Our Affiliates

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Christmas Hope:
In Advent and Throughout the Year

In his Christmas letter to the Diocese, our Bishop, the Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano wrote:

“The Christmas season provides an excellent opportunity for us, like Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and Magi, to strengthen, to renew, to embrace and to proclaim our faith.”

For us at Catholic Charities, the Christmas season is a time to renew and strengthen our resolve to respond to Jesus’ call to love our neighbor – to provide “Help that works. Hope that lasts!” We do so not only in this Christmas season, but throughout the year.

This issue of the Good News focuses both on special activities which some of our agencies undertake in the Christmas season but also on work that our agencies do throughout the year.

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In the Christmas Season

**Catholic Charities of Livingston County**

Catholic Charities of Livingston County is again this year carrying out its Christmas Program. Many local parishes, businesses, and organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary, and other civic groups that have participated in the past, have signed up again this year to collect and distribute gifts to about 300 individuals in need. The agency is fortunate to have partners like Kiwanis Club of the Woodcliff Hotel and Spa. Foodlink has also granted Catholic Charities of Livingston County 40 Thanksgiving food baskets and a basket of Christmas food items.

The agency’s Christmas Sponsorship Initiative targets families who do not receive or qualify for other forms of assistance, as well as individuals who are making significant attempts to support themselves, e.g. the under-employed. Based upon the needs of an individual family, donors provide needed household items, which are then delivered to recipients, usually when children are not home. This is a wonderful experience for parents, as children often help to open the gifts the very next day.

The agency is inviting one and all to participate in the Giving Tree Program to help clients with their Christmas purchases. The Giving Tree is another way for people to express their generosity toward the poor.

**Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties**

The agency’s Christmas Sponsorship Initiative targets families who do not receive or qualify for other forms of assistance, as well as individuals who are making significant attempts to support themselves, e.g. the under-employed. Based upon the needs of an individual family, donors provide needed household items, which are then delivered to recipients, usually when children are not home. This is a wonderful experience for parents, as children often help to open the gifts the very next day.

**Catholic Charities of Finger Lakes**

Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes is the happy beneficiary of a local family’s efforts to respond to the needs of their neighbors. In 2010, the Smith Family, including siblings Hannah, Louis and Jacob, put their heads together to think of a way to help people in their community. The children, students at St. Francis-St. Stephen School in Geneva came up with the Gloves for Love campaign, an initiative that seeks to gather new, donated gloves and hats and distribute them across the community. For the Christmas season, the family collected more than 217 sets of gloves and hats. More than 50 pairs were collected. Through assiduous efforts of school leaders and staff of CFC programs, the project has continued to grow. For Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, the donation of gloves and hats is a welcome addition to holiday efforts. The contributions come just before Christmas, a time when requests for assistance are numerous.

Catholic Charities of Steuben County

Catholic Charities of Steuben has partnered with ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc. to bring poverty awareness to the groups and organizations in Steuben County. A Poverty Simulation is a realistic portrayal of living in a low-income household. Participants are assigned roles in households, in the community and on the job. They have been invited to see how residents of typical low income households cope.

While the Christmas season activities described in this newsletter are just a small part of the activities of these agencies and while our other agencies also engage in activities in which we share here ongoing efforts of other agencies who provided help and hope throughout the year.

**Catholic Charities of Steuben County**

The Tioga Outreach Center of Catholic Charities of Steuben County, located in Nichols, again this year continued its Thanksgiving/Christmas traditions. Thanksgiving Baskets were provided to low-income families of three or more. Christmas toy baskets were made available to families with children ages infant to 12 years. In Tompkins County, Catholic Charities continued its collaboration, Share the Warmth with the Ithaca Rotary to help insure that people who have warm outerwear for the winter.

**Catholic Charities of Wayne County**

Catholic Charities of Wayne County has been invited to participate in the Poverty Simulation event to be held before the start of the 40th Annual Sparkle event in Corning’s Gaffer District on Saturday, December 6th. The Selfless Elf 5K presented by Wegmans was run in conjunction with the 40th Annual Sparkle.

In “promoting the run, the goal is to attract all types of runners and walkers to participate,” said Natasha Thompson, President & CEO of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. “We encourage runners and walkers of all ages to turn out wearing festive holiday-themed outfits. Our hope is that we can get the community together for a fun event while raising awareness about the important issue of child hunger.”

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Food Bank’s BackPack Program™. More than 18,000 children across the Southern Tier are eligible to participate in free or reduced price school meal programs. Many of these children don’t have access to adequate nutrition over the weekend and holiday breaks when school is not in session. The BackPack Program™ provides a pack of healthy, child-friendly and easy to prepare foods to children in need each Friday. In the 2013 – 2014 school year, the Food Bank’s BackPack Program™ will operate in 41 school districts across the Southern Tier; delivering packs of food each week to more than 2,500 students each week.

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**Catholic Charities of Livingston County**

Highlights on ongoing activities of Catholic Charities of Livingston County include:

- “So far this year, 25,000 individuals with an urgent need have received assistance. Types of assistance have included provision of a warm coat, winter wear, food pantry, phone call for referral and more.”

- “The Help! Works Emergency Services program has assisted 1,728 people to date with rent, security deposit, utility bill and budget counseling.”

- Twenty-four families participated in the Emergency Housing program and all were successfully placed in permanent housing.

- Fifty-one women participated in parenting classes offered by the Community of Caring program while in the Livingston County Jail.

- The Pantry and Clothing Cupboard program has served 2,868 families in 2015.

- Through the Hope Youth Mentoring Program, 48 students have been matched with a mentor, while 50 children remain on the waitlist.

- Through the Employment Program, 108 clients have obtained employment. CCLC employment counselors partner with staff from the County Social Services and Workforce Development office.

**Catholic Charities of Wayne County**

Highlights of ongoing activities of Catholic Charities of Wayne County include:

- At its 10th anniversary celebration in September, the agency honored Father Peter Clifford and John Holley as founding Catholic missionaries of its agency.

- Through the College Bound program, the agency works with 200 high school seniors to facilitate their acceptance into college.

- La Casa, a transitional housing program, serves as the hub of the agency’s ministry to farmworkers and their families in the northern part of the county.

- At the Wolcott Community Clothing Center, over 200 backpacks were distributed to school-age children in August, and once again the Center is in partnership with Radio WACK, 1420 and Herb Phillips in New York, and with Fidelis Care of New York to distribute new and gently used coats.

- The Early Intervention, PINs (Persons in Need of Supervision) and General Counseling programs continue to be staples of the agency.

- The Mobile Food Pantry program has been instituted in cooperation with Newark Rotary, distributes food to 200 families each month.

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