

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

HOLY FAMILY SHELTER OFFERS MORE THAN JUST A PLACE TO STAY

WHEN YOU FIRST MEET JAMES AND Darnetta Hayes in the Holy Family Shelter, it's obvious that they feel at home. The couple moved in at the beginning of July after hearing about the shelter from word of mouth. "Some things got overwhelming, and we knew we needed help," Mrs. Hayes said. And they came to the right place.

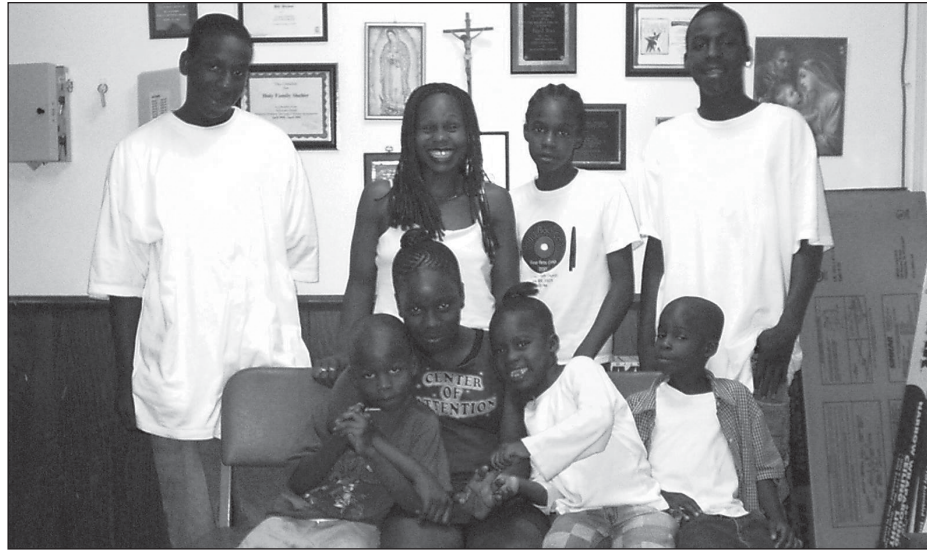
With seven children ranging from 6-year-old twins to a 16-year-old, the emphasis on family in the shelter was important to the couple. "My children are totally and completely comfortable with the environment," Mrs. Hayes said.

That feeling of comfort isn't uncommon in this family-friendly setting at Holy Family Shelter, a program of Catholic Charities of Indianapolis.

The shelter may not look extraordinary on the outside, but it is nothing short of exceptional. With its door open to everyone, no matter their challenges, background or language, the shelter can house 50 to 70 people. And it's always full.

"We don't close our doors to anyone," said Bill Bickel, director of Holy Family Shelter.

Holy Family Shelter, located on the near-south side of Indianapolis for more than 20 years, provides care for those who need help, whether it's to escape domestic violence or simply get some help during difficult times. Legal assistance and medical services are offered at the shelter, and classes ranging from nutrition to



parenting are required for each family. Summer activities are also available for the children staying at the facility.

Mr. and Mrs. Hayes stress the importance of the classes at Holy Family Shelter and their effect on the residents. "I love the parenting classes," Mrs. Hayes said. "You think you know everything, but then there are so many little things that you don't know."

Group settings provide support among the residents, and families with success stories who have stayed at the shelter come to talk with current residents.

With the help of Holy Family Shelter and its dedicated staff, which includes two case

managers, Mr. Hayes is re-enrolled at school and working for Greyhound Buslines, and Mrs. Hayes recently received her General Equivalency Diploma (GED), a high school equivalency diploma.

Financial gifts go a long way at the shelter. "You're helping to stem a tide of a new generation that would be on the street," Bickel said. "It doesn't do any good to just put a family in a home."

And that's why this shelter is so much more. After residing at the facility, 75 percent of families have improved their housing situation, and 70 percent of employable adults have secured a job. "We get to see the conversion of a family. It's just remarkable," Bickel said.

But the successes point to a need for a larger and modern building. A convent that was once built for 25 nuns of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet is now housing 22 families daily. Approximately 1,000 individuals, or 325 families, are provided with emergency housing every year. A new site is being explored, and plans for a new facility will be part of the upcoming campaign.

When asked about their plans after leaving, Mr. and Mrs. Hayes both laugh, explaining how comfortable they are here. "It's home," Mrs. Hayes said about Holy Family Shelter. "When I talk with James on the phone, I ask him what time he's coming home."



Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocese's upcoming capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Catholic Charities. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your funds will be allocated to Catholic Charities and distributed to organizations such as Holy Family Shelter.