

Tidbits



Elf Eliza Olson

Santa's Little Helper

Catholic Charities Daybreak Center's very own "Santa's Little Helper," Eliza Olson, came dressed as a Christmas Elf to bring cheer to clients and other volunteers as she participated in our holiday gift wrapping project!



(l-r) Mayor of Joliet Thomas Giarrante, Bettye Gavin, Executive Director of the Forest Park Community Center and Glenn Van Cura, Executive Director of Catholic Charities

Many Thanks to Mayor Giarrante!

Thank you Mayor Thomas Giarrante for supporting Catholic Charities' collaboration with the Forest Park Community Center.

Hope on the Horizon: Gigi Gentile's Story

Gigi began her professional career as an artist in 1995 and was featured in magazines, TV, radio and newspapers since 2003. Then, in 2009, Gigi suffered serious injuries (including a broken neck and traumatic brain injury) in an escalator accident, which left her unable to work and in need of much help. In the wake of her accident, Gigi sought assistance from Catholic Charities. We are happy to report that Gigi is on the path of healing. In the fall, Gigi created a painting for the Catholic Charities Thanksgiving card to honor the Agency. The painting for the card is only the second piece Gigi has painted since her accident.

Says Gigi: "They provided me with food when I was hungry and a therapist to help me get through this ordeal. My therapist at Catholic Charities has helped me understand PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and TBI (traumatic brain injury); talked me through many situations, and made me feel empowered."

"It has been a long road to recovery and although I am not completely back to normal, I feel that there is light at the end of the tunnel and hope for the future."



Help Us Reach Our Goal!

It's not too late! Please help Catholic Charities meet our Holiday Appeal goal. Our annual **Holiday Appeal** benefits clients in all our programs throughout the seven counties we serve. Donations made to our Holiday Appeal will help us meet the needs of all of our clients year round, not just at Christmas time.

An envelope has been included in this newsletter. Please send whatever you are able to afford today to help your neighbors in need. Thank you for your generosity.

Dear Friends

The Gospel and the actions of Pope Francis remind us that God shows His face in the lives of the needy and vulnerable among us as well as through our staff, volunteers, and other agencies and organizations with which we partner to help the needy in our community.



Collaboration with others of “Good Will” is essential to effectively serve those in need in the Diocese of Joliet. Coming together by pooling resources and expertise helps all of us accomplish our work of improving the lives of the poor and vulnerable.

In late fall, when tornadoes struck the Midwest, Catholic Charities joined with 31 other organizations to form a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) in order to offer transformative change to those impacted by the storms.

In November and December, Catholic Charities reached out to the Forest Park community in Joliet, sponsoring a Mobile Food Pantry and Resource Fair on November 18. On December 18, turkeys and fixings along with children’s toys were distributed to more than 200 needy families to make their Christmas brighter. This outreach would not have been possible without the dynamic collaboration of organizations and agencies including:

- Forest Park Community Center
- Northern Illinois Food Bank
- National Hook-Up of Black Women
- Joliet Housing Authority
- One Way to Christ Ministries
- Will County Health Department
- Bridges to a New Day
- Agape Missions
- CASA of Will County
- Illinois Health Marketplace
- Omega Psi Phi of Joliet

Our work reflects the teaching of our Church; we treat our clients with compassion, dignity, and respect. We provide services to one individual, one family, and one story at a time; striving to help everyone achieve their God-given potential. We are grateful for the opportunities to collaborate with such wonderful organizations.

Peace, Blessings, and Gratitude,

Glenn Van Cura
Executive Director



Catholic Charities Mobilizes to Aid Victims of Devastating November Tornadoes

On November 17, 2013, the villages of Coal City and Diamond (in Grundy County and partially in Will County, respectively) were hit by a devastating blow from nature. Tornadoes ripped through the area, damaging and destroying more than 300 homes forcing families and individuals to leave and seek shelter with friends and relatives. Catholic Charities joined forces with 31 local social service and government agencies to assist the victims. Coming together at the Diamond Banquet Hall where a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) was established to address the needs of those impacted, a coordinated community effort got underway.

A team from Catholic Charities comprising program staff and management assembled at the MARC to provide funds, support and counseling services at no charge to residents struggling with the trauma of loss of home and possessions. According to Pam Terrell, Catholic Charities’ Community Services Division Director, donations received have been distributed so far to help with a variety of needs: food; gas for vehicles; financial assistance for mortgage payments; homeowner’s insurance deductibles; minor home repairs, and utilities. Another \$10,000 will be available to provide follow-up needs through a grant we received from Catholic Charities USA as the shift begins toward a long-term recovery effort.

