Volunteers honored for devoted service

Catholic Charities could not fulfill its mission without the efforts of hundreds of volunteers,” said Bill Sinclair, executive director of Catholic Charities when the agency honored eight people as 2011 Volunteers of the Year on September 15. “Volunteers are involved in all areas of programming. Without the help of volunteers, it would be impossible for us to meet the needs of the more 69,000 people we serve each year in Middle Tennessee.”

He added, “These honorees are representative of the many ways in which volunteers make a difference to Catholic Charities, its clients and the community.”

Rhonda Borman, a licensed clinical social worker, is the Social Services Child Welfare Volunteer of the Year, honored for volunteering her knowledge and insights to Catholic Charities’ school and child welfare counselors for more than 10 years.

Margaret Connelly, the Loaves and Fishes Volunteer of the Year, has been a regular Monday volunteer at the Loaves and Fishes Community Meals for the Hungry program for more than four years. She helps wherever needed; one of her distinctive ministries is assisting guests who have special needs.

Minnie Horton, Administrative Services Volunteer of the Year, was recognized for her six years of service on the Board of Trustees. She was chair of the Board’s Program Oversight Committee for four of those years during a period of tremendous growth and change.

Sheila Kiley is the North Nashville Outreach Volunteer of the Year. After retiring from Catholic Charities in 2006, she wanted to continue serving people in need. She has volunteered more than 535 hours of service during the past five years, manning the North Outreach Center reception desk and helping distribute lunches to the homeless and clothing to anyone in need.

Julia Pickard, Caring Choices Volunteer of the Year, helps the Material Assistance Program meet the basic needs of pregnant women. (Volunteers continued on page 3)

Mary Falls will receive Spirit of Service Award at October 26 Celebration

Mary B. Falls is a perfect match for the criteria used to determine the annual Spirit of Service Award recipient according to Paul Ney and Deborah Varallo, co-chairs of the 2011 Celebration of Mission to Service. The award will be presented to her during the Celebration on Wednesday, October 26, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at Hillwood Country Club. The Celebration of Mission to Service supports the work of Catholic Charities of Tennessee and Saint Mary Villa Child Development Center.

“The Spirit of Service Award is presented to someone who has been a significant contributor to the well-being of the clients served by Catholic Charities and Saint Mary Villa, and reflects the agencies’ values of love, goodwill, kindness, learning and laughter,” said Ney. “Mary Falls personifies all of these values.”

Mary’s service to the community, especially to Catholic Charities and Saint Mary Villa, is long and significant. She is a past member, secretary and chair of the board of both Catholic Charities and Saint Mary Villa.

“She was deeply involved with the leadership of both agencies about a decade ago, when the agencies were in the midst of significant transition,” explained Bill Sinclair, Catholic Charities’ executive director.

In addition to her service to the two agencies, she is a past board member and secretary of the Visitation Hospital Foundation of Haiti. She has also served as a board member and officer for Catholic Charities' Oversight Committee for four of those years during a period of tremendous growth and change.

“Tajah’s work is critical to making sure our office operates efficiently,” states Holly Johnson, director of TOR. “Refugees must receive their cash assistance on time to place them on a path toward self-sufficiency. TOR staff and our partners appreciate her ability to be thorough and accurate, and also her positive attitude and friendly demeanor.”

Other departments at Catholic Charities agree with Holly’s assessment. Tajah has been employed in a variety of positions and several programs during her 11 years at the agency. When one of those programs concluded, Holly was quick to request that Tajah come to TOR.

“Tajah is one of the hardest workers I have ever met, but she is also a fun and delightful friend,” notes Holly.

A mother of a son just starting high school, Tajah is modest about her talents. However, everyone who works with her knows she is a great mom, a devoted friend and a greatly admired coworker.

