

## Tidbits

### Back to School Fair

11,359 individuals attended Catholic Charities' three Back to School Fairs, where students from low-income households had access to free school supplies, health services and other resources to help get the school year started on the right foot!



### Corporate Champions

Staff presented an innovative new project called "Corporate Champions" at the Mission to Service training recently held at University of Notre Dame and co-sponsored by Catholic Charities USA.



Dr. Carolyn Woo, Dean of the Mendoza College of Business at Notre Dame (pictured second from left) said, "This project is groundbreaking." She also hoped that others across the country would use the project's core ideas to motivate social responsibility among corporate America.

Also pictured from left: Head Start Site Supervisor Nykisha Barefield, Director of Development Lorri Nagle and Catholic Charities Board Member Hilary Denk.

### Bike Drive

Catholic Charities' Emergency Services recently distributed 14 bikes (collected by several Catholic parishes) to homeless clients in DuPage County who have no other means of transportation. These bikes help them get to essential appointments related to work, healthcare and obtaining basic needs.

When Vergie Dyson was a young girl growing up in Louisiana in the 1920's and 30's, she spent her days doing hard labor on a farm and never had the opportunity to attend school. As an adult, Vergie married, raised four wonderful children and worked cleaning houses and caring for children. After Vergie's husband passed away, she left Louisiana and moved to Crete to live with her daughter, Darlene, Darlene's husband and their daughter.

Darlene and her husband work full-time and decided it would be best for 89 year-old Vergie to have a companion visit during the day to make sure she was safe and to keep her from becoming lonely. Darlene contacted Catholic Charities to inquire about the Senior Companion Program, which offers homebound adults (over 55 years-old) regular home visits from their peers. Kristin Ruda, Senior Companion Program Coordinator immediately paired Vergie with Naomi Sibert, who had recently left her job as a hospital dietary aide after suffering a shoulder injury and wanted to volunteer to fill her days with meaningful activities.

When Naomi met Vergie, she asked what sort of activities Vergie would like to do with their time together in the Senior Companion Program. Vergie's answer was shocking.

"I want to learn to read and write," she said. It was a tall order, but Naomi welcomed the challenge and immediately began collecting schoolbooks for their lessons.

"I was just so impressed with Vergie's ambition and enthusiasm! I was glad to help,"



## Never too Late

Vergie Dyson (right) learns to read with Senior Volunteer, Naomi Sibert

Naomi said. The two women meet four days per week for four hour visits and they spend a large amount of that time helping Vergie achieve one of the greatest challenges of her life. Despite

failing eyesight and arthritis in her hands, Vergie is slowly learning to read and carefully practicing writing her own name.

"It comes to me pretty easily," Vergie explained. "But I go over it again and again."

In between lessons, the pair discovered that they share many things in common, including that they were both raised in the south by their grandmothers.

"We talk a lot about life... and men," Naomi said, looking over at Vergie as they both giggled.

Both women have gained tremendously from the Senior Companion Program and are thankful for how their lives have been enriched.

"Vergie has become my friend," Naomi added. "Not just 'someone I know' or a 'client,' but a true friend."



What gift would you give to the person who has everything? Your donation will be used to buy diapers, food and milk, toiletries and cleaning products for low-income families and seniors. You can even make your gift in honor of someone special and we'll send them an acknowledgment telling them about your thoughtful gift on their behalf. Shop for your gifts today at [catholiccharitiesjoliet.org](http://catholiccharitiesjoliet.org).

# Dear Friends

Advent is a time of waiting and longing. It's a time for reflection and a time of thanksgiving. For most of our staff it's a time of joy and celebration when we see the goodness in so many people emerge. Donors drop off gifts for families, volunteers decorate our homeless shelters and all are praying for better days. There's no escaping Christmas at Catholic Charities.



But amidst the happiness this year, there are tears of sadness as we end 50 years of foster care and adoption programs.

Over the next several weeks we will transition our foster families and the children in their care to another, very competent agency. We will say tearful goodbyes to friends and co-workers and wish well to the many families who have provided foster care with us for years. Please pray for all of them.

