



# The Mission

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington

Fall 2008

## Forum to Focus on Search and Reunion in Adoption

Photo by Jeanne Speath



Jessica was reunited with her birth mother Gerry (left) during the past year after requesting Catholic Charities' assistance with her search.

In her late thirties, after being raised by loving, adoptive parents, Jessica decided to search for her birth mother. "At first I was afraid to search for her. Maybe I would disrupt her world. Maybe she would not be interested

in seeing me" she said.

Jessica turned to a Catholic Charities' counselor for help with her search. The counselor helped her explore the hopes and expectations she held and to consider the various outcomes her search might have. The final result, after her birth mother agreed to disclosure, was a heartfelt reunion of mother and daughter.

As part of National Adoption Month, Catholic Charities will present a "Search and Reunion in Adoption" forum on November 8 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the meeting room of St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel at 4515 Roberts Road in Fairfax.

The program will cover recent changes that have taken place in the field of adoption, the

Commonwealth of Virginia's procedures for opening adoption records, and the way to initiate a search.

The main feature will be a panel discussion by members of the adoption triad: adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents. These individuals will share personal reflections about how it feels to grow up as an adoptee, the effect of reunion on the adoptive family, and how a birth mother may react to contact from her child.

To preregister for the forum (\$30), call Children's Services at 703-425-0100. Registration at the door will be \$35.

Catholic Charities' Children's Services supports the pro-life mission of the Church by offering crisis pregnancy counseling, foster care, and adoption services.

## Volunteers Called to Action

Thanks to a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Catholic Charities now has on staff Jeannine Purdy, a full-time director for volunteers.

Jeannine, who holds a Master's in Social Work, will administer the RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program), which matches volunteers (age 55 and up) with positions that

relate to their interests and abilities and serve the community.

Jeannine and her assistants, Abdul Rahim and Celeste Reed, will work closely with volunteers to find assignments that match their skills or let them develop new ones.

"Opportunities are available for as little as a couple of hours a week to full-time, and some volunteers even work from home," says Jeannine.

Photo by Jeanne Speath



Jeannine Purdy (left) and assistants Abdul Rahim and Celeste Reed review files to match volunteers with areas of interest.

CNCS is a federal agency that supports service and volunteering programs.

Call 703-841-3834 for details.



Stephen Luteran

## FROM THE DESK OF Stephen Luteran

What is this thing called love? When I was surfing through television channels the other night, I happened to come upon an MTV video about love. As is often the case in today's world, love was represented as only feelings and emotions and was almost reduced to a type of self-love.

During the Year of St. Paul, June 2008 to June 2009 as proclaimed by our Holy Father, we can learn a great deal about love by turning to the definition

given by St. Paul: "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, is not pompous ... does not seek its own interests ... rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes in all things, endures all things. Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 13)

Nothing in the MTV video showed any of these qualities. The video's representation of love was based on selfish love and using the other person for one's gratification, whereas true love—agape—is an unselfish, self-sacrificing love that always chooses what is good for the other person. This

is the standard for love that every Christian and person of faith should be striving for and not the standard that the world has set.

In our work at Catholic Charities, we are trying to live out St. Paul's definition of love everyday. With your prayers and contributions, we will succeed.

Stephen Luteran, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.  
Executive Director  
Catholic Charities  
of the Diocese of Arlington

## Lunches for the Hungry

Catholic Charities' Western Regional Office recently started a program to feed the hungry in Loudoun County. Staff and volunteers prepare bagged lunches twice a week for distribution to needy individuals who come to the County drop-in center in Leesburg.

When Dawn Dumas, manager of social services for the office, heard that the drop-in center was in need of prepared meals, she asked local stores such as Giant and Harris Teeter and organizations such as Loudoun Interfaith to donate food so that she and volunteers could prepare brown-bag lunches containing a sandwich, fruit cup, and cookie.

Executive Director Stephen Luteran says, "We're pleased to work with local groups and the Loudoun County staff at the drop-in center to provide this service. We've learned that a number of the individuals who pick up the lunches are the working poor. They have jobs

like stocking shelves at night in stores in the area. They are struggling to make ends meet one day at a time."

The Western Regional Office is located at 100 Dry Mill Road, SW, Unit 102, in Leesburg. For information or to contribute to the new lunch program, call 703-443-2481.



Photo by Dawn Dumas

Volunteer Theresa Lozano prepares food.

## 33 Years of Service



Photo by Jeanne Spaeth

Linda Cullen, program director of Children's Services, is retiring from Catholic Charities after 33 years of work. Executive Director Stephen Luteran thanks Linda (above) for her dedicated service and says, "When I first came to Catholic Charities, Linda was a great mentor and one of those individuals truly committed to upholding the sacredness of life. She has spent many years helping women in crisis pregnancies."

## News In Brief

- Remarkable results are reported by Catholic Charities' Hogar Immigrant Services for students taking its citizenship class. Since July, thirty-one students—a record number—have passed the U.S. Citizenship Test and become full-fledged citizens. The class teaches English and the fundamentals of U.S. history and government.

- With generous contributions from St. Mary of Sorrows Parish of Fairfax and other donors, Catholic Charities provided low-income students with backpacks filled with school supplies. The program was organized by Hogar Immigrant Services, and the backpacks were distributed in late August to ninety happy young students.

