Catholic Relief Services
How Far Can Your Heart Stretch?

During Lent 2014 Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Rice Bowl invited us to stretch our hearts thousands of miles to touch the lives of brothers and sisters in the Philippines, Malawi, Kenya, Guatemala and Haiti. CRS Rice Bowl is the Church’s Lenten faith-in-action program of prayer, fasting, almsgiving that focuses our attention on the needs and people of five countries each year.

On average 74 parish communities and 6 Catholic schools/campus ministries in the Diocese of Rochester journey through Lent with CRS Rice Bowl. 75% of the alms they contribute are used by Catholic Relief Services for global development projects such as rebuilding homes destroyed in the recent typhoon in the Philippines; improving agricultural practices for small-scale farmers in Malawi; job creation in Kenya; education for children in Guatemala; improving health in Haiti. Twenty-five percent of the alms return to our local communities to help stock the shelves at Catholic Charities and other parish/community food pantries and meal programs. This local-global sharing of the alms deepens our understanding regarding the similar causes of hunger and poverty whether at home or around the world.

Catholic Relief Services is the global humanitarian relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic community - serving 91 countries overseas in our name. A variety of CRS programs offer parishes and schools, youth groups, faith formation and social ministry courses, many meaningful opportunities to partner year-round with CRS...to change lives and to nurture the virtue of global solidarity.

To learn more about Catholic Relief Service check out www.cr.org or contact Kathy Dubel, the Diocesan Director at kdubel@doc.org

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Bishop Matano Encourages Second Collection For Heating Assistance

Continued from page 1

Monroe County Dept of Human Services) due to extreme winter heating bills, and deceased due to excess income. Sherry thereafter her ex husband lost his job and child support stopped. She went back to HEAP to apply and found out that this program was closed for the season. At the same time the brakes on her car went and repairs cost over $400. RGE sent her a shut off notice and indicated that if she did not pay $578.85 service would be shut off. After failing to find other resources in the community to assist her, Alice turned to her parish (through the Diocese of Rochester) and was referred to Catholic Family Center for assistance. She met with a worker from the Community Resource Service Department and the amount was paid in full. CRS was also able to identify other areas in which Alice could obtain assistance. She states that this assistance lifted a great burden off her shoulders and that her financial situation is improving due to recent approval for Section 8 rental subsidy as well as approval for food stamp (SNAP) benefits.

A further benefit of this collection is that because much funding came late in the heating season, all seven Catholic Charities agencies have on-hand reserves to help with next year’s heating season.

Barb Montagna, a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Church in Rochester, was surprised to learn about the great work of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. She had just viewed a video on CCHD as part of the JustFaith program in the parish. “Why haven’t we heard about CCHD before?” she asked the leaders of her JustFaith group. Barb is not alone in her lack of knowledge of this important social justice ministry of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development was started by the U.S. bishops in 1970 to address the root causes of poverty through grants to projects that provide leadership training to the poor and their allies to bring about systemic change in their communities. What makes CCHD unique is that it does not fund direct service projects—like food cupboards or overnight shelters. CCHD’s approach starts with the belief that the poor best know what they need to change their lives and their communities. CCHD does not do for people what they can do for themselves. CCHD funds groups which organize people and resources to bring about structural change to improve the common good. In the process grassroots leaders are trained and find their voice in the public arena. The focus of CCHD on the root causes of poverty complements the direct-service programs and advocacy efforts of Catholic Charities agencies serving that County: Catholic Family Center (Catholic Charities of Monroe County), Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties, Catholic Charities of Livingston County, Catholic Charities of Steuben County, Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes (serving Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca and Yates Counties), Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga Counties and Catholic Charities of Wayne County. Uplifting stories of the impact of these funds abound. Just one example is the story of Alice (not her real name)...

For more information: www.usccb.org/cchd or contact Marvin Mich, the diocesan director at mmich@cfrochester.org.
Regional Roundup: Good News From Around the Diocese

Catholic Family Center

In a Speaking Out Essay published by the Democrat and Chronicle on March 1, 2014, Providence Bakhita Ministries Marive Basetta and Mental Health Clinic Director Kristie Elias advocated for increased funding for community-based treatment of persons with mental illness because “treatment works.” Among the services they advocated for were integrated mental health, addiction and medical care to respond to increased demand caused by the fact that restructuring of mental health care systems has reduced care available to treat chronic conditions. They also pointed to the growing need for dual treatments of alcohol/substance abuse and mental illness.

Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Through the BackPack program, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier provide 1,000 meals each Friday food for the weekend. Thanks to a new pilot program being tested in three school districts, children who receive the BackPack Program are enjoying even healthier foods: fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties

Housing Counseling Services at Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler is in full swing in 2014 as it reaches its 20th anniversary milestone. Over the past two years the program provided effective and comprehensive First Time Homebuyer education that has enabled 418 families to purchase their first home in the City of Elmira; Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention that has preserved homes and assets for hundreds of homeowners in distress; and Financial Fitness counseling that continues to help consumers see and act on a debt-free, more hopeful future. The program has developed strong partnerships with local lenders; City of Elmira, state and federal funders, other community partners and Catholic Charities USA. All working together to offer Help that works, Hope that lasts!

Catholic Charities of Livingston County

The Catholic Charities of Livingston County 9th Annual Eat for Heart Dinner sponsored by St. Matthew’s Parish in Livonia in January was another success! Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers and everyone that came out to support CCCLV.

Catholic Charities of Steuben County

Catholic Charities of Steuben County relies on significant community involvement to raise funds to support its anti-poverty programs. An anti-poverty walk, steps to end Poverty in Steuben (STEPS), is held each spring in major areas of the county to raise awareness and dollars. Participants can go to the event website to create a team, join a team, register as an individual walker, or make donations to walkers. A progressive dinner is hosted each year to benefit the food pantry, bringing churches together in a common mission in the fight against hunger. Some community members even plan their own events to raise dollars to donate directly to CCSC. These funds support three Turning Point sites in the county (Hornell, Bath, Corning) which provide direct emergency assistance to 9,000 annually.
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Continued from page 1

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The focus of CCHD on the root causes of poverty complements the direct-service programs and advocacy efforts of Catholic Charities groups which organize people and resources to bring about structural change to improve the common good. In the process grassroots leaders are trained and find their voice in the public arena.

The annual CCHD collection takes place in our diocese on the third Sunday of September. Twenty-five percent of the funds collected are used to fund diocesan grants and 75% of the collection is used for education about poverty and national grants. Visit the CCHD website for more information: www.usccb.org/cchd or contact Marvin Mich, the diocesan director at mmich@cfcrochester.org.

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Responding to concerns expressed by Catholic Charities leaders that our agencies were turning away record numbers of clients seeking assistance in paying heating bills, Bishop Matano sent a letter to all parish leaders in late January encouraging them to take a second collection to raise funds to go directly to payment of clients’ heating bills. He recognized that need for such assistance had skyrocketed because of the brutally cold winter and cutbacks in the last two years in the government’s HEAP program (Home Energy Assistance Program).

Once again the generosity of parishioners throughout the Diocese was extraordinary. To date, over $145,000 has been raised from 71 parishes. Over $85,000 was raised in Monroe County, more than $12,000 was raised in Cayuga County, more than $8,000 was raised in Tioga County, and more than $6,000 was raised in Tompkins County.

Funds collected in any given county have been allocated to one of the seven Catholic Charities agencies serving that County: Catholic Family Center (Catholic Charities of Monroe County), Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties, Catholic Charities of Livingston County, Catholic Charities of Steuben County, Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes (serving Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca and Yates Counties), Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga Counties and Catholic Charities of Wayne County.

Uplifting stories of the impact of these funds abound. Just one example is the story of Alice Martin.

Alice is a single mom with a teenage daughter. Over the past year she has been hospitalized with a stroke, heart failure and lupus. She receives Social Security Disability and up until a month ago was receiving child support. Her daughter suffers severe anxiety and is home-schooled. Alice went to apply for HEAP assistance (Home Energy Assistance through the Department of Health) but was turned away. She heard about CCHD and applied, but nothing happened. She thought about giving up on the HEAP program until she heard about the second collection. Alice was able to go directly to the monetary assistance she so desperately needed. Alice says, “It’s a blessing.”

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