Pam Otte (pronounced “ott-y”) is our new director of Ryves Youth Center Preschool, providing preschool for homeless children. She wrote this brief letter to our supporters to fill you in on what’s going on.

“It has been exciting to settle into my new position, to get to know the enthusiastic staff and terrific volunteers, and most importantly, get acquainted with the children. We are falling into a routine that includes active participation in calendar tasks (practicing the days of the week, the months, and discussing the weather), saying the Pledge of Allegiance, and singing and dancing to our “Good Morning” song. Our day continues with class projects and crafts that emphasize colors, shapes, numbers and letters. The children have had great fun tracing their letters using shaving cream on their tables.

“One Friday we focused on the color green. We used finger paint to color turtles, frogs, alligators and dragons. My family and I had constructed a castle from refrigerator boxes with an arch and windows, so we continued the dragon theme and the children made crowns and pretended that they were princes and princesses in a medieval castle. It was wonderful to see the children using their imaginations. We read a book called The Popcorn Dragon and made popcorn for an afternoon snack.

“The children are currently participating in a weekly nutrition class. They get hands-on experience preparing nutritious snacks. One lesson was centered around shapes of food, and another on using your senses to identify and enjoy food.

“Shortly, we will be involved with CODA (Council On Domestic Abuse) and their educational program called Healthy Relationships. This is a six-week program geared specifically to preschool-aged children promoting positive, healthy interaction and communication skills.”

Helping to end the cycle of poverty and abuse is a huge task. Because of the instability of homelessness, our children at the preschool often miss out on normal childhood activities, including the learning and maturation that occurs between the ages of zero to five. Research is pointing to the fact that the experiences of children under the age of five is a crucial time for their brain development and can help determine their capacity as they get older (ZerotoFiveFoundation.org). We, at Catholic Charities, firmly believe that these lessons can be learned at the earliest of ages to promote positive self-esteem, generate lifelong creativity and learn the skills necessary to lead healthy lives: physically, emotionally and spiritually. We invite you to join with us in this endeavor.
Bethany House began taking back residents on January 31 after five months of renovations to the kitchen and dining room. The soup kitchen and dining room began serving again on February 4. During the construction months, the soup kitchen operated out of Ryves Youth Center, shuffling food and supplies across the street in order to continue serving 75 to 125 people with daily free lunch.

The open house and blessing by Monsignor Joseph Schaedel, vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, was held January 28. Catholic Charities’ friends and well wishers from the community rejoiced in the blessing received and the fellowship of the afternoon.

Sadly, Martha “Marty” Green, program director of the Bethany House since 1980, had suffered a heart attack in December and passed away on January 25. Marty dedicated her life to the service of the homeless, underprivileged and needy in the community. She received Catholic Charities Terre Haute Staff Member of the Year Award in 1992. Marty served with an extraordinary humility, dedication and selflessness. Marty will continue to be in the hearts and thoughts of all who were helped by her.

Since the closing of the Simeon House, Dottye Crippen is now the program director for Bethany House. She has been working with Catholic Charities Indianapolis Holy Family Shelter to adapt their guidelines and service delivery model to fit a revised Bethany House Program. Goals are being set and community networking is being established for tools, training and materials needed for residents to accomplish independence in a stable environment. As these goals are met we are hoping to see an increased success rate, enabling us to serve more people with fewer returning residents.

Bethany House currently has 6 rooms with a 20-bed capacity, and currently all rooms and 13 beds are filled. We are working hard to make improvements to the house and to be a positive influence in people’s lives, helping them to achieve a successful life on their own.

For more than twenty-five years Ryves Youth Center at Etling Hall has relied on the support of many volunteers from and collaborations with the community. We would like to highlight just a few collaborations that help make us successful.

Partner Profiles with Ryves Youth Center at Etling Hall

Foster Grandparent program
AARP program
Indiana State University (ISU) has provided many resources for our center. It is difficult to name every person or department that has helped us during the past twenty-five years. Below are just a few examples of the resources that the college provides.

- AmeriCorps program
- School of Nursing
- Social Work Department
- Criminology Department
- Department of Education
- Center of Public Service and Community Engagement
- Theater Department
- Sociology Department

Saint Mary of the Woods College
Maryland Community Church
Healing Pointe Community Church

The above organizations are only a few of those who help us on a yearly basis. We receive assistance throughout the year from all of the Optimist Clubs as well as the Kiwanis. Vigo County Community Corrections provide help with custodial and kitchen tasks. Recovery Associates also provides volunteers and Diana Edwards, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, supervises all Social Work interns, which is a requirement by their school.
Dear Friends,

Here we are again at the start of spring. Every season brings new blessings and challenges for each of us. As we go through these times of concern and change we might find ourselves in a struggle to make a decision or come to terms with the result of one. For every action it is said there is an equal or opposite reaction. For our clients this reaction usually means addiction, incarceration, abuse, violence, poverty, hunger and homelessness. They are often victims who need our help and a chance to heal.