- Catholic Charities thanks St. Francis de Sales Parish of Purcellville for its generous support of the agency's Western Regional Office (WRO). Over the past several months, the parish has donated food and money for WRO's brown-bag lunch program for the hungry. It has also designated WRO as a recipient of one of its "community needs" donations.

- Catholic Charities has limited funds available to help families and individuals who were directly or indirectly impacted by the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Call 703-841-2542.

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## Soccer Day Provides Fun and Outreach

Volunteer  
 Mahmoud  
 Nemat of  
 the American  
 Soccer League  
 directs a soccer  
 clinic for young  
 players at  
 Hogar's recent  
 outreach event.



Photo by Erin Maradiegue

To increase its outreach to the community, Catholic Charities' Hogar Immigrant Services recently hosted "Family Soccer Day," featuring soccer clinics for children, an exhibition match by players of the American Soccer League (ASL), and information tables about Hogar's English classes, naturalization workshops, and immigration legal services.

Hogar Program Director John Odenwelder said, "This event was the crowning achievement of our ExxonMobil summer intern, Alfredo Fletes. In addition to soc-

cer clinics, there were games, prizes, free books, local food vendors, and an exciting match."

Generous contributors to the event were Barnes and Noble, Kihomac Inc., Loudoun Electric, Students of Georgetown Inc, Fedex Kinko's, Volunteer Fairfax, and DC United. Funding also came from a "family strengthening" grant from CCUSA.

Odenwelder thanked Hogar volunteers and staff, particularly Erin Maradiegue, for their help as well.

## Fredericksburg Office Offers Play Therapy



Photo by Diane Hess

The new play room gets checked out.

Catholic Charities' Fredericksburg District Office recently opened a play therapy room. Fr. David Martin, pastor of St. Jude Parish, blessed the room and its brightly colored furnishings and supplies: sand tray, doll house, miniature kitchen, cars, building blocks, puppets, dolls, figurines, clay, paints, games, and other items.

Play therapy is a way of helping troubled children express their concerns, emotions, and thoughts in a safe environment

that is natural to them. Through non-directed or directed play under the guidance of a counselor, the child is often able to work through his or her pain or difficulties. Children suffering from neglect, loss (such as the death of a loved one), abuse, or developmental delays are typical candidates who can benefit from play therapy.

Supervisory therapist Carolanne Croll said that the office "had been turning away requests for counseling for nonverbal 3 to 9 year-olds" because it was not able to provide a play therapist and playroom. "We could only help the young child who is able to talk to a counselor about his or her feelings," said Croll. "But now we are able to serve this population group." Call 540-371-1124 for information.

# Many Hands Make Light Work at Christ House

After praying the rosary at a morning assembly on October 17, Bishop O'Connell students delivered more than 12,000 cans of food to the Christ House food pantry in keeping with a tradition that the school began more than 30 years ago. During the early part of October, students brought in "chunky soup" cans to their homerooms. On the final day of the food drive, students collected the cans, loaded them onto a truck, delivered them to Christ House, and placed them on pantry shelves.

Executive Director Stephen Luteran says, "This annual delivery is a tremendous help to our mission of feeding the hungry. We thank Bishop O'Connell students for their unflagging generosity and support."

Thanks is also given to dedi-

cated parish supporters. St. Bernadette of Springfield, St. Andrew and St. Clare of Clifton, and St. Timothy and St. Veronica of Chantilly collaborated with the Christ House on Wheels program to make several deliveries over the past summer to low-income families in Our Lady of the Blue Ridge area of Madison. The food totaled 5,325 pounds, and gift cards totaled almost \$2,000.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish of Triangle recently held a successful food drive for Christ House, as did Providence Presbyterian Church of Fairfax. Youth Group members of Providence Presbyterian collected food and then spent time helping to take inventory and to organize the food pantry.

The Christ House on Wheels van was able to deliver school supplies to needy children in the St. Isidore the Farmer area in Orange County in early September. The supplies were collected through a campaign organized by Pooja and Richard Krumenacker, who both attended college in southwestern Virginia where, said Pooja, "We saw many families who had a real need for such simple things as school supplies."

The holiday food basket



Photos by Jeanne Spaeth

O'Connell students (above) deliver their school's annual truckload of soup. Members of the Providence Presbyterian Youth Group (right) help organize the food pantry.



Photo by Ray Pisney



## Fr. Killian Returns

Five years after serving a summer internship at Christ House as a seminarian, Fr. Tony Killian returned to celebrate Mass in the St. Vincent de Paul Chapel on September 4.

"The chapel is such an important part of Christ House, and it is a privilege to celebrate Mass here with those who have taken an interest in Christ House—a landmark of hope in our Diocese—over the years," he said.



Photo by Tom Bransfield

Christ House's evening meal for the hungry is prepared by young members of Squire Roses of Knights of Columbus Council No. 10723 of St. Anthony Parish of Falls Church.

program is now underway at Christ House. Donations are needed to fill Thanksgiving and Christmas gift baskets for needy families. Requested items include turkeys, hams, stuffing mixes, instant potatoes, canned gravy, cranberries, canned vegetables, and pies.

To help fill food baskets or the pantry, call 703-548-4227.

## Calendar

November 8 – "Search and Reunion in Adoption" at St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel, 703-425-0100

November 22 – Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walkathon on the Mall in Washington, DC (code for Catholic Charities: VA011)

February 20 – Catholic Charities Ball at Ritz-Carlton in Tysons Corner (703-841-3835)