

Privileged to see miracles

DONNA BYZEWSKI

DIRECTOR OF GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

The staff of Catholic Charities North Dakota's Guardianship Services take immense pride in fulfilling their duties as guardians. The work of a guardian is 24 hours per day, 365 days per week and it can be heartbreaking and intense but it is also the most rewarding work possible. Those of us in the Guardianship Program have often said that we are privileged to serve our clients because every now and then, we see miracles and we know that our actions played a small part in the miracle.

A Guardian's Perspective

Gerald, a 50 year old man with a mild intellectual disability, was living in a dilapidated 2 bedroom trailer house with black mold on the walls. He lived with 6 other people, one being his fiancé. He was sleeping on the couch, on continuous oxygen and used a walker. He was in the hospital a few times with severe respiratory problems and even once went into respiratory arrest. Hospital staff called the Human Service Center and got a Developmental Disabilities (DD) Program Manager

involved. Even though the home was not safe, Gerald did not want to leave the home. In addition, he was being exploited financially because one of the housemates was representative

payee for his Social Security benefits. His representative payee refused to allow him to move.

An emergency guardianship was sought by the DD Program Manager and Catholic Charities North Dakota was appointed his guardian. Our guardianship worker's priorities were to address the financial exploitation and medical issues first. She immediately changed the representative payee for his Social Security benefits to a creditable agency. Our guardianship worker met with Gerald to get a better understanding of his needs and wishes. She spent a great deal of time visiting with medical staff and his DD Program Manager to get a clear picture of his medical and residential needs.

With much encouragement from his guardianship worker, Gerald agreed to temporarily move to a nursing

Gerald-Continued on page 3



Catholic Charities North Dakota: Helping People. Changing Lives.

This summer, a task force, comprised of staff and Board members, reviewed the Mission Statement, Tag Line and Vision Statement of Catholic Charities North Dakota. It was important to the Task Force to have a succinct Mission Statement which describes what we do as an agency so that staff, board and other stakeholders could easily communicate it to others.

The "guided by our values" phrase in the Mission statement is a reference to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, which were incorporated into a new Values Statement.

We are happy to announce that the Board of Directors approved a new Mission Statement, Tag Line and Values Statement at their September 2011 meeting.

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Larry J. Bernhardt
Executive Director

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Being Thankful

Fall is here, which always makes me think of Thanksgiving and reflect on what we have to give thanks for. I want to share two things for which I believe we can be thankful: 1.) Our role in helping out with Disaster Assistance for the floods, and 2.) How Catholic Charities North Dakota compares to Southwest Airlines.

Unfortunately, North Dakota had more than its share of flooding and related disasters in 2011. Catholic Charities North Dakota was able to obtain over \$ 70,000 in grants and donations to help out with disaster assistance, with most of those dollars coming from Catholic Charities USA. We initially provided \$200.00 gift cards to parish priests in Minot and Devils Lake to help with immediate emergent needs and later included the parish in Jamestown.

Over \$50,000 will be issued to individuals, as grants, once they have been through the FEMA process and have made application for that funding through the local recovery units. We should start issuing those checks by November 1, 2011. We are thankful, that in a small way, we are able to help with disaster recovery.

One of the speakers I heard during the Catholic Charities USA Conference in Fort Worth, Texas in September was the retired President of Southwest Airlines, Colleen Barrett. Her message was simply that they believed to be successful you must have – 1.) a “ton of spirit”, 2.) a “service heart”, and 3.) a “fun loving attitude”. She attributes all of the recent success of Southwest Airlines to these principles.

I got to thinking how fortunate we are at Catholic Charities North Dakota to already have those three principles in place and I am so thankful to the past Directors of the agency, past and current Board Members of Catholic Charities North Dakota, and past and current staff for creating this atmosphere where we can truly be effective for the clients who need our help because we have that “ton of spirit”, “service heart” and “fun loving attitude”. We just have to work a little more on having a little more fun!

I wish you all a happy and blessed fall season and Thanksgiving Holiday.

Larry J. Bernhardt
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

Guided by our values, Catholic Charities North Dakota serves people in need and advocates for the common good of all.