“Catholic Charities is a great place to be employed. It is more like a family than a job. Care is shown to the employees as well as to the clients,” Tajah explains.
Recognizing cyberbullying

There are many types of cyberbullying[1]. Happy-Slapping means recording someone being harassed or bullied in a way that usually involves physical abuse, then posting the video online for public viewing. Photoshopping involves doctoring digital images so that a person is placed in a compromising or embarrassing situation. Rumor Spreading involves spreading gossip through e-mail, text messaging or social networking sites. Another type of cyberbullying is Physical Threat, which means sending messages threatening a person’s physical safety. Have you heard of Flaming and Trolling? It means sending or posting hostile messages intended to "inflame" the emotions of others.

Catholic Charities school counselors have found this simple demonstration is helpful in explaining how cyberbullying works.

Show your child a clear pitcher of water. Point out that the water is clear or colorless. Have your child mix in the powdered juice. What is happening to the water? Has anyone ever said unkind things about you to someone else online or in the real world? Just like the juice mixes quickly changed the water's color, rumors can quickly spread on the Internet. Sometimes people say mean or untrue things about other people online. The gossip and lies quickly travel from one person's computer to another, like the juice mixes quickly changed and dissolved in the water. There's no way to stop rumors from spreading, and their effects can be permanent. The water permanently changed color, and the reputation of a person who is a victim of cyberbullying can be permanently changed. If you are ever cyberbullied it is important not to respond, save the evidence, and tell a trusted adult.

Additional ideas and tools to explain cyberbullying and other personal safety issues related to technology can be found at www.netsmartz.org.

For more information about cyberbullying, please visit this website.

Opportunity for Catholic students

All Catholic students in grades 7-12 in middle Tennessee are invited to enter the 2011-2012 Multi-Media Youth Arts Contest presented by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) and sponsored locally by Catholic Charities. Theme for the contest is, Put Faith in Action! Uproot Poverty Together. Catholic Charities sponsors the contest as part of its advocacy efforts and support of various anti-poverty initiatives.

Entries can take a variety of forms in the categories of visual and literary arts, including painting, short story, poem, song or photography. Contest rules are available online for students and teachers at www.usccb.org/artcontest. Entries must be received by Catholic Charities by February 17, 2012.

For additional information, please visit www.usccb.org/cchd/artcontest.shtml

Agency’s international adoption team preps for Hague accreditation

Through its International Adoption Program, Catholic Charities of Tennessee has helped many Middle Tennessee families maneuver through the complex and confusing international adoption processes which vary greatly by country. For more than 25 years, families adopting from China, Russia, Ethiopia, and many other countries have received assistance from Catholic Charities with completion of the home studies as well as education and other support.


It established that the Council on Accreditation would evaluate agencies in the United States that place children from other countries for adoption. Agencies such as Catholic Charities were able to operate as supervised providers for placing agencies that had been accredited and to continue to complete home studies and post-placement supervisory reports.

This spring, China decreed that it would no longer accept home studies from agencies that were not accredited. As other countries are expected to follow suit, this would leave Middle Tennessee families with very few options to turn to for assistance in completing an international adoption. Therefore, Catholic Charities made the strategic decision to embark on the lengthy process of applying for accreditation.

A four-member committee consisting of a Board member and staff is at work to address the detailed preparations required prior to accreditation being achieved; their goal for accreditation is March 2012.

“We look forward to achieving this accreditation,” Catholic Charities made the strategic decision to embark on the lengthy process of applying for accreditation.
Many refugees arrive in the United States with talents and skills — such as sewing, farming and weaving — that don’t necessarily translate to the American labor market. Women refugees, in particular, face challenges entering the workforce, whether due to a lack of education or childcare or English language skills. However, the Women’s Alliance Group and Refugee Handicrafts, both launched earlier this year by Catholic Charities Refugee Services, are now turning the culture-based skills of refugee women into opportunities and helping them overcome challenges.

With funding through the Tennessee Office for Refugees, the Women’s Alliance Group provides training that helps refugee women develop the business skills they need to be self-sufficient. Specifically, the Women’s Alliance Group provides financial and budget skills training, connects the women to additional ESL classes, and provides them with business management guidance through Refugee Handicrafts. Refugee Handicrafts is also a tool and brand to market the products the women produce, including beautiful handmade throw pillows and hot pads that are sold at the Nashville Farmers’ Market and other outlets.