Have you or someone you know been affected by the November Tornadoes? Please see the back page of this newsletter for ways that Catholic Charities can lend assistance.

Because of You, Life is Brighter for Those We Serve!

Holiday Appeal

Catholic Charities conducted a variety of special programs to ensure a Merry Christmas for our clients. Our annual Holiday Appeal benefits clients in all our programs (Community Services, Aging and Disability Services, Counseling and Head Start) throughout the seven counties we serve. Donations made to our **Holiday Appeal** helps us meet the needs of all of our clients year round, not just at Christmas time.

A Gift of Christmas

Catholic Charities' **A Gift of Christmas** campaign invites donors to sponsor a family or an individual client by making a cash donation which is converted to a Wal-Mart gift card. These gift cards are then given directly to our clients and their families to use during the Christmas season. This year, the A Gift of Christmas campaign exceeded its goal!

Each site location offers special opportunities to our clients during the Christmas season. In Kankakee County, we provided presents for children; food; clothing; help with bills; gas cards, and appliances when needed. This Christmas season Catholic Charities assisted 60+ families in Kankakee County.



Bertha receives a Christmas gift through Kankakee's Sharing the Warmth program.

Sharing the Warmth

Sharing the Warmth, a program of Aging and Disability Services, is designed to provide gifts to needy seniors in Kankakee County. Case managers identify our neediest senior clients who then make their Christmas wish lists. Senior clients are matched with donors in the community who receive the client's wish list and purchase and wrap the items and drop them off at Catholic Charities in time for Christmas delivery. **Sharing the Warmth** is in its 12th year and it continues to grow. This Christmas season, donors provided gifts to 220 seniors in Kankakee County.

Holiday Outreach Program

Our Community Services Program in DuPage County hosted the **Holiday Outreach Program**, which serves low-income families who have received our services during the current calendar year. Churches and businesses are the biggest supporters of this program. We received donations of gift cards, clothing, winter jackets, hats, gloves and toys for children. This year we served nearly 300 households (assisting more than 1,000 individuals).

Adopt a Family and Sponsor a Holiday Food Basket Programs

Daybreak Center in Will County brought Christmas cheer to its shelter clients through its **Adopt a Family Program**. Clients make a wish list and donors purchase items to fulfill their requests. Daybreak also conducted the **Sponsor a Holiday Food Basket** program. Many generous donors each provided a \$45 contribution to feed a family of eight ensuring a festive holiday meal for all!



Thank you Joliet Catholic Academy's Student Council for taking care of so many of our Head Start children this Christmas! JCA's Student Council Seniors Rock!

A Gift of Christmas Program

To ensure children in our Head Start program stay warm this Christmas, we delivered coats, scarves, hats, and gloves for the children who needed them. Many parents of our children in Head Start received help purchasing Christmas gifts for their children through our **A Gift of Christmas Program**.

Thank You!

We at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet thank all of our supporters, donors, volunteers and friends. Without you, there would be no Catholic Charities and our clients would have nowhere else to turn!



Thank you ComEd Employees for your Christmas donations for our newest First Light family in DuPage County.



Walmart Foundation Awards \$75,000 Grant to Catholic Charities for Mobile Food Pantry Program

With the Walmart Foundation as a partner in fighting hunger, Catholic Charities will provide fresh food every month to low-income residents in all seven counties of the Diocese of Joliet in 2014. Through the Foundation's generous support, the Mobile Food Pantry, a refrigerated truck belonging to the Northern Illinois Food Bank, will visit a designated location in five counties in its service area every month to bring meat, fish, cheese, vegetables, fruit, pasta, potatoes, bread and other bakery items – for distribution to low-income families. To serve Ford and Iroquois Counties each month, Catholic Charities will rent a refrigerated truck and purchase fresh food for distribution thanks to Walmart funding. It is estimated the Mobile Food Pantry Program will have a broad and dynamic impact on the lives of over 30,000 impoverished and hungry children and adults in the Diocese of Joliet.

At each Mobile Food Pantry distribution site, Catholic Charities will also offer wraparound services with a comprehensive array of services designed to meet multiple needs. For example, a person may come to Catholic Charities for food, but may also be struggling to pay rent, mortgage, utilities, or for prescription medications. They (or someone in their family or household) may also be struggling with job loss; child care concerns, or a disability. Our programs can assist people facing these challenges. Program staff will be at each distribution site to provide information on our services and connect people to them if they desire. Offering wraparound services enables us to meet the complex needs of those we serve and improve the quality of their lives.

A Special Thank You...

