

# Catholic Charities

Fall News 2013

## Director's Letter

### *Dear Friends,*

Can you believe there are people in our community who think no one needs them? They feel completely dispensable – believing if they died, no one would miss them beyond their own funeral.

How can this be? The world is filled with people in need . . .

*... children who cry out to be adopted . . .*

*... elderly people in nursing homes, longing for someone to talk with . . .*

*... teenage runaways and street kids . . .*

*... families without enough income to get through difficult days . . .*

And in every city, there are soup kitchens in need of both food and volunteer workers.

One of the most remarkable traits of Jesus of Nazareth was his compassion for suffering people of the sort just described. He felt for the multitudes because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Moved by the suffering of the poor, the sick, and the socially outcast, Jesus welcomed, healed, fed, forgave, and encouraged. He poured himself into relieving suffering and asked people to help him.

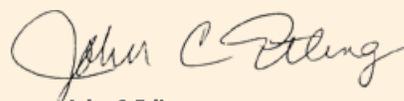
Instead of asking, "Who needs me?" shouldn't you ask "Out of all the people who need me, how many can I help?"

Everyone has something to give; most of us many things. Very few forms of assistance require any special expertise. Every one of us can always give what people need most of all: Love.

If the idea sounds like work; that's because it is. But there is a paradox in it. This kind of work is also the way to purpose and joy. The whole meaning of our lives is bound up in love; we find happiness in loving others and being loved in return.

Over the last 8 years, I have had several young people tell me they feel their lives are meaningless. When I start to ask questions, it seems almost all of them are isolated; cut off from relationships. They say no one needs them. Naturally their lives are meaningless and they are miserable when they lack meaningful relationships with others. They say "I wish someone would love me. How wonderful it would be if I knew someone who would really be concerned about me."

We believe the answer is found in Jesus' simple advice: "Give and it will be given to you." (Luke 6:38) The cry of the unhappy heart, "Will someone please love me?" is the wrong cry. "Who needs me?" is the question that leads to life!



**John C. Etling**  
Agency Director

## Diana's Story of Help and Hope

*“My time at the Bethany House was very humbling, but it was also very helpful to me for healing and recovery so I could begin the process of rebuilding my life. I had enough time to take a deep breath and get my life in order, set priorities and find people who could help me create an initial plan to restart my life.”*

—Diana Reedy, former resident of Bethany House Emergency Shelter



**Diana Reedy, former Bethany House Resident, shares her story at the recent Annual Benefit Dinner for Catholic Charities.**

As a single mother of three sons, I spent my life focused on raising them. When they were grown and began to move out on their own, I found myself lost and feeling anxious – I was alone. My sons were my life and I felt I wasn't needed as a mother anymore. When I began working, it gave me a renewed sense of purpose and helped me realize I could have a life of my own.

After more than four years of employment with a global company, I lost my job.

I was devastated, but immediately began looking for work. Day after day, week after week, soon turned into months and I still had not found a new job. Eventually, my own resources and unemployment benefits were completely exhausted. I was lost and beginning to feel depressed, even a little suicidal. My rent was due and my utilities were all past due. I didn't know where to turn. I needed help, but where could I go?

I had never felt as desperate and anxious as I was at that moment in my life. Everything seemed out of control; certainly out of my control. I began going to Cummins Behavioral Center and was fortunate to get the most amazing therapist I could ever imagine. She saved my life and helped me get the assistance I needed. It was my therapist who suggested ways I could find help; one of which was Catholic Charities.

When I finally reached out to Catholic Charities, I was scared because I'd never been homeless before and I had never been in a shelter, either. The first person I met was the program director, Dottie Crippen, and she made this experience much easier than I imagined. She helped me move everything I needed into Bethany House. She also helped me find a way to store the rest of my belongings, so one day when I was able to get into more permanent housing I would have some of my things to begin my new home.

Because of a referral by Cummins and Catholic Charities, I have been able to move into the YOUunity Village, a program of Mental Health America. I now live in an amazing apartment which is both protective and productive for me.

It all seems too good to be true. And, you know what? I couldn't be happier than I am today! I think back to where I was just six months ago and where I am now. My heart is so thankful and it makes me want to keep on reaching for bigger and better things. It is also a dream of mine to take some classes, get a degree, and be better prepared for the job market.

All in all, I have to say Catholic Charities has saved my life and given me hope!

## Christmas Store Help

**Elves are needed** for the 2013 Christmas Store during the weeks of November 18, December 2, and December 9. Volunteers should contact Debbie at (812) 232-1447 or at [info@catholiccharitiesterrehaute.org](mailto:info@catholiccharitiesterrehaute.org) for more information and to schedule a date and time. Various opportunities for morning and afternoon shifts are available.

