



The Mission

CATHOLIC CHARITIES • Diocese of Arlington

Adoption and the Rise of the Internet

Kim Harrell, program director for Catholic Charities' Center for Adoption and Pregnancy Services (CAPS), explains the internet's effect on adoption and ways that Catholic Charities balances face-to-face services with an online presence

How long have you been working with birth parents and adoptive families?

I have been working in the field of adoption for over 20 years. When I first started this work the internet was not a factor, but as the internet has become a part of everyday life and "googling" has become a verb, we have seen its



Kim Harrell, CAPS
Program Director

influence in adoption. When a woman discovers she is unexpectedly pregnant and is looking for help, she takes to the internet. When a family wants to adopt, they go to the internet. This is a very valuable tool but all those involved in adoption are vulnerable and still require a human "touch" and personal face-to-face contact.

What are some of the benefits associated with the rise of internet-based adoption?

The internet is a great place to start your research. Our website answers questions and myths, details the services we offer and profiles couples waiting to adopt. However, we also have social

workers on staff to meet with parents face-to-face, a critical component of the adoption process.

What are some of the risks associated with internet-based adoption?

Choosing to conduct all of your adoption services over the internet becomes dangerously impersonal. It's especially challenging for birth mothers. Adoptive families are required to work with at least one local agency, but birth mothers can set up an adoption completely over the internet. Without a personal connection, they don't have anyone to fall back on when times get tough. These women need a human touch, a support group or professional counseling. Local

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The Priceless Value of a Confidant

A birth mother's personal adoption experience with Catholic Charities

Five years ago, Kate (*name changed to retain anonymity*) gave her son up for adoption through Catholic Charities' Center for Adoption and Pregnancy Services (CAPS).

When she first found out she was pregnant, she decided that adoption would be the best way that she could care for him. Like most everyone of her generation, she got on the computer and researched adoption.

"The internet was a great place to start, but I realized I was craving human

interaction, someone I could talk to about this experience," she said. "I knew I couldn't hide behind the internet forever."

Her parents and parish priest recommended that she call Catholic Charities.

"My priest told me that I couldn't go wrong with Catholic Charities, that it was his number one recommendation," she recalls.

Desiring that her son be raised in a religious home, CAPS seemed like the best fit.

"From the very first time I called the CAPS office, their professionalism and compassion was overwhelming," Kate said. "They knew the journey I was on and could anticipate my questions before I could ask them. Now they don't sugarcoat anything, but you never find yourself thinking, *I wish someone would have told me this.*"

Kate received counseling through the CAPS office during her pregnancy, and together they worked through the varying stages of grief that she experienced.

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“Adoption...”, continued from page 1

agencies provide those services, but the nature of the internet removes this component.

How are you trying to work against this growing trend in internet-based adoption?

Well, the answer isn't what you're thinking... We're actually going to the source, the internet. Our goal is to have an increased presence on the internet and social media. When people start searching for answers, we want to be on page 1, not page 5. We believe that people will choose a local agency over an online agency if we are easily accessible. We want the parents to know that we offer face-to-face services, and we will go to them if they need us to. Just as Christ went from town to town, so do we.

So what kind of face-to-face services does CAPS provide?

We work with anyone touched by adoption, not just families that went through us. I like to say that “everybody

needs a somebody” in adoption. We offer counseling and a birth parent support group that meets once a month. Some of the members placed their child recently and others placed their child more than 20 years ago. We also have a picnic around Mother's Day each year to recognize these women even though they may not be parenting their child. We provide a variety of services and resources for adoptive families and those waiting to adopt. We like to bring adoptive families together and facilitate this through meet and greet events, picnics, etc. with our Friends of Adoption group.

Why do you believe that CAPS is the best agency to provide these services?

Catholic Charities has been doing this work for as long as any agency in the area. For me and my employees, I would say it's our life's work. This isn't just a job for any of us. We stick to our mission and are rewarded by it.

“Confidant...”, continued from page 1

One of her most touching experiences has been her role in the birth parents support group. It's held on the first Tuesday of the month at the CAPS office in Burke. After five years, Kate still attends the meetings.

