

GOOD NEWS NOW

[www.CatholicCharities.org](http://www.CatholicCharities.org)

*Providing Help. Creating Hope.*

## Catholic Charities Provides Assistance to Flood Victims

On Memorial Day 2015, a devastating storm hit the Houston area, resulting in historic flooding. Responders dealt with 500-plus emergency rescues, and crews towed more than 750 abandoned cars from city streets. Leaders activated the Emergency Management System, and Governor Greg Abbott declared Houston a disaster area.



As one of the area's leading organizations working with poor and vulnerable families, Catholic Charities immediately began working with other organizations to respond to the needs of storm victims. We were already in disaster relief mode the day before the flood as we worked with the City of Houston to house 150 families displaced by a tornado. To date, we have coordinated with the American Red Cross to assist more than 100

households with emergency needs, gift cards and shelter in Galveston County and the Bay Area. We also arranged to have 100 food boxes available for those families as they relocated to more permanent housing.

In addition to making sure that all of our current clients were safe, our staff completed home visits, assessed damage and documented immediate needs of the individuals and families that called in for help. Many of the callers told us about their need for housing because they had to leave their homes. Others were unable to work because of lack of transportation, and many could not pay their rent or feed their families. We called on our supporters to help with disaster relief, and we are grateful that so many of you helped families and individuals in need with housing and food.

### Hope Springs from the Flood for One Homeless Family

Five members of the Gregory\* family were living in their truck behind a supermarket when the truck flooded during the Memorial Day storm. Fortunately, they were able to leave the vehicle and go to a shelter without injuries. The parents and their three sons met with a Catholic Charities representative and shared that they had nowhere to go. The dad used his last few dollars for gasoline to keep the family moving from place to place.

Catholic Charities was able to provide food assistance and placed the family in an extended stay hotel. Our case managers began helping Mr. Gregory look for a job and referred him to The Beacon, and they are now on the road to self-sufficiency.

*\* Name Changed*

**“I love your staff for all you did for me and my family.”**

*- Mr. Gregory*

### Your gift can help families like Mr. Gregory's with these needs:

- Food/gas gift cards from Kroger (generally \$100/family)
- Rent, utility and medication assistance
- Temporary housing for one week
- Temporary storage for one month

To help, log on to **CatholicCharities.org/donateonline** and select “2015 Memorial Day Flood” under Designation, or call **713.874.6681** for more information.

# DEAR FRIENDS

As you know, many of our neighbors have experienced significant losses due to our recent severe weather. Through it all, Catholic Charities has been there to lend a helping hand. We are collaborating with other community agencies to help people find new long-term or shorter-term housing, apply for benefits, and receive basic needs support and case management services. Two case managers from Catholic Charities in Camden, N.J., are here sharing the workload to help us reach as many people as possible. Volunteers and donors have also helped us bring assistance and comfort to those impacted by the storms.

During my prayer time today, I read a verse from Matthew that reminded me that even the strongest of us have moments when the storms of life seem too big... too overwhelming. It is in those times that we hear God reminding us, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28)

The people served through Catholic Charities have been through many types of storms in their lives – broken relationships, abuse,

lack of a job and homelessness are just a few. Despite those challenges, we have seen the amazing resilience of the human spirit as we walk alongside people in life's journeys – *providing help and creating hope.*

Please keep all those impacted by the recent storms in your prayers, and also pray for all our clients as they recover from the storms of life. Thank you for being one of the many hands in this ministry.

May God bless you,



Cynthia N. Colbert, MSW  
President/CEO



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**“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”** (Matt 11:28)

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## NEW LEADERS AND AWARDS

The Annual Meeting & Celebration on April 7 – with the theme *“One Mission. One Heart. Many Hands.”* – included hors d’oeuvres, music, videos highlighting the impact of our agency’s programs, and a touching testimony by a Mamie George Community Center senior client-turned-volunteer.



*Pictured left to right:  
Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee,  
His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo,  
Cynthia N. Colbert and John Kafka.*

The 2015 Charity in Action Awards were presented to three outstanding supporters: St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred

Heart, and retired Marathon Oil Assistant General Counsel Richard Horstman.

“When I think about an agency that tirelessly works to help improve and elevate the lives of others, I believe there is no better organization equipped to do this work than Catholic Charities,” said John Kafka, board chair and president/CEO of Chamberlin Roofing and Waterproofing. *See the back page of the newsletter to see the new list of officers, board members and advisory members.*

### Nonprofit BBB Pinnacle Award Winner

The Houston Better Business Bureau supports and recognizes businesses and nonprofits in the Greater Houston area that meet specified standards of excellence and quality in the workplace. We are accredited by the BBB, and on May 13 at the annual Awards of Excellence luncheon, we received the Pinnacle Award! Catholic Charities was selected among a group of 16 finalists including Houston Food Bank, Star of Hope Mission and Goodwill Houston.