You can help a family have a happier Christmas by helping us stock the Christmas Store. Personal hygiene products, toys for children under age 12, and children's clothing are still needed for this year's Christmas Store. Donations may be dropped off at the Catholic Charities office located at 1801 Poplar St., Terre Haute. *Please keep the value of toys under \$20 each.*



## Help from Local Farmers

**Our Farm Banks Bushels** is a new program developed in partnership with farmers in Vermillion County to provide food for our hungry neighbors in west central Indiana. As a volunteer and advocate for the Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank, Nancy Foltz learned of an opportunity for farmers to donate their grain to a local food bank through any Archer Daniels Midland elevator. Not having an ADM elevator close enough for her farming family to participate, Nancy did what any impassioned advocate would do – she created a way to

participate locally and invited her neighbors to do the same.

Nancy discussed the opportunity with Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank and her local elevator, created a logo for the program, and invited her farming neighbors to a kick-off cookout in the family's farm shop. During the first harvest for the program, the cash donations received from the farmers' donated grain was enough to provide more than 6,000 meals to our hungry neighbors!

Thank you, Nancy. And thank you to all the farmers who helped kick-off last year's *Our Farm Banks Bushels* program. We look forward to growing this meaningful partnership with you.



## A Safe Haven

Ryves Youth Center is a safe-haven for more than 1,500 children each year. Through the kindness and generosity of our supporters, we are able to provide help to our community all year long with:

**Improved physical fitness & health through recreational activities & evening meals**  
**Enhanced academic growth through tutoring & reading programs**  
**Emotional & social support through adult mentors & counselors**

The youth at Ryves are nurtured, encouraged, and empowered to develop the skills needed to succeed in life. When asked how the adults at Ryves make them feel, our kids respond with:



## Thank you

for helping us make Ryves Youth Center a place of hope.

## Summer Feeding Program Reflections

Throughout the summer, children had the opportunity to receive a nutritious meal through various summer feeding programs. At one of our partnering shelters, meals are served Monday - Friday at noon within a neighboring park where a sign states, "FREE FOOD, All Children 18 & Under." However, on a particular Saturday, the site supervisor failed to remove this sign at the shelter. Promptly at noon, several children entered the shelter house, got in line and began serving themselves with the food that was available. Unbeknownst to them, this food had been prepared for a local family reunion. With the children already in line, this family happily shared their food with these hungry children.

This is a picture of true community and how the definition of "family" takes on a greater meaning when it comes to serving hungry children. This family could have easily turned the children away, but instead they welcomed them to join in their celebration.

This same family mentality is seen in our volunteers who prepare food for the children each week. Sure, they are part of a mission to feed hungry kids with a hot, nutritious meal, but they also extend warm kindness that brings a genuine smile to a child's face. Five days a week, children receive not only a healthy meal, but friendly interaction with people who genuinely care about their happiness and well-being. What a difference we can make in the life of a child by being humble servants and giving to others.



# Catholic Charities

Providing Help. Creating Hope. Serving All.

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**MISSION STATEMENT** *Catholic Charities in Terre Haute exists to serve the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the elderly, the neglected children, and the needy. Our goal is to relieve suffering and hardship for people in the community regardless of nationality, race, creed, or religion.*

## Operation Cooperation to Feed

Collaborations between Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank and Families By Choice continue to expand. Some of you may recall the story of Bernie Ryan, the “bread” man, who picks up and delivers Panera Bread. He still does. . . and now his wife Muriel is delivering food to Garfield Towers and Gardens, as well.

Families By Choice serves persons who lack the basics of food and shelter and are at a distance from their family – either emotionally or geographically. A project with the Garfield Towers and Gardens public housing projects helped Families By Choice (FBC) become more aware of the shortage of food many of their residents have. In February 2012, when Public Housing contacted the Foodbank, we called on Families by Choice to organize and develop a system to supply the hungriest of the hungry that are disabled, elderly and/or have no transportation. As a result, Operation Cooperation to Feed was created.

After a lengthy process of securing the funds, FBC and their volunteers now pack boxes once a month on the tables at Ryves Youth Center and deliver them to an ever-growing group of persons in need at Garfield Towers and Gardens. If you would like to help with this outreach, please call our office at (812) 232-1447. Donations may be made to Catholic Charities for the benefit of this program.

## Everyday Stories

Lisa Summers, Food Sourcer for Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank, is spearheading this year’s Hunger Study to learn more about the individuals who receive food through the Foodbank and its member agencies. On a recent pantry visit, Lisa met Rita and her sister.

“When I approached Rita to see if she would be willing to participate in the Hunger Study survey she was very eager to do so. As I was getting her set up to participate, Rita began talking about how thankful she is for Feeding America and Catholic Charities. She wanted to help us in any way she could because we had helped her several times.”

“Her story is one that we hear all too often,” continued Lisa. “Rita’s husband had recently passed away and she moved in with her disabled sister. They thought it would be a good idea for Rita to help out her sister while sharing living expenses. Shortly after her move, Rita lost her job. With a significantly reduced income, things became increasingly difficult and they began facing decisions about whether to buy medicine or food.”

Stories like these are always difficult to hear – and it is a blessing to know that Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank can help Rita and others like her during these difficult times.

After Rita completed her survey, she shared a heartfelt, “Thank you. There is no way we would have made it without the help of the Foodbank.”