

AASK: Providing “forever families” for children

Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) works with children, ages birth to eighteen, who are in foster care and unable to return to their birth families. AASK, a collaborative of Catholic Charities North Dakota and PATH ND, Inc., provides adoption services for these children as well as the families called to provide permanency for them through adoption. Recently their new logo was introduced with a design that highlights the fact that AASK is a statewide program. From July 2008 to the present, AASK has placed 58 children for adoption and has celebrated in the adoption finalization of 58 children into their forever families.



New logo for the
Adults Adopting Special Kids program

In November, AASK participated in the launch of the Heart Gallery with an unveiling at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo. The Heart Gallery contains professional photographs of children who are waiting for their “forever families.” The Heart Gallery has been displayed in several area locations, and is available for statewide use. Call (701) 356-7980 or go to www.ndheartgallery.org for more information about displaying the Heart Gallery in your community.



Bobbie McGarvey and Dorothy Holter are shown preparing material that they will make into blankets through Project Linus.

Providing love and a sense of security to children in foster care who are waiting for their forever adoptive families is a mission held by the Adults Adopting Special Kids program that is further enhanced through our partnership with Project Linus. For over 2 years, children served through AASK have benefited from the handmade blankets distributed by Project Linus, a 100% volunteer non-profit organization, led by Lynne Olien, Chapter Coordinator. Project Linus serves with two missions; first, they desire to provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are in need by the gift of handmade blankets, a blanket “hug”. Second, they work to provide a rewarding and fun service opportunity to individuals and groups for the benefit of children.

The Eastern ND chapter started donating blankets in Jan 2006, and has donated 3600+ blankets through foster care, hospitals, abuse shelters, fire and police departments, and ambulance services all across Eastern ND. Volunteers throughout the state, including local church and youth groups, serve as “blanketeers” to make handmade blankets for children in need. The blankets are knit, crocheted, fleece, flannel, or quilted.

AASK adoption social workers share the blankets with children during the adoption process and present them with these blankets on behalf of the many volunteers who graciously make them.



Catholic Charities North Dakota

Providing help. Creating hope. Transforming lives.

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Briston J. Fernandes
Executive Director

TRANSFORMING LIVES: EMPOWERING THOSE WE SERVE

Our tag line reads: *Providing Help, Creating Hope, Transforming Lives*. Although it comprises three phrases, it is in reality a continuum for effecting our mission. We provide help to create hope and transform the lives of the people and communities we serve.

A little more than a decade ago, Catholic Charities USA launched Vision 2000, a strategic plan that would provide a renewed vision for Catholic Charities agencies as we entered the third millennium of the Common Era. I was privileged to be on the national Task Force of Vision 2000, and chaired the committee for Strategic Direction One, which emphasized empowerment as integral to quality services: *Enhance our historical commitment to quality service by making the empowerment of those we serve, especially people who are poor and vulnerable, central to our work.*

Not long ago, we were told that service alone is not enough. Service without advocacy would not break the cycle of poverty, dependency and powerlessness. We came to the realization that people who are poor and marginalized had lost their voice because their cries are not heard by those in the mainstream who have the power. We need to be advocates of the poor and disenfranchised by using

our power, our influence and our voice to make systemic changes.

Although empowerment is a much-used word in our times, Vision 2000 gave it a distinctive and qualitative dimension by asking us to think of ourselves and our mission in a radically new way. As one of our colleagues on the Task Force emphasized, "We need not only new wine, we need new wineskins." Now, we are being called to be more than advocates. We are called to serve people and communities in a way that transforms their lives and empowers them to find their voice and participate in the social processes that will shape their present and their future.

We must continue to provide quality, caring services. But we must do it in such a way that it goes beyond the needs and deficits of the people we serve, to look for the strengths, potential and capacities that lie beneath the smoldering ashes. The commitment and ingenuity we have used to get people housed, fed and cared for must now be used to get them involved in the public process of speaking up for themselves and their communities. According to our teachings, poverty is more than the lack of material things; it is being powerless in all those things that determine the quality of one's life.

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

Since starting at Catholic Charities North Dakota as the Development Director in July, time has flown by. I've had the opportunity to learn about our wonderful organization and the amazing things we do in our programs. We truly are making a difference in the lives of families across North Dakota. I've also had the opportunity to connect with our many supporters and find myself humbled by their generosity and support of our programs and services.

I welcome the opportunity to visit with you and to update you on the great things that are happening at Catholic Charities North Dakota and how you can help. As we move forward, we are looking for volunteers to help out with fundraisers and events across the state. Watch our newly designed website (www.catholiccharitiesnd.org) for details about upcoming events and let us know if you are interested in volunteering your time and talents.