Gerald-from page 1

home to regain his health. Seven months later, Gerald and his fiancé moved into an apartment.

Today Gerald is in much better health, walking without a walker and is no longer on oxygen. Plus, he now has money to pay his bills, all because a guardian was put in place to take the weight off his shoulders and make the decisions that were in his best interest.

His DD Program Manager stated, “I would have to say that without a doubt if guardianship was not in place, Gerald would not be alive today to tell his story of being a survivor. Guardianship has given him the opportunities and resilience for the simple daily things we take for granted. He now has a safe place to simply call home compared to being homeless since age 16, his medical contacts are those of continued progress rather than long admittances for fragile health. Gerald can say he has a relationship with someone who does not have a hidden agenda, he does not fear abuse and now has money that he has earned himself. Guardianship has given him hope and most importantly, finally peace.”

Mission-from page 1

New Mission Statement: Guided by our values, Catholic Charities North Dakota serves people in need and advocates for the common good of all.

New Tag Line: Helping People, Changing Lives.

New Values Statement:

Catholic Charities serves all people, regardless of faith. These values inspire the work that we do for and with those most in need: Our mission is sustained by HOPE, guided by CHARITY, and rooted in Christian FAITH and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching:

- *Life and Dignity of the Human Person*
- *Call to Family, Community, and Participation*
- *Rights and Responsibilities*
- *Option for the Poor and Vulnerable*
- *The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers*
- *Solidarity*
- *Care for God's Creation*

What is Guardianship?

A person may need a guardian if he or she lacks the capacity to make and communicate responsible decisions on his or her own behalf which places him or herself at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Guardianship should always be the last resort because it is so intrusive. It involves the court removing certain or all rights from the person and authorizing the guardian to step in and make these decisions. The guardian must ensure the ward's protection and well-being and act in the ward's best interests.

Removing rights from a person – how in the world can that be a good thing? Guardianship has one purpose and one purpose only – enhancing the life experience of the individual to the fullest extent possible. The Guardianship Division believes that every human being possesses an inherent dignity which is not diminished by physical or social disabilities, emotional, economic or spiritual limitations. Our program is limited to serving only individuals with developmental disabilities who have no family members or friends who are available or appropriate to serve as they guardian. At times, it is their family or friends who are abusing, neglecting or exploiting them.

As the story of Gerald has illustrated, a Catholic Charities North Dakota guardianship worker helped him get back on his feet: financially secure, living in safe conditions, respected and not exploited by those around him. It is those small miracles we are privileged to see.



John Hardy
Chairman
Board of Directors

It's Who We Are and What We Do.

Fresh off our recent Annual recognition luncheon, I commend the committee for implementing this new format. The attendance numbers alone speak for themselves when you consider we had over 200 people join us that day, including those who came from a great distance to be there. By scheduling the luncheon versus an evening banquet event, more were able to work this into their busy schedules.

I was especially thrilled to see the number of Catholic Charities North Dakota employees that represented the Agency. It is good that we are able to recognize them publicly for all the great work they do on behalf of Catholic Charities North Dakota! We really are blessed to have such dedicated staff members. Thanks to each and every one of you for helping Catholic Charities North Dakota be able to continue to make a difference in so many people's lives.

I was fortunate to be able to visit with Fr. Jack Davis and Sr. Peggy Byrne at the Annual luncheon. I'd heard so much about what they have done over the years in Chimbote, Peru, so I was thrilled to be able to finally meet them in person. I was so proud that the Agency bestowed our **Caritas Award** on each of them. All in attendance at the luncheon were able to hear the emotion in Fr. Jack's voice when talking about the poverty

in the villages, but from my vantage point, I was able to see the emotion in each of their faces when the video of Chimbote was being played.

To see the tears in Sr. Peggy's eyes and to have her tell those of us at the table how she longed to get back to those people was truly inspiring. What wonderful ambassadors they are to charitable works and I'm not sure God could have asked for two better people to care for the poor and needy in that part of the world.