Not only is the Women’s Alliance Group helping women repurpose their skills, it also works in collaboration with local businesses to find new ways to use old items. For example, one group of women created children’s and women’s sunhats from up-cycled men’s shirts. The sunhats are for sale at The Green Wagon in East Nashville.

Through the Women’s Alliance Group and Refugee Handicrafts, Catholic Charities hopes to bring peace and refuge to women who were once refugees, help them realize their strengths, and empower them to succeed in their new home.

Refugee Handicrafts continually explores new ways to make items available for sale as it develops new products. To view and order items made by refugee women, visit www.facebook.com/refugeehandicrafts.

Refugee Handicrafts needs donations of sewing machines, irons and sewing notions. To donate items, please contact Robin Norris, at 615-760-2766.

### Mary Falls (continued from page 1)

Dress for Success, Project Reflect Educational Programs, and Nashville’s Table, now part of Second Harvest.

Mary currently is secretary and chair-elect of the Alive Hospice board and she chairs its Governance and Nominating Committee. She is also board secretary and chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee for St. Thomas Health Services.

Mary makes a difference in local parishes, too. For 11 years, she served on the Cathedral of the Incarnation parish pastoral council and for several years was adult education small faith communities co-chair at the parish. She is now a parishioner at Christ the King with her husband Naill and their three children, Catherine, Andrew and Christopher. At Christ the King, she is the 7th grade catechist and a Room in the Inn volunteer.

“Mary is remarkable in so many ways,” added Mike Miller, executive director of Saint Mary Villa. “She brings impressive insight, intelligence and dedication to every project in which she is involved. Her energy and enthusiasm inspire others to serve. Both of our agencies are so grateful to have benefited from her service over the years.”

Sinclair and Miller both expressed appreciation to the members of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist to the Celebration of Mission to Service committee. Committee members are Frank Caruso, Chris Donnelly, Debby Glennon, Kathy Griffin, Mike Hogrefe, David Johnson, Jim O’Neill, Eleanor Parkes, Mary Rolando, Pat Shepherd, and Lauren Wagner, who represent the boards of the two agencies. Also on the committee are Catholic Charities staff members Mark Barry, Isabel Garrillo, Laura Junovske, Shirley Lopehandia and Richard Neal.

Tickets to the October 26 Celebration benefit reception are $500 per person; $1,000 per couple. Tickets can be purchased through the Catholic Charities website, www.cctenn.org, or by contacting Isabel Garrillo at 615-760-4428 or icarrillo@ctcctenn.org.

### Volunteers (continued from page 1)

women and mothers. Twice a month for more than two years, she has answered the program’s phone and followed up on messages regarding requests for items such as diapers or inquiries about donations and prepared assistance bags for clients.

Mary Rolando is the Tennessee Office for Refugees Volunteer of the Year, honored for her role in creating this new department. Her skill and talent for effective communication have been invaluable in launching this program that links TOR with state agencies and partner organizations across Tennessee.

Ren Lu Yu, a native of Shanghai, China, is the Refugee Services Volunteer of the Year. For the past 18 months, he has volunteered his financial planning knowledge and experience to help newly arriving refugees. He works with clients from many different backgrounds who may lack formal education and usually speak little or no English, helping them acquire skills essential to their financial security and success in a new country.

Kristen Portanova, a senior at Ravenwood High School in Brentwood, received the I Care Award, presented each year to someone age 18 or younger who provides outstanding community service. At Holy Family Church, she volunteers as a catechist for the church’s Wednesday afternoon religious education program, assists with the parish’s annual confirmation and first communion retreats, and works in the parish’s nursery on Sunday mornings.

