North Nashville Outreach serves the poor for 30 years

In 1981, Bishop James D. Niedergeses requested a study of the needs of the residents of North Nashville and Germantown. To find the answers, Sister Naomi Libiak, D.C. conducted informal door-to-door surveys of more than 900 households over a nine-month period.

She presented her findings to the Bishop in 1982. In the report, she noted the irony of standing in front of Assumption Parish Church and “the impoverished neighborhood” in which it was located while being “within view of downtown Nashville and the seat of Tennessee political and economic power.” The neighborhood, she continued, was “struggling to prevent further decay and throw off the yoke of poverty.” Her words helped inspire establishment of the Assumption/St. Vincent Outreach, now known as North Nashville Outreach, a ministry to Nashville’s neediest people. Thirty years later, the power and truth of her words are still translated daily into deeds addressing basic needs for thousands of people annually.

Early Years

In a late 1982 Tennessee Register article about the program, Sister Naomi commented that “…assistance needed ranges from financial aid to food stamps to aid in home repair costs.” She and her team of volunteers helped locate clothing, food and furniture for those in need. They also drove people to the Food Stamp office or other critical appointments.

“I had great support from area parishes and from the Catholic community. What a wonderful foundation for this year,” said Cristina Libiak, D.C. presented award recipient for 2012.

Noche Musical celebration on April 14

Noche Musical, a festiva of Latin food and music benefitting Catholic Charities’ Hispanic Family Services program, will be in full swing on Saturday, April 14, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Noah Liff Opera Center. Saint Thomas Health is the presenting sponsor.

Attendees will enjoy an array of delicious tapas and postres (desserts) prepared by Karla Ruiz Catering with a selection of margaritas, beer and wine. The popular San Rafael Band will provide entertainment and salsa dance instruction. Talented artist Laura Jumonville will provide artwork and jewelry.

A silent auction will feature an exciting collection of trips, artwork, jewelry and more.

A highlight of the evening will be the presentation of the 2nd Annual Juan Diego Award to Sister Mary Kay Tyrell, D.C. She will accept the award on behalf of the Nashville Daughters of Charity in recognition of their long time support of the local Hispanic community.

“Last year’s inaugural Noche Musical provided a wonderful foundation for this year,” said Cristina Libiak, D.C. event co-chair and member of the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees. “The enthusiasm for this year’s event is fantastic! It is going to be a tremendous evening for a great cause.

Hispanic Family Services provides new immigrants of all ages with the tools and support needed to develop skills and vocations required for an enhanced quality of life and greater self-sufficiency.

Last year, 2,600 people were served.

“We are very grateful to Saint Thomas Health, Noche Musical presenting sponsor in 2011 and 2012,” said Megan Stack, director of Family Assistance and Community Employment at Catholic Charities. “It has been an incredible supporter of the Hispanic Family Services program over the years and, as a result, the program’s clients.”

Tickets to Noche Musical are $100 per person or $1,000 per table. Purchase tickets through the Noche Musical registration link on the Catholic Charities website (www.cctenn.org). For more information, contact Laura Jumonville at 615-352-3087, ext. 231 or ljumonville@cctenn.org.

Join the Noche Musical celebration on April 14

North Nashville Outreach, now known as North Nashville Outreach, a ministry to Nashville’s neediest people. Thirty years later, the power and truth of her words are still translated daily into deeds addressing basic needs for thousands of people annually.

Employee Spotlight

Wonderful counselor

What people notice about Mary Hemminger are her smile, calm personality, compassion for children and youth, and counseling skills. These qualities and abilities perfectly equip Mary for her position as coordinator of the Catholic Charities School Counseling Program.

Mary worked in other positions at Catholic Charities before joining the school counseling program. In 1989, she came to the agency as a contract worker for the pregnancy counseling program, conducting home studies for families wanting to adopt. Next, she worked with social services, interviewing families to provide foster care respite homes for children at risk of neglect or abuse. In 1991, she became a school counselor and two years later was named program coordinator. After a brief “retirement” break, she returned in 2008 and in 2011 become program coordinator again.