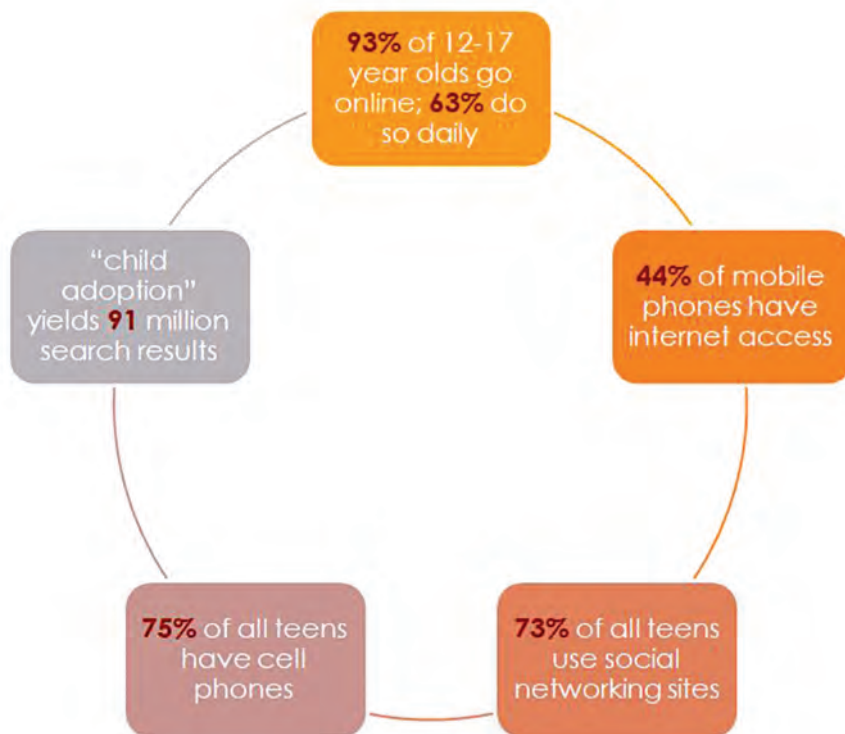
“Every story is different, and they are all beautiful,” she said. “When you're new, you need to see that there are women who have gone on to get married and have children. You need to see that there's a light at the end of the tunnel.”

“Now some of these women are my closest friends. I'm a Godmother to one of their children. It's an amazing process to be a part of.”

While grateful for the care and healing that she has experienced, Kate says she is ultimately thankful for the emphasis placed on her son.

“He was the only priority for me in this whole process,” she said. “It is wonderful to have the support of CAPS and to have these relationships. It's a part of my daily healing. But knowing that my son is in the hands of parents that I got to select is such a comforting feeling. Knowing that he's getting the life that I could not provide helps confirm my decision.”

Save the date
Friends of Adoption
Wine and Cheese Party
 Saturday, April 12
 Contact Pam Carbajal at PCarbajal@ccda.net or
 (703) 425-0100 for more information.



Source: Pew Research Center, 2009

GET INVOLVED!

If you have been touched by adoption and would like more information on the Families of Adoption Network or post adoptive counseling, please contact Kim Harrell at KHarrell@ccda.net or 703-425-0100.

● PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Recently I was reading the daily Scripture readings and it centered on John the Baptist. He told the crowd to repent and they replied, "What should we do?"

Good question.

Without skipping a beat, he answers, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." (Luke 3: 11)

Fast forward 2,000 years and Pope Francis is calling us to do the same. In his Lenten Message, the Holy Father writes, "In imitation of our Master, we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it."

More of others, less of ourselves.

Catholic Charities, at its best, provides each of us that opportunity—to love others more than we love ourselves as we take practical steps to alleviate poverty across our diocese.

Each employee, volunteer and donor prayerfully brings personal expertise and a sacrificial heart to a brother or sis-

"In imitation of our Master, we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it."

Pope Francis



ter in need—and what an incredible mission we have to advance.

In this issue of *The Mission*, you will read about leaders who bring personal expertise and leadership to change lives of those we serve. Kim Harrell leads our adoption services with a person-to-person model of best serving our families. Two volunteers at St. Martin's, each passionate about health and well-being, bring fitness classes to our seniors. Retired businessmen give back by mentoring at Christ House Men's Shelter. Our dedicated Catholic Charities Ball volunteers looked within themselves and also inspired their peers to raise more than \$838,000 for this year's event.

During this Lent, I pray that your spiritual journey will allow you to follow both John the Baptist and Pope Francis by imitating Christ in his encounter with the poor and his service to others. In doing so, may we all grow closer to God while transforming lives and the face of charity in our diocese.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Art Bennett".

Art Bennett

*President and CEO
Catholic Charities of the
Diocese of Arlington*

● FAMILY SERVICES COUNSELING

Counseling for Struggling Mothers

Partnership with Mary's Shelter brings family therapy to homeless pregnant women

Starting in February, our Family Services office in Fredericksburg began a partnership with Mary's Shelter to provide a parent skills training group to its residents. Mary's Shelter started in 2007 in Fredericksburg and provides housing for homeless pregnant women and their children.

