

Leanne Johnson: An Angel in Adoption

Leanne Johnson, Director of the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) Program, has been selected by Senators Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad to be a 2009 Angels in Adoption Award Recipient from North Dakota! The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's Angels in Adoption™ Program provides Members of Congress the opportunity to honor an individual or entity from their district who has made an extraordinary contribution on behalf of children in need of homes. Leanne has provided such service to children and families in North Dakota for over ten years and is definitely a deserving recipient!

Leanne is an employee of Catholic Charities North Dakota and serves as the Director of the AASK collaborative, a position she has held since October 1998. AASK is North Dakota's collaborative adoption program serving children being adopted from foster care and the families who adopt them.

The ND Department of Human Services, Catholic Charities North Dakota and PATH ND (a collaborative partner in the AASK Program) have complete confidence that Leanne's skills and knowledge of the program, state and county systems and relationships with valued partners will continue to make AASK a quality program for children and families.

Leanne is respected within the state child welfare system and the adoption community as a consummate social worker, a capable program director, an effective supervisor and advocate for her staff, and a personable and friendly coworker. She is a member of the ND Heart Gallery Board and was instrumental in its creation in North Dakota. (The Heart Gallery contains professional photographs of children who are waiting for their "forever families.")

The Angels in Adoption™ program is Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's signature public awareness campaign and provides an opportunity for all members of the U.S. Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans in the United States and abroad. It is also meant to give Members of Congress the knowledge they need to use the power they have toward making the dream of a family a reality for every child.

We are proud to have Leanne Johnson represent our state and our agency as one of the Angels in Adoption™. She will be honored, along with more than 190 Angels from around the country, at an awards ceremony and gala event in Washington, DC, September 30, 2009.

AASK contract renewed

The North Dakota Department of Human Services has renewed the contract for the Adults Adopting Special Kids collaborative. The contract is for 2 years and renewable for an additional 2 years. In wrapping up the previous contract, staff of AASK program were very excited to have exceeded all the contract targets in the 2008-2009 fiscal year; 110 children were placed into homes and 116 children had their adoption finalized.





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Executive Director

Briston J. Fernandes

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A Rising Tide



Briston J. Fernandes
Executive Director

For many of us, the Flood of 2009 is now a distant memory. We rallied together, we filled sandbags, helped our families, friends and neighbors in need. We volunteered and helped in any and every way we could through churches, agencies and community efforts. We fought the good fight, and we joined to celebrate the fact that, for the most part, we were spared of a major catastrophe.

We learned that a rising tide not only lifts all boats, but also the hearts, minds, and the human spirit in coming together and helping one another. Adversity, as we know, always seems to bring out the best in each one of us. And although many among us suffered the loss of home and belongings, we were all nevertheless touched and transformed by the challenges we faced.

As the water levels kept steadily rising, Catholic Charities North Dakota responded by mobilizing its staff in joining community agencies and groups to coordinate and provide volunteers, financial resources and direct assistance in meeting the immediate needs of people affected by the flood. We visited and contacted pastors and other community leaders to encourage them to refer people who needed assistance. Catholic Charities staff assessed the needs of those who came to us and provided immediate financial assistance.

Catholic Charities USA sent a staff member from the National Disaster Response Office to help us assess the needs and develop a response for immediate and long term recovery. CCUSA granted funding to the dioceses of Fargo, Bismarck and Crookston so that our agency could provide a coordinated regional response. With additional funding coming from individuals and groups around the country, we have now joined the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) in providing intermediate and long term recovery assistance to people affected by the flood.

CCND has joined the efforts of Resource Agencies Flood Team (RAFT) by hiring a Case Manager who meets with people, assesses their unmet needs and connects them with the available resources within the community. We will continue to provide direct assistance for those who have no other resources.

At Catholic Charities ND, we learned that we cannot do charity, social service or social justice by proxy. In order to live our mission, we must be directly involved in the lives of those who are affected by disaster or suffered a loss. We must be a visible presence by providing help, creating hope and transforming lives.

Mission Statement: In faithfulness to the Gospel and the mission of Jesus, Catholic Charities North Dakota fosters the common good through charitable and social services to the people of North Dakota.