This fiscal year has been a very rewarding year for us so far. Our annual fundraiser was held on September 20, 2007, at Idle Creek and featured Craig McKee as our Master of Ceremonies with personal testimonials by Connie Norman, executive director of the Parke County Community Food Pantry (a member food pantry of our food bank), and Beth Sabelhaus, education coordinator at Ryves Youth Center. Their personal stories of service and hope help us recognize our own connection to others in our world and in our community. It is in the service we provide that we have the chance to see Jesus among the least of our sisters and brothers.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our program events this past year and encourage you to visit our facilities. We have several new programs starting with cooking and nutrition classes, theatre, a community garden project and the Indiana Jr. Olympics Boxing program. Please call us to schedule a tour at 232-1447.

Thank you and God Bless,

John C. Etling
Agency Director

Agency Council Members

John C. Etling, Agency Director
David Grimes, President
Sally Stewart, Vice President
Mary Chloupek, Secretary
Mary Lou Albert, Treasurer
William Haley, Past President
Mary Caye Pfister
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Bobbi McPeak
Robert Waelbroeck
Jennifer Peters
Ex-officio
Rev. Joseph Kern, Chairman
Mr. David Siler, Executive Director, Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries

Community Garden Project

In conjunction with Indiana State University, Purdue Extension, Sisters of Providence, White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, and Downtown Terre Haute, Inc., we all recently held informational meetings for Terre Haute’s new community garden program. We asked potential volunteers for their input regarding the design and operation of the community garden and to sign-up for a garden plot. This community garden will be located at 12th and Eagle Streets. For additional information, call 812-237-2334 or email disbell@indstate.edu.
Ensuring Access to Safe Affordable Housing

As our Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America declares, poverty in the United States is a moral and social wound in the soul of our country, one that threatens the well-being of our nation. One of the ways in which our well-being is threatened is through the lack of safe affordable housing.

Our nation’s affordable housing crisis displaces millions of people into homelessness each year. More than five million others live on the brink of homelessness or in severely substandard conditions as they struggle to meet enormous increases in housing costs, which for a number of years have largely outpaced wages. It is estimated that on average a worker would have to earn $16.31 an hour to afford rent in our country, paying no more than the affordability standard of 30 percent of their income on housing.¹ Today, nearly one in three U.S. households spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing, and more than one in eight spends upwards of 50 percent. Persons burdened with severe housing costs find themselves struggling to pay for basic needs such as food and health care and have nothing to contribute to long-term investments such as education and savings.

Catholic Charities agencies nationwide can be found working at every point in the housing continuum, from homeless street outreach to foreclosure prevention to affordable housing development. We can be found counseling young couples as they move toward homeownership or an elderly widow as she considers converting her home equity into a desperately needed stream of income. We can just as easily be found helping a young, single mother find an affordable apartment so that she can reunify with her children.

In such work, Catholic Charities agencies daily witness the emotional, physical, and financial toll that the lack of safe affordable housing levies upon our brothers and sisters. We have seen federal funding for affordable housing wane over the past few years; funding for public housing declined by 25 percent between 1999 and 2006.² In addition, we have seen the challenges of people on long waiting lists for housing assistance. People can be turned away.

Catholic Charities agencies rely on partnerships with government, public housing authorities, private business, and community groups to leverage enough resources to provide desperately needed housing services to the poor and the vulnerable. We cannot do this work alone. Government must be an equal partner. Indeed, Catholic Charities USA will continue to hold our partners, especially the federal government, accountable in their commitment to provide desperately needed housing programs. Congress must take immediate action to address America’s growing affordable housing crisis.

Detailed information on housing policies and our positions can be found on the Advocacy page of the new Catholic Charities USA website: www.catholiccharitiesusa.org.

Karen Wong, legislative policy and research analyst for Catholic Charities USA, contributed to this article.

This article was originally published in its entirety in the 2007 Fourth Quarter issue of Charities USA. Reprinted with permission of Catholic Charities USA.


Photos provided by Laura Sikes/Catholic Charities USA
A few years ago, Catholic Charities USA, the national member service organization for the Catholic Charities agencies throughout the United States adopted the tagline, “Providing Help. Creating Hope.” Now, our own archdiocesan Catholic Charities organization has embraced this statement to clearly communicate what we do and what we seek to achieve.