Mary's Shelter operates four separate residences in downtown Fredericksburg and provides housing free of charge for women in need regardless of race, creed or religious affiliation.

The women at Mary's Shelter will be participating in a Family Filial Therapy (FFT) Group, which is a weekly skills

training and support group designed to teach parents how to be better parents for their children.

This has the three-fold effect of supporting the mental health and emotional growth of the child, improving the mother's confidence in being able to parent positively and strengthening the relationship between mother and child. FFT has shown to have a positive impact on the children involved, so that they demonstrate improved mental health and healthier relationships. These factors contribute to improved school performance and provide a more positive foundation for success.

The FFT group is being provided free of charge to the residents of Mary's Shelter thanks to the support of a donor committed to finding ways to break the cycle of intergenerational homelessness in the diocese.



GET INVOLVED!

A donation or monthly pledge of \$25, \$50 or \$75 will allow us to better serve the poor in our diocese through counseling programs and partnerships like this one. Please visit www.cdda.net to donate today.

Christians Are Networking Expands to Four Sites

Volunteers bring CAN to Ashburn and Falls Church, in addition to sessions held in Alexandria and Culpeper

CAN supports people looking for work or a career change by providing job seekers free career counseling and networking opportunities. Each session opens with a prayer. Presentations on topics such as developing an “elevator speech,” setting goals and dealing with stress are given by volunteers. From there, one-on-one mentoring provides an important personal touch. A workbook is given free to all attendees so they can take charge of their job search.

St. Philip, Falls Church



Photo by Brenda Schrier at brendasphotos.com

Vicky Dobbin has helped bring Christians Are Networking (CAN) to St. Philip’s parish.

“I think there’s this idea that unemployed people are under educated, under skilled or untrained,” Dobbin said. “It’s a different reality to what unemployment is really like.”

Dobbin faced unemployment a couple of years ago before deciding to start her own social media and marketing business that caters to local businesses and associations.

Now she uses those experiences and her marketing skills to help others find jobs.

“A lot about job searching is marketing yourself,” she said.

CAN sessions are held at St. Philips on the first and third Wednesday evenings of each month.

“We’ve had so much support from our parish community and the Falls Church business community,” said Dobbin. “It’s so much more rewarding than I thought it would be.”

Elizabeth Lucas CAN Co-Founder

“The Diocese of Arlington has a large footprint, encompassing 21 counties and including almost 3,000,000 people within its boundaries. Expanding the program allows it to be more accessible to a broader community of the unemployed.”

St. Theresa, Ashburn

Una Giachinta volunteers in the office at St. Theresa. She works with Marianne Guidos, Director of Divine Mercy Outreach, a ministry that helps individuals and families in need, especially those transitioning out of shelters.

However, they realized that there was a recurrent theme—unemployment or under employment.

“I knew that a jobs ministry would complement this issue that is plaguing so many people in our community,” Giachinta said.

With a masters in social work, she worked in medical social work, foster care and adoption for 12 years, even working for the Archdiocese of New York for a few years.

“Working with that population, many families who are on the fringe and just need someone to listen, has made me adaptable to work in our outreach ministry and with the job



seekers who come to our CAN sessions,” she said.

CAN sessions are held in the school classrooms at St. Theresa on the first and third Tuesday evenings of the month.

Marianne Guidos St. Theresa Outreach

“People tend to just see Ashburn as affluent, but many families struggle to live in Loudoun County. We noticed a rise in unemployed individuals, and helping them financially wasn’t enough. We wanted to help individuals to help themselves.”



GET INVOLVED!

Are you looking for a job? Can you volunteer with our weekly CAN sessions? Are you a business owner who can help find employment for our job seekers? Please contact Elizabeth Lucas at Elizabeth22305@verizon.net or (703) 683-7704 for more information.

Dancing to the Music

Volunteers share fitness passions with seniors to help them maintain physical health

We provide instructional exercise classes that support elderly health that also increase the seniors’ knowledge of exercise and nutrition. From Zumba to Arthritis Foundation classes to Muscle Fitness—the activities create a sense of self-confidence for the participants. As they strengthen their muscles, joints and heart, a conversion of positivity takes over. They can move more freely, feel great about their improvements and take on new challenges!