Colleen Hardy
Development
Director

As we near the end of 2009, we ask you to consider a gift to Catholic Charities North Dakota. Your gift can provide valuable counseling services for a couple facing an unintended pregnancy, counseling for someone dealing with a challenging relationship at home, or transportation of a guardianship client

to an important medical appointment. Talk to your tax planner to find out more about the benefits of setting up a charitable annuity that can benefit you or your loved ones by providing income for life and support Catholic Charities at the same time. You may also earn an immediate charitable tax deduction.

For more information on giving a gift to Catholic Charities, please call me, Colleen Hardy, at (701) 235-4457.

Catholic Charities News

International Adoption Accreditation

In April, 2008, Catholic Charities North Dakota achieved its 2 year temporary Hague accreditation. This made our agency the only licensed child placing agency in North Dakota, which works in international adoption, to have this accreditation. Being Hague Accredited provides the families and couples with whom we work, who are pursuing international adoption, with an extra sense of security. We are now applying for full Hague Accreditation with the self-study portion submitted in August and having site reviewers visit us in October.

Still time to get out on the courses

Fall Special: August 1 through September 30-Golf for Guardianship cards @\$20.00 Cards provide great discounts at 103 courses in North Dakota and Western Minnesota. To purchase a card visit www.catholiccharitiesnd.org and click on the Golf for Guardianship logo. To date, 1,100 cards have been sold, totalling \$28,555. Thank you to those who have supported Golf for Guardianship this season!

SPARCS students graduate

The counseling services' SPARCS (Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress) program was offered to two groups of students at West Fargo schools this spring. A total of twenty students were enrolled and sixteen graduated. Student and teacher response to the program was very positive. Students found that they were able to manage difficult situations more readily and calmly. They appreciated that the skills they learned in group were ones that they would be able to use for a lifetime. Teachers commented that they had seen a difference in the ability of a number of the students to manage their emotions more readily, enabling both the student and the teacher to focus on academics instead of behaviors.

Love in Stitches

Women from St. Catherine's Church in Valley City are shown with Colette Gauslow (upper right) from Catholic Charities. The women made 18 knit baby caps and 26 quilts for the Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Program. These items are much appreciated by the birth moms and their babies who receive them.



Catholic Charities Thanks All of Our Generous Donors

Gifts given from January 1 through June 30, 2009

With your help we can continue to provide quality community services, education and assistance to those in need in our community.

In Memory of

My Parents
Madeline Metzger
Esther Rowekamp
Daniel J. Lessard
Debbie Gabel
Margaret Mimnaugh
Herman Wieland
Norm Weber
Ervin F. Miller
Agnes Kubik
Sharon Smith
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Ron Schumacher

In Appreciation of

Fr. Tom Graner, our pastor

four

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Fr. Al Bitz, 40th Anniversary

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Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Wanner
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Barb and Kurt Witteman
Karen and Albert Wolf
Thomas Woodward

I've completed my second year as chairman of Catholic Charities North Dakota (CCND), which has been an exciting time. I now have one more year to serve on the board of directors, then will get off the board as one can only serve two 3-year terms. Time certainly flies; we board members have been busy keeping in touch with what is happening at CCND and giving advice to administration and staff on how to improve the organization. The goal, as always, is to serve as many people as possible, with the services we provide.

With the competent executive director and staff who keep board members well informed, it is not a difficult task, however it can be time consuming. We have had turnover in board members in the five years that I have been on the board. As situations change from year to year, some board members have had to resign their positions when their personal job has become more demanding, but they have always volunteered to be available for consultation when needed. All our board members have taken an active part in the organization and have

served well on the committees to which they were appointed. I want to personally thank all of the board members who have served, and also want to thank those members who continue to serve for the fantastic job they are doing.

Several new members will be commissioned at the Annual Dinner in September. They will be a great asset to CCND, and I'm grateful to them for volunteering their services. **

I am sad to say that we are searching for a new executive director as Briston Fernandes has submitted his resignation effective December 31, when he plans to retire. Briston was the executive director when I became a member of the board. He has been very helpful in getting new board members acclimated to the happenings of CCND and the staff. I wish him well in his retirement. It will be very difficult to find someone to take his place (not replace him, but assume the duties which he has had). He has been an excellent director.

To the staff, I wish to thank all of you for your dedication to CCND and for making me feel welcome each time



Jerome Schwartzenberger
Chairman,
Board of Directors

I have stopped at your offices, even if it was just for a few minutes to say "Hello". Like I said, I have one more year on the board so you may see my face several more times before the end of my term, but I am always glad to stop at the office and see all of the persons who make Catholic Charities North Dakota function.

