



Parish Liaison News

A Journey Together...

March 2009

Dear Friends, please join us at our next **Parish Social Action Lay Ministers (PSALM)** meeting. We are a group of staff and volunteer Parish Social Ministry workers who get together once a month—usually the second Thursday of each month from 11:30-1:00ish. This is an informal opportunity to meet with others who do what you do, enjoy each others company, share what is happening in the Parishes, discuss best practices and learn from each other. You will be heartily welcomed! This is a casual affair. Bring a brown bag lunch. Dessert provided. Bring any handouts of events at your Parish that you wish to share. Please RSVP with Sally O'Dwyer at sodwyer@ccda.net.

PSALM

Parish Social Action Lay Ministers

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 12, 2009

3838 Cathedral Lane, Arlington VA 22203

This is the Family Services Building, across the street from St. Thomas Moore Cathedral



Spring is here and we are bursting with energy at Catholic Charities
Find out what we are up to at www.ccda.net!

FEINSTEIN CHALLENGE

2009 is the Second year for CATHOLIC CHARITIES to participate in the annual Feinstein Challenge. For the past 12 years, Alan Shawn Feinstein divides \$1 million among hunger-fighting agencies nationwide to help participating agencies raise funds during March and April. The more donations of money and non-perishable food (@ \$1/pound) made to Catholic Charities during March and April – *and identified for the “Feinstein Challenge”*, the more Feinstein money the agency will receive.

Now is the time for you, your parish, your parish-based and/or neighborhood organization, scout troops, K of C, club or group to pool your efforts to conduct a food drive or take up a special collection for Catholic Charities’ Christ House food pantry program. Checks payable to Catholic Charities must be noted “Feinstein Challenge” and bags of food that are donated should similarly be marked.

Send \$\$ or deliver food donations to Catholic Charities’ Christ House, 131 S. West St., Alexandria 22314. For additional information, call Tom at 703.549.8644.

General information about the Feinstein Challenge can be found at www.feinsteinfoundation.org

Happenings at Catholic Charities

Please help us insure that Catholic Charities efforts are announced in your parishes and in other appropriate venues. **I rely on each of you to be the eyes and ears in the community – and to help Catholic Charities promote opportunities for others to learn, pray and act in response to God’s call to serve others.**

Parish representatives are asked to bring this news to the attention of your pastor, clergy, staff and key leaders in the parish. Also, please help facilitate the printing of announcements in the parish Bulletin and post event fliers on the parish bulletin board, where appropriate. When Catholic Charities staff visit parishes or participate in programs at parishes, we look to see if there are Catholic Charities brochures and announcements prominently displayed. You can help us achieve that goal. Contact the agency’s communications director (jspaeth@ccda.net) to obtain supplies.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES SENIOR SERVICES: would like to announce an assistance program available to benefit those 60 and older. The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps people with low or fixed incomes receive monetary benefits to purchase food. If you would like more information or are interested in seeing if you qualify, please call 1-877-SNAP (7627) to speak with Nicole Bruno

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM: Thank you to the parishes that helped with the Transitional Housing Furniture Fair on February 7th and with our Housewarming volunteer event on February 21st. Thanks to your help in personally donating furniture in time or in spreading the word to others we have completed our efforts to furnish the new Transitional Housing program in Woodbridge. Thanks to you, we have met our current needs for donated goods. Please see attached information for more news about the Transitional Housing Program.

CCDA GOLF CLASSIC: Save the date!! Monday, June 22, 2009, golfers from throughout the area will gather at the International Country Club in Fairfax. Golfers – we need you to participate! Event planners – we need your help! Contact *Beth Fitzpatrick* @ bfitz@ccda.net for details!

PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY: A fabulous resource for parish-based social ministry and outreach available from the Diocese of Richmond on the web site: http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ojp/manual_08-02.pdf

HOGAR IMMIGRANT SERVICES: In concert with several other programs has written a practical document for immigrants. The document explains what to do in case of a raid. It is attached to this newsletter, and is also available in Spanish. Please contact msardone@ccda.net for the Spanish Language version

Current Volunteer Opportunities with Catholic Charities

Loudoun Regional Office: Our office in Leesburg needs volunteers who care about others to support those in need during business hours. Answer phones and work with clients.

The St Martin de Porres Senior Center, located 4650 Taney Ave, in Alexandria, needs translators for Chinese, Farsi, Amharic, Korean and Arabic. Many of the seniors are immigrants with limited English proficiency and need assistance communicating and sharing their stories. St. Martins would also love volunteers who can play the piano or guitar and lead a sing-a-long. If you can teach a craft, St. Martins would love to have you come and share with the seniors. We also need individuals interested in working with the seniors at the center and we could use help with the phones as well. The Senior Center is open from 8am until 2pm weekdays.