Mary has worked with all 17 elementary and high schools within the diocese to meet the counseling needs of their students. Those needs can range from coping with the loss of a family member to dealing with an internet bully. She works with a team of counselors and the school principals to make certain that the program is running smoothly and students receive appropriate services.

“Sometimes the lives of children and their families are at risk,” said Mary. “It is important to find available resources, either through consultation with other professional counselors or other community resources.”

Mary explained, “Children and families come to us for help. We cannot let them down.”

Eileen Beehan, director of the Social Services Department, noted that Mary is very skilled in finding those resources. “However, just as importantly, Mary is a resource herself. She is always calm and supportive. She is a source of hope,” said Eileen.
Bud Adams & Tennessee Titans honor volunteer foster mother

Sue Hillman recently received the 2011 Titans Community Quarterback Award in recognition of her loving care of more than 100 foster babies. In winning the award, she also earned a $10,000 grant from Titans owner K.S. “Bud” Adams, Jr. and the Tennessee Titans Foundation for Catholic Charities of Tennessee and its Caring Choices Adoption and Pregnancy Counseling program. Pictured at the awards presentation are Don MacLachlan, executive vice president of the Titans; Sue Hillman; and Donna Thomas, director of the Caring Choices Department at Catholic Charities of Tennessee.

Sue and her husband, Ralph, are often asked, “How do you give up the babies?” Strongly believing that they are called by God to this ministry, they said, “God has faithfully equipped us to care for the babies and, yes, to give them up. Through life’s heartache and joys, we are always ready to take a baby when needed. Our babies always remain in our hearts. We are so grateful to participate in this ministry.”

English classes help refugees adjust; find work

During the past year, more than 700 adult refugees participated in English language training classes offered by the partner agencies of the Tennessee Office for Refugees (TOR). These classes are an important part of the social adjustment process, explained Holly Johnson, director of TOR, a department of Catholic Charities of Tennessee. “They help refugees obtain and retain employment, interact with their children’s schools, and be an active part of the community.”

The English language training classes are one of the many services and programs of TOR, all focused on the goal of helping refugees achieve self-sufficiency. Most refugees are employed within eight months of their arrival. Between October 2010 and September 2011, 461 adults secured full-time employment; 80% retained employment for at least 90 days, enabling them to financially support themselves and their families. An additional 87 refugees found part-time employment.

TOR’s partner agencies are Siloam Family Health Center, World Relief, Catholic Charities of Tennessee, and Nashville International Center for Empowerment in Nashville; Catholic Charities of West Tennessee in Memphis; and Bridge Refugee Services in Knoxville and Chattanooga.

Students’ artwork wins recognition

Students in grades 7-12 at Catholic schools and parishes in the diocese submitted 85 entries inspired by the theme, Put Faith in Action! Uproot Poverty Together, to the annual National Multi-Media Youth Arts Contest of Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). The contest is sponsored locally by Catholic Charities. Pictured are some of the 15 Christ the King students who created the painting/sculpture, PowerTree, the Best of Show winner in the 7th-9th grade entry category. Left to right are art teacher Jessica Young, Dodi Frederick, Audrey Burdge, Hope Long, Anna Frederick, and Caroline Frederick. Yes, Dodi, Anna and Caroline are triplets!

Eliza Tarwater, a 10th grade student at St. Cecilia Academy, won the Best of Show in the 10th – 12th grade category with her painting, Family Tree. Both Best in Show winners have been invited to submit their work to the national CCHD contest competition. A complete listing of all the local award winners and photos of their artwork are posted on the Catholic Charities website, www.cctenn.org under News.
Agency’s 50th anniversary celebration activities reflect its mission

more than 50 years ago, the Diocese recognized that a major change was needed. If the Church was going to effectively and promptly deliver services to people in Tennessee. At that time, the Diocese’s charitable initiatives were numerous – many were loosely organized.

That changed on July 17, 1962, when Tennessee Secretary of State Joe C. Carr accepted incorporation papers submitted by Bishop William L. Adrian, formalizing the creation of Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc.

