

***Catholic Charities  
of the  
Diocese of Davenport***



***ANNUAL REPORT, 2010-11***

# *Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Davenport Annual Report, 2010-11*

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Davenport began again on July 1, 2011. After a forty year absence, Charities is again present in the diocese by name, and as described in what follows, also in deed.

## **Information and Referral**

The goals for the first year's operation were to: enhance services already in place, work collaboratively with community partners, and support and promote local ministry efforts already in place. Yet much of the early work undertaken could be characterized as "information and referral." Esmeralda Guerrero, full-time Administrative Assistant for the Social Action Office, now fields the majority of calls for Catholic Charities while balancing her other work demands, averaging 1 to 3 such calls a day. The calls to Charities from the general public are often individuals looking for direct financial assistance, help with rent, gas or food needs. As there is no budgeted money available to directly respond to these requests, Esmeralda provides information to callers for agencies in the community who can do so, including referrals to Community Action, Community Services and food banks in any of the communities across the diocese, and to Churches United CareLink unique to the Quad City Metro area. In a short year, Esmeralda has developed advanced information and referral knowledge and skills and is of great help to those who call.

Additionally, and in my role as Director of both the Social Action Office and Catholic Charities, I maintain contact with a variety of community agencies and groups to keep abreast of both community needs and corresponding service responses. I attend meetings for Scott County Kids, the local Iowa Youth Dream Team committee, and the Parent Partner Program which are connected with the Iowa Department of Human Services Child Welfare operations. I also regularly attend a community meeting hosted by Scott County Public Health which includes representatives from approximately two dozen metro service and charity agencies. Our responsibility as Charities is to know of specific programs that have such unique service offerings as providing free or greatly reduced legal counsel for those living in poverty or money for tuition and living expense for those who have been employed in the farming sector, but who again find themselves below the poverty line. We can then in turn make knowledgeable referrals to those most in need.

## **Enhancing Services**

**The Immigration Program** of the Diocese of Davenport has operated since 1972 under the Office of Social Action. It was placed under the Catholic Charities umbrella with the reintroduction Catholic Charities in the Diocese on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. The Immigration Office continues to serve approximately 400 people per year. The Program staff assists people of all faiths and races with family reunification, adjustment of status, and citizenship. The program

and its counselors are certified by the Board of Immigration Appeals, an element of the US Department of Justice. The volume of cases is high for an office this size.

During this past year, there have been major accomplishments for the Immigration Office, not the least of which is the introduction of Karina Garnica as the second BIA approved counselor. Karina had most recently served as an administrative assistant for the Program and follows the career path of her colleague, Gricelda Garnica, who had been the office's sole counselor for approximately one year during a period of staff transition. Karina and Gricelda continue to obtain the required ongoing professional development training unique to immigration law in order to maintain currency with changes in the law and its interpretation by the courts.

Other operational enhancements include continuing with quarterly case file and procedural reviews by an independent Immigration Attorney, Dan Vondra, securing professional malpractice insurance, establishing policies and procedures, including a client agreement (contract) form, setting a policy of "appointment only" visits, and collecting consultation fees for initial visits. All of these enhancements have enabled the Program to be prepared to return to satellite location visits that will start again in Ottumwa and Columbus Junction in July, 2011.

**Disaster Response** is a function thrust upon us during the 2008 floods that devastated portions of the Diocese in 2008. Disaster Response became a Charities function with the re-creation a Catholic Charities in July of 2010.

The Diocese had developed a manual (including a nationally recognized pandemic plan) to assist parishes and schools in preparation of a disaster, however, we did not have any mechanism for responding to individuals who had been impacted by a disaster. The national attention drawn by the magnitude of the flooding activated great generosity and we began to receive donations for flood relief, including large donations from the Sioux City and Des Moines Dioceses. We were beginning to have a considerable amount of money and no way to get it to those in need.

We contacted Catholic Charities USA, (CCUSA) for assistance with what we knew would become a large relief effort. They responded with a \$10,000 grant, and the on-site assistance of their national staff. Following initial visits by their national disaster response folks, they arranged for two experienced disaster responders from Catholic Charities, Oklahoma City, to spend two weeks showing us the ropes. Their guidance was to work with the existing, local Volunteer Organizations active in Disaster (VOADS), who would hire case workers to integrate the needs of the affected with donated cash, donated building materials and appliances and donated labor. (A year later, CCUSA provided a scholarship for a week of disaster response training for us at their offices in Virginia.)

VOADs work with state and federal agencies, local non-profit organizations and religious groups, to tailor individual recovery plans for each family, making the best of available resources while assuring that no person received duplicate benefits or benefits they for which they did not qualify.