St. Martin de Porres Activity Schedule, March 17-21				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Warm Up Video •Blood Pressure Readings •English as Second Language •Zumba •Rosary •Bingo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Warm Up Video •Shopping Trip •March Birthday Party •Line Dancing •St. Patrick’s Day Party and games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Warm Up Video •Games with Bishop Ireton students •Arthritis Foundation classes •English as a Second Language •Bread Raffle •Musical Performance by: “The Jazz Update” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Warm Up Video •Bridge •English as a Second Language •Muscle Fitness •Interreligious Prayer •Movie “Leap Year” and snacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Warm Up Video •Blood Pressure Readings •Wellness class •Zumba •Catholic Eucharist •Senior Council Meeting •Prize Bingo

Marie Kennedy taught and coached track for more than 30 years, including 7 years as the first Fitness Director at Catholic University of America.



These days, instead of high school and college seniors, she’s using her time to focus on seniors of a different variety—those that visit St. Martin de

Porres Senior Center.

Every Thursday, Kennedy comes to Alexandria from her home in Great Falls to teach Muscle Fitness to the seniors. The goal of the class is to help them maintain muscle mass, which deteriorates much faster in older age.

“By maintaining a higher level of physicality in old age, our seniors can continue doing their daily activities and keep a high quality of life,” said Kennedy, who has had elderly parents live with her. “It also helps build self-confidence and makes them feel young.”

Kennedy also has an assistant, Marcia Slick, who leads the class if she needs to stop and give a senior individual attention and help with a particular exercise. Both Kennedy and Slick are parishioners at Our Lady of Hope.

“This is an opportunity to use what I know to make things better for other people,” Kennedy said. “And the rewards are great. You give back to them, but you gain much more than you give.”

Patricia Aldas has spent more than 33 years working in health care and her current position as a community relations representative brings her out into the community, to build partnerships and promote healthy living.

To maintain her own health, Aldas was attending Zumba classes with her daughter when she decided to get certified herself. Now she brings the classes to the seniors at St. Martin de Porres.

“It’s so important for the seniors—not only do they get to move around and exercise their joints, but it makes them so happy to listen to the music,” she said. “It brings out so much happiness when we do the Zumba.”

With more than 30 countries represented at St. Martin’s, the beat of the music breaks down this language barrier.

“They may not understand the words but whatever movements we do, everyone enjoys it,” she said. “They really come alive.”



GET INVOLVED!
 Volunteers are needed for activities including front desk help, exercise classes, bingo and computer classes. Contact Kathryn Toohey at KToohey@ccda.net or (703) 751-2766.

● 2014 CATHOLIC CHARITIES BALL

On the evening of February 21st, about 750 guests joined Catholic Charities in celebrating its life-giving services at the 2014 "Light the Way" Annual Catholic Charities Ball. Bishop Paul S. Loverde presided over the evening, which raised more than **\$838,000** for Catholic Charities' programs and services. The evening debuted a new Live Auction that included trips to Rome and Buenos Aires. Also new this year was a \$50,000 Challenge Gift from an anonymous donor. Mrs. Dee Estes was honored with the James J. Matthews Legacy Award recognizing her dedication as a Catholic Charities Ball leader.

All images below courtesy of Jenifer Morris Photography JeniferMorrisPhotography.com



2014 Ball Chairs: Maria Coakley David and Lynne Shank with Bishop Loverde



Bishop Loverde with Dee Estes, recipient of the 2014 Matthews Award



2014 Special Gifts Committee Chairs: Pat DiBari and Mary Anne Forrester with Bishop Loverde and Art Bennett



Paul Lanzillotta and Bob Smith don their red accoutrements for this year's theme of "Black Tie and Red"



The event was held at the Ritz-Carlton in Tysons Corner



Shawn McLaughlin led the Live Auction with the help of Maria Coakley David and Lynne Shank, raising an additional \$48,000



Former Ball Chairs let loose on the dance floor to the tune of the band, Fresh Air



Ronald and Mary Jane Steele



Shannon David, Kristin David Burch, Cornelius James David and their grandmother, Mrs. Ellen Coakley

Save the date for the
2015 Catholic Charities Ball
 Friday, February 13, 2015

For more information about the 2015 Ball, including information on sponsorship or Catholic Charities partnership opportunities, please contact James Michels at JMichels@ccda.net or (703) 841-3841.

● STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet Sarah Porter, LCSW

Social Worker, Center for Adoption and Pregnancy Services

How did you come to Catholic Charities? Well, I previously worked in adoption for Catholic Charities of Broome County (New York) and interned with Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Boston. When I moved here I was working as a social worker at a pre-school, but when this position opened up two years ago I jumped at the opportunity to return to a field and organization I love.