Help is provided in many different ways: helping homeless families find permanent housing; helping seniors find companionship; helping children find a safe haven after school; helping pregnant mothers make the best choice for their children; helping refugees find a home and a job; helping the hungry find food; helping the depressed find happiness.

Help can come in so many different and varied ways, and the ultimate goal in providing help is to create hope. When a family has a home, a senior has companionship, children are safe after school, pregnant mothers make good decisions for their children, refugees find a home and a job, the hungry have food, the depressed find happiness, the light of hope can enter their lives. The light of hope is the brightest of all lights and can make all the difference in the world.

I would imagine that all of us at some point of time in our lives have experienced a “poverty of hope” – those times when it seems that nothing will change to make our lives better. If we’ve lived through those times and gotten to the other side, I also imagine that we can look to some small ray of hope that revealed itself that gave us the strength to hold on.

At Catholic Charities we know that the source of genuine hope is love – and since God is love we can also say the source of hope is God. Just before the conclusion of Pope Benedict XVI’s encyclical, God is Love, our Holy Father states it this way, “Love is the light – and in the end, the only light – that can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working”.

I am reminded of an old song Burt Bacharach called, “What the World Needs Now is Love”. Some would judge the song to be “corny” but it tells us that there is just too little love and that the world needs more love. I think Mr. Bacharach’s song connects with the gospel of Jesus who came to remind us that God loves us and wants us to live in the glory of this love.

Our Catholic Charities staff and volunteers provide help in many varied, formal ways through our 35 different programs. But, we don’t need a program to provide help. In both the very smallest and in the largest of ways that each of you gives help, you too create hope for the receiver of the help and by God’s grace, you too experience hope as the giver since “it is in the giving that we receive”.

How will you create hope today?

www.CatholicCharitiesIndy.org

Providing Help. Creating Hope.

By: David J. Siler, executive director for the Secretariat for Catholic Charities

The Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries encompasses six Catholic Charities agencies:

- Catholic Charities Indianapolis
- St. Elizabeth/Coleman Pregnancy and Adoption Services
- Catholic Charities Bloomington
- Catholic Charities Terre Haute
- Catholic Charities Tell City
- St. Elizabeth – Catholic Charities (New Albany)

Each agency serves any person in need in their respective deanery, with the exception of our adoption services available in Indianapolis and New Albany. These two agencies are licensed adoption agencies for the states of Indiana and Kentucky.

Secretariat Advisory Council and Staff

Each agency has an advisory council to help determine local priorities. In addition, the secretariat (department) has an advisory council to determine the priorities of Catholic Charities as a-whole. Many of these members also serve on their local agency advisory councils.

David J. Siler, executive director for the Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries

David J. Bethuram, associate executive director for the secretariat

Stefanie Anderson, communications and marketing coordinator for the secretariat

Bill Spangler, President of the Secretariat Advisory Council

Members

Jake Asher    Peggy Magee
Bob Buckner    Jim McGillivary
Mary Ann Browning    Ron Mead
Mike East    Father Don Schmidlin
Pinkie Evans    Sister Marlene Shapley
Dave Grimes    John Thompson
Tom Hirschauer    Roberta Walton
Bill Jones
April 26-27 – Catholic Charities Terre Haute Hosts the Indiana Junior Olympics Boxing Tournament at Ryves Youth Center. Purchase tickets by calling 235-1265

April – Curve’s Fitness Center Food Drive

May 10 – National Association of Letter Carrier’s (NALC) Food Drive

May – Sodexo Feeding the Future Child nutrition food program begins.

June 7 – Annual Hunger Awareness Day Breakfast, Ryves Hall

June – Ryves is sponsoring the month of June, focusing on recreation, for the Year of the Child.

Cleaning Supplies (bathroom, laundry and kitchen cleaners and tools)

Personal Hygiene Items (toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, feminine hygiene items)

Shampoos and conditioners

Coffee, tea and creamers

Nutritious, non-perishable food

Digital camera

Child-size table and chairs

Washable paint

Tape (10)

Soft blocks (no wooden ones)

Art paper and craft supplies for ages 3 to 5.

Dramatic Play dress up clothes for girls and boys

Music and Movement CDs for preschoolers, musical instruments, tambourines etc.

Dolls with different ethnicities

Volunteer Needs

• Tutors to work with our school age children and scout leaders

• Help with recreational programs at Ryves: basketball, amateur radio, and computer education

Catholic Charities

Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities Terre Haute

Corporate Square Annex

2931 Ohio Blvd. • Terre Haute, IN 47803

CatholicCharitiesTerreHaute.org

United Way

Community Partner

Archdiocese of Indianapolis