We became members of the VOADS serving affected counties. We continue to participate with VOADS in Des Moines, Louisa, Johnson, Scott, Wapello, Muscatine, and Cedar Counties. Unfortunately, not all counties or areas had VOADs prior to the 2008 flooding, so we

participated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and local organizations to form long term recovery committee in Wapello and Cedar counties. Our principal support was to provide the seed money for hiring case workers. With our seed money, the VOADS were able to secure grants from foundations, businesses, state and federal agencies. Participating in many VOADS, we were able to provide sharing of ideas and techniques, document templates, etc. We ultimately distributed \$327,315.47 to case management for victims.

In addition to working with the VOADS, we became a member of the Iowa Disaster Human Resources Council under the Iowa Department of Homeland Security, which is a valuable resource. We continue to work closely with FEMA, largely through the regional office in Kansas City. We are assisting with the Disaster Preparedness Manual by integrating what we learn from our work with the VOADS.

Our most significant success for 2010 was our assistance to Washington County in the formation of a VOAD. Untouched by disaster, their VOAD formed out of the recognition by the Chamber of Commerce of the need for preparedness. Fr. Appel, then of St. James was one of those involved in the formation of the group, and it met at St. James Parish Center during its formative period. For this year, which so far has not resulted in significant disasters within the diocese, we have collected and will contribute \$57,585.98 to CCUSA for tornado relief.

Our challenges for the future include defining the desired Diocesan role in disaster response, documenting practices and procedures, expanding the number of VOADS, and assisting the Manual preparation team in actively involving parishes in disaster preparation. The Diocese does not have the staff necessary to handle the complexities of a volunteer management system, particularly one that would cover 22 counties, but there are many parishioners who desire to volunteer during disasters, so integration with existing volunteer management systems is a long term goal.

## **Working with Partners**

For many years Catholic Charities of the Peoria Diocese has provided counseling and family mediation services from their Rock Island office to the residents of the Quad City metro area, including residents of Iowa who live in the Davenport Diocese. For about as long, there have been informal discussions about the possibility of providing these services in Iowa. Finally, earlier this spring and with the building renovation complete for the headquarters for the Diocese of Davenport, our neighbor Catholic Charities agency began to provide services here in Davenport. The counseling services are unique in the community as they combine sliding fee scale services with offerings that are consistent with Church teaching. This collaboration stands to benefit those that we have a responsibility to serve by saving folks in need time and money in getting to appointments.

In addition to this arrangement, we also provide referrals for a variety of services to satellite offices for both Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque and the Diocese of Des Moines, locations in the respective dioceses but close enough for some folks in the greater Davenport Diocese area to access them. These referrals are not intended to address all

community needs within our 22-county diocese, but they do speak to our need to be creative and work collaboratively with other agencies in these difficult economic times.

## **Supporting Ministries Already in Place**

**Parish Health/Nurse Ministry:** During this past year, the nurses employed by the parishes within the Davenport Diocese met once, along with their respective parish priests. There are a handful of parish nurses who continue to serve a vital and needed role in their parishes, as attested by the feedback they receive from parishioners and priests alike. The parish nurse program is one of the most popular ministries where offered.

Of particular note at the conclusion of this fiscal year, is the introduction of Tonni Richard, RN BSN, as the new parish nurse for the St. Anthony parish in Davenport.

The goals for the Parish Nurse program for the upcoming year include quarterly meetings for the nurses. There is great value in formalizing the network of parish nurses in place. Peer support is crucial, along with the ongoing support of priests and parish staff and council. In addition to facilitating the quarterly gatherings, Catholic Charities staff will also seek presentation topics of interest to supplement information that the nurses receive via ongoing professional development provided by the two hospitals in the Quad City metro area. The number of parishes with nurses is relatively small, but it is important to support those in place while promoting the program in parishes without one.

Parish communities have a multitude of issues they face, the graying of the parish and the possibility that elderly parishioners also have no relatives living close to them, and the inaccessibility or prohibitively high cost of care for some, to name only a few. Independent of whether a parish maintains or introduces a nurse dedicated to the exclusive needs of their community, there are issues that can be addressed programmatically which can be shared with those all across the diocese. The parish nurses already in place can be of great assistance to Catholic Charities in identifying the needs and information important to share within the diocese. Whether the information in turn comes to parishioners by way of Parish Life, Social Action, Pastoral Council or some combination of the three, health information can be of great help for the members of our parish family.

**Jail/Prison Ministry:** Much of the work in promoting Jail and Prison Ministry in the first year of Catholic Charities has been learning of the work already being undertaken by dedicated lay people and clergy across the diocese. In at least six locations across the 22 county diocese, there are regular Bible studies or Communion visits occurring for the benefit of inmate in jails and prisons. As longtime lay jail ministry volunteer Gene LaFosse noted, Bible study and materials are given "...to change souls and convert them." As Gene added, the goal here is for the inmates "...to know God and be a better person upon their release."