As we gather with families and loved ones in the weeks to come, remember to thank God for the blessings in your life. I know we thank Him every day for you!

May your Christmas be filled with goodness and love.

Best,

Glenn Van Cura  
Executive Director



*All Saints Academy in Naperville collected hundreds of books due to the support of hard-working students like Maddie, Darlene and Kyle Zediker.*

## All Saints Book Drive

The annual book drive sponsored by the Catholic Charities' Foster Grandparent program to collect books for Head Start was a roaring success! Most of the books were collected by the generous students at All Saints Academy in Naperville. As the result of their efforts, over 1,300 books will be donated to more than 800 children from low-income households who attend Catholic Charities' Head Start programs in Will County.

Nancy Zakosek, Foster Grandparent Director reported that the drive received sufficient contributions to give every child in the Head Start program a book to keep for the holidays and we will have more books to supply to the classrooms where the Foster Grandparents serve as volunteers. She explained why this is so important: "The most successful way to improve the reading achievement of low income children is to increase their access to books. This is a great start to the holiday season, sharing our blessings with those less fortunate."



## The Gift of Children

*Lord, we thank you for the gift of children.*

*May we be the hands of hope for children who are living in poverty so that they feel loved and valued.*

*May we be the hearts of love for parents who struggle each day to provide food, pay their rent, and keep their children safe. May we help them find the resources they need to nurture and care for their children.*

*May we be the ears of compassion for children whose cries are going unheard and whose needs are unmet. Help us be a conduit to their safety and respond to their pain.*

*May we be the voices of the unborn so that women who are facing an unplanned pregnancy find the strength they need to choose life.*

*May we be warriors of justice so that we can help move others from tolerance of childhood poverty and abuse to passionate work for justice.*

*Lord, let your grace fall upon your children like gentle breezes giving them inner strength, peace, and patience for their journey ahead.*

*Amen*

# Hands of Hope Now Open in Bourbonnais and Joliet

Everyone wants to lead a healthy and satisfying life, but it can be a struggle to achieve or maintain that status, especially during these challenging times. Catholic Charities' Hands of Hope Counseling Services has opened two new centers – in Bourbonnais and Joliet to provide experienced counselors who offer caring and effective behavioral services.

The new center in Bourbonnais is located at 475 Brown Blvd. and proudly serves Kankakee, Bourbonnais, Bradley and the surrounding communities. In Joliet,



## Hands of Hope Counseling Services

Hands of Hope has a new location at 2121 Oneida Street, Suite 304. Both centers offer a full range of counseling services including individual, family and group sessions.

Pam Kostecki, director of the center, explained why Hands of Hope is the best choice for counseling, "People are struggling now more than ever and we want the community to know that we are here to help with life's struggles. Our approach is to provide supportive faith-based counseling. We have experienced, trained therapist who are non-judgmental. Our services are offered in a warm and welcoming private setting."

For more information, call 800-240-7011.



Sharing the spirit  
of Christmas giving  
with those in need.

# Gift of Christmas

Sponsor a Family Program

Catholic Charities has again partnered with *Christ is Our Hope*, the magazine of the Diocese of Joliet, to help Christmas wishes come true for children and families in need this season. Sixteen stories of struggling families and their wishes are currently showcased in the magazine and 60 stories are featured on Catholic Charities' website.

To help a struggling family, child or senior, please visit [catholiccharitiesjoliet.org](http://catholiccharitiesjoliet.org).



Ron Madsen (far left), Employment Counselor and leader of Catholic Charities' Out of Poverty Program in DuPage County stands proudly with his most recent graduates.

## Out of Poverty Graduation

On graduation day from the fall 2011 Out of Poverty program in DuPage County, one by one, each of the ten graduates stood up, walked to the podium and bravely spoke of their triumphs, tragedies and experiences in the program. The graduates were from a variety of backgrounds and each had overcome a different obstacle, but the group had formed a tight-knit and supportive bond.