“The review of the agency’s original purposes expressed in these documents clearly shows that Catholic Charities of Tennessee has stayed true to course since 1962,” said Bill Sinclair, executive director since 1986 and an agency employee since 1975. “We still meet basic needs for food, shelter and clothing, help refugees settle in our community, provide assistance to seniors, serve as a resource for crisis pregnancies and adoptions, work on behalf of children and especially adapt to meet new urgent needs such as the 2010 flood.” All of these services are referenced in the incorporation papers.

At 69,000 people last year, the number of people served by Catholic Charities is much larger than in 1962 and many of the issues faced are more complex.

“However, Bishop Adrian and the other visionaries who gave us our formal start in 1962 also gave us an amazing legacy in their vision for service,” observed Sinclair.

Celebration Activities

In gratitude for that vision and to celebrate the agency’s anniversary, The Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated on July 17 at the Cathedral of the Incarnation by Bishop David Choby and other priests from the diocese. The mass will be the capstone event in a series of “50 Acts of Love, Goodwill and Kindness” performed to celebrate the golden anniversary.

The 49 acts leading up to July 17 include a variety of programs, special events and educational sessions to increase awareness of the many services provided by Catholic Charities and how it meets individual and community needs. Agency staff and Board members are particularly excited about the upcoming May 5 Day of Service.

“Catholic Charities benefits from the services of hundreds of community volunteers and the contributions of thousands of donors. On May 5, we will acknowledge our gratitude for community support by undertaking a variety of projects,” said Lisa McGovern, program coordinator for the Social Services Individual & Family Counseling program and co-chair for the “50 Acts” effort.

Gigi Rose, technical assistance specialist in the agency’s Office for Refugees and co-chair of “50 Acts,” explained that potential service projects are being identified now. They could include light painting, closet or pantry cleaning, light spring cleaning, and gardening. “We hope that family members, friends and other Catholic Charities supporters will join us on May 5,” she said.

For more information about the May 5 Day of Service, contact Lisa McGovern at 615-352-3087 or lmcgovern@cctenn.org.

Anniversary Facebook Page

“Catholic Charities of TN – 50th anniversary” is a Facebook page created to spread the word about Catholic Charities’ 50th anniversary celebration and related activities.

“We hope that everyone in the diocese will like our page,” said Mark Barry, director of marketing and chair of the 50th Anniversary planning task force.

The Facebook page communicates details for specific events and also provides information about the many services of Catholic Charities.

“It is another way to inform the community about who we are and what we do,” noted Barry.

Award received from UT College of Social Work

Catholic Charities has received the Senator Douglas Henry Award for Service to Children and Families from the University of Tennessee’s College of Social Work. The award honors those whose concern for children and families inspires and motivates others.

In a letter to Catholic Charities executive director Bill Sinclair to notify him of the award, Karen M. Sowers, Ph.D., dean of UT’s College of Social Work, wrote, “Your agency’s record of service to the children and families of Tennessee is a true inspiration.”

The award was presented on March 27 during a reception in Franklin.

Overwhelmed? Here’s help

Families can face challenges because of job loss, the death or illness of family members, substance abuse, communication problems, and mental illness. Sometimes, the challenge is to rebuild a life in a new community or after a natural disaster.

When the Individual and Family Counseling Program began in 1964, few people were willing to seek outside help with problems. Today, the eight professional counselors at Catholic Charities help more than 300 people each year.

A 57-year-old mother and her 9-year-old daughter were among them. The mother was overwhelmed with responsibilities and constantly irritable. The daughter was trying to be an “adult” and take care of the family including her younger brother. However, she had become very anxious and was having night terrors. The mother found it difficult to cope with this behavior and was growing more irritable. After counseling on parenting skills, the mother gained confidence and grew calmer. The daughter was less stressed. Instead of spiraling down, they are working together.

Counselors are available at the Catholic Charities main office in Nashville, and community outreach counselors are available at the parishes in Hermitage/Old Hickory, Franklin, Murfreesboro and on Thompson Lane in Nashville. A Spanish-speaking counselor is on staff. To learn more about this service, please contact 615-352-3087.
Adoption meetings provide information

Event planning was not a major focus for Caring Choices administrative assistant Scott Gubala when he joined Catholic Charities in 2007. However, for the past several months, it’s been a top priority as he has coordinated a series of adoption information meetings throughout the diocese.