### Thank You

- Thank you to Mary Rolando, Ned Spitzer, Shandy Husmann, and Ruth Lomo for their dedicated service and expert guidance to the Tennessee Office for Refugees.
- Janie Bushee, Mother to Mother Charity, for car seats and play-pens donated to Carrying Choices, St. Mark Church, Manchester, and St. Henry Church, Nashville, for their support of the pregnancy counseling program. Our Lady of the Lake, Hendersonville, and Lighthouse Missionary Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg, for their support of the Adoption Support and Preservation Program.
- Alex Dedman, YMCA of Middle Tennessee, for 19 computer keyboards & mice and Anthem Career College for six complete computer sets for 6 sets of speakers and two extra monitors and keyboards donated to Refugee Services.
- M-FUGE and CSM for providing many groups of volunteers to Lunes & Fishes this summer; Kenny Mullins for providing home grown vegetables for Lunes & Fishes guests to enjoy, Community Food Advocates for opportunity to start a community food garden.
- Americas were volunteers for their service with the Living at Home Program and the Adult Day Program. RCA Community Volunteers for their Community Outreach day service in the Adult Day Program area. Group Care and Ensworth High School students for sprucing up the homes and yards of living at home clients.
- St. Henry Parish for its support of the dress a child program of North Nashville Outreach.
- Jim Haggaman, Carmichael Towers; Field Deolochamp, Let’s Get Moving; and James and Scott, Mary Queen of Angels, for generous furniture donations to Refugee Services.
- Tim Stewart and Micah Weedman, Belmont University, for a day of service at the Refugee Services Warehouse.

### $138,000 preventative health grant awarded to Tennessee Office for Refugees

The Tennessee Office for Refugees, the department of Catholic Charities of Tennessee charged with the coordination and administration of the statewide refugee program in Tennessee, was recently awarded a $138,000 grant by the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement under its Refugee Preventative Health Discretionary Grant Program. The grant will be used by the Tennessee Office of Refugees (TOR) for its innovative preventative health program, said Holly Johnson, director of TOR.

TOR will track measurable outcomes of its preventative health program’s various areas of service which will provide valuable data about the effectiveness of the interventions and a replicable model for service delivery across the nation.

The TOR program focuses on supporting refugee health through advocacy for and scheduling of follow up care after the initial health screening; orientation to the American health care system and preventative health measures — particularly in the areas of nutrition and mental health care; and access to a nurse line during evenings and weekends for consultation on health related issues. A Health Navigator will be housed at each resettlement agency in Tennessee to assist refugees in managing chronic and urgent health conditions as well as to provide necessary information and guidance so that refugees are equipped to address health and wellness issues on their own.

Approximately 1,600 refugees found a new home in Tennessee last year.

### Old talents become new refuge for women

The need for assistance increases each year; unfortunately, the need for help will be great this Christmas. It is only through the generosity of churches, community organizations, businesses and individuals that Catholic Charities is able to meet the basic needs and Christmas wishes of so many.

Angel gifts must be returned no later than December 14 to Catholic Charities’ office at 30 White Bridge Road, Nashville, TN 37205. For information on how to adopt a Christmas angel, please contact Megan Stack at 615-760-1031 or mstack@ctcctenn.org. Thank you.

### 1,000 angels wish & wait

On Friday, November 4, the Catholic Charities’ Angel Tree will display the Christmas wishes — and basic needs — of children, families and the elderly. It is anticipated more than 1,000 wishes will be placed on the 2011 Angel Tree upon referral from Catholic Charities staff members and various public agencies.

Families in need also receive food baskets, and household and personal care staples.

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www.cctenn.org

Service to People in Need Page 3
In Their Own Words
Angels found at Adult Day Program
by Steve Hayes,
The Human Capital Group, Inc.

Almost four years ago, my parents came to live with me, my wife and our five children. Dad was recovering from several long-standing medical challenges and had recently been diagnosed with Parkinson’s. Mom was overwhelmed as she tried to care for him and manage their household.

After they moved in with us, we watched Dad progressively decline. We began to think he needed nursing home care.

Just when we thought there was no other option, “angels” arrived in the form of Catholic Charities’ Adult Day Program. Dad is now doing better than I have seen him in over 10 years because of the loving staff, amazing volunteers, and a program focused on love, dignity and respect. He has friends, independence, and mental and emotional stimulation. Most of all, he has a reason and a will to live.

Words cannot express how grateful we are to the “angels” at Catholic Charities!