## Thank You for Helping Us Win \$50,000!

After receiving more than 35,000 total votes, the Houston Chronicle announced the winners of the inaugural \$1 Million Charity Giveaway. Readers and our supporters voted once per day for their favorite charity, and the top 20 nonprofits won \$50,000 of in-kind advertising in the Houston Chronicle. Look for our ads in the paper soon!

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*We Appreciate  
Your Support!*

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# ENHANCING THE WELL-BEING OF OLDER ADULTS THROUGH THE ARTS



This spring, Beth Zarate, Executive Director of the Mamie George Community Center (MGCC), and Terri Bieber, Creative Aging Program Coordinator, joined colleagues and leaders in the field of creative aging at the 2015 Leadership Exchange and Professional Development Institute hosted by the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) in Washington, D.C. The NCCA focuses on the practice, research and business of this burgeoning field which is dedicated to fostering an understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and healthy aging. Terri was asked to speak on one of the panels where she shared our unique creative aging model that incorporates sustainability strategies specifically benefitting low-income seniors. At the MGCC, daily art classes plus drama, music, cultural arts presentations and community art exhibitions are offered that help enrich and empower seniors. In addition, participants are trained to teach some of the programs. Through their volunteer involvement they gain a sense of personal accomplishment and help sustain the Creative Aging

program, keeping it accessible and free to more than 600 seniors participating each month.

## National Conference Offers New Ideas for Local Activities

While at the conference, Beth and Terri learned of a successful model for supporting individuals living with the effects of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia being implemented in Boston. They created a pilot program, The Memory Café, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association of Houston. The Memory Café serves as a "think tank" and social gathering for persons suffering from memory loss and their care partners in Fort Bend County. Another idea that will be implemented in 2016 is a sliding-scale fee based membership program. Currently, MGCC is the only community program in Fort Bend County that focuses on creative aging. The sliding-scale membership would allow wider access to individuals not currently qualified for services while helping to offset some of the expenses so that programming can remain free to low-income seniors.

Participants in the MGCC Creative Aging program paint pictures, make rugs out of plastic bags and create an array of artistic items. Research from the Health Service Journal indicates that participating in arts and cultural interventions can reduce the potential risk for illness.

## Here are 3 reasons to support an ongoing art program:

- 1 Focuses on the current abilities of the participant
- 2 Keeps the participant engaged over a long period of time
- 3 Levels of depression and overall illness drop by 37 percent



## Get involved at Mamie George:

The Creative Aging room is open daily from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Many of the activities change daily, so please contact Terri Bieber to learn more at [tbieber@catholiccharities.org](mailto:tbieber@catholiccharities.org).

## Get involved at Memory Café:

The third Thursday of every month, we host a Memory Café in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association. Memory Café is a social gathering for people with memory loss and their caregiver. We need volunteers to assist with art activities for Memory Café participants who are living with early-stage Alzheimer's disease. For more information on volunteering, contact Marisa Ramon at [mraron@alz.org](mailto:mraron@alz.org).

To learn how you, your business or organization can support programs at the Mamie George Community Center, or to schedule a tour, please contact Beth Zarate at **281.202.6240** or email [bzarate@catholiccharities.org](mailto:bzarate@catholiccharities.org).

