Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.
Dear Friends of Catholic Charities,

From my youth, I can recall the motto of the Christopher movement, “Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness”. We have adopted this as the theme of our 2009 annual report.

Last year Catholic Charities brought light into the lives of over 29,000 persons. We walked with our clients in joyful times: couples adopting children, pregnant women recovering from addiction, mothers and children finding freedom from abuse, immigrants becoming new citizens, refugee children experiencing the love of foster families, abused or traumatized children discovering healing or families overcoming crisis. We also were there when times were difficult and resources not there.

Catholic Charities also responded to local needs with new services such as the new Food Pantry in Natchez. When needs change, we change. After years of providing shelter to homeless and runaway youth, Catholic Charities is on the cutting edge of these services by transforming Our House into Host Homes, a much less restrictive means of helping these young people. In times of disaster, Catholic Charities was there to help families recover quickly and with dignity.

In the future, Catholic Charities is seeking to respond to the needs of our elderly. We want to expand services to the Delta and eastern parts of our diocese. We believe we can continue to be a voice for the poor and vulnerable in our society through the development of strong advocacy networks and calling all people of good will to join us in serving God’s people.

Facing the prospect of a long recovery from the recent recession, Catholic Charities’ services will be in greater need for years to come. Answering the Gospel call to serve “the least of these” is something we can do together. With your support, Catholic Charities can continue to bring light and hope into the lives of thousands of individuals and families.

May God’s love be a light for each one of you,

Greg Patin

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Candle photos: Joy McClellan
Programs / Services

Bringing Light...into the lives of our sisters and brothers in Christ

CHILDRENS SERVICES

Hope Haven Residential provides mental health services for children in a residential therapeutic crisis center which involves a short-term respite with individual, group and family therapy. Crisis Response and Outreach offers 24-hour telephone and mobile response with on site intervention for the family in crisis. These programs served 1005 persons during the year.

Hope Haven Home Based specializes in counseling and service coordination to families whose children have a mental health diagnosis. This program served 195 persons.

The Trauma Recovery for Youth Project (TRY) strives to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for traumatized children, their families and the community. In the year, 3000 persons were reached.

Therapeutic Foster Care offers intensive in-home services to help children with serious emotional disorders who are in the custody of the Department of Human Services. We help these children develop the skills needed to function in the home and in community settings. We were able to help 170 persons.

Our House Shelter for Homeless and Runaway Teens provides emergency shelter, counseling and prevention services to runaway, homeless, neglected and abused youth ages 12-17. This service has now evolved into a Host Home Program that offers shelter in foster homes as well as remedial help. 115 persons were assisted during the year.

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence Centers in Jackson and Natchez provide safe refuge for victims of family violence. We make available emergency shelter, daycare and counseling. The Jackson Center has a Legal Assistance Clinic that offers support and legal representation to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. We also offer violence prevention education. Second Stage housing and support services are available after victims leave the shelters. We served 7,500 persons in the year.

Rape Crisis Centers in Natchez and Jackson assist victims of sexual assault with medical intervention and counseling. We make sexual violence presentations before school, law enforcement and community groups. 7,247 persons were reached during the year.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES

Born Free is a residential treatment program for pregnant or parenting women in need of assistance to help them recover from chemical addictions. New Beginnings is a follow up service for women who have successfully completed the Born Free treatment. These programs served 91 persons.

REFUGEE SERVICES

Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program is a long term therapeutic foster care service for refugee children from war torn countries and individuals seeking political asylum. 40 persons were helped by these efforts.

ADOPTION/MATERNITY CARE

Adoption Services are offered to those seeking to open their homes and hearts to children. Our services include domestic and international home studies, pre and post placement services for adoptive families, services to birth parents and counseling which is available throughout the life of an adopted child.

Maternity Care Services are offered to women facing an unplanned pregnancy. Services include prenatal counseling, exploring parental options, adoption planning and referrals.

Infant Foster Care is provided on a short term basis for infants pending adoption or reunification with birth families. We were happy to have served 251 persons in these programs.

We were happy to have served 251 persons in these programs.
The Immigration Clinic of Catholic Charities provides families and individuals with immigration services including permanent residence, citizenship, work authorization, and visa renewal. The following is a story from the Clinic’s files – names have been changed to protect privacy.

One Man’s Journey

Felix was born in Jerusalem. He came to the United States, met, fell in love and subsequently married Janet who lived in South Carolina. Unfortunately, their “honeymoon period” did not last very long. Sadly, he suffered a stroke and became disabled. Rather than give Felix the medicine that the doctor prescribed, his wife took it and sold it on the black market. She tied him to his bed so that he could not call anyone for help. She even threatened him by saying that she could kill him by giving him the wrong pills.

One day, while his wife was gone, Felix was able to escape from the house. He came to Mississippi seeking help. There he was taken into a shelter for the homeless and that is where he resides today.