Jerome Schwartzenberger
Past Chairman, Board of Directors

***New members joining the Board of Directors this fall are Brian Herding, Grafton; Jerry Clark, Minot; Agnes Harrington, Fargo; Sonia Lunardi and Deacon Doyle Schulz, Bismarck; Thomas Vanorny, Oakes; Mary Ann Votava, Grand Forks.*

Farm Bureau Foundation supports agency's disaster efforts



The North Dakota Farm Bureau Foundation recently presented Catholic Charities North Dakota with a \$10,000 grant from their Disaster Relief fund to support our agency's Disaster Response efforts. The funds will be used as part of the agency's work with Resource Agencies Flood Team (RAFT) in providing case management. Through this process, families are helped with recovery, be it rebuilding damaged homes or replacing destroyed property.

Catholic Charities, in partnership with other Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster, is also involved in Hands Across North Dakota, a fencing project, and in recruitment of volunteers to assist with rebuilding efforts. For more information or to volunteer, call Colleen Hardy at (701) 235-4457.

Colleen Hardy, Director of Development and Community Relations of Catholic Charities North Dakota, is pictured with major sponsors to the relief fund. (l to r) Jim Alexander, CEO-Nodak Mutual Insurance Company; Scott Anderson-Dow Agrosiences; Colleen Hardy; Bridgette Readel, Dow Agrosiences and Eric Aasmundstad, Chair-NDFB Foundation.

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If you wish to receive this newsletter via email, you no longer wish to receive it, or are receiving multiple copies, please call 1-800-450-4457 or email jedwards@catholiccharitiesnd.org.
Thank you.

Guardianship-Someone to lean on

Larry came into our program like many others, not because of his developmental disability, not because of his age of 75, but because of an unfortunate medical diagnosis. Larry came to our program with newly diagnosed stage 2 colon cancer. We were appointed his emergency guardian while he was still in the hospital. While this was not the best place to become acquainted with a new client, it worked well for Larry and his guardian to discuss with the doctors the many medical decisions and treatment options that lay ahead. In the end the decision was made by Larry and his guardian to have the surgery to remove the cancer as well as complete the prescribed one year treatment of chemotherapy the doctor had ordered.



Larry came through the surgery well and completed 10 months of weekly chemotherapy with the support of his team and staff. However, at 10 months he announced to everyone he was done and no longer wanted to go to treatments. By this time his guardianship orders had been changed from emergency to permanent guardianship status, allowing his guardian to continue to oversee his medical care. Larry and his guardian then met with his team to discuss the choices of continuing treatments or stopping treatments. After a lengthy discussion it was decided everyone would pull together to get Larry through the next two months no matter what it would take. He had done so well up to this point and stopping treatments at that point could mean a certain return of the cancer. Two months later Larry and his team celebrated the long awaited end of his chemotherapy treatments with a big party. Over the next several years Larry and his guardian continued to go to recheck appointments to make sure the cancer had not returned.

The decision to finish his treatments served Larry well as he lived the next 10 years exactly as he wished. The only thing he loved more than giving someone a bad time was for them to give it right back to him. He became affectionately known around the home to everyone as “grandpa” as he gracefully aged. The years passed and twelve years after we were appointed guardian we began to see a significant decline in Larry’s health. His team would meet to discuss his growing needs and how they would be met. A move to a nursing home was considered as he and his guardian toured several homes. While all would provide wonderful care, no nursing home would allow him to continue his chewing tobacco habit that he had begun as a teenager or his daily multiple cans of Mountain Dew. These habits were central in his life as well as the relationships he had built with the others around him over the years. Larry celebrated his 87th birthday in April and at the beginning of May moved to a different group home with more staff so he might be able to receive additional care. His guardian felt this to be the best move for him to meet the needs of his declining health yet still maintain his quality of life. Larry continued to live in this home surrounded by those who cared about him most until he peacefully passed away in his sleep one month later.

Annual Dinner set for September 11

The Seventh Annual Dinner of Catholic Charities North Dakota will take place on September 11th at St. Michael’s Parish Social Hall in Grand Forks. The Social will begin at 5:30 p.m. with Dinner at 6:30 p.m. The Caritas Award will be presented to Betty Keegan. Dinner reservations (\$25.00 per person for prime rib dinner) may be made by calling (701) 235-4457, or through our website at www.catholiccharitiesnd.org. *Reservations are requested by September 4th.*