Thank you so much for your support of Catholic Charities North Dakota. If you are interested to learning more about how you can help, contact Colleen Hardy at 701-235-4457 or chardy@catholiccharitiesnd.org.

Make a Legacy Gift

Friends of Catholic Charities North Dakota who would like to make a lasting impact on our communities may want to consider making a Legacy Gift to the organization. A Legacy Gift is a planned gift designed to continue your commitment to an organization to benefit future generations.

There are numerous ways to make a Legacy Gift. The two most popular Legacy Gifts are bequests and life insurance policies, which can be arranged quite quickly and easily.

Bequests

Are you one of the majority of Americans who will die without a will, forfeiting to the state their right

to determine what happens with their assets?

Making a will is an important way of protecting your family and others important to you, ensuring they are cared for after your death.

Visit with your attorney to write or revise a will or living trust to make your Legacy Gift a reality. They will provide you with information on how, if you choose, to also support the work of Catholic Charities North Dakota.

Life Insurance

Do you wish you had the ability to make a major difference in the lives of families? For many people, making a major gift is not financially feasible. One

option is to make Catholic Charities North Dakota a beneficiary to a new or existing life insurance policy if it's no longer needed to cover expenses such as mortgage or funeral expenses.

This enables you to make a gift that is far greater than you may have imagined you would ever be able to make. Further, the premiums you pay may be tax-deductible.

If you would like to talk more about bequests, life insurance, or other ways you can make a Legacy Gift to Catholic Charities North Dakota, please contact Colleen Hardy at chardy@catholiccharitiesnd.org or 701-235-4457.

Make other Financial Gifts

If you are interested in making one of the following gifts, please contact Colleen at chardy@catholiccharitiesnd.org or 701-235-4457 for more information.

1. **Website:** Make a gift by credit card through our secure website at www.catholiccharitiesnd.org and click the *Donate Now* button.
2. **VISA or MasterCard:** Make a one-time gift or regular monthly gifts charged automatically to your credit card.
3. **One-time gifts by cash or check:** Simply send a gift to Catholic Charities North Dakota; 5201 Bishops Blvd., Suite B; Fargo, ND 58104
4. **Matching Gifts:** Obtain a matching gift form from your company's matching gift administrator, fill it out according to instructions on the form. This will make it possible for your gift made in any of the above ways to be matched!

Catholic Charities Thanks All of Our Generous Donors

Gifts given from July 1 through December 31, 2008

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

Memorials and Honor Gifts

In Memory of

John Kunert
Shirley Zaun
Dave Winkler
Margaret Harvath
Gary Loh
Helene Arnason
Barbara Mueller
Barbara Mueller
Lyle Osmundson
Edward Kline
Harry Salisbury
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Ralph W. Schiele
Michael Bjorgen, our son
Aric Bjorgen, our nephew
Julia Hall
LCDR William R. Muscha
Juanita Schmitz
Mel Luiten
Pete and Albert Wetzell
Verna Gamache
Margaret Mimnaugh
Mr. and Mrs. Max Griggs, Jr.

In Honor of

Anna Plante-90th birthday
Marlis Tarlher
Baby for whom an adoption plan was made
All my children and grandchildren
Birth of our 4th child, Krystian James
Michael
Tara Dvorak nee Lizakowski

In Appreciation of

Linda Jaeger
Adoption of James Sobolik
Linda Jaeger, for many years of dedicated service for Catholic Charities
Our two adopted children
Chelsey and Shawna, our two adopted daughters
Health
Linda Jaeger
Paul locating birthparents

By

Margaret and Lloyd Thilmony
Margaret and Lloyd Thilmony
Margaret and Lloyd Thilmony
Margaret and Lloyd Thilmony
Margaret and Lloyd Thilmony
Fred Arnason
Fran and Robert Lebrun
Many unnamed friends and family
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Elaine Kline
Diane and Howard Trapp
Billie and Steve Schumacher
Leone and Loren Kramer
Lillian and Ray Seifert
Susan Ohnstad
Dixie Davis
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Fr. Gary Luiten
Cindy and Rodger Wetzell
Isadore Gamache
Diane and Howard Trapp
Patricia Griggs

By

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Arlene Schneider
Pat Fritel
Vicky and Anton Gudajtes
Nadine and Duane Bartak
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By

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Most Rev. Paul A. Zipfel

This has been another good year for Catholic Charities North Dakota as we expanded our programs throughout the Diocese of Fargo, and also continued working in the Diocese of Bismarck.

The Board of Directors continues to work with all the staff in trying to build a good relationship and assist in getting the programs publicized throughout the State of North Dakota. Catholic Charities North Dakota serves the needs of North Dakotans from all walks of life.

Each year there are vacancies on the Board of Directors as terms of service end. If you or someone you know would be interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please contact one of the

directors listed in **The Networker**. We are always looking for someone who would provide valuable skills and ideas for the Catholic Charities North Dakota Board of Directors.

