

Good Works

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CatholicCharitiesAZ.org

Building the Assets to Escape Poverty

When Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) launched the *Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America* two years ago, we at Catholic Charities Community Services were beginning a strategic planning process. We determined that we wanted to find ways that we as an agency could help reach the national campaign's goal to reduce poverty by half by 2020.

As we examined our history, we found that for 75 years, our agency has worked to stabilize people in crisis, and to the credit of our dedicated staff and volunteers, we have been largely successful. But while many of the people we served managed to escape poverty—having the assets and motivation to do so, many did not and we saw them repeatedly returning to our programs. We quickly understood that helping people achieve affordable housing, food, health care, and economic security would help many, but not all, leave poverty behind.

For 75 years, our agency has worked to stabilize people in crisis.

Some people fall into a culture of poverty, a culture which results in a mental model that focuses, necessarily, on survival. The culture of poverty is well documented in the publications of Dr. Ruby Payne, PhD, an educator who pioneered this work. We determined that to be successful, we would need to develop approaches to help people in chronic or generational poverty build a range of assets: financial, personal, social, cultural, and spiritual.

First, we identified five states of being in a poverty continuum:

- In crisis
- Vulnerable
- Stable
- Moving/Secure
- Out of poverty

For each state of being in the poverty continuum, we identified services we currently provide to help people in their current state and to help them move along the continuum and out of poverty. As we looked at the range of our services, we saw that there are additional services that we could expand or develop. Some of these innovative and proven strategies include *AZ SAVES*, a four-session financial literacy training; and *Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World*, a 13-session program developed by Dr. Payne that addresses behaviors that keep people in poverty and requires participants to evaluate their behavior, identify their personal assets, and develop a dream plan for their lives.

We also partnered with the Coalition for Compassion and Justice to pilot *Circles of Support*, a mentoring program designed to help motivated people develop tangible and non-tangible assets to overcome financial, educational, and behavioral barriers to escaping poverty. Basically, a group of volunteers form a circle of support around an individual or family and meets with them weekly, usually for a year, to develop a plan, provide guidance, help solve problems, identify community resources, model productive behavior, and act as a sounding board for ideas and goals.

The CCUSA *Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America* has challenged us to rethink our service goals. Emergency services, while necessary, serve to alleviate suffering and help people stabilize in a time of crisis. Some people, once stabilized, have the assets to escape poverty. Others, especially people in generational or chronic poverty, require development of a range of assets to successfully leave poverty. Through our new efforts and program, we're working to help them do that.

One Woman Finds a Path out of Poverty

When Cathy Scott entered Catholic Charities' Transitional Housing program in Cottonwood, she was eager for something better in her life. Her life had often bordered on crisis—over several years, she had spent money unwisely, moved constantly, and struggled with alcoholism and mental illness. Most recently, she'd been unsettled for several months after leaving an abusive marriage and living in a domestic violence shelter. She had a job that didn't pay much, and her mother, beset with her own problems, had come to live with her. But she knew a good thing when she saw it.

Cathy and her mother moved into Catholic Charities' Transitional housing units at Rio Verde apartments. In exchange for reduced rent, Cathy would have to work full-time, meet weekly with case managers, contribute to a savings account on a regular basis, and do community service.



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One Woman Finds a Path out of Poverty

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Cathy's case manager, Margaret Stein, helped Cathy set out a plan—save money, pay off her debts, get some counseling, learn life skills, get a better job, and resolve the issues that had contributed to her situation.

Cathy has now been at Rio Verde for two years. It hasn't always been an easy road, but Cathy has given it time, effort, and the chance to work. Margaret's encouragement and support has made all the difference.

"She listens to me, and she doesn't judge me," said Cathy. "Whenever there was a problem, she always tries to come up with a new resource, a different way to do things."

Cathy has taken advantage of the classes offered through the program, especially the "Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World" classes.

"I'm learning a lot," said Cathy. "It shows you ways that people do things that keeps them in poverty and teaches you new behaviors. I'm watching and learning how to be in the middle class."

