

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

CATHOLIC CHARITIES TELL CITY PREPARES FOR FUTURE MINISTRY GROWTH

Amid the rolling hills of southern Indiana, new growth plans for Tell City Catholic Charities are taking shape and efforts to expand local outreach throughout the communities near the Ohio River are under way.

“We feel like we’re just in the beginning stages,” says Joan Hess, director of Catholic Charities Tell City. “The needs of the poor and vulnerable in this part of our state are so great. We believe that it is the Church’s responsibility to be on the front lines of providing help to people in need.”

Those initial steps are becoming clearer as Hess gets settled into her position, which she began several months ago. As a member of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, she brings new insights into the local needs and ministry opportunities presented in Perry and Spencer counties.

Under the leadership of the previous director, Catholic Charities Tell City launched plans for the John Paul II Center for Family Life in Tell City. It also established its Strengthening Families program, which ministers to families with children ages 10-14. It’s a drug abuse prevention program that strengthens parenting skills and teaches children respect for the family unit.

Funds raised in the Legacy for Our Mission campaign, along with a grant from a regional foundation will help Hess and Catholic Charities leaders build on these existing programs and others. Matrix Lifeline, a crisis pregnancy program, will grow as Catholic Charities Tell City expands.

Along with utility assistance for local families, another ministry that can grow is the Martin’s Cloak Food Pantry operated by members of St. Martin Parish in Siberia in the northern edge of Perry County. The pantry serves more than 4,000 people throughout the year and has



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operated successfully on tiny budgets with abundant volunteer contributions. Martin’s Cloak Food Pantry is so effective that Hess hopes to extend its ministry to other communities.

David Siler, executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries, says Catholic Charities Tell City is positioned to help address social issues throughout the Perry County area. One of the most devastating social problems in the area is the crystal methamphetamine plague. The agency is seeking ways to assist local agencies with battling the

meth problem that has devastated so many people in southern Indiana communities.

Siler and Hess are also exploring the addition of a new crisis telephone line for area women and families as a logical extension of the existing Matrix program. These and other growth plans show the necessity for a growing Catholic Charities Endowment that perpetuates funds for future needs.

“A lot of our expertise and programming background at Catholic Charities can be extended to more communities in the Tell City Deanery,” Siler says. “We can offer education and provide people who can discuss the solutions. We can provide counseling and guidance for schools and families. We can also assist with awareness efforts that inform people how they can help us minister to others.”

Hess also will involve more volunteers throughout Perry County and the surrounding area, including at St. Augustine and St. Mark parishes. Catholic Charities hasn’t established a clear identity in the area, she says, but it is poised to grow more visible and vibrant where needs exist, and her community connections will encourage that development.

“We really see our future as a facilitator, as an organizer of causes,” Hess says. “Our Catholic Charities efforts can find new gaps in local services where we can help people in need.”

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocese’s 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 gift will be allocated to Catholic charities programs and distributed to organizations such as Catholic Charities Tell City.