Why are you passionate about working in adoption? Adoption has always been close to me because my cousin is adopted. She and I are more like sisters than cousins, so I've been especially thankful she was adopted into our family. Working in adoption is also very relational because to establish trust with a birth mother or adoptive family,

you have to build a relationship with them.

Help us understand how you help others in your position. I counsel women and couples that are experiencing unplanned pregnancies and help them decide if they should make a parenting plan or an adoptive plan for their child. I also work with adoptive families that are working through the stages of being able to adopt and plan trainings and informational meetings for them.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job? This work takes an emotional toll on me because I become invested in the families I'm serving. However, we really promote self-care in our office. We take walks at lunch just to get out and clear our heads.



March is National Professional Social Worker Month. We are pleased to honor Sarah and all of our dedicated social workers.

What is the best part of your job? I love working with all different types of people, getting to know them and hear their stories. I enjoy being able to serve them throughout their journey and help them realize their goals.

● MEN'S SHELTER

Volunteers Listen with the Heart of Christ

Christ House mentors use listening ear, past experiences to encourage and help residents

As a member of Blessed Sacrament parish for 15 years, Barry Shillito was aware of Christ House Men's Shelter, but wanted to take a greater role in its community once he retired from his career as an attorney.

He was attracted to the mentor program for the men living at Christ House because of its relational nature and emphasis on in-depth help for one individual.

"I'm just trying to help this man get back on his feet," Shillito said. "But it's not about me. It's all about my mentee. I try not to fill him with my success stories, but instead I look for experiences I've had in the past that might help him."

About once a week, Shillito comes to Christ House and he and his mentee find a quiet space—typically in the library room or kitchen—where they can talk for an hour or so.

"This isn't something that suits the nature of everyone because it isn't remedied by a quick fix," Shillito said. "You have to be very patient and understanding. But that makes it a genuinely worthwhile opportunity to change someone's life for the better."

Jerry Howard, parishioner at St. Luke's for 10 years, admits that he was nervous when he started mentoring a resident at Christ House Men's Shelter.

"We come from different backgrounds, so I was nervous of how we would relate to one another," Howard said. "But we developed a basis of trust right away and have never looked back."

Since November, Howard has been meeting with his mentee about once a week.

"We both appreciate the fact that we can talk man to man," Howard said. "He talks candidly about his situation and I am able to share life lessons and experiences I've had without being over bearing."

Howard says that Alan Holmer, an active Christ House volunteer, suggested this mentoring program to him as something he might enjoy and find rewarding.

"I shared a few strategies and tactics about watching other people in his work place and emulating their good habits and he ended up getting a promotion," Howard said. "I find it very rewarding to help someone who is so interested in helping himself."

Giving through a Donor Advised Fund

The Foundation for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington

The Foundation for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington is a 501(c)(3) public charity that began as a conversation driven by parishioners verbalizing their interest in establishing endowments which could allow for donating in the present to care for Church needs into perpetuity.

While the concept of having a foundation is not new; within the tax regulation, legal costs, and donor options of this millennium, the timing was right for our Diocese to establish a Foundation which could assist parishioners in finding ways to enhance their charitable giving.

The primary purpose of establishing a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) in the Foundation is to provide donors with the programs, tools, resources, and support to make charitable giving simple and to carry out the legacy of their family's stewardship.

The mission of the Foundation is to receive and steward charitable gifts in support of the spiritual, educational, and social service needs of families and individuals, thereby providing for the long-term stability of the designee, such as a parish, school or ministry like Catholic Charities.

Our own **Christ House Men's Shelter** was the first recipient of a grant made through this Foundation.


"I can think of no better expression of faith in action than the work at Christ House" said Joe Guiffre, Chairman of the Board for the Foundation. "Christ House does two things well. It feeds the hungry and provides a way out of dependency by offering men the help needed to break away from homelessness and to provide for themselves by getting work."

To learn more please contact James Michels, Catholic Charities Vice President of Development, at (703) 841-3841 or JMichels@ccda.net or Lou Ann Armstrong, Director of Special Gifts at (703) 841-3819 or L.Armstrong@arlingtondiocese.org.




Individuals and families may establish or direct their philanthropic support to include, but are not limited to:

- **Restricted Endowment Funds**
- **Donor-Advised Funds**
- **Memorial Funds**
- **Scholarship Funds**
- **Unrestricted Endowment Fund**





Catholic Charities is now listed on Guidestar, one of the largest 501(c)(3) organizations dedicated to collecting, organizing and presenting information to donors and volunteers. We are glad to provide our supporters this information as part of our on-going commitment to Catholic stewardship of those resources entrusted to us.



The Mission, Winter 2014
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