Cathy has also taken part in the *Circles of Support* program. Every month, she meets with a group of mentors who give her guidance in leading a successful life. She appreciates the perspectives they have to offer.

Cathy is just about to move out of Rio Verde with her mother into their own apartment. She got a better job, saved money, and paid off her credit cards. She found a supportive church community. And most importantly, she began believing in herself. Cathy credits Catholic Charities for her success.

"If there were words to express how wonderful it's been, I'd use them," said Cathy. "My life has turned around 100 percent—in every area."

A Burmese Youth Finds Home and Family

Bo is an 18-year-old young man from Burma. His life story has been one of much tragedy, but through Catholic Charities' Unaccompanied Minor Refugee Program, his story is turning into a happy one.

At age 10, after his parents divorced, Bo was abandoned by his mother. He lived for several years in an orphanage, but because of the continuing conflict and violence between the repressive Burmese government and the ethnic group Bo belongs to, the Karen, the orphanage had to relocate to a refugee camp in Thailand. Under the auspices of UNHCR, the orphanage began to resettle the children before they aged out so that they could have the chance for a better life.



At 17, Bo arrived in Phoenix, to be resettled by Catholic Charities. He was placed in a foster family that already had two young Burmese boys, though of a different ethnicity, and a young man from Liberia.

The transition was difficult for Bo, and he felt isolated and alone. To help break through Bo's fear and sadness, his Catholic Charities case worker, Clairette Clinger, connected him with the Karen interpreter who they had met in court and the pastor of a small Karen Christian community here in Phoenix. They welcomed him with open arms, and over time, Bo began to open up and develop warm relationships with his foster family and the Karen community members.

Today, almost a year after arriving in the Phoenix, Bo is thriving. He is doing well in school and playing soccer on his high school team. Every week, he takes the bus to the Karen church services. Most importantly, he feels like he has a family. His foster mom has become like a real mom to him, and he has made lasting bonds with his foster brothers and father.

Catholic Charities has resettled more than 10 Burmese youth in the Phoenix area this year, helping them find a home, a family, and a future.

For more information about Catholic Charities' Unaccompanied Minor Refugee Program, contact Kitty Marquez at kmarquez@cc-az.org or 602-997-6105, ext. 51813.

My Sisters' Place to Receive \$20,000 from Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation

Catholic Charities' My Sisters' Place has been chosen to receive one of 150 grants awarded by a leading national anti-domestic violence organization, the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation (MKACF). The \$20,000 grant will be used to help support the Catholic Charities' PAVE – Preventing Abuse and Violence through Education program.



Catholic Charities
My Sisters' Place

Shelters are feeling the impact of a weak economy. According to the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, shelter donations are down, but the need for services is increasing. To help make sure needs are met, the foundation started by the late Mary Kay Ash is donating a total of \$3 million in grants to shelters in all 50 states.

"This grant gives us much-needed cash and hope at Catholic Charities," said Yvonne Taylor, director of domestic violence programs. "The problem of domestic violence in Maricopa County isn't going away and neither is the need for funding. Programs to help battered women and their children require a lot of resources. We're grateful that the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation is stepping up to the plate in helping us.

"My Sisters' Place and the PAVE program have helped so many women and their families in Maricopa County. We know they will use these funds to benefit even more domestic violence survivors and their children," said Jennifer Cook, MKACF board member. "Mary Kay Ash wanted her foundation to help enrich women's lives. All the tragic stories and statistics we hear about domestic violence, encourages us to do our part."

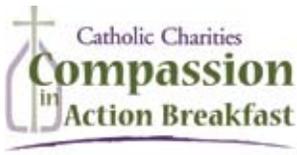
Community News

Adopt-a-Family This Christmas

Catholic Charities in Yavapai County is counting on community support to help make the holidays a little bit brighter this year. Individuals, churches, schools, businesses and civic groups are invited to Adopt-A-Family through Catholic Charities and help provide food, clothing and basic necessities for hundreds of families in need. For more information or to help, contact Jean Littlehale, director of programs and services, at 928-778-2531, ext. 54022. *Photo courtesy of CCUSA.*



Rise, Shine and Work Wonders



Join us on **Thursday, April 2, 2009** for the third annual Catholic Charities Compassion in Action Breakfast at the Arizona Biltmore. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. and the program will follow from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. This free breakfast will provide an opportunity for guests to learn about the programs and services Catholic Charities' offers.