I was amazed at the number of people that stood up when Fr. Jack recognized the people that have made the trip to Chimbote to help in his mission. May God continue to bless Fr. Jack, Sr. Peggy and Friends of Chimbote-Father Jack's Mission for the wonderful work you do!!

On behalf of Catholic Charities North Dakota, I welcome our new members to the Board of Directors. Kaylin Frappier, Chris Johnson, Aaron Krauter and Jim Laske bring a variety of talents and background experience to the board and I look forward to the contributions each of them will lend to their respective committee assignments and director roles. Thank you to the Nominations Committee for selecting such fine candidates to help carry out the works of the Board.

Thank you to Deacon Ed Didier and Sonia Lunardi for the

time you dedicated to our Board. I offer special thanks to Sr. Lois Byrne for having served the maximum number of terms on the Board. Catholic Charities North Dakota was not only blessed to have you serve as a Director in our state, but your continued work for the Catholic Charities agency in the Diocese of New Ulm is a testament to your dedication to their programs as well.

In closing, I would share with you words of Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical letter, *Caritas In Veritate*; "Charity is love received and given. It is "grace" (*châris*). Its source is the wellspring of the Father's love for the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Love comes down to us from the Son. It is creative love, through which we have our being; it is redemptive love, through which we are recreated. Love is revealed and made present by Christ (cf. Jn 13:1) and "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5). As the objects of God's love, men and women become subjects of charity, they are called to make themselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God's charity and to weave networks of charity.

For those of us at Catholic Charities North Dakota, it's who we are and what we do.

Caritas always,
John

Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Services Going on the Road

Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Services staff has taken on an ambitious schedule this coming year to make presentations in schools, with the goal of each staff member going to 10 schools, as well as doing six community presentations. Along with the staff member (Lisa, Kristal, Katie or Sharon), there will be a birth mom or an adoptive mom to share her story. Hearing real stories is more impactful when informing teenagers of the services we offer to someone facing an unplanned pregnancy.

Presentations have already been made at two schools, which led to a referral for pregnancy counseling. This is exciting to us and we look forward to spreading the word across the state. We offer great support to birth parents whether they decide to parent their child or to make an adoption plan; we want them to benefit from our services.

In addition to going to schools, staff members are available for speaking at church groups, service clubs or social services agencies. Whenever possible, a person who has experienced our services first hand will join us. Requests for presentations are always welcome! Please contact Sharon at 701-235-4457 smaier@catholiccharitiesnd.org to make arrangements for someone to speak to your group.



Counseling Services Expanding

As part of our mission at Catholic Charities North Dakota, we often look at ways to provide our services to the underserved, disempowered or other vulnerable populations in which there are needs that are not being addressed adequately.

In Counseling Services, we have been paying particular attention to expanding to the more rural areas of our state. The need for counseling in rural areas has been brought to our attention through the advocacy of local priests, parishes as well as other entities. Oftentimes, an individual, couple or family living in a rural part of the state must travel several hours for counseling services. This kind of distance from services may create a barrier or pose undue hardship. In 2004, counseling services were started in Langdon, ND. Father McDermott and the local parish are very supportive and services are provided by a part time clinician who also lives in the community, Barb Boesel, LPC. This model has been very successful!

We are excited to report that we will soon be opening another rural site in the community of Rugby, ND. Sandy Giezler, LPCC was hired and will begin providing services when the office location and set up details are finalized. During Parish Mission weekend October 8 & 9 at Little Flower Church in Rugby, Sandy was introduced to parishioners.

We appreciate the support and enthusiasm of Father Tom Graner in Rugby and look forward to assisting in fulfilling the need for additional counseling services in this part of the state.

In addition, counselors from Fargo provided a variety of presentations on family life. Mary Jo, LPCC (Counseling Services Clinician) and her husband Jens Andersen presented information for couples on strengthening their marriage as well as a workshop on Building Family Strengths. Janelle Miedema, Director of Counseling Services presented information and issues regarding Empty Nesting and Thriving While Aging.



Colleen Hardy
Director of
Development

For the last few months, I have been dropping by homes of donors to thank them for choosing our agency for their charitable gifts. What a wonderful experience! I have heard so many great stories of why you choose to give to give to Catholic Charities North Dakota. Many have had a personal connection to our agency or know someone who has experienced our services, others have great respect for the work we do. I want to thank those donors who have invited me into your homes to share a piece of your life with me. What a privilege!

