clients who are served by the agency. Each client was interviewed and chose to tell their story of living with HIV/AIDS to illustrate the diversity of the epidemic and who it affects. Having clients' voices and images in the room was a vivid reminder of why the agency exists: to serve those in need.

Catholic Charities AIDS Services anticipates a strong showing for their sixth annual Celebrate the Harvest event, to be held October 9, 2008.

**By Angela Keller,
Executive Director
Catholic Charities AIDS Services**

Reports on the mission

Catholic Charities AIDS Services and Community Maternity Services staff, board and friends participated in the AIDS Walk 2007 on September 30. They were wearing lapel buttons to indicate support of those they serve. It was a record-breaking year in terms of dollars raised: approximately \$2,500. Half of the proceeds will be directed towards emergency client assistance. The remainder is put towards a larger pot of dollars; all agencies serving those with HIV/AIDS can then bid for grants. The walk serves the whole community in meeting the needs of those with HIV/AIDS.



Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany is delighted to announce our new director of development, Betsy O'Haire. She has served on our Board of Trustees for over

nine years and is very familiar with and truly committed to our mission.

Community Maternity Services enjoyed a haunted house fundraiser at the Pruyn House in Newtonville on October 28. Janet Hans and family (of Dead Dog Productions fame) transformed the Verdoy Schoolhouse with "spooktacular" results, and the Ladies of Charity helped provide food, fun and games for the whole family. Proceeds benefited CMS and the many families the agency serves.

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month; **Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties** had a lot of great community events planned during the month:

- Every Friday in October, in conjunction with Senator Hugh T. Farley's office, we hosted an information table at Wal-Mart on Route 30 in Amsterdam.
- On October 1, we kicked off our October events with a Proclamation

Ceremony at The Supervisor's Chambers at The Montgomery County Office Building. The proclamations were read by Assembly member George Amedore and Jennifer Conking-Donovan of Senator Hugh T. Farley's office.

- On October 25, we offered an "In Her Shoes Training," an experiential program that allowed participants to follow a battered woman's journey over a number of years during a compressed period of time. It was held at the Canajoharie Youth Center Inc.
- On October 31, we had our annual Domestic Violence Collaboration Award breakfast to honor a member of our community who had gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure client safety and offender accountability. It was held at the Carondelet Pavilion auditorium in Amsterdam.

"Un momento latino...." was held November 6 at the Thelma P. Lally School of Education at The College of Saint Rose in Albany. The event celebrated the fourth anniversary of a unique partnership between **Hispanic Outreach Services** and Saint Rose. It is a program designed to develop the academic and leadership skills of Hispanic/Latino Youth in the Capital Region. Award honorees this year were Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez, New York State Secretary of State, and Dr. Maria De La Camara, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Humanities at Benedictine University.

Hispanic Outreach Services also welcomed a new executive director, Elaine Escobales. Sister Anne Tranelli, CSJ, will remain with the agency as its director of Institutional Advancement.



Catholic Charities of Rensselaer County is proud to welcome its new executive director, L. Lloyd Stewart, who brings a vast amount of experience to his position. Catholic

Charities of Rensselaer County is a newly reconfigured agency of Rensselaer County, comprising Sunnyside Center in Troy, CoNSERNS-U in Rensselaer and its rural outreach office in Averill Park, known as REACH.

On September 28, **Diocesan Housing and Property Management (DHPM)** staff hosted an Informational Fair at the Diocesan Pastoral Center to highlight the housing programs and services operated by the three major housing and property management organizations within the Diocese of Albany: Catholic Charities Housing Office (www.cchoalbany.org), DePaul Housing Management (www.depaulhousing.com), and McCloskey Community Service Corporation.

These organizations manage and operate senior housing communities ranging from affordable HUD-subsidized to full-service retirement living and housing for homeless men, women and children sponsored by the Diocese. The organizations own/manage more than 60 properties used by Catholic Charities agencies throughout the 14 counties of the Diocese.

Booths manned by DHPM staff at the fair included specific information about programs for senior citizens, families and adults; overviews of services offered to residents in connection with housing programs, including case management focusing on homelessness prevention; and one unique program provided by Catholic Charities Housing Office staff to assist victims of human trafficking with case management, clothing, food and shelter.

Continued on back page.

Back-to-School Jamboree

The Saturday Youth Enrichment Program (YEP) hosted its annual "Back-to-School Jamboree" at the Neighborhood Community Center in Albany in August, when parents and guardians were able to enroll their children for the 2007-2008 school year.

The 72 children who were enrolled received a free backpack, filled with school supplies. This helped the parents, most of whom could not afford to purchase these supplies.

YEP provides learning, fun, sports and art activities for children, 6-14, every Saturday in the West Hill neighborhood. The Program Coordinator, Sheneka Ford, is enthusiastic and creative with programming. YEP also provides a breakfast snack and lunch. Ms. Ford has several adult volunteers who help with the program.

