Share Your Story

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans is excited to announce a new addition to our website! The new Share Your Story page allows clients, donors, volunteers or anyone else affected by the work of Catholic Charities to share their stories with us.

The people we serve and those who help us serve them are at the very heart of our mission. We want to share with the community the stories of those who have benefited from Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans into what it is today.

If you are a client who has benefitted from our aid, a donor who has seen your generosity at work in our community or a volunteer who has made a difference in the life of even one person that we serve, we want to hear from YOU!

You can visit www.ccano.org/share-your-story/ and start sharing today. We look forward to hearing from you!
Foster Grandparents

The national Foster Grandparent Program began in August of 1965 with a dual purpose of engaging limited-income people aged 55 and older in volunteer service to meet the needs of their community and enriching the lives of their elderly volunteers. The program is part of Senior Corps, which is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Currently, there are more than 33,000 Foster Grandparent Program volunteers nationwide. The program has been with Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans for over 30 years.

The role of each foster grandparent is to provide one-on-one assistance to troubled children with exceptional needs in classroom settings. They serve as tutors, mentors and role models for 15 hours a week. They provide emotional support, model appropriate behavior, assist in social, emotional and developmental skills in children who are behind in reading and become disengaged at school. Foster grandparents help them improve literacy skills, build confidence and increase engagement.

"Teachers often report an increase in their literacy skills, build confidence and increase engagement," said Shellie Simeon, Foster Grandparent Program Director. "Our community has a high percentage of children who are unable to read or who have fallen two to three grade levels behind in reading and become disengaged at school. Foster grandparents help them improve their literacy skills, build confidence and increase engagement." Teachers often report an increase in social, emotional and developmental skills in children who have the support of a foster grandparent in their classroom.

The Foster Grandparents Program is valuable to the community because it provides intergenerational exposure, helps seniors remain active in their community and enhances the lives of children. Simeon often hears stories of children who run into their foster grandparents years later, and they always remember "grandma or grandpa from school!"

Catholic Charities’ Foster Grandparent Program serves 20 sites in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Tammany parishes, including public, private and charter schools and Head Start facilities. Currently, there are 83 active Foster Grandparent Program volunteers offering thousands of hours of time each year. Two of our foster grandparents have been volunteering for 23 years, and another recently celebrated her 93rd birthday!

In April, long-time foster grandparent, Bobbie Bridges, received the Joseph Massenburg Memorial Award for Excellence in National Service from Mayor Mitch Landrieu for her work with the Foster Grandparent Program.

If you or someone you know is 55 or older and wants to share your experience and compassion with children in our community, contact Shellie Simeon at ssimeon@ccano.org or (504) 310-6882.

3rd Annual Peace Games a Big Success!

On July 1, 2016 the Peace League of New Orleans held the third annual Peace Games New Orleans at St. Mary's Academy. The day-long event featured 47 young men from in and around the city a chance to interact, hear from community activists, and of course, play basketball. This year’s speakers included Michael Ruffin from the City of New Orleans, Alfred Pfleger, S.J., co-founder with Dignity, and Antonio Travis and the Black Men Rising group from FFULC.

The Peace League of New Orleans has been a three year collaborative project of Isaiah 43/ Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans, One Voice Louisiana, and Temple of Praise Ministries. The league was created in response to requests from young men who attended an Interfaith Peace Initiative event in 2014. This season the Peace League held several Saturday tournaments leading up to the Peace Games. Additional activities included a health fair, empowerment sessions, job search support, and team coaching.

Peace Games New Orleans is modeled after the Chicago Peace Games and the work of Fr. Pfleger as a means to curb violence by helping build relationships across neighborhoods. Seven teams competed in this year’s event. The 1st and 2nd place teams received trophies and their players who demonstrated outstanding commitment to integrity and hard work were also recognized. The final award, the Herbert Tennessee Peace Award, was presented to Harvey Stewart, a player on the Herb World team who was recognized as an outstanding participant within the league.

Additional support for the Peace Games was provided by several donors and volunteers.

Head Start students are moving up!

Last month, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans held promotion ceremonies in honor of our Head Start students. Early Head Start students who reached the age of 2 were promoted to Head Start, and students who reached the age of 3 graduated from the Head Start program and are heading off to kindergarten in the fall.

Promotion ceremonies were held at St. John the Baptist, Incarnate Word, St. Mary of the Angels and Louise Head Start. A total of 145 children were promoted this year: 35 from Incarnate Word, 17 from St. Mary of the Angels, 54 from St. John the Baptist and 37 from Louise! The majority of students graduated from the Head Start program altogether, while some were promoted from Early Head Start classes to Head Start classes.

Friends and families were invited to attend the ceremonies. Each Head Start program added personal touches to their own ceremonies and made them special for the students. With the help of their teachers, each class performed a short song or poem for those in attendance.

Guests at the Louise Head Start promotion ceremony were able to see the positive effects of Head Start first hand. A sister and brother, both of whom completed the Head Start program and are now in high school, spoke to students and parents about the importance of education and the value of getting a jump start so young.

This year, the ladies of the St. Elizabeth’s Guild handed out small gifts to the graduates and served refreshments to the children and their families at the reception. We are thankful for the love and support the ladies have shown to this year’s Head Start students.

Near the end of the St. John promotion ceremony, Sr. Maryjoe Hebert, President and CEO, asked the young students, “Who’s excited to go to kindergarten next year?” A mass of hands shot into the air, and all the students smiled and laughed. While their teachers will miss them greatly, we are proud of all of their accomplishments and excited to see what each of their futures hold.

Congratulations, grads!

Pray for us

On July 6, we celebrate the Feast of Saints Anne and Joachim, the parents of the Virgin Mary. Saint Anne was born in Bethlehem and eventually married Joachim, a shepherd from Nazareth. The two were childless, and Anne was growing older.

Both Anne and Joachim were visited by angels who promised they would bear a child who would be celebrated for all of time. The two were soon blessed with a daughter, Mary, whose life Anne promised to devote to God. In thanksgiving for the miracle God had given them, Anne and Joachim delivered Mary to serve at the Temple when she was three years old. There she began her journey in faith that eventually led her to motherhood, as well.

Because of his model of devotion to the Father, Saint Joachim is the patron saint of both fathers and unborn children. She is often portrayed as a loving, devoted mother to young Mary.

Saints Anne and Joachim, pray for us!