All proceeds raised during the event will directly benefit Catholic Charities programs that touch the lives of over 200,000 Arizonan's each year. To learn more, visit CatholicCharitiesAZ.org. To volunteer to become a table captain, contact Sylvia Hopkins at shopkins@cc-az.org.



DIGNITY Walk

Walkers show their support for DIGNITY Programs at the 7th Annual Candlelight Walk on Saturday, Oct. 4. The Walk was held in commemoration of 7th International Day of NO Prostitution, a day where NO ONE shall buy or sell anyone for sex.

DIGNITY (Developing Individual Growth and New Independence Through

Yourself) is a comprehensive array of rehabilitation and diversion services that help women break away from the destructive life of prostitution and rebuild their lives. Last year, DIGNITY helped more than 900 individuals involved in prostitution successfully turn their lives around and currently has an 82% success rate where women who leave the program continue to live free of prostitution, alcohol and drugs.

Catholic Community Foundation Luncheon

Leslie Lindquist, director of corporate and foundation proposals accepts a \$12,000 grant from the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) during an awards ceremony with Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted (right) and Jay Heiler of the CCF Grants Committee (left). *Photo courtesy of the CCF.*



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4747 N. 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85013
602-285-1999

Administrative Service Center

4747 N. 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85013
602-285-1999
info@cc-az.org

Three Easy Ways You Can Help

Join us today in Providing Help.
Creating Hope. Serving All.

Volunteer: VITA Tax Site Coming to Prescott

Arizona's working families need your time as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) provider in Yavapai County. Being a VITA volunteer is a great way to give because you can help families get the tax benefits they need to improve their lives. Your support will help hundreds of families who are getting assistance from Catholic Charities' Poverty Outreach Initiative. VITA volunteers can choose from flexible volunteer hours from February 1 through April 15 at the Catholic Charities Yavapai Regional Service Center, located at 434 Gurley in Prescott.

To learn more about VITA site positions available and see frequently asked questions, visit: CatholicCharitiesAZ.org/volunteer.aspx or contact Jean Littlehale at 928-788-2531 ext. 54022 or via email at jlittlehale@cc-az.org.



Gifts in Kind: Car Donation Program

You can donate your car, RV, or boat to Catholic Charities, and receive a tax deduction. We will arrange to have your vehicle or boat picked up at no cost to you. When it is sold at auction, we will send you a letter with the vehicle's selling price for tax purposes. We offer fast, courteous service and prompt receipting.

Call 1-866-688-GIVE today. You can also go online to CatholicCharitiesAZ.org/car.aspx for more information.

Donate: Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Program

Reduce your tax liability while helping those who need it most. Thanks to the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Program for the Working Poor, state taxpayers now have more incentive to make cash donations to Catholic Charities. Contributions up to \$400 (\$200 for singles and \$400 for married couples) may earn a dollar-for-dollar tax credit on Arizona income tax owed, which means your total tax bill can be reduced by this amount. In addition, your gift to Catholic Charities also qualifies as a charitable deduction on your federal return if you itemize.

Call Catholic Charities today at 602-650-4807, and we will be pleased to mail you a complimentary packet of information on how the credit works. You can also email us at info@cc-az.org.



Please join Catholic Charities Community Services as we provide Help, and serve All. Your gift will help us affirm human dignity and develop just and caring communities.

Please clip along dotted line and mail or fax to:
Catholic Charities Development Office
4747 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85013
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A new way to give, monthly giving program: 12 monthly payments of \$10 \$20 \$30 OR a one-time gift of \$100 \$200 \$400

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