

# THE GOOD NEWS

SPRING 2014

A QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER



## Bishop Matano Encourages Second Collection For Heating Assistance

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 Janu-

ary 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 in Monroe County:

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

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## Catholic Campaign for Human Development Empowering Individuals and Community

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. Barbara is not alone in her lack of knowledge of this important social justice ministry of the Catholic Church.

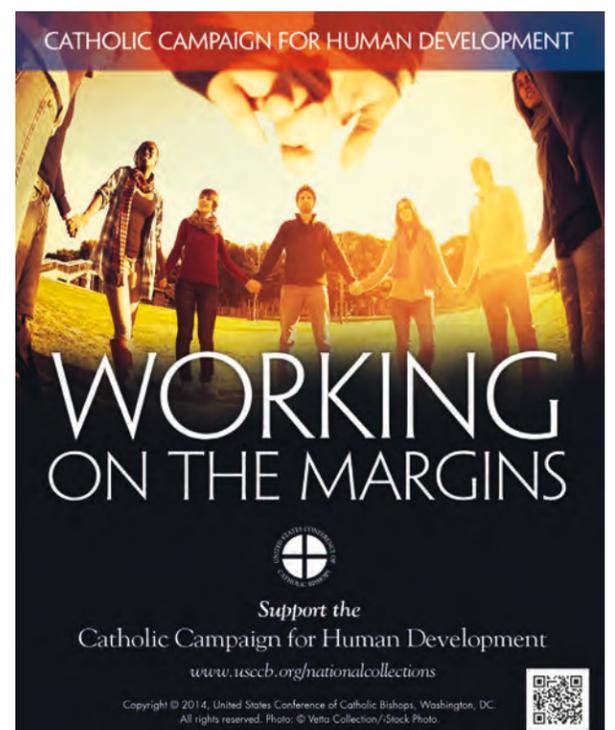
The Catholic Campaign for Human Development was started by the U.S. bishops in 1970 to address the root causes of poverty through grants to projects that provide leadership training to the poor and their allies to bring about systemic change in their communities.

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, St. Vincent DePaul, and parish outreach ministries.

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/](http://www.usccb.org/cchd/) or contact Marvin Mich, the diocesan director at [mmich@cfcrochester.org](mailto:mmich@cfcrochester.org).



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# 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, President and CEO Marlene Bessette 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 treatment of alcohol/substance abuse and mental illness.



## 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 decades this program provided effective and comprehensive FirstTime 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 Wayne County

In early 2014, Peter Mares was recognized by Wayne Action for Racial Equality (WARE) for his dedication and commitment to our community in promoting non-violence and fighting racism. Peter serves as program manager for LaCasa, a transitional housing program for migrant farmworkers and their families in Sodus, NY operated by Catholic Charities of Wayne County.



Peter was recognized for his years of dedication as a social justice advocate for the poor in our region, working diligently to positively influence governmental leaders towards better embracing immigrant rights and improving the lives of our local farmworkers in our communities.

The WARE selection committee identified Peter as a model of advocacy for immigration reform in our time, a kindred spirit of Dr. King that positively builds networks with other advocates who "answer the drumbeat of justice."

Congratulations Peter on this wonderful award in recognition of years of service to our brothers and sisters in need!

## Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Through the Backpack program, the Food Bank provides to 2,200 school children 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.

So far, children in the test areas – Binghamton, Corning/Painted Post and Ithaca – have enjoyed carrots, apples and squash, all sourced from local farms. Recipes are included as well so that the kids can make nutritious, tasty dishes with their produce. Each month, another fruit or vegetable will be featured.

It is the goal that eventually fresh, healthy, local produce will regularly be in the backpacks of children in other school districts served in our six-county region. Funded by the Walmart Foundation, the pilot will run through the 2013-14 school year.

An elementary teacher in the Ithaca City School District remarked, "We want our children to have a boost over the weekend: they are hungry. Kids need as much whole, unprocessed food as we are able to provide. I can see the benefits of complete nutrition on brain development and behavior. I love to see packs filled with fresh fruits and veggies!"



## Camp Stella Maris

Since 1926, the children of our community have been coming to the shores of Conesus Lake to experience the time of their lives at Camp Stella Maris. As the summer of 2014 quickly approaches, leaders of the camp are busy preparing the camp for the over 2,500 participants in our Resident, Day, Overnight Experience, Leader in Training, Counselor in Training, and Family Camp Weekend programs. An Open House is scheduled for Sunday, June 8th from Noon to 3:00 P.M. for families and friends interested in finding out more about camp. For more information please visit our website: [www.campstellamaris.org](http://www.campstellamaris.org).

## Catholic Charities Community Services

The mother of AIDS activist Ryan White, who died of the disease in 1990, spoke about the continuing importance of HIV/AIDS education at the Catholic Charities Community Services' third annual Breakfast with Friends on Friday morning March 9th.

About 160 sponsors, community members and elected officials gathered at the Irondequoit Country Club to hear Jeanne White-Ginder's experiences as the "poster family" of AIDS education in the late 1980s.

Catholic Charities assists about 2,000 clients annually across the 12 counties surrounding Rochester, about 560 of them are affected by HIV/AIDS. The charity provides services such as case management, HIV/AIDS education, transportation, medication adherence programs, and support groups.

## Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes

Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes has begun working with community partners across the Canandaigua area to tackle the issue of homelessness in and around the Canandaigua area. What began as a request to identify resources for homeless individuals to take showers has evolved into a community-wide series of dialogues that have raised awareness and have begun to foster increased collaboration around the needs of homeless individuals. A series of community-wide dialogues have taken



place that have provided opportunities for community residents, community leaders and current and former homeless individuals to provide insight, offer suggestions and challenge misconceptions. Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes remains committed in working with its community partners to address the concerns raised and to create a meaningful response to homelessness. The second forum, held on May 8th provided an opportunity to look at models of community response that have worked in other upstate New York Communities.

## Catholic Charities of Livingston County

The Catholic Charities of Livingston County 9th Annual Eat for Heat 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 CCLC!

The dreadful weather had the number of meals served down to 175, but our dedicated supporters helped to surpass our total proceeds from last year. We brought in over \$7,000 between the spaghetti dinner, silent auction and additional monetary donations. Proceeds from this Eat for Heat dinner, as well as other such events go into the agency's Livingston Emergency Assistance Funding which provides financial assistance to over 7000 individuals per year.



## Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga Counties

Catholic Charities in Tioga County has been collaborating with other community partners to enhance the services provided to the county. This collaboration or what has been re-named "partners" started out with three main agencies: Catholic Charities, Tioga County Rural Ministry and the Open Door Mission. The three agencies started meeting once a month to talk about the needs of the community and how best to help all. Since the start of this group gathering other agencies including Tioga County Department of Social Services and Community Care Network of Nichols-Salvation Army have joined the network. This group took the "partnering" one step farther and collaborated on a grant to Tioga Downs to help support the emergency assistance in the Tioga County Community.



Photo by Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Providence Housing Executive Director Deacon John McDermott, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren, state Sen. Joseph Robach, and Son House tenants Tom Skellen (seated) and Carmen Sanchez cut the ribbon on Rochester's Son House Apartments.

## Providence Housing Development Corporation

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held on Monday, February 24th at 10:30 a.m. at 539 Joseph Avenue to highlight the completion of the construction and opening of Son House Apartments, a quality, affordable housing development. Son House Apartments was made possible through the funding provided by New York State Homes & Community Renewal, New York State Homeless Housing & Assistance Corporation, City of Rochester, Federal Home Loan Bank of New York, NYSEDA, and First Niagara.

Son House Apartments provides 21 one-bedroom apartments of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals through a partnership between Providence Housing and Catholic Family Center. The development team consisted of Providence Housing, Catholic Family Center, SWBR Architects, Stantec, Lescage Construction Services, and Comfort Systems USA.

## 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 individual walkers, 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. All these funds support three Turning Point sites in the county (Hornell, Bath, Corning) which provide direct emergency assistance to 9000 annually.



# 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 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 ministries, 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](http://www.cr.org) or contact Kathy Dubel, the Diocesan Director at [kdubel@dor.org](mailto:kdubel@dor.org).

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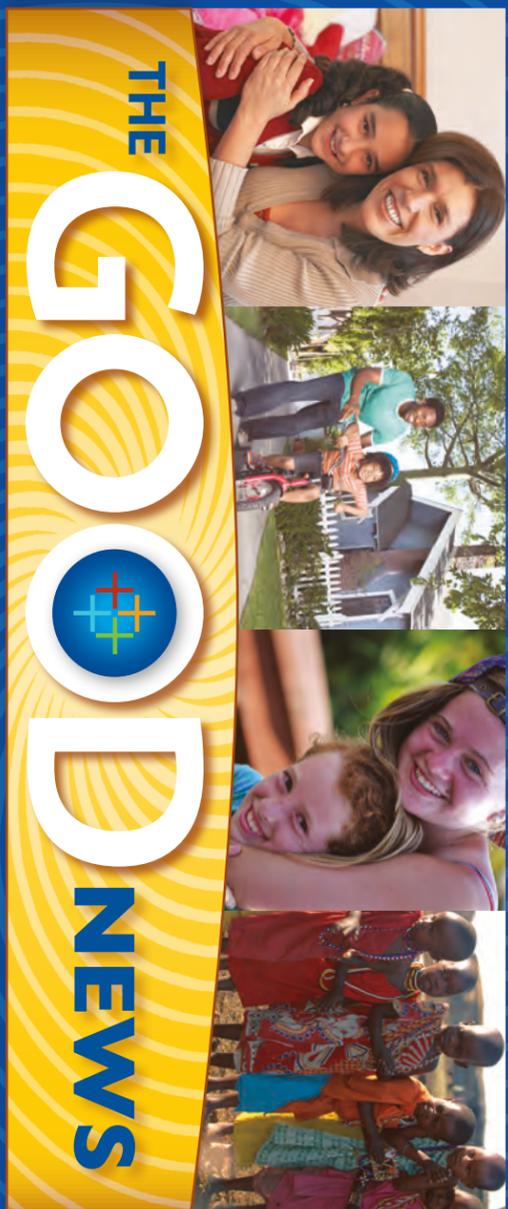
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Monroe County Dept of Human Services) due to extreme winter heating bills, and was denied due to excess income. Shortly thereafter her ex husband lost his job and child support stopped. She went back to HEAP to apply and found out that this program 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.

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 1150 Buffalo Rd. • Rochester, NY 14624



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