Out of Poverty is a program which addresses and works to overcome both personal and financial poverty. Participants in the program have experienced issues like hunger, homelessness, unemployment and low self-esteem. During the six week program, they learn skills to take control of their goals, time and money in order to work toward a more prosperous future.

At graduation, the participants shared the knowledge they'd learned. When it was Sarah K.'s turn, she spoke these wise words: "We, as human beings are much more resilient than we give ourselves credit for. We just need to tap into it."

October 28th was a night to remember as hundreds of generous party-goers gathered at Ashton Place in Willowbrook to raise funds for Catholic Charities while enjoying a fantastic party! Playing for Miracles featured dueling pianists Tommy Sklut and Tony Kidonakis, an impressive silent auction, live auction and the very popular “Ring and Win” game where guests paid \$10 for a chance to ring (and win!) a bottle of wine.

## Playing for Miracles

The second annual Angels Among Us Award was presented to Fr. Peter Jarosz and the family at Christ the King Parish in Lombard for their outstanding contributions of time, service, and financial support to Catholic Charities.

BMO Harris Bank sponsored the entertainment for the evening. Greg Signs was the media sponsor and Central States Trucking Company was the transportation sponsor.

Playing for Miracles raised nearly \$80,000 to benefit the programs and services of Catholic Charities.

Special thanks to Carmen Gonzalez, chair of the ad book committee. Thanks also to the auction committee: Maureen Mitchell Golden, Janice Katsaounis, Sue LaBarbera, Kelly Melone and Pam Prezek. Also, thanks to Meredith Spesia for her generous contributions as the “Ring & Win” chair.

*Fr. Peter Jarosz (bottom right) and others from Christ the King Parish in Lombard accept the Angels Among Us Award from Executive Director Glenn Van Cura (bottom left).*



*Roseann Deadessis (left) displays her award with Director of Development Lorri Nagle (right).*

## Spirit of Charity Award

Roseann Deadessis was one the recipients of the 2011 Catholic Charities' Spirit of Charity award for her faithful support of the organization over the past decade. Roseann's talent and dedication helped raise almost a quarter of a million dollars for Catholic Charities through the Playing for Miracles fundraiser. For all of her hard work and success, she truly embodies the “spirit of charity.”

## Leaving a Legacy of Hope *and* Saying Thank You

Sometimes people remember Catholic Charities through a bequest or will. Oftentimes we do not learn of that generosity until after their death. We are so grateful to them for believing in our mission and work, but wish we could have expressed our gratitude while they were still living.

If you decide to include Catholic Charities in your estate planning, please let us know. We want to say “thank you”!

**To learn more about planned giving opportunities, please call Lorri Nagle at 815.723.3405, ext. 1102.**

### The following wording is suggested for including Catholic Charities in your will:

“I give, devise and bequest to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Joliet, Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit organization located administratively at 203 N. Ottawa, Joliet, Illinois 60432, the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_ (or specifically described property).



## John St. Aubin – RSVP Volunteer

John St. Aubin had been searching for a meaningful volunteer opportunity when he stumbled upon a notice in his parish bulletin looking for volunteers for Catholic Charities' Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). A retired engineer, St. Aubin had a wealth of knowledge and experience to offer, "I wanted to volunteer to make a difference, but I didn't know exactly where to go."

RSVP matches people 55 and older with volunteer opportunities which coordinate with their personal interests and experiences. When St. Aubin called Catholic Charities, he spoke with RSVP

