Jazz Brunch & Auction Benefits Pro-Life Services

On Sunday, March 26, 2017, nearly 300 guests gathered at the Audubon Tea Room for the 34th Annual ACCESS Jazz Brunch and Auction, which supports the Pro-Life Services of Catholic Charities. The theme for this year’s event was “Live, Laugh, Love,” which organizers and attendees thought perfectly expressed the importance of celebrating the gift of life. St. Jane de Chantal was named the 2017 Outstanding Pro-Life Parish in recognition for their work promoting the sanctity of life. Respect Life Coordinator Neal and Loretta Naquin accepted the award on behalf of the parish. Proceeds from this year’s event were used to provide life-saving care to 800 abortions that would otherwise have been performed.

ACCESS Pregnancy and Referral Center provided pro-life pregnancy support services to more than 800 abortion-vulnerable women and their families in the New Orleans community last year. The ACCESS Mobile Unit reaches even more women in underserved areas and serves as a pro-life presence in the community. ACCESS also operates a Diaper Bank and distributed an average of 9,000 diapers monthly to those in need.

Make Room for Hope

Dear friends of Catholic Charities,

Happy Easter!

We journeyed through Lent enjoying the favor of Jesus’ mercy, love, and grace. Each of those forty days, whether or not we were true to our determined Lenten fast, sacrifice, or almsgiving, had the benefit of God’s favor. That favor was the source of our service to our family members, our neighbors, our colleagues, or the many individuals we were unaware of as we daily met the challenges of Lent. Your support of Catholic Charities has had a positive impact on thousands of community members in need – community members that you may or may not know personally but are all our brothers and sisters worthy of compassion and respect.

Catholic Charities not only provides direct services, but works with individuals and families towards future self-sufficiency. In his most recent Easter homily, Pope Francis recalls Peter’s reaction to the news of the empty tomb. “Without giving in to sadness or darkness, he made room for hope; he allowed the light of God to enter into his heart.” When you support Catholic Charities and join us in prayer, you make room for hope.

How appropriate that Resurrection Church served as Catholic Charities’ headquarters for disaster relief after this spring’s tornados in New Orleans East. Even in disaster, there is room for hope. Knowing that there is somewhere to turn when you have lost everything, when you are struggling, brings levity to our spirit. Thank you for your continued support.

I wish you and your loved ones a blessed and peaceful Easter holiday.

Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans

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Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

Notes from the Heart

Making Room for Hope

GiveNOLA Day is May 2, 2017!

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans is excited to be participating in GiveNOLA Day again this year! GiveNOLA Day, which will take place on May 2, 2017, is hosted by the Greater New Orleans Foundation. The one-day online giving event works to inspire individuals to support local nonprofits that are making our community a better place.

Your donations on GiveNOLA Day are used as undesignated funds that allow us to serve those most immediately in need in our community. Recently, these funds were used to bring much-needed relief and aid to those affected by the February tornado in New Orleans East.

This year, your donations will go even further thanks to the generosity of the Donald Palmer Foundation, which has offered to match your gifts dollar for dollar up to $20,000! You can learn more about GiveNOLA Day at www.givenola.org. We hope you'll join us on May 2 to #GiveNOLA!
Jonathan was adopted from a Catholic orphanage in Vietnam and arrived in the United States in 1973. Because his adoptive father was a member of the Air Force, he was afforded the chance to travel the world and the country, learning different languages and a myriad of agricultural, culinary and other diverse skills along the way. In 2001, he married his wife, Kaye.

He had suffered from multiple medical problems, including breathing issues, as long as he could remember, but it wasn’t until 2007 that he learned he’d been exposed to Agent Orange as a child. From there, his medical state continued to deteriorate. In 2013, he had to have his right lung removed completely.

Jonathan and Kaye, who now found themselves homeless, began researching the best places to receive treatment and decided that New Orleans was best equipped to care for Jonathan’s medical needs. They arrived in 2016 and connected with Health Care for the Homeless, an initiative of the City of New Orleans that offers primary health care to people in the area regardless of ability to pay for services. Shortly after, Jonathan’s left lung collapsed and had to be surgically repaired. He spent 22 days in the hospital.

Because they were a stable couple trying to get their feet on the ground and their life back on track, Health Care for the Homeless referred Jonathan medically, financially, and unemployment benefits so they can help them acquire food stamps, a government-issued machine to ease Jonathan’s respiratory problems and beyond.

Working as a team, these two programs and other community organizations have helped Jonathan and Kaye medically, financially, socially, emotionally and so much more.

**Volunteer Spotlight:**

**Foster Grandparent Essie Theyard**

Essie Theyard has completed 17 years of service to Catholic Charities’ Foster Grandparent Program! She began volunteering in 1999 as a tutor, mentor and volunteer at the Methodist Home for Children, which provided a broad range of services including therapeutic foster care, home-based services, out-patient counseling and residential treatment services for children and families experiencing crises, emotional stress and relationship problems.

In 2007, Ms. Essie began volunteering at James Singleton Charter School, where she still serves today. She works one-on-one with students in a classroom setting, assisting them with literacy skills, social and emotional issues, developmental skills, self-esteem and engagement. She spends 6 hours every school day tutoring the children and providing positive reinforcement, which increases their self-esteem and makes them feel loved and supported.

Ms. Essie, who has a college degree in English and Speech, taught English to ninth and tenth graders for years before becoming a foster grandparent. Her experience and knowledge allow her to help the students improve both their written and spoken English skills.

For Ms. Essie, it’s the little things about being a foster grandparent that are the most enjoyable. She says, “The best part of the day is just sitting down right next to them while they do their seat work. I help them with their letters and their words. I can help them get their handwriting straight!”

In her time at James Singleton Charter School, Ms. Essie has received an outstanding rating every year from the teachers there. One teacher commented, “Ms. Essie is a pleasure to work with. She helps the children work their complete very effectively and improves their self-esteem. She understands the needs of children with special problems!”

A wonderful person both inside and out, Ms. Essie truly understands the commitment of helping others and always shares her joy for the work with those around her. Thank you for your service, Ms. Essie!