



# The Mission

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington

Winter 2009

## Requests for Help Pour In as Recession Worsens

As the national recession takes its toll in northern Virginia, Catholic Charities' offices are being overwhelmed by calls for help. The Emergency Assistance program reports a 450% increase in requests for aid, and the Western Regional Office in Loudoun County is experiencing a 128% increase in calls. Family Services is seeing its waiting list for counseling grow, and the stress that families suffer during economic hardships may well be the cause.

Eric, who found himself unable to buy groceries after paying the rent for his Arlington apartment, heard about Christ House and joined other out-of-work individuals going there for dinner and free food staples. He had been somewhat indifferent to the news reports about foreclosures, bank failures, and falling stock prices

until the electronics retail chain he worked for suddenly announced it was closing all stores and filing for bankruptcy. Eric is looking for a new job and has applied for unemployment benefits, but in the interim his available cash is almost nonexistent. "Thank God for Christ House," he says.

As prices for food, especially dairy products and produce, continue to rise, Mary Sue has come to rely more and more on the deliveries the Christ House on Wheels van makes to Madison County. She uses the nonperishable staples to supplement what she is able to buy for her four young children and husband, whose wages come from seasonal agricultural work.

"I thank Catholic Charities for remembering families like mine out here in the country. We have money problems just like some of



Photos by Ray Plisney



Unemployed and hungry, Eric (center in top photo) comes to the Christ House evening meal. A volunteer ((bottom photo) empties Christ House pantry shelves to deliver much needed food to rural areas.

the people in the big cities," says Mary Sue.

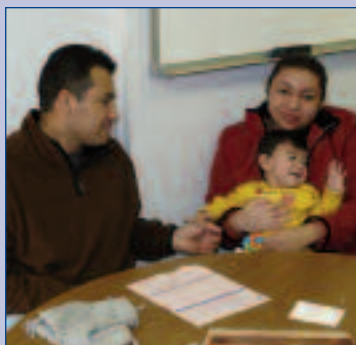
Call 703-841-3838 to donate food.

## A Family Struggles to Stay Afloat

Luis had recently been promoted to senior bank teller when his bank was taken over by a West Coast conglomerate that quickly reduced service locations and cut jobs, including his own. As he hunts for a new position and applies for unemployment benefits, his family is struggling to get by on his wife's paycheck from her work at a local daycare center.

Luis was able to get help from Catholic Charities' Emergency Assistance program to pay rent for his family's 2-bedroom apartment in Falls Church.

"I have so many things to worry about—food, heating bills, job hunting, and stretching our available cash. The rent money from Catholic Charities is helping us avoid delinquency. I'm so grateful," says Luis.



Luis and his family

Photo by Troy Zeigler, CCUSA

## FROM THE DESK OF **Stephen Luteran**

Photo by Jeanne Spaeth



Stephen Luteran

**N**ew faces are coming through the doors at Catholic Charities. People who have held working-class jobs that keep the economy going are showing up for food, clothing, and help to pay heating bills in greater numbers than ever.

We are scrambling to meet the needs of these first-time clients, many of whom have lost jobs or used up savings.

My biggest concern as the

requests continue to increase is that we will be unable to keep up with the demands. Over 5,000 calls per month have our staff swamped.

We know that everyone in this country is affected by the recession, but compassionate supporters like you also understand that there are some hurting more than others. This is what gives me hope that we will meet the needs of those who come to us for assistance.

I am extremely grateful for all the support you have given us during these difficult economic times.

In this newsletter, you will read stories about some of the clients and challenges we are dealing with. But these stories are only the tip of the iceberg. We would need a full volume to describe all that we are doing.

May God bless you for supporting our mission of bringing the Gospel to life.



Stephen Luteran, MSW, LCSW  
Executive Director  
Catholic Charities  
Diocese of Arlington

## Remembering the “Least of the Brethren” in Good Times and Bad

**A**lthough Catholic Charities fears the troubled stock market may adversely affect the giving patterns of major donors, supporters like Frank Fannon still manage to make substantial gifts to the agency.

Frank has been a friend of Catholic Charities for more than 30 years. “Catholic Charities’ programs and staff are excellent. They do a spectacular job in this area and need more support than ever during the current economic crisis,” he says.

A major supporter of Christ House, Frank attends the monthly Mass at the shelter’s chapel, and he always says a prayer near the memorial plaque placed in the lobby for his father, Francis H. Fannon, Sr.

“My father introduced my brothers and sisters and me to Catholic Charities when we were young. My two aunts, who were Holy Cross nuns, also helped us learn about the Church’s charitable work,” recalls Frank.

After graduating from St. Mary School in Alexandria and St. John High School in Washington, D.C., Frank earned a Bachelor’s degree at the University of Virginia and opened his own insurance agency. He says, “I could have gone into the family business, Fannon Fuel Oil Services, but I decided to try to run my own operation.”

Frank served on Catholic Charities Board of Directors from 1979 to 1982.

Now retired, he and his wife Kathy still live in the area, near their two sons and grandchildren.

For information on giving opportunities, call 703-841-3899.



Frank Fannon

Photo by Jeanne Spaeth

## News in Brief

- ExxonMobil generously contributed \$15,043 to Catholic Charities through its 2008 Employee's Favorite Charity Campaign. In addition, ExxonMobil employees donated and delivered 113 new bicycles to Catholic Charities for distribution to disadvantaged children as gifts this past Christmas. A safety helmet was attached to each bike.
- Thanks to the Military Council of Catholic Women at Fort Belvoir, the Christ House food pantry received two large truckloads of much needed food in December. The Council, whose members already help serve the evening meal for the hungry at Christ House, designated the shelter as its outreach recipient for the month.
- Shepherd's Gate, the grant program of Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, has kindly given Catholic Charities a \$1,866 grant to cover medical prescriptions for the poor in Fiscal Year 2009.
- Catholic Charities is pleased to receive a \$10,000 grant from the Virginia Literacy Foundation to support its English as a Second Language program in Fiscal Year 2009. The grant is made possible in part through Verizon's "Check into Literacy" program.

