Coach Thompson is why we do this food drive; the competition with the boys is fun, however. We’ve learned first hand what it means to help out others in our community regardless of what we are going through. He is an awesome person and makes us all better people,” Sarah, a Terre Haute South Vigo High School student, told us while helping with their annual Halloween food drive competition between the boys’ swim team and the girls’.

Food drives are one of the lifelines that help connect what the Food Bank does with donors, community pantries, soup kitchens and other charities providing food to the hungry. Our ability to reach seven counties and distribute two million pounds of food annually speaks to food drive participants’ ability, commitment, faith and compassion.

Coach Jeff Thompson is the coach of some phenomenal athletes who are also young people of outstanding character. For a third year in a row, the swim teams at Terre Haute South Vigo High School have collected food on Halloween to help support the food bank.

The boys’ team is pitted against the girls’ team. The team with the most pounds of food collected gets to have breakfast served to them by the other team. This food drive has tripled their results every year going from 700 pounds in the first year to more than 5,000 pounds in 2008.

Their annual food drive does not only demonstrate their commitment to helping the hungry. Coach Thompson has struggles of his own, but is always on the lookout for others. During this year’s food drive, Jeff’s wife was having a difficult and life threatening pregnancy with their fourth child. The early delivery was successful but the new baby couldn’t go home for three months, not leaving until December.

Jeff taught us all valuable lessons of perseverance and patience. His ability to cope during stressful times is an invaluable example to his high school students and all of us. During these times of uncertainty we must believe that everything will work out and continue to provide for those who are the least among us. We could also take a lesson of humility from Jeff: “These students did the work. I just had to stay out of their way.”

Mission Statement

Catholic Charities 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.
For the past 18 years, WTHI-TV has been the major sponsor in making the local Share Your Thanksgiving Food Drive a success. In 2003 Papa John’s Pizza joined this partnership in an effort to bring greater awareness about the need of those struggling and boost participation by making a significant financial donation. This year’s drive generated more than 30,000 pounds.

Chris Wood, WTHI staff person and food drive organizer, recently commented, “It takes the entire community to turn out and make this work. We all probably know someone in our neighborhood, church or school community that is affected by a recent job loss or a life situation that has put their family in a difficult situation. This seems like the least we can do to help them out.”

The list of businesses, professional and civic partners that participated in this effort include:
- Kroger’s Food Stores
- Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club
- Locust Street IGA
- Vigo County School Corporation
- Knights of Columbus
- Anderson Chiropractic
- Baesler’s Market
- Terre Haute Fire and Police Departments
- Indiana State University
- Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
- Downtown Rotary Club
- United Way of the Wabash Valley
- Vigo County Child Protective Services

Catholic Charities Terre Haute received a grant for $25,000 from the Wal-Mart Foundation to help transport food that has already been prepared. One of the ways a community can better utilize its resources is to get already-prepared food into the mouths of the hungry.

Often times at catered events, hotels or other gatherings more food is prepared than can be eaten. Food manufacturers and grocery stores can also have excess food that is completely suitable for eating. These are highly perishable, but definitely nutritious. It becomes a matter of the logistics. In order to not waste it and get it to the hungry safely, it must be transported in a specific way. Catholic Charities will use this grant money to purchase a refrigerated truck to maximize the freshness of the food.

We especially want to thank Russ, Jim, Jane, Linda and the entire staff of the local Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club for helping us obtain the grant for west central Indiana.
In June 2008, Valerie arrived at the Bethany House in much the same way as do many of our residents. She was not working and had just lost her disability benefits, food stamps and Medicaid because her friends were abusing her benefits. She has been diagnosed with emotional and cognitive disabilities and is easy prey for others to take advantage of. She was also very shy and found it difficult to speak with others.

Every person deserves attention, respect and dignity. Maybe for the first time in her life, Valerie received these from the Bethany House staff. The staff and residents had recently formed a resident’s council to discuss issues, house conduct and community activities. And they voted Valerie as their secretary.

At the same time her personal success was increasing, so was her ability to earn a living. She began working more and more for a temporary service and then found full-time employment at ISU. She has been saving more than the required 75 percent and bought the new glasses she needed.

She is making new friends at her job and being invited to parties. She is starting a new life with healthy, productive friendships; this life is much different from the one she has led until now.

Her addictions and manipulative relationships had caused a split between her and her family. While on Christmas break, she was able to buy a plane ticket to spend time with her family and mend the tears in their relationships. The Bethany House case manager, Charlene, drove Valerie to the airport where she would spend two weeks in Colorado and Texas. Just before she left, she looked Charlene in the eyes, then bowed her head and began to cry. “I would have never been able to do this without Bethany House. Thank you so much for helping me make this trip happen.”

Valerie returned in early January. She is continuing to add money to her bank accounts and work everyday. She now has options for her own housing and living successfully on her own. Valerie is an example of how people thrive and succeed when shown the dignity they deserve and the love and support they need to be successful. The help they receive turns in to hope for a future of self-respect.

For more than 20 years, Bob Prox has been a dedicated volunteer to Catholic Charities Terre Haute. He has served as an advisory council member, agency review committee member, fundraiser, recruiter and advocate. For the past several years, he has played the role of Santa Claus for our Ryves Youth Center at Christmas party. His concern for children and ability to connect with them has left a lasting impression on many kids and his presence is quickly becoming a tradition.

Bob is known for his smile, welcoming presence and servant’s heart. He is always present with a kind word and good counsel.