# 87,629 LIVES WERE IMPACTED IN 2014 BECAUSE OF YOU!



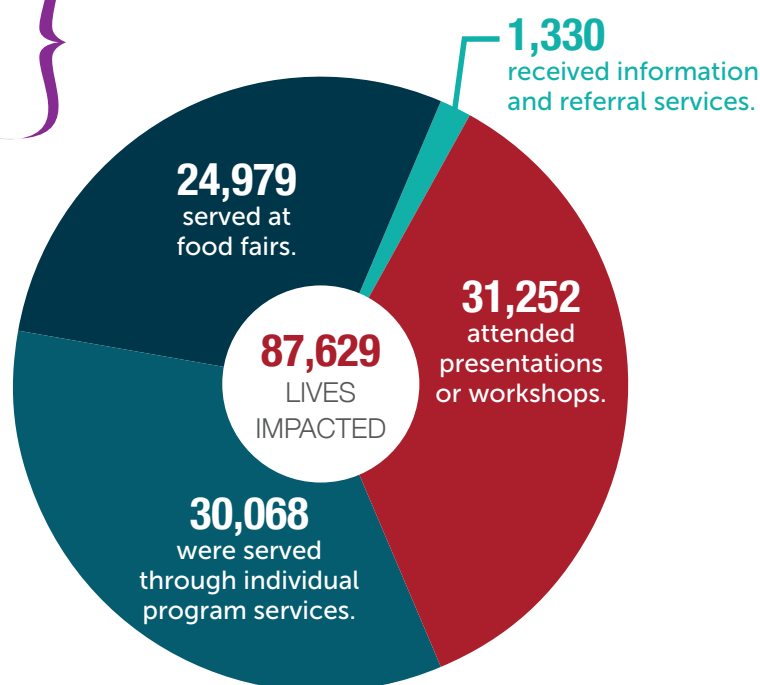
**89%** of clients in Strengthening Families  
programs have household incomes below  
the 2014 Federal Poverty Guideline.



**65** women and children  
were provided safe  
housing and support  
services at The Villa Transitional  
Housing Program.



**36** infants and children  
in foster care found  
forever homes  
through adoption.



**27 languages** are spoken by our staff,  
enabling us to help people from many countries.

## 70%

of children identified as needing academic  
improvement with the assistance of our  
school counseling program succeeded in  
increasing their skills.



We will be emailing our 2014 Annual Report soon!  
Sign up to receive our e-newsletters at [www.CatholicCharities.org](http://www.CatholicCharities.org)



# PLANNED GIFT IS EASY WAY TO HELP CATHOLIC CHARITIES, LEAVE A LEGACY!

A charitable bequest is an excellent way to help further our mission – and it is easy, too. Working with an estate-planning attorney, you can simply include a provision for Catholic Charities in your will. It could be a gift of a specific asset, a dollar amount or a percentage of your estate. A bequest could also be made from the remainder of your estate – or what is left after all gifts have been made to your heirs.

Please contact us to learn about the benefits of making a charitable bequest and to discuss how, together, we can continue to answer Christ's call to serve those in need.

## Charitable Bequest Benefits

Your gift will improve the quality of life of those less fortunate, support and build strong families, and meet the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable. Here are some of the many benefits of bequest giving:

### It costs you nothing today.

- A bequest is free of federal & estate tax.
- Your bequest can be changed later.
- You can still benefit your heirs with specific gifts.
- You can leave a legacy through a bequest.
- You can change people's lives.



For more information, contact  
Diane Cervenka, VP of  
Development Marketing:  
[dcervenka@catholiccharities.org](mailto:dcervenka@catholiccharities.org);  
call 713.874.6624; or visit  
[www.CatholicCharities.GiftLegacy.com](http://www.CatholicCharities.GiftLegacy.com).



When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), Amazon will donate to Catholic Charities. Make sure to select the *Catholic Charities of Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston* before checking out.



## Randalls Good Neighbor Program

Link your card with Catholic Charities, **organization number 1760**. Visit our website to download these forms.

## Kroger Community Rewards

Link your Kroger Plus Card to our agency and we can earn a rebate each time you shop for groceries!



- 1 Create an account and set your preferred location at [www.Kroger.com/CommunityRewards](http://www.Kroger.com/CommunityRewards)
- 2 Add Kroger Plus Card to your account by entering your Plus Card number or alternate ID and last name
- 3 Account Summary Page: Click "Enroll" under "Community Rewards"
- 4 Enter your information under "Community Rewards Program"
- 5 Under "Find Your Organization" type in 81976 or Catholic Charities
- 6 Choose Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, 2900 Louisiana St., Houston, Tx 77006
- 7 Click "Enroll"

# Stories from the Heart

## CLIENT GIVES BACK BY VOLUNTEERING



Galveston resident Evangeline contacted Catholic Charities because she had fallen

on hard times and needed rent assistance. During her interview, the representative put her at ease and suggested that Evangeline might be a good fit to work for the SER program for seniors.

This gave her a strong sense of hope, purpose and possibility. She started working for the program and was assigned to the Catholic Charities office as an intake receptionist. She soon became involved with the jobs program because she is passionate about helping fellow Galvestonians find employment.

**“Everyone is always willing to lend a hand or an encouraging word. I really feel blessed to have been assigned to this group of awesome individuals.”**

## Family Pays It Forward After Immigration Assistance

Mr. Gonzales\* and his wife came to the U.S. from Mexico more than 20 years ago. For years they tried to obtain legal permanent resident status through the help of private firms, but after spending thousands, they ended up with nothing.