In 2006 Catholic Charities Immigration Clinic filed a VAWA petition (a petition for domestic violence victims) and a petition for adjustment of status (for a green card). Nothing had been easy for Felix up until now and it continued to be very difficult. The State of Israel had no records of his birth in Jerusalem. Felix did not have a legible copy of his birth certificate or his passport. For these reasons, the Israeli Embassy refused to issue a new passport.

Finally, after going through numerous obstacles, Felix received his green card. The Immigration Clinic gave him the good news. He was in shock and was crying tears of joy that he was now a permanent resident of our country. He now plans to visit his sister in Jerusalem, who he has not seen since 1985. Through the work of the Immigration Clinic along with dealing with his domestic violence situation, Felix’s life has been changed after many years of suffering. Catholic Charities was able to make a difference in his life.
Dear Friends,

As you may know, many of those who benefit from Catholic Charities are not Catholic, some come from abusive situations, some are addicts or the children of addicts. But I am here to show you other faces of Catholic Charities and the benefits that come from your generosity. Those faces belong to me, my husband Wray, and our two children.

In September 2005 while our community was picking up the pieces from Hurricane Katrina, our family was in somewhat of a hurricane ourselves. Our two year old daughter, Julia, was diagnosed with Leukemia. After seven months living in Memphis for treatment at St. Jude Medical Center, we returned home with a child in remission and a family ready to live again.

Returning home though were two adults with entirely different ways of dealing with what the past seven months had done to our marriage, our family, and our overall view of life itself. On the outside I saw everything in a nostalgic light. I felt that life was good and we are blessed. But inside I was terrified. If she relapsed, I had plans for that. I kept order in the house in case I had to send friends in there again to pack up.

Wray verbalized his fear but then moved on in a very "act as though it never happened" mode. Occasionally he would obsess about the smallest bruise or sniffle that would not go away. I found myself fearful when he would ask me what I thought. Frustrated, I would reply "she is fine" though not sure if I actually believed it.

After a few months of this and what seemed like increasing arguments and frustration in our marriage, we turned to Louise Dillon of the Solomon Counseling Center. I felt guilty that we had endured so much and yet as a couple could not get along. Then those words that we heard at St. Jude’s rang in my heart: "please take care of yourselves and your marriage because illness can tear families apart and ruin marriages". Although I could see that happening to some, never us. But it was happening.

After several months of counseling we became aware that we did not “know” each other. It is called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. What Louise taught us is that we are both very different people and have very different ways of dealing with how Julia’s illness affected us. Some of the differences cannot be verbalized because they are part of who we are and how we cope. It was amazing to see that PTSD could literally affect how we parent, how we manage our money and how we spend our free time.

After over a year of counseling and reliving our time at St. Jude’s on paper we were able to see a great deal – but we are still working through issues as they arise. I have a greater understanding of what worries Wray. And he knows that before each yearly checkup if I become mean and not easy to be around, it is because I am very anxious. Lately, since Julia is almost six, we are learning that she has a greater understanding of what she actually endured.

I write because you are interested in seeing that the hope Catholic Charities provides to families continues for those who need it. But we also wish to say thank you for your generosity. We were able to pay for our regular counseling visits but many of the people who seek these services cannot pay. However, because of you they can obtain these services.

We are blessed that our church provides a community service like Catholic Charities and that there are people such as you who choose to support it.

Thanks!

Jennifer

(Thank you Wray and Jennifer for your courageous witness. Your family is embraced by our hopes and prayers. GO JULIA!)
INTERVENING EARLY IN THE LIVES OF TROUBLED CHILDREN

A Pre-School in Natchez Helps Young Children Overcome Behavioral Problems

By Nancy Owens

“Do you love me?” a 4-year-old child in our pre-school classroom recently asked his teacher. “Yes, I love you,” she replied.

In response, he said, “My mother says she doesn’t love me.” He then asked, “Who else loves me?” and she named all of the staff members. For several days he asked the same question to other staff members.

This is just one example of a child at our day treatment program for preschoolers with behavior problems. He doesn’t feel loved and comes from an at-risk family. Our goal is to give him a lot of loving attention, to praise him and affirm him.

Nearly three years ago, we at Catholic Charities in Natchez, MS (Diocese of Jackson), started a day treatment program for preschoolers in order to impact an alarming trend being seen in the elementary schools in our area. One teacher described this trend as “never having seen so many angry children before.” Many children in preschool, kindergarten and the first grade were being locked out of school with no where to go because of severe behavior issues. Some smart children were ending up in special education classes. Sadly, many of these children were being trapped in a cycle of low expectations and low performance.

We know that when children are unable to succeed at a very early age, they lose confidence in themselves and often get on a track to drugs, alcohol, gang activity, promiscuity, lawlessness, youth court, detention, and finally prison. Our purpose is to intervene in the lives of very young and vulnerable children already exhibiting behavioral problems and promote self-confidence, good social and problem solving skills, and a belief in their ability and their lovability.”
With classroom space, transportation, and food services generously provided by our partner, the Natchez Children's Home, we opened our doors in April 2006 with one classroom, one behavioral specialist, one program aide, and four children. We have since added two more classrooms and now enroll 27 children. In almost three years, we have impacted the lives of 100 children.