In order to support those involved in jail/prison ministry, there were six lunch meetings in the past year. Along with providing updates, the clergy and lay volunteers have had the opportunity to learn from guest speakers during the lunch meetings, speakers from the greater community, including Scott County Jail staff, a Protestant jail ministry director and the founder and director

of the Catholic Social Worker House in Davenport. This has enabled volunteers to learn of the many facets of the ministry, beyond the direct evangelizing efforts. In one instance, a retired teacher was able to learn of the procedure to become an approved jail volunteer and was in turn able to realize the goal of providing math tutoring to interested female inmates.

There is one area within this ministry that has great potential for growth in the near future. Following the model of Restorative Justice that is part of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Deacon Bob McCoy here in the Diocese of Davenport, has continued to serve as a Mentor in individual, one-to-one relationships with offenders upon their release from prison. This mentoring is focused on helping the offender successfully return to the community, but can touch on many different aspects of life, including securing and maintaining housing and employment. The reason for great optimism with this mentoring approach here within the next year is that there are candidates within the Deacon Formation Program who have many of years of experience as attorneys who also have established relationships with judicial districts and community agencies within the diocese, and who have interest in obtaining the mentoring training to begin as mentors as Deacon McCoy has done.

As others join this group of mentors, either from the ranks of those already involved in jail/prison ministry efforts or those altogether new to the ministry, more offenders will receive needed support. The natural progression of ministry growth would then be to do as the Dubuque jail/prison ministry has done and begin Circles of Support. A Circle is a group of volunteers from the community who can commit themselves to supporting offenders being released, to find a new and better life and to help them get back into their communities.

Success with Mentoring and Circles can be done in a stepwise manner, building sustainable capacity first with Mentoring and then in turn Circles expansion. There is interest from folks in local parishes in getting involved in jail/prison ministry, but figuring out how to begin is what often inhibits involvement. Based both on having individuals willing to be more involved and Dubuque's willingness to help us with training, next year's annual report could include great additional efforts in this very important, yet often overlooked ministry.

## **Structure, Assets, Thank You's**

The reintroduction of Catholic Charities was done very simply and modestly. To this point, Charities has no separate corporate structure, no board of directors nor by-laws. No additional staffing has been added. Yet in spite of lacking all of these elements, much has been undertaken and learned in this first year. There is indeed a need for a uniquely Catholic service presence in the Diocese of Davenport. Those needs can be met with the services in place and the thoughtful expansion in other areas where no other comparable service is being offered.

As the organizational structure of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Davenport remains within the Office of Social Action for the Diocese of Davenport, the vast majority of financial resources for operations come from the budgets for the Office of Social Action and the Immigration Office. A very small amount has been realized from the recently completed Diocesan Capital Campaign, more will come in subsequent years. Additionally, and without a formal fundraising campaign,

two individual contributions were made to Catholic Charities and received by way of local United Way campaigns and through employee paycheck deductions.

In spite of no formal board of directors, there are informal resident experts for each of the service or ministry areas previously described. These individuals have been very generous with their time in explaining all that they undertake and enthusiastic about their programs could improve and expand with support by way of Catholic Charities. Thank you again to Esmeralda Guerrero, Karina Garnica, Gricelda Garnica, Glenn Leach, Kathy Thennes, Gene LaFosse and Deacon Bob McCoy. Additionally, thank you to Amber Dopler with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Peoria for her willingness to be part of the counselor team now providing services here in our diocese and for being willing to be part of future conversations regarding planning for our Catholic Charities here in the Diocese of Davenport.

In the next ring out in our own circles of support, I would like to thank Pam Burke, Mary Fritch and Lorraine Pacha, who along with Kathy Thennes, have provided years of service to their respective communities by serving as parish nurses and have been very willing to share accounts of their work with their peers and with us here at the diocese. Likewise, I would like to thank Al Logan, Ruth Morris, Bob Shaw, Father Tom Stratman, Monsignor Marvin Mottet, John Burkholder, Chuck Easton, Deacon Joe Dvorak, Father Bill Reynolds, Joan Miller, Father Joseph Phung, Bill Terrell, Margaret Marie, Bob Shaw, Father Gary Beckman, Father Bruce DeRammelaere, Dorothy Wiston and Sister Mary Veith who have given hours and years to the efforts within Jail and Prison ministry.

And last, but certainly not least, thank you Bishop Amos, Monsignor Hyland and Char Maaske for your willingness to meet and review the initial structure of Charities with our consultant and for your support during year one. Your support has enabled us to be deliberate in our first steps.