A special thank you to our extraordinary staff who has tirelessly worked at keeping Daybreak Center and Hope House opened as warming shelters 24 hours a day 7 days a week during these brutally cold days. Two boilers and one gigantic hot water heater later, they are still going strong. May God bless you and your families!



Christian Brothers Bring Cheer to Daybreak Center

Catholic Charities Daybreak Center welcomed the staff of Christian Brothers Services as they hosted a "Christmas Festival of Fun" themed party for our Daybreak clients during the Christmas season. It was a huge success as everyone enjoyed playing bingo, decorating cookies, eating delicious treats and drinking hot chocolate!

**Don't forget to purchase your tickets for
the greatest event in town!
Corporate packages are still available.**



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

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

Exclusive Preview of the 2014 Chicago Auto Show

Friday, February 7, 2014 • 7 pm – 11 pm

Amazing Cars • Non-stop Food & Fun • Top Name Entertainment
Tuxedo required.

Watch for details in the mail.

Purchase tickets from Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet.

catholiccharitiesjoliet.org

By purchasing a ticket and attending the event, you will be automatically entered to win one of two fabulous vehicles. Prize vehicle winners must be present.

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.

Catholic Charities Reaches Out to Needy Families in the Forest Park Community

On December 18, 219 families in the Forest Park community on Joliet's northeast side braved the freezing cold and stood in line at the Forest Park Community Center to pick up holiday food boxes. Catholic Charities, in partnership with the Forest Park Community Center, The National Hook-Up of Black Women, the Joliet Housing Authority and the Northern Illinois Food Bank, provided the holiday food boxes (frozen turkeys and accompaniments for a holiday meal), along with toys for children just in time for Christmas.

The Forest Park community has been underserved for many years. Catholic Charities is bringing support and services to this community through our partnership with the Northern Illinois Food Bank. We have brought the Mobile Food Pantry to Forest Park where residents can obtain fresh food for their families on a regular basis. Responding to the community's need for coats, Catholic Charities conducted a coat drive and delivered coats and warm clothes to the Forest Park Community Center for distribution. Families were thrilled to have the warm coats as a harsh early winter set in.



Catholic Charities Participates in eBay Giving Works Network

Catholic Charities has joined the eBay Giving Works network! This social enterprise model and its entrepreneurial strategy will help Catholic Charities diversify our revenue streams and increase the amount of unrestricted funds we raise. The program makes it easy to contribute to Catholic Charities and support those in need through direct donations.

We are pleased to have a new part-time eBay coordinator, Alice Ardaugh, who will assist in developing a marketing and media strategy to alert donors, clients, and all our constituents about the eBay Giving Works Program. Alice will coordinate the community selling component (where any seller on eBay can donate 10% to 100% of the proceeds of their sales to Catholic Charities), as well as the direct selling program, which enables Catholic Charities to monetize items donated and post them for sale on eBay with all of the proceeds coming to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet. We are very excited about this new venture and hope that you will partner with us to make it a success! Shop, Sell & Give through eBay Giving Works!



Shop and give

Look for the gold and blue giving ribbon. When you purchase one of the items featured on our charity page, the listed contribution percentage is sent directly to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet. Through eBay's Giving Works platform, we can receive much-needed funds quickly and directly.

Donate

Donation items for this project are currently being accepted at Catholic Charities Daybreak Center in Joliet from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sell on our behalf

Don't forget to designate in your eBay listing that your item gives back to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet. Because your item shows the giving ribbon, once sold, the donation percentage you set is then placed directly in Catholic Charities' account.

Spread the word to family and friends to support Catholic Charities and our new eBay Giving Works program!

Questions? Call Alice Ardaugh, our new eBay coordinator at 815 723-3405.



Shopping with the Teenagers...How Cool! Looking up to Providence!

What a wonderful example the Providence Catholic High School students set when they took some of our precious Head Start students and their families shopping for Christmas!



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For giving opportunities and more information about our programs, visit our website.
catholiccharitiesjoliet.org



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

Our Mission

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

Please help us get the word out to those suffering the impact of the November tornados.

Catholic Charities has been in Diamond and Coal City since the storms first hit. Catholic Charities will continue to support everyone impacted by the violent storms until they have fully recovered.

Catholic Charities' professional counselors understand the anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress that come from surviving a devastating experience and the lasting effects such a disaster have. That is why Catholic Charities is offering our counseling services, free of charge, to anyone of any age that might be in need.

In addition, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet has and will continue to assist those impacted by the violent storms with food, housing, financial support, transportation, home repairs, household supplies, storage/warehousing and child care.

Catholic Charities will stay after FEMA and the insurance companies have left to help those struggling to pay their deductibles.

For assistance, please call Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet's Tornado Relief Hotline: 815-724-1198.