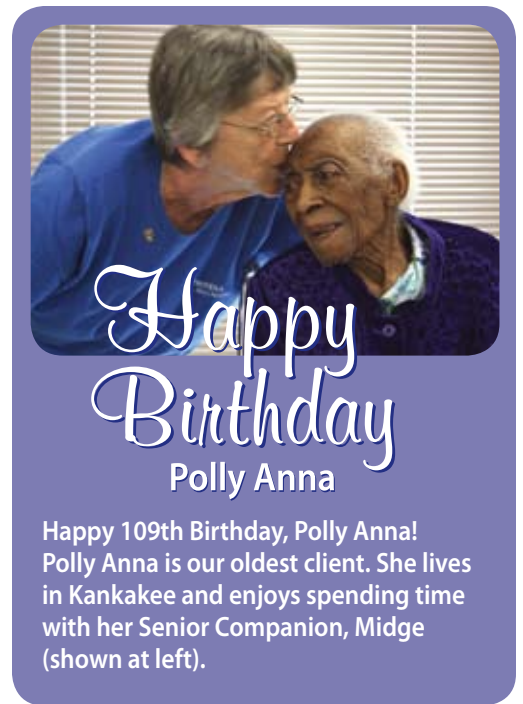
*I wanted to volunteer to make a difference, but I didn't know exactly where to go.*

Coordinator Cindy Perryman, who quickly connected him with Joliet Job Corps, where he began volunteering as a one-on-one math tutor.

"But it's more than math," St. Aubin insists.

"I'm encouraging these students and helping them gain confidence so that they can move forward and have success."

St. Aubin is making a meaningful impact on the lives of the students he tutors and Joliet Job Corps recognized that and awarded him the honor of Volunteer of the Year. However, St. Aubin remains modest, "I get back much more than I give. When I see how much it affects the students, I'm inspired to help even more."



Happy 109th Birthday, Polly Anna!  
Polly Anna is our oldest client. She lives in Kankakee and enjoys spending time with her Senior Companion, Midge (shown at left).

## Dan Gibbons Turkey Trot

This year, Catholic Charities Emergency Services in DuPage



County was selected as a recipient for a portion of the proceeds from the 28th Annual Dan Gibbons Turkey Trot fundraiser held on Thanksgiving morning in Elmhurst. Dan Gibbons, founder of the Turkey Trot 5K run is also the Project Manager for Catholic Charities' Café 360 restaurant, which will train economically disadvantaged, unemployed and underemployed people for a career in the food industry and is scheduled to open in 2012.

The race had a record 7,619 runners and Catholic Charities received \$26,500 to help feed the hungry in DuPage County!

## Creative Giving

The Magemeneas kids, who range in age from 3 to 10 years-old have admired their grandfather's volunteer efforts at Daybreak Center in Joliet. Last summer, the family started brainstorming ways that they could contribute to the homeless shelter. They decided to make a lemonade stand and to donate whatever money they earned.

Dusti Magemeneas explained how she and her children organized the fundraiser: "The kids made the signs, muffins, mixed homemade lemonade and worked the whole day. We emailed our friends and relatives to let them know what we had planned. Lots of neighbors stopped by as well as people who saw our lemon-shaped signs and yellow balloons. People were so generous."

Mason, Gloria Lynne, Lydia and Sylvia (not pictured) Magemeneas of Plainfield presented the donations they earned from their neighborhood lemonade stand to Andrea Bird, Community Services Supervisor at Catholic Charities Daybreak Center, the largest homeless shelter in Will County.





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# Save the Date!

Exclusive Preview of the 2012 Chicago Auto Show



If you have any questions or concerns about this publication, please call Maggie Snow at 815.724.1165.



**First Look for Charity benefits Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Joliet and 17 other local charities.**

First Look for Charity and the Chicago Auto Show are presented by the Chicago Automobile Trade Association, representing the new-car dealers of Chicagoland and northwest Indiana.

**Thursday, February 9, 2012  
 6:30 pm – 10:30 pm**

This year the fun will never stop with big name entertainment, incredible food, amazing new cars and more!

**Reserve your tickets today. Call 815-724-1140.**

Tuxedo mandatory.

Watch for details in the mail.

Purchase tickets from Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet.

**[catholiccharitiesjoliet.org](http://catholiccharitiesjoliet.org)**

By purchasing a ticket and attending the event, you are automatically entered to win one of two fabulous vehicles – 2012 Cadillac Escalade and 2012 Cadillac SRX. Prize vehicle winners must be present.

Catholic Charities

## Mission

*We are a faith-based organization providing service to people in need and calling others of good will to do the same.*