Earlier this year, Mr. Gonzales and his son (who was born in the U.S.) attended a Catholic Charities information session explaining immigration laws. After attending the Information Charla, their case was assigned to an accredited representative, who advised the son

to file a family petition in order to get his family’s legal status finalized in a short time.

Their representative filed their case and a few months later, they were scheduled for their interview. With the help of Catholic Charities, they received permanent legal status at little cost to them. Because of their positive experience with Catholic Charities, the family has graciously given the agency a \$10,000 donation in hopes that other families like theirs will be helped in their time of need.

*\*Name changed to protect client's identity*

## One of the *Many Hands*

A.J. is a graduate student in social work at Texas State University. He interned with our Refugee Resettlement department this past Spring.

“The most rewarding part of my experience with Catholic Charities was seeing the client walk in the door with hope and expectations and walk out with their needs met,” A.J. said. “The staff and volunteers helped them sign up for food stamps or Medicaid and Medicare, helped them get ID cards, provided people a place to live, provided vaccinations for the children and helped them enroll in school, and helped many people get jobs and start earning a paycheck.”

A.J. said it was tremendously rewarding to see the results of their efforts. “We helped a family of seven make multiple appointments to a variety of clinics to ensure their kids were immunized and enrolled in school. When the family lost their apartment mid-year, we were there to help them again.”

For A.J., the tireless efforts of the staff on behalf of refugees and the poor were inspiring to him. “This organization is a model for others to follow,” A.J. said.

**“The staff helps strangers feel welcome and treats them like family. They go above and beyond the call of duty, and they impact lives every day. I admire the team’s work ethic. They are amazing people!”**

# SPECIAL EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

## Gala success in Fort Bend County



Love" gala to benefit services provided in Fort Bend County.

The event was hosted at Heaven on Earth, an historic event venue that includes a home built in 1898 by the first settlers to Missouri City. Festivities included a high-spirited wine pull, silent and live auctions, a reception, "paddles up" bidding, as well as an art sale of original pieces created by the seniors from the Mamie George Creative Aging program.

Honoring Gene and Pat Reed of EE Reed Construction, this fun, festive event was chaired by Schottsie Hill, Lucy Maldonado and Michelle Porth. Faith Sponsorships were provided by CHI St. Luke's Health, Heaven on Earth, David E. Harvey, Jr. and Dr. Mikki Hebl.

On May 7 more than \$130,000 was raised for MGCC through the "Mission of

Our Hope Sponsors were Chamberlin Roofing and Waterproofing, Kohl's, Stan and Reinette Marek, Burt and Ally Martin, and St. Teresa Catholic Church.

## Concert at the Villa



Concert at the Villa on April 19.

This concert honored the memory of the many loved ones lost to HIV/AIDS and those whose efforts have sustained those affected by the disease. The event featured a Mass of Remembrance in the Neo-Byzantine chapel, presided by Bishop Sheltz; a High Tea; and a concert featuring the Apollo Chamber Players.

HIV/AIDS Ministry offers compassionate care through counseling, financial assistance and spiritual support to men, women, children and families affected by HIV and AIDS.

Honorary Chairs Rhonda and Donald Sweeney presented the

## World Refugee Day Houston 2015



This free family event occurred June 13 at the University

of St. Thomas. World Refugee Day was established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to honor the courage, strength and determination of individuals forced to flee their homes under the threat of persecution and violence.

Since 1978, Houston has resettled nearly 70,000 refugees, which contributes to the region's richly diverse culture and to its growth and development.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**AUG 14** **Healing Hearts Retreat: A Birthmother's Love Lasts Forever**  
August 14 - 16  
Cenacle Retreat House

The goal of the Healing Hearts Retreat is to affirm and support the sacrificial love of birthmothers in their gift of life. This retreat offers restoration for mind, body and spirit and is an opportunity to share the special bond of birth-motherhood.

If you have any questions, please call Colleen Kitowski at 713.874.6760 or email [ckitowski@catholiccharities.org](mailto:ckitowski@catholiccharities.org).



**DEC 12** **A Cardinal's Christmas**  
Noon -1:30 PM  
Lakeside Country Club

Event Chairs:  
Gloria R. Kalman,  
Jennifer K. Fuentes &  
Lauren K. Summerville



For more information, please contact Zarinah K. Poole at 713.874.6649 or [zpoole@catholiccharities.org](mailto:zpoole@catholiccharities.org). You may also visit [www.CatholicCharities.org/ACC](http://www.CatholicCharities.org/ACC).



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