We make a difference in the lives of so many people across North Dakota and it is our donors who make this possible. As we near the end of the year, you may be looking at your charitable giving to reduce tax liability. A great way to do this is through a planned gift to Catholic Charities. Individuals who made a qualified deferred gift to a qualified nonprofit organization such as Catholic Charities can get a 40% tax credit with a maximum of \$10,000 per year, for couples it is \$20,000.

For example, Mr. and Mrs. Smith enter into a \$200,000 charitable gift annuity agreement with Catholic Charities North Dakota. The IRS allows them to deduct \$100,000 from their federal taxable income as a charitable gift. The couple would qualify for a \$20,000 Income Tax Credit. They could take up to 4 years to take the credit against their ND Income tax liability. The credit is limited to the amount of the income tax liability.

To learn more about this tax credit and other options that may be right for you, contact your financial planner or tax advisor or contact me at 701-235-4457 or chardy@catholiccharitiesnd.org.

Thank you to all of our donors and all those who support our agency in any way, especially those who volunteer your time and talents to help up to organize events such as the Purse and Quilt Auction, the Dinner Theater, the Annual Celebration and Chip In for Charity. Your generosity helps us continue "Helping People, Changing Lives."

Making Forever Families through Adoption



November is National Adoption Awareness Month—and the staff from Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) has been busy.

On October 29th, the statewide Adoption Celebration kicked off the celebrations. Held in Bismarck, families, adoption advocates and the Triads formed by Open Adoptions (Birthparents, Adoptive Parents and Child) were recognized and given awards.

The 4th Annual North Dakota Heart Gallery Gala was held on November 3rd at the Plains Art Museum. Six children are featured in the photo gallery of children in foster care who are waiting for their forever families. The Heart Gallery is available for display at conferences, seminars, and other events

A Children's Reception held at the Gala was a celebration of children that have been/are being adopted and children that are currently in foster care. There was ball park themed food and a meet and greet with the Minnesota Twins mascot TC Bear. Also, the children that are featured in the ND Heart Gallery had the first opportunity to see their pictures at the reception.

The grand finale for the month will take place on November 19, National Adoption Day when special events are held at the Cass county and Grand Forks County Courthouses. In Fargo, 10 children will finalize their adoptions with 6 families, and in Grand Forks, 7 children will finalize their adoptions with 5 families. The Grand Forks occasion is open to the public and a toy drive is being held in conjunction with the event. The toys will be used to give to children entering adoptive placement or finalizing their adoptions with their forever families.

Thank you to All of our Donors

The work that we do with the vulnerable and hurting would not be accomplished without our kind and generous benefactors. All gifts are needed and appreciated. Thank you!

Gifts were given from April 1 through October 31, 2011.

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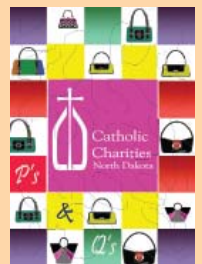
Thank you.

For Your Calendar



Chip In for Charity is the new name for the successful fundraiser formerly known as Golf for Guardianship, which supported the Guardianship Services of the agency. **Chip In for Charity** will have the same benefits as before with the funds raised used for all the programs of Catholic Charities North Dakota. The debut of the new brochure and golf card will occur in February 2012. Watch the website for details.

Find your P's & Q's! Purses and Quilts of course! Catholic Charities is looking for donations of hand-quilted or machine-quilted quilts as well as purses and bags, either handmade or purchased for the Annual Purse and Quilt Auction, themed "Every Stitch Tells a Story" coming in March! Proceeds benefit the Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Services Program. If you are interested in donating a purse or quilt, please contact Colleen Hardy at 701-235-4457 or chardy@catholiccharitiesnd.org. Thank you!



Dinner Theater

Planning is underway for the annual Catholic Charities North Dakota **Dinner Theater** to be held in in Bismarck this spring. Watch for details by going to www.catholiccharitiesnd.org

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