Collaboration on the North Shore

When Reverend Rodney Bourg from Most Holy Trinity Church in Covington encountered Rita, a part-time who was 45 years old with no living family and a home she could no longer afford, he reached out to Stephanie Duppee from CCANO’s North Shore Outreach Center. Rita lost her husband and her son within the last two years and was left with massive credit card debt and medical bills. Stephanie quickly determined that Rita’s housing costs were far above her means, and she was struggling to keep up her house. CCANO first assisted with covering some immediate needs such as utilities and helped Rita apply for SNAP benefits. However, there were more complex issues to address, so Stephanie reached out to community partners.

Reverend Bourg found pro bono legal services from parishes for legal and real estate transactions, which allowed Rita to complete probate transactions and list her home. A Boy Scout troop cleaned up her garden and cleared out some clutter. Stephanie worked with Christopher Holter so Rita could find housing for an affordable percentage of her fixed income. Once the house sold, volunteers from Stepping Stones Ministry (Family Promise) secured a storage unit for her furniture and personal items packed everything up, and moved everything out over multiple days. A local congregation in Lacombe had a house on their property and Dr. Rita stays there until her apartment at Beaujouette Lodge in Mandeville was available. Through Stepping Stones Ministry’s advocacy, Rita was awarded a monthly pension from Veteran Affairs due to her deceased husband’s years of service in the Army. She then used the sale of her house to pay off her debts and her car note.

This community collaboration lifted Rita out of a potentially dire situation and blessed her with long-term affordable housing and a stable budget. Catholic Charities prides itself on building strong, effective relationships with other providers so that clients like Rita can thrive.

Learn about the North Shore Pastoral Center at http://www.ccano.org/north-shore-pastoral-center/

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Last December, a nondescript moving truck pulled into the drive of 1000 Howard Avenue. After it backed up, the entire cargo area was bursting with green and red wrapped presents of all shapes and sizes. As Santa’s special helpers, the good folks at Louisiana Dental Center trolled over to unload their bountiful haul of bikes, board games, and stuffed animals for CCANO’s annual toy drive. Because of the generosity of donors like those, 1,337 of our clients received Christmas gifts or health bags, and 475 clients had a traditional Thanksgiving meal last year. The Thanksgiving and Christmas season should be a time of love, family, and warmth, but for many of our clients, it is a reminder of struggle and stress. To provide the happiest of holidays, we host an annual Thanksgiving food basket and Christmas gift drive. Individuals, churches, and companies can “adopt” clients by purchasing Thanksgiving food basket items or Christmas gifts and then delivering them to our office on a designated day. It’s a truly heartwarming sight to watch the outpouring of support, and we especially appreciate those who participate in both the Thanksgiving and Christmas donations.

If you would like to brighten a family’s holiday, Emily Sleeter at csleeter@ccano.org. Because we understand that the holidays are busy, we have an online donation option for Thanksgiving, where we will fill a good box for a family when you contribute $50. The Thanksgiving donation page will be live from October 28th to November 12th and can be found at http://www.ccano.org/holiday. Thank you in advance for your help this holiday season.
Fostering Love

Alice Skinner has been a foster parent for over twenty years, welcoming many children into her home. In October 2013, CANAO’s Therapeutic Family Services (TFS) approached her about fostering an eight-month-old boy who had been hospitalized with medical issues. Alice declined, as she was nervous about the small size of the tub she had to use, and she feared that her experience in foster care had not been enough. However, Alice later decided to foster care and is now fostering a five-month-old baby named Kai. Alice has been fostering Kai for over a year, and they have developed a strong bond. Alice has also been fostering two other young children, Alana and Alex, who have been in foster care for a little over a year. Alice and Kai have enjoyed spending time together, and Alice has found it rewarding to be able to provide a loving home for a child in need.

Care for Caregivers

Alice joined the CANAO’s Therapeutic Family Services (TFS) team in 2013. The TFS team is committed to providing ongoing support and training to foster parents. Alice has found the support she has received from the TFS team to be invaluable. Alice has also found it helpful to connect with other foster parents through the CANAO’s online forum. Alice has found that connecting with other foster parents has helped her to feel less isolated and has given her a sense of community.

Youth on the Rise

The CANAO’s Youth Services team has seen a significant increase in the number of young people seeking support. They have found that many young people are experiencing mental health challenges and are seeking support to help them navigate these challenges. The CANAO’s Youth Services team has developed a range of programs and services to support young people, including counseling, mentorship, and online support groups.

Notes from the Heart

The CANAO’s Therapeutic Family Services (TFS) supports foster parents by offering supportive services and trainings about abuse and neglect, communication, socialization, conflict resolution, and more. These sessions allow foster parents to unite as a community for support and advice. Sheryl Hadfield, a Program Director of TFS, shares, “The children find security in a loving home with someone who has proven trustworthy in the most rewarding part of this work. It can be a difficult and long road to get there, but in the end, it’s worth it. It’s important to know that these children have now committed family members who will support them.”

“The program has been a true blessing. God helped to provide a great solution to a problem I previously found hard to manage.”

Leanne

Leanne is a recently fostered child who has been struggling with behavioral issues. She has been in and out of foster care for several years, and she has had many different caregivers. Leanne has found it difficult to connect with her caregivers and has struggled with trust issues. Leanne has found the support she has received from the CANAO’s Youth Services team to be invaluable. Leanne has found that connecting with other young people who are experiencing similar challenges has helped her to feel less isolated and has given her a sense of community.