In 2008, Council President Sally Stewart honored Bob with the President’s Award for Lifetime of Service. Several years ago, Bob took David Grimes, former council president, on a tour of the Ryves Youth Center and its neighborhood. For David it was an eye-opening experience that made him aware of the great need that existed in his hometown and brought him to the conclusion that he had to get involved himself.

“You can’t help but want to get involved when you see the need. It was Bob’s persuasion to take that step that allowed me to get involved, to be part of something that has a direct impact on our local community and hopefully make a difference.”

We thank Bob for his generosity with his time, talent and treasure. We know Catholic Charities Terre Haute would not be the same without him.
Dear Friends,

For more than 30 years Catholic Charities Terre Haute has been providing basic needs to families and individuals in the Wabash Valley. These services are provided to anyone who is in need regardless of race, creed, nationality or religion. Over this period of time we have responded in coordination with local, state and federal disaster relief agencies to help out those who have been forced from a fractured state of existence into complete despair. We work with and rely on other faith-based and grassroots organizations that provide support and outreach to those families that struggle to make ends meet.

I want you to consider some of the many things that connect us, the air we breathe, the roads we travel, the utilities we use and the food our health and wellbeing requires.

As the present economic recession/depression presses down on our lives, how are we responding? Do we remember our most vulnerable brothers and sisters? Are we keeping hope alive in our own lives and the lives of our children? Can we see this as a time to enjoy simpler pleasures, spend more time in conversation with family and friends, and grow in our spiritual lives? Do we recognize the possibility that living more simply makes us better stewards of the resources on the beautiful planet Earth?

For us at Catholic Charities Terre Haute, hope can sometimes be a little easier to see. Daily in the places we serve, we hear the amazing stories of hope. People demonstrate determination and courage as they face numerous challenges in their personal lives, in their families, and at their places of work. Over and over we are blessed to observe the beauty of God’s grace and the resiliency of the human spirit.

Today, our Indiana families are finding it to be increasingly more difficult to provide good nutrition with the resources they have available. The food banks, pantries, soup kitchens and emergency feeding sites do a tremendous job of reaching out everyday to meet the needs of these families. We ask that you be with us during this journey. Provide help when you can through donations and create hope by praying for all of us.

John C. Etling
Agency Director

Agency Council Members

Sally Stewart, President
David Grimes, Vice President
Mary Chloupek, Secretary
Mary Lou Albert, Treasurer
William Haley
John Heck
Louis Lenne, Jr.
Jennifer Peters
Mary Caye Pfister
Robert Prox, III
Henry T. Smith
Robert Waelbroeck

Ex-officio
Rev. Joseph Kern, Chairman
David J. Siler,
Executive Director, Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries
The Catholic Charities family lost one of its most committed members on Feb. 5, 2009. Rev. Donald L. Schmidlin served as the director of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis from 1962 – 1976, while also faithfully serving a number of Indianapolis parishes.

Father Don was very healthy at the age of 78, when just a few weeks prior to his death he became severely fatigued. Within a few days of running tests, he was diagnosed with lung cancer that had already metastasized to his liver. By the time the cancer was discovered his liver was beginning to shut down. He died just two weeks later.

I had the privilege of counting Father Don among my dearest of friends after we became acquainted when he was assigned the pastor of my parish, St. Matthew in 1993. Since he held my job for more than 47 years, he became a great mentor to me during my time with Catholic Charities. Shortly after being appointed as the director, I asked Father Don to serve on my advisory council. As always, he served faithfully in that capacity for five years – always challenging us to do more to serve the poor and vulnerable.

Father Don’s life was an example to me and hundreds of others of a true life of service. He had a deep love and compassion for those on the margins of society. He often shared with others his own battle and victory over alcoholism as a way to demonstrate that he understood the struggles of life and that God’s grace is available to us all – no matter the circumstances.

Catholic Charities was a very small ministry when Father Don took over in 1962; and 47 years later we have grown several times its original size due to his vision and commitment. He had a wonderful knack for getting others involved, helping them to see their responsibility of meeting the needs of the poor.

Just as in his life, he taught us all a great deal in his dying. While visiting Father Don in the hospital I witnessed him working hard to learn the names of his caregivers and showing them compassion and care and making sure that they knew that he was praying for their needs. He was a tremendous example of putting the needs of others first.

Father Don Schmidlin left us all a wonderful legacy. He lives on in all of you who continue to support the mission of Catholic Charities. May he rest in peace.

Creating a Hopeful Legacy: Father Donald L. Schmidlin, 1930-2008

David Siler reflects on a life lived in service.

Celebrating Anniversaries in 2009

- 175th Anniversary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis: Celebrate Mass and Confirmation on Sunday, May 3 at 3 p.m., Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis
- Catholic Charities Indianapolis’ 90th Anniversary
- St. Elizabeth’s 20th year of pregnancy and adoption services in New Albany
- Catholic Charities USA’s Centennial Anniversary
Donation Needs:

*non-perishable and in cans. No glass please.*

- Fruit and vegetables
- Baby formula and food
- Diapers
- Peanut butter
- Cereal
- Tuna
- Pasta
- Cleaning supplies

Upcoming Activities:

**April 19:** Homeward Bound Walk to benefit Bethany House and other homeless providers. Call (812) 232-4978 to walk with us.

**April 25-26:** Ryves Youth Center hosts the Junior Olympics Boxing Tournament. Tickets are $10 for one day or $15 for the weekend. Ringside tables are also available for $150.

**Save the date:** Sept. 16, Annual Fundraising Dinner