At Christ House, located in Old Town Alexandria, offers a program called CHOW (Christ House on Wheels). This program provides food to the outlying counties from our large food pantry in the basement of Christ House. Many area food pantries depend on our deliveries in order to help those who are hungry. This is particularly true in the rural counties in Virginia. If you like to drive, and have a large car, van or truck, we would love your assistance in making deliveries. The time involved is flexible and families can participate. Must be able to lift 40 pounds as those cans of food are heavy.

Also at Christ House, we are looking for volunteers to answer the phones and we have several mornings available. We need receptionists to volunteer one morning a week from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. We have several openings in our shift schedule for volunteers to work at our Thrift Shop from 11am to 3pm seven days a week. Shop while you work!

Our Emergency Assistance program at Christ House is looking for specialists in **bankruptcy law** and **Foreclosure prevention** to assist our clients in financial crisis. Hours are flexible.

We are searching for an experienced **Support group Moderator** to volunteer his/her time one evening a week to run a group for the men at our Shelter at Christ House. Excellent facilitating skills a must.

Hogar Immigrant Services, Teach “Survival Skills” English to immigrants in the NOVA area. We have 13 sites throughout the diocese where we offer English classes to immigrants. We offer excellent training and support. We need volunteers mornings, eves., and weekends. .

Children’s Services in Burke Virginia is looking for Parenting Mentors. Hours are flexible. Act as a one-on-one mentor for a new mother teaching infant care. Parenting experience is needed. Children’s Services would also like assistance during the work day with data input, donation solicitation and outreach.

Please contact Phyllis at pjohnson@ccda.net if you are interested in any of the above positions. Training is provided. For more volunteer opportunities, please join our facebook group “Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington”.

Poverty in Virginia — New report underscores financial woes

From the *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*:

“An alarming new report from the Commonwealth Institute is warning that Virginia’s poverty level could increase by as much as 218,000 people if national unemployment levels reach 9 percent.

The Federal Reserve is predicting unemployment rates in the nation could hit 9 percent as early as this week.

If that happens, the Commonwealth Institute — a coalition of advocacy groups for the poor — says the number of Virginians living in poverty is going up between 159,000 and 218,000, the Associated Press reported Monday. If unemployment hits 8 percent, the poverty figure will rise between 122,000 and 169,000 — still an alarming statistic for Virginia.

It is estimated that close to 700,000 residents of Virginia are already living in poverty.

Michael Cassidy, executive director of the Commonwealth Institute, says such increases in unemployment are linked directly to rising poverty levels. Cassidy said the report gives the state a glimpse of what may be ahead as the economy worsens.

The study is the latest troubling news for the Commonwealth. Lawmakers in Richmond are still working to plug a \$3 billion budget shortfall. The Virginia Department of Transportation has announced it is laying off 450 hourly employees across the Commonwealth next month in response to a \$2.6 billion shortfall in transportation

revenue. VDOT also is proposing a number of additional cuts, including the proposed closure of its residency office in Tazewell, which provides joint administrative functions for Tazewell and Bland counties.

Southwest Virginia has been hit hard by the deep budget cuts, and a number of worthwhile projects across the region have already been lost, including the Tazewell Day Report Center and the Virginia Wilderness Institute.

Clearly, these are difficult times for the Commonwealth of Virginia. And times are only going to get tougher if the number of unemployed in Virginia climbs by another 218,000. It is our hope that the federal stimulus package passed by Congress and recently signed into law by President Obama can provide some help in reversing this economic decline in Virginia.

While it is doubtful that every American — and every resident of Virginia — agrees with everything that is included in the stimulus plan, most will agree that something has to be done to stop the deepening recession and a further downward spiral of the economy.

The latest report from the Commonwealth Institute underscores the fact that some type of action is needed to jump-start the national and local economy.”

Website of the Month

www.cliniclegal.org Clinic—Catholic Legal Immigration Network has a new website. Their mission is to help the delivery of legal services to indigent and low-income immigration through diocesan immigration programs and to meet the immigration needs identified by the Catholic Church in the United States. Sign up for their mailing lists, RSS feeds and read regular postings on their blog.

Seeing In A New Way From the Justice Corner – March

The story of the transfiguration is about seeing in a new way. In the midst of war and violence, the gospel invites us to see the presence of God and God’s invitation to peace. In the midst of poverty and injustice, the gospel invites us to hear God’s invitation to respect the dignity of every human person and the need for justice for all.

The Transfiguration is a sign of great hope. We can see the presence of God in Jesus. We can see things in a new way. We can see God in others. We can let go of racism, addiction to money, power and control, violence, inaction, blindness and selfishness. It is possible to solve international problems without war. It is even possible to let go of the religious experience on the mountain and come down and find God in all things and all people. It is possible to see the world as a global community and to see all people as our brothers and sisters.

Enjoy the Lenten Radio Retreat

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All information in PLNEWS is intended to be shared and promulgated.

PLEASE forward this information to others.

Copies are sent to colleagues in ministry via e-mail.