Membership to the Board of Directors is for a 3-year term, with the option for renewal for one additional term.

Catholic Charities North Dakota (formerly known as Catholic Family Service) has been providing social services to people throughout North Dakota for more than 85 years. Services provided are in the areas of Counseling to individuals, couples and families; Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Services (PPAS); Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK); Guardianship services to adults with developmental



Jerome
Schwartzenberger
Chairman,
Board of Directors

disabilities, as well as some emergency services to people in need. These services are provided regardless of race or religion.

If you are interested, please call 1-800-450-4457, and a board member will be in contact with you to further explain some of the duties.

Your participation in this great organization is needed, and it is hoped to have people on the board from all areas of both dioceses.

Generosity in our Community

Catholic Charities started a counseling program for New Americans who are experiencing stress or anxiety as they adjust to their new life in America. This program, SPARCS, is a 16-week program that teaches the youth how to respond to their environment in healthy ways so they do not feel compelled to lash out in destructive patterns such as fighting, drinking, or truancy. The success has been tremendous, as one student indicated: "There are many things that I liked about this group. It helped me to talk about my concerns. This is where we go to listen to different ideas about solving problems."

When our cold weather came, it was discovered that many youth did not have appropriate winter attire. Some had no coats, many had no mittens, and almost all had no hats. We submitted a plea within Catholic Charities offices

and the Fargo Diocese as well as to others to help us gather needed items. When Gretchen Noah received the plea, she contacted Bill Nelson, manager of Scheels in Fargo. Scheels donated new coats, gloves, mittens and scarves. We also received boots, sweatshirts, scarves, and other items from the employees of CCND and the Diocese. The delight and surprise on the children's faces when they received these items was touching.

Catholic Charities recently received a \$5,783.00 grant from the Women's Fund, a component fund of the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation to support expansion of the SPARCS program in the West Fargo School system.

At a time when our nation is struggling through many challenges, it is truly wonderful to see such generosity and kindness of spirit abound in our community. Many thanks go out to

Scheels and Bill Nelson, the Women's Fund and members of our community for their generous gifts.

New name for program

The Child Welfare program recently had a name change. The new division name is **Pregnancy, Parenting, and Adoption Services (PPAS)**. The division still encompasses all of the same services it previously provided, namely pregnancy counseling, adoption search and disclosure, and all types of adoption. The name change was made to more fully represent the services provided within this division at Catholic Charities North Dakota.



Catholic Charities
North Dakota

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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.

A Course a Day all Summer Long!



Since it began in 1991, the Golf for Guardianship Golf Pass Program has raised over \$640,000 to provide guardianship services to adults with developmental disabilities across North Dakota. The Golf for Guardianship Golf Pass allows you go golf free at or at a reduced rate at 103 courses in North Dakota and western Minnesota for \$30! Imagine... you can golf a course a day all summer long!

Guardianship Services served 399 clients since July 1, 2008.

To purchase your Golf for Guardianship Golf Pass, contact Sharon Hughes at 701-235-4457 or order your golf pass online at www.catholiccharitiesnd.org.

Secrets of Strong Families

Do you ever wish there was more attention given to what's right with American families? For over 30 years, researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln studied strong families to find out what they have in common. They discovered secrets that have been too good to keep and have made them available to families through the Building Strong Families Program. This program has the primary purpose of helping families discover **their own strengths** and then further **develop** them.

The secrets they found contradict some current myths. What the research found to be vital to a strong family are:

- Quantity time together is what counts, not simply quality. Happy families commit more than an average amount of time together.
- Happy families exhibit wellness. They are people who believe the world is kindly intentioned towards them.
- Strong families expect to endure and act as cheerleaders for one another.

- Members of strong families spend a lot of time talking to each other – although this doesn't mean they never fight. They are able to take care of conflicts and share feelings openly.
- They join together to deal with stress and crises head on and have the ability to see something positive in situations, no matter how bad, and to focus on that aspect.
- They say thank you to each other a lot. People in strong families notice positive traits in each other and are skilled at accepting compliments themselves. Comfortable patterns of expressing and receiving appreciation are part of the warmth and mutually supportive behavior of strong families.

All families have strengths! This may appear to be an exceedingly positive statement in a time when so many American families are hurting. The Building Strong Families Program emphasizes "prevention and coping skills that can be applied before situations occur which pull families apart." Strengths are discovered, then built upon.

Catholic Charities will be offering the Building Strong Families Program every Friday evening during Lent (February 27 – April 3) from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. The place is yet to be determined. Families can attend one or all 6 sessions with discounts for attending all 6 sessions. Cost is \$25 per family per session or \$100 per family for all 6 sessions. Call Mary Jo Andersen to register at 235-4457.

