

Catholic Charities

Summer 2005

Archdiocese of Boston

Making Things Better through Collaborations

We see musicians, authors and business people do it. Even politicians involve themselves in the process. Whether an album, biography, new product or piece of legislation, more often than not working with or collaborating with another person or organization will make things better.

Collaborations are very important to non-profits. Combining efforts allows non-profits to maximize resources. In that sense, the individuals and organizations with which Catholic Charities collaborates serve an important role in continuing to provide much-needed services.

Catholic Charities appreciates these efforts from individuals. Staff and volunteers work on the front lines

to provide services. The agency also recognizes the support of donors, without whom our staff and volunteers would not be able to do what they do.

The agency collaborates with several organizations to help provide job training and placement, child care, English classes, young parent support and many other programs which help us accomplish the mission of Catholic Charities.

It is in this spirit that we celebrate the generosity and dedication inherent in these partnerings. Catholic Charities invites you to read how, through our efforts with individuals and other organizations, we are able to make things better and make a more positive impact on those we are blessed to serve. ♥

Playing Well for Others

When you think of playing with children, what comes to mind? A child's smile? A few moments when you can be a kid again? An opportunity to just have fun? While volunteers from Horizons for Homeless Children get to enjoy their time at select Catholic Charities residences playing with the children, their efforts go a long way in helping these children build self-esteem as their mothers begin the long journey to self-sufficiency.

Through a collaborative effort with Horizons for Homeless Children at both our St. Ambrose Family Shelter in Dorchester and Nazareth Residence for Mothers and Children in Roxbury, 15 to 20 volunteers take time out of their busy schedules each week to visit and play with the children of these residences. The volunteers read stories, play games, help with homework or sometimes just sit and listen. The time volunteered is vital, according to St. Ambrose Director Rick Freitas, as it gives the mothers of the children an opportunity to better themselves and, in so doing, their families through trainings offered by both St. Ambrose and Nazareth staff.

"Without the volunteers from Horizons for Homeless Children, the mothers in our program would not have the time and peace of mind to participate in training classes," Rick said. "These trainings cover a wide variety of topics, including stress management, nutrition, budgeting, housing searches and conflict resolution as well as other topics



Volunteers like Kelly Thren from Horizons for Homeless Children, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of homeless children and their families, visit St. Ambrose Family Shelter to spend time playing with children while mothers participate in training programs.

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To find out how Catholic Charities is aiding in hurricane relief efforts, visit www.ccab.org and click on "Hurricane Katrina."

Nursing Program Benefits from Partnership with St. Joseph Manor

Catholic Charities South's Certified Nursing Assistant and Home Health Training Program focuses on developing career entry and marketable skills in the health field for new immigrants, women transitioning from welfare and current high school students or dropouts interested in health care. Students not only spend time in the classroom but also in clinical training through a partnership with St. Joseph Manor, a nursing home and skilled care facility in Brockton.



Students in Catholic Charities South's Certified Nursing Assistant and Home Health Training Program practice maneuvering a walker as part of their training.

"Everyone in the program does at least 21 hours of clinical training at St. Joseph Manor," said Jodi Francis, program manager and lead teacher. "We have a great relationship with St. Joseph's. Usually two students from each class are St. Joseph's employees looking to make a career change."

During clinicals, each student is assigned a patient. They are responsible for anything the patient needs, which may include getting them out of bed, brushing their teeth and feeding them. But the relationship between the program and St. Joseph's does not just benefit the students.

"We use one of St. Joseph's classrooms. So since we are so close sometimes they will call us if they need help with activities or just to make beds, which is a great help to them. This gives students the opportunity to build relationships with the residents prior to their clinicals," Jodi

said. "Also, St. Joseph's is able to hire any of our students after they complete the program."


"The mission of our organization is rooted in health care and education. Our collaboration with Catholic Charities' CNA training program has allowed us to return to those roots," said Anne Teri, chief executive officer of St. Joseph Manor. "The program has become a component of our career ladder program, which provides opportunities for our associates to advance and improve their wage earning capacity."

The Certified Nursing Assistant and Home Health Training Program serves approximately 120 students each year. The day program lasts 8 weeks; the evening program takes 13 weeks. Students must complete 125 hours of training to receive certification. This program differs from others in the area because of the double certificate. Others offer either certification as a nursing assistant or in home health training.

"We offer the double certification to make our students more marketable," Jodi said. "It definitely gives them more options as they take their first steps into the health care field."

While this program serves many different people interested in health care, its primary focus is on immigrants. Approximately 80 percent are from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Africa and Cape Verde. They may take specialized English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes through Catholic Charities South's Immigration Center where they learn medical and health terminology either before or while participating in the certification program. It is important for these students to be able to speak and write English effectively because this program works at a fast pace, often covering four chapters each week in the classroom.

Jodi said that the main goal is to help these students succeed. Some students are asked to retake the program if instructors feel they are not ready for a job. Others may be transferred back to ESOL classes.

"We don't want to push them through the program. We want to make sure they can do the job and be the best they can be." 