“We’ve had a very full schedule since December,” said Donna Thomas, Caring Choices director. “Through these meetings, we are reaching many prospective parents and professionals in our community who are eager to learn more about adoption.”

The meeting topics include Building Your Family through Adoption, International Adoption “101”, Adoption Issues in Adolescence, and Understanding Infant Adoption. In addition, Caring Choices has conducted mandatory training for people seeking an international adoption and for professionals involved in counseling women with unplanned pregnancies.

The meetings will continue throughout 2012. To learn about upcoming sessions, call 615-760-1025 or check the agency website (http://www.cctenn.org/our-organization/events).

Catholic Charities of Tennessee

Our Mission

Following the example of Christ, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Nashville advocates for and provides services which enhance and enrich the quality of life for people in need.

Catholic Charities of Tennessee provides its services in accordance with the Rights under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.

Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc. is a licensed child placement agency of the State of Tennessee.

For Information:
615-352-3087 or www.cctenn.org
Contributions can be made online at www.cctenn.org

Catholic Charities work together to fight hunger with fresh food

Catholic Charities of Tennessee and Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee have teamed up to help fight hunger in East Nashville and North Nashville.

Perishable food items— including fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products and baked goods—are now delivered to two Catholic Charities programs serving hungry people in these neighborhoods.

What started as a test last fall was upgraded to an on-going program in early 2012. Catholic Charities receives two shipments each month from Second Harvest. On the first Friday of the month, a delivery truck goes to Loaves and Fishes Community Meals for the Hungry at the Holy Name Church Parish Center in East Nashville. The other shipment goes to North Nashville Outreach on Buchanan Street on the third Friday of the month.

The average shipment to each location is 5,000 to 10,000 pounds of fresh food, depending on what is available, according to Tracey Alderdice, agency & program services director at Second Harvest.

“We have stepped up our efforts to distribute perishable foods to hungry people throughout Middle Tennessee,” said Alderdice. “These are goods provided to us by area grocers due to their respective expiration dating procedures. The products may not be sellable from their perspective, but they still have useful food life from ours and should not be thrown away.”

“Our results with Catholic Charities’ distributions have been tremendous! The Catholic Charities team quickly built a great plan of execution for each location, which made things easy for us,” she added.

North Nashville Outreach serves for 30 years (continued from page 1)

Volunteers needed: Can you lend a hand?

The perishable food distribution program offers a new volunteer opportunity to groups interested in assisting Catholic Charities. Five to six volunteers are needed on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month from approximately noon until 5 p.m.

Volunteers help with set-up, distribution to clients, and modest clean-up. For information, please contact Megan Stack at 615-352-3087, ext. 254 or mstack@cctenn.org.

Help the hungry through sponsorship

More than 17.5% of Nashville’s population lives in poverty. Adults and children, both homeless and working poor, are regularly forced to skip meals or to eat less than needed to prevent hunger. Unfortunately, as the need for food assistance increases, federal funding decreases.

Catholic Charities has two long-standing programs that address the issue of hunger in the Nashville community. Loaves and Fishes Community Meals for the Hungry serves free nutritious, hot lunches on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday to approximately 600 guests of all ages every week. North Nashville Outreach distributes emergency food boxes which provided 88,000 meals last year.

Catholic Charities needs sponsorship partners to help sustain its vital food programs and meet the needs of Nashville’s hungry people. A $2,500 sponsorship donation can fully cover out-of-pocket food costs of Loaves and Fishes or North Nashville Outreach for one month. Every sponsorship dollar purchases food that turns hunger to hope.

Sponsorship is an opportunity for an individual, organization or business to make a difference in the lives of thousands of people in the local community. It is also an opportunity to set a pacesetting example to others because sponsors are recognized on the agency website and newsletter, and with signage at the sponsored program.

Please contact Laura Jumonville for more information at ljumonville@cctenn.org or 615-352-2087, ext. 231.