We provide day treatment services for children ages 3 through 6 who are diagnosed as having severe emotional disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Reactive Attachment Disorder, Autism (minor symptoms) and/or Conduct Disorder. Some of the observable behaviors have been out of control temper tantrums, aggression, and non-compliance to adult rules and requests.

These children are out of control in most settings, including home. In working with these children, we've found that the root of their diagnoses is usually trauma, neglect, or abuse of some kind.

Our services are based upon behavior management principles including positive feedback, self-esteem building, social skills training, anger management, conflict resolution and impulse control. We use "The Incredible Years" curriculum, developed by Dr. Carolyn Webster-Stratton, a clinical psychologist, nurse, and leading expert on parent training, promoting young children's social and cognitive skills, and reducing aggression. The Incredible Years Curriculum uses puppetry, motivational stickers and prizes, and massive praise. We only have 8-9 children in each classroom, with one behavioral specialist and one program aide. We place a third program aide in the classroom when we have an especially out of control child.

Our day treatment meets daily, year-round, and there is no set amount of time the children stay in the program. When a child has met her goals in the classroom and has also become well-behaved at home, she may graduate and return to the least restrictive environment.

The program also provides family therapy through home visits, counseling, and parent education. Many of our families are single mothers who have needs for transportation, educational opportunities, and work. Divorce and absent fathers are also part of the problem. In addition, some families have a history of alcoholism, drug use, and mental illness. With all these challenges, these parents often lack good parenting skills.

We teach parents how to play with their child every day, letting the child control this playtime. Most parents are so busy that they do not have time for their children, and they are amazed what they learn when they start spending time with their child. We also teach the basics of behavior modification using incentives, prizes, and massive praise, as well as consistency in discipline, primarily use of time out.

We have seen great success through this program. Some children need to return to our program, but most do not. We have a child, Gary, that came into our program because he was out of control at home and in the classroom. Over time, we have been able to make progress with him, and he continues to improve. He still has his moments, but overall the change is nothing short of miraculous.

His family situation has been difficult. His parents were initially separated and both became physically ill. However, after the mother received individual counseling in our program and also through our agency counseling program, she has become more positive. Catholic Charities also provided assistance with transportation, utilities, and food. The parents are now back together, and the family is doing better. Gary will graduate and go to school this fall.

Gary's mother recently commented, "Before this program Gary seemed to be a very troubled child. With the help of your program, he is now a very well-behaved child. While he was in your program, you not only took the time to help him, but to help our whole family."

Catholic Charities has a reputation in Natchez as being the agency people can turn to in time of need, and that's largely because of the dedicated people that work there. In our program, the teachers, aides, and volunteers are the real heroes. They are faithful day in and day out, working intensely with these difficult children, and they do a wonderful job. We are seeing children progress, and with them, their families.

We and the Natchez Children's Home share a mission of being "a visible sign of Christ's love" to those who cannot help themselves. The children we serve are so vulnerable, and the need is so great. However, the blessing of seeing children and families improve makes it all worthwhile.

Nancy Owens is the director of the behavioral health day treatment program for pre-schoolers.
Statement of Financial Activities
June 30, 2009 & 2008

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
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<td>Catholic Service Appeal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions, Bequests &amp;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated Goods</td>
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<td>Grants from Governmental &amp;</td>
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<td>Private Agencies</td>
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<td>Program Service Fees &amp; Other Income</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>10,165,367</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>EXPENSES</strong></th>
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<td>Adoptions</td>
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<td>Ministries for Parishes/</td>
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<td>Counseling Center</td>
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<td>Refugee Programs</td>
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<td>Rape and Domestic Violence Programs</td>
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<td>Natchez Programs*</td>
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<td>Runaway Youth Services</td>
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<td>Children's Mental Health Services</td>
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<td>Alcohol &amp; Drug Abuse Programs</td>
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<td>Northeast Services</td>
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<td>Long Term Recovery</td>
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<td>Support Services &amp; Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>9,822,610</td>
<td>10,654,445</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Excess of Income over Expenses          | 342,757    | 100,433    |

*Natchez Programs include Domestic Violence Shelter, Rape Crisis, Emergency Assistance, Food Pantry, Counseling, Children’s Mental Health Services.

From the Independent Auditor's Report
In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as of June 30, 2009 and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Horne LLP
The mission of Catholic Charities
is to be a visible sign
of Christ's love and concern for all people.

We are called to minister compassionately to all,
whether Catholic or not.

The services of Catholic Charities are made possible
through the generosity of many people like yourself.
On behalf of the many hundreds of individuals
whose lives have been touched by your generosity, we say

THANK YOU!

We also offer our assistance.
If you, or someone you know,
needs us, we are here to help.

Providing Help.
Creating Hope
...for all God's children.