Editor’s Note: For more information about the Adult Day Program, please contact Lynn Herman at 615-352-3087 or lherman@cctenn.org.

New job training center helps refugees

Essam Saad, a native of Egypt, is one of the thousands of refugees from more than 35 countries who Catholic Charities of Tennessee has welcomed since 1962. As has been true for other newly arrived refugees, he is eager to work.

However, finding meaningful employment quickly after arrival is a challenge according to Megan Stack, Catholic Charities’ Family Assistance & Community Employment (FACE) director.

“Most new arrivals are not immediately ready to enter the local labor market. They need time to adjust to a new language as well as a new social environment and new employment cultures and practices,” she explained.

The May 2011 opening of the Refugee Job Training Center is helping solve this problem. In a “real world” work environment, Saad and other newly arrived refugees are involved in meaningful work, receive job training, and learn American work practices and expectations. They also earn a modest income.

The light manufacturing and fulfillment work performed at the Center includes cutting, sewing and assembly. Recent projects involved sewing banners and producing specialized industrial cleaning products.

Located near downtown Nashville, the Center is close to Nashville MTA bus routes often used by refugees to move around the city.

“The Refugee Job Training Center can serve as many as 25 new refugee arrivals at a time,” said Henry Crane, the Center’s production manager. “No one is expected to be in the program for more than three months.”

Over a year’s time, up to 100 clients may participate in the training program, earning income while also getting ready to take the next step out into the local labor market. The refugee trainees are exposed to a variety of skills critical for success in the workplace, including how to function in an environment in which English is the primary business language. They learn how to receive and follow specific directions including customer-provided specifications. They also learn about teamwork and how to provide guidance and direction to others. They gain understanding of production processes, especially those involving light manufacturing or fulfillment.

“The job here is very good,” said Saad, who has become one of the Center’s sewing experts. However, he does long for a job with more hours which would result in higher income. Participants in job training programs are limited to working 30 hours per week. A better job will come, explained Candice Horton, a job skills trainer.

“The purpose of the Center is to make sure that refugee clients have the skills necessary for gainful employment and longevity,” she said. Another benefit is that they can add current, local work experience to their resumes.

Saad’s dream job would involve air conditioning work; he has more than 20 years of experience and has worked as a supervisor in this field.

“Employees value refugees as employees, especially because of their strong work ethic,” noted Stack. “Time and again, they prove themselves to be eager and dependable employees. They are also proving themselves to be eager learners at the Refugee Job Training Center.”

Planning begins for 50th anniversary celebration

On July 17, 1962, Catholic Charities of Tennessee was established with a $100 donation from the Diocese of Nashville and a $1,000 loan. Its first major initiative was to provide care for 25 Cuban families and 43 children arriving in the U.S. without their parents, all fleeing the revolution in that country.

A team of Catholic Charities board members, volunteers and staff is now at work, planning events to celebrate the agency’s 50th anniversary. Centerpiece of the celebration will be a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Cathedral of the Incarnation on July 17, 2012, exactly 50 years from the day of the agency’s founding. Additional events and activities will take place before and after the anniversary date.

“This anniversary should be a celebration for not only the Catholic community, but for all Middle Tennesseans,” said Bill Sinclair, executive director of the agency. “Catholic Charities annually serves more than 69,000 people of many religions, races, cultures and ethnic groups living in the 38 counties of Middle Tennessee. It is difficult to comprehend how many people have actually been served over the past 50 years and to count the ways that our staff and volunteers have served them.”

He added, “It is our hope and intention that the 50th anniversary celebration serves as a springboard for the community, providing a call to action and service.”

The 50th Anniversary Planning Commission currently includes chair Mark Barry, director of marketing at Catholic Charities; community and Board volunteers Nancy Anness, Michael Corbett, Chris Donnelly, Father Mark Hunt, Paul Ney and Bill Tophile; and staff members Scott Gubala, Lisa McGovern, Fran Rajotte, Gigi Rose, Bill Sinclair, and Deasree Williams.

“The Planning Commission is developing a variety of ideas to make the anniversary celebration meaningful, engaging, educational, and exciting,” said Barry.