At the "Back-to-School Jamboree," YEP collaborated with Fidelis Health Care, the Albany Network of Hispanic Service Providers, the Dual Language program of Albany City Schools, Albany County DSS (HEAP, Food Stamps), and the Crime Victims and Sexual Assault Center.

Parents were able to obtain information to apply for Child and Family Health Care Plus services. Freckles the Clown provided face painting to the children, and a DJ played music, which added a festive air to the event. Stewart's donated free ice cream cones.

Additional Catholic Charities Albany Community-based Services Program Coordinators helped to make this a successful event: Selina Dobbs from the Juvenile Mentoring Program not only helped but also brought her two young daughters to assist. Also on hand were Ray Gifford from the Arbor Day Program, Emily Gilbert from St. Patrick's Home based Child Care, other child care staff from our New Day Art program and volunteers from YEP.

By Roslyn Jefferson, LSCW-R
Director, Albany Community-based Services

Caregivers *continued from page 1*

Both groups need relief from time to time in order to re-charge and be able to continue their work.

The needs of these growing segments of our population have recently prompted Governor Eliot Spitzer to form a family caregivers' council to plan for and address key issues they face. The council is charged with addressing several important and timely concerns:

- completing a review of key policies and practices related to family caregiving;
- completing a comprehensive review of existing services and needs of family caregivers;
- proposing new and innovative services and/or policy changes to strengthen family caregiving; and
- identifying ways of strengthening local agencies abilities to reach, assess and support caregivers' needs.

The caregivers of our country save us hundreds of millions of dollars that would otherwise have to be spent on additional medical and healthcare services. Hopefully, this newly established council will effectively address these important issues.

Renée, who has been appointed to serve as a representative on this council, will bring her expertise, insights and experience to its deliberations. It is her belief that: "there is no greater group of people anywhere who give so much and are so invisible to our society. They have earned great respect and loyalty in my eyes, and anything we can do to help them succeed is worth doing."

When we consider what the Caregivers' programs offer to those who need help in ministering to the elderly or young for whom they are responsible, we can only be grateful for their mission and mindful of the saying: "There but for the grace of God, go I."

In the future, we could all be caregivers at some point. What a gift to know such help exists!

As Catholic Charities Caregivers Support Services celebrates its 20th year, it can look back on a job well done. We can only wonder how many people's lives have been touched during that time. **By Sister Nola Brunner**

Contact Catholic Charities Caregivers Support Services at 100 Slingerland Street, Albany, New York 12202; 518-449-2001; Fax 518-426-3662; caregivers@ccalbany.org.

CC WORKS

A Catholic Charities quarterly committed to active witness

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Reports on the mission

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The DHPM staff was proud to have the opportunity to share knowledge of their work with their colleagues at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

CoNSERNS-U sponsored a NYC bus trip to Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas: The Musical* on November 3. What a great way to get people into the holiday spirit with a trip to New York City, for shopping, lunch and the show at the St. James Theatre!

Through the generosity of the community, **Catholic Charities of Schoharie County** will once again be sponsoring a Thanksgiving Project. We will provide families who are struggling financially with a turkey and all the trimmings. This will be coordinated with the Community

Dinner. Those in families of three or less will be referred to the Community Dinner; they can choose to eat with the community or have dinner(s) delivered to their home. While we encourage all to consider the Community Dinner, we provide food for larger families (4 or more) if they want to cook at home. Last year, we served 70 families with 378 people.

All money raised in this appeal will be used to purchase food. If we receive more than we need for Thanksgiving, these donations will be used to purchase food for our Food Pantry.

Some of the best fun and entertainment can be found right in our own agency events! Arnie and Kathie Greenblatt, Ted and Mary Ellen Sangetti-Daniels, Ellen Alessi, and Jennifer Evans traveled from Otsego County to attend the

AIDS Services, Celebrate the Harvest event on October 4 at the Albany Country Club. We had a wonderful time and want to thank all of the people who worked on the event, and donated prizes for the raffle and auction. The weather was beautiful and the Country Club had great autumn views from the terrace and clubhouse. The food was excellent, and the dining room was filled with laughter and conversation all evening. The music was great, and the raffle items were amazing! It was a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and to see old friends, while supporting a worthwhile program. We hope the event was as successful financially as it was fun for those who attended.

Grants & Awards

Hispanic Outreach Services was awarded \$14,500 from the New York State Department of Minority Health for a program that works with the elderly Hispanic/Latino Community in the City of Amsterdam. The program will offer four health-related events, based on days of cultural celebrations - El cinco de mayo, El dia de la raza, El dia de los reyes, y Un dia con mis abuelos (a coming together of youth and grandparents).

Those of you who have previously received the *Willow* will now receive *CC Works*, due to the creation of Catholic Charities of Rensselaer County as of July 1. You will continue to receive information-based articles pertaining to not only Albany and Rensselaer but also the entire 14 counties that Catholic Charities serves.