How the Work in the West is Done

Throughout our 100 plus years, Catholic Charities has worked with a wide variety of agencies, both through the state and federal governments as well as other non-profits. Catholic Charities West, however, cooperates with sister agency Catholic Charities Worcester to combine skills, ideas and resources to help advance the like missions of both organizations.

This unique arrangement between Catholic Charities West, part of the Archdiocese of Boston, and Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Worcester, began in the late 1990s. Catholic Charities West Director Pat Dunn and Catholic Charities Worcester Administrator Noreen Landry began planning a needs assessment of the region. At the time, Catholic Charities Worcester was providing a variety of services in the region even though much of the service area fell within the geographical confines of the Archdiocese of Boston. When the decision to expand the reach of Catholic Charities West was made, the two organizations got together to find out how best to maximize both of their efforts.

"When Noreen and I met to do the needs assessment for the region, the first step was to look at what each organization was doing," Pat said. "Catholic Charities Worcester was already doing terrific work in the region; the challenge was to increase what could be offered while maintaining a continuity of services that was already being undertaken."

The cooperative spirit of this effort comes through in a variety of avenues. For example, Catholic Charities West and Catholic Charities Worcester share the cost and use of office space in Milford, stretching financial resources for both agencies. The two offices also work together to provide consultation to local parishes, whether through St. Vincent de Paul or local pastors who seek advice on a myriad of problems facing families, including rental and utility assistance, food and budgeting as well as information and referrals for other services.

"Combining the talents and skills of the staff and volunteers of both agencies not only allows for a sharing of resources but also allows for the sharing of ideas, experience and expertise to the betterment of the communities we serve," Pat said. "By working together, we are able to help approximately 2,000 individuals each year. Without the ability to work in tandem with Catholic Charities Worcester, we would not be able to aid as many people." 


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these mothers need assistance with. These trainings help the mothers take their first steps to being able to move out of the residence and live independently with their children.”

Each Horizons volunteer makes a six month commitment when first agreeing to participate, though most volunteers stay on for one to two years. By helping the children with their homework or just by playing outside with them, the volunteers interact positively with them, many of whom have come from difficult family circumstances. This positive interaction can be especially important to children who have trust issues. Many of these children are withdrawn when first coming to the residence, but with the help of the volunteers, positive change can come overnight.

“When the children first arrive at the residence, they can be very hesitant, sometimes even unable or unwilling to speak,” said Sister Mary Farren, director of Nazareth Residence. “But after a few days, thanks in large part to the efforts of our volunteers, progress is quickly made. Even some of the most withdrawn children come out of their shells through their interactions with volunteers.”

And perhaps the best part of all for the volunteers is that even while they are giving of themselves, they are benefiting from the experience as well.

“It’s great because the kids are so excited to see you when you get there,” said Kelly Thren, a Horizons volunteer at St. Ambrose. “They get excited to see you because they know it’s their time when they will get your undivided attention. I get as much out of volunteering with the kids as they do from me, sometimes more.” 



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

Labouré Center Soho Wine Tasting

Thursday, October 6, at 6:30 p.m. at the Artists for Humanity EpiCenter in South Boston. For more information, contact Judy Swanson at 617-268-9670 or judy_swanson@ccab.org.

Catholic Charities South Fashion Show

Sunday, October 16, at 11:30 a.m. at Stonehill College in Easton. For more information, contact Lisa Lodge at 508-587-0815 ext. 234 or lisa_lodge@ccab.org.

Young Professionals Service Project

Saturday, October 22, from 12 noon – 4 p.m. at Malden Child Care and Preschool Center. For more information, contact Katherine Hargadon at 617-451-7958 or katherine_hargadon@ccab.org.

NOVEMBER

Autumn Fundraiser

Tuesday, November 1, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at Abe & Louie’s in Boston. For more information, contact Katherine Hargadon at 617-451-7958 or katherine_hargadon@ccab.org


Haitian Multi-Service Center Dinner Dance

Saturday, November 12, at 7 p.m. at Lantana in Randolph. For more information, call 617-436-2848.

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The Family Foundations Network helps support these teens as they attempt to become better parents by offering support groups, parenting skills classes and workshops which range from tips for good nutrition to helping children sleep through the night. Services are offered to the children as well and include playgroups, music classes and art projects.

Other agencies Brigid’s Crossing collaborates with include the Healthy Families program offered by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC), the Ann Sullivan Center, Lowell Community Health Center and Lowell High School. The various collaborations with community resources enable staff, along with the teen mothers, to identify what programs will be best for each family, making it easier to achieve individual goals.

“We are very fortunate,” Mary said. “We have worked hard to reach out and establish connections with some great organizations. As a result we have been able to offer our residents a wide variety of services and expand their connections within the community.” 

The Catholic Charities Young Professionals group seeks to involve young adults in the service and fundraising aspects of our organization through social events and volunteer opportunities. For additional information or to join, please contact Katherine Hargadon at 617-451-7958 or katherine_hargadon@ccab.org.