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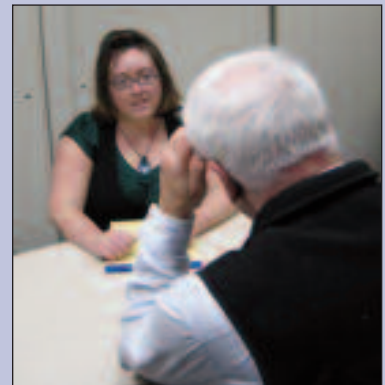
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## St. Martin's Helps Feed the Hungry

Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, St. Martin's now has a new staff member, Nicole Bruno, who serves as a coordinator for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the new name for the food stamp program. Nicole's job is to help low-income seniors learn about available food benefits and complete paperwork required to receive them.

Nicole says, "It is estimated that 35,000 people over the age of 60 in the Commonwealth of Virginia are qualified to receive SNAP benefits but are not receiving them." Her role is to explain what documents are needed, such as bank account statements and receipts from rent and utility payments, and help the applicant complete the 15-page application and submit it to the local Department of Human Services.

One senior that Nicole helped access the program says "I now eat more fresh fruit and vegetables because the high price of produce doesn't scare me away as much." This woman attends the daily program at Catholic Charities' St. Martin de Porres Senior Center. She adds, "My lunch at St. Martin's was my only hot meal of the day, but



Nicole Bruno helps a senior apply for food benefits.

now I can afford more substantial food for breakfast and dinner."

SNAP participants present the store cashier with an electronic debit card, instead of food stamps. "The card is aimed at removing the stigma sometimes attached to receiving benefits from the government," explains Nicole, who is finding that food assistance can be a "touchy subject" with some seniors at St. Martin's, where 70% of the daily attendees have incomes at or below the federal poverty line.

Although Nicole's primary focus is helping people over the age of 60, she will provide information and help to any age group, if asked. One of her goals is to train Catholic Charities' staff and local agencies in pre-screening techniques so that they can help clients determine if they may be eligible for benefits. "It is important that organizations know how to pre-screen and help clients apply for food benefits," she says.

Call 1-877-820-7627 or go to [www.fns.usda.gov/fsp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp).



Program Director Carol Augustine helps serve hot lunches at St. Martin's.

Photo by Jeanne Spaeth

Photo by Jeanne Spaeth

# Catholic Schools Pitch In to Help the Needy

Photo by Jeanne Spaeth



Some schools raise funds for the poor by attending a "gift giving" Mass.

The third annual "Catholic Schools Care about Catholic Charities Week" took place this past December when Diocesan schools took time in Advent to support Catholic Charities' work to help the poor and vulnerable in the Diocese.

The annual event was initiated by Catholic Charities Ball committee members in 2006 as a way for students to become partners with the agency in providing assistance to those in need. This year, students in grades K-1 through 12 raised more than \$16,000 to help the poor.

Paula Ann Mancini and Sandy Oujiri, co-chairs of the Ball's Parish Liaison Committee, coordinated the 2008 event. "We met with the principals in October at a principals' meeting," says Paula Ann. "I designed a poster to display the first week of Advent. Then we talked about ways to put things in perspective for the students. For example, we could encourage them to 'give up' or 'sacrifice' the money they would normally spend on things like renting a video or buying an ice

cream cone and donate that money to Catholic Charities. In this way, they would be helping others less fortunate than themselves and would begin a commitment to charitable giving at an early age."

The principals were asked to display the poster and decide how they would have their school observe the week of charity. One school raised money with an "out of uniform" day that allowed a student to wear regular clothes for \$1.00. Another school asked students to create their own fund-raising projects, such as lemonade sales, babysitting, dog walking, and so on. Some schools had "gift giving" Masses, and others asked student government or the honor

society to organize the fund-raising.

Two schools raised funds through a soccer tournament. The Student Councils of St. Luke and Holy Spirit organized a Charity Cup event, with teams formed from students in grades 5 through 8. The proceeds from refreshment sales and open donations were given to Catholic Charities.

Sr. Bernadette McManigal, Interim Superintendent of Schools, says, "Service is one of the marks of Catholic schools. All involved in our schools are pleased to work with Catholic Charities in helping our students learn the value and meaning of helping others. I thank all those who worked on this project."

## New Facility Is Readied to Welcome Homeless Families

Renovations of Catholic Charities' transitional family housing got underway November 5 with a ceremony that included a blessing by Bishop Paul S. Loverde at the Woodbridge facility.

Bishop Loverde said, "We must all pray together. Lord, be close to your servants who are preparing this new home for those moving from homelessness to a life of peace and security."

HomeAid, the nonprofit service arm of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association, will oversee the renovation work, which will be done at cost or at a consid-



Bishop Paul S. Loverde blesses workers as they begin renovation work on Catholic Charities' new transitional family housing.

erable discount.

Catholic Charities' Executive Director Stephen Luteran said, "We thank HomeAid for partnering with us on this important project to help homeless families.

"We also thank Beazer Homes for serving as the builder captain for the extensive work."

Photo by Jeanne Spaeth