

JULY 2010

## The Economic Downturn impacts all in the community, especially those with very little.

Catholic Charities continues to service even more people in need, even with major funding reductions to homeless services – including food and post-shelter housing. We will always continue to help; but will need your help! When you can provide help! And whatever you can provide will be welcome.

I was taken by a letter from a client written to “Sam Jones Staff and Administrators” – “Just a quick note of warm & safe gratitude! My stay here has allowed me to breathe, laugh, function and even sometimes sleep☺ ...I, like many women, have run away from a horrific situation; although it takes personal courage, the support provided brings tears of gratitude. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you. Your belief in me will help me heal.”

### Where would she be without our shelter?

Then I heard about Carolyn – a strong self-employed community member with normal health risks and hit by the recession...Carolyn lived in the same local apartment for 12 years. She owned a business selling clothing, but the business suffered in today’s economy, closed in 2009 and then her health suffered as well. Carolyn is not a quitter, so she tried to make a living selling clothes on consignment. By March 2010 she had no savings left and was hospitalized for a tumor. She was sent home from the hospital with a walker and found that she had no home for long; she had been evicted as she was behind in rent. A local agency managed to stay her eviction for one month. She couch-surfed for a week and then started sleeping in her car. When she found out that it was illegal to sleep in her car, she started napping. In desperation she arrived and was welcomed at Catholic Charities’ center for people who are homeless. In a few months, she will be 65 and will receive enough Social Security to pay rent. In the meantime she is applying for Supplemental Security Income. Because Carolyn found a stable place to start her life again, she got right back in charge of her life and is moving on. Carolyn is one of the strongest people we know.

### Where would she be without our shelter?

One needs only to read or hear the news once a week to know that shelter programs and all kinds of social services are taking cuts in funding, like all other government service programs. No one likes to make the cuts, but it is where we are with our economy today. We continue to work at Catholic Charities to keep helping those people



PHOTO CREDIT: LYNN NEARY

most in need with a box of food, some clothes, help in finding work, or a warm, safe place for a family and children. We do this for and on behalf of the community. Would you like to get the great feeling of helping? Volunteer or make whatever donation you can. You can make donations through our web site or by calling 528-8712 ext. 159. Can you afford \$20 a month, automatically deducted from your checking account? It can be that easy, and your monthly contribution, when added to others in the community, can keep lights on, beds warm, food on the table, for those most impacted by the economy.

### Progress is possible with direction and support

As you read about the people who have made great progress in Napa Catholic Charities programs – Tarah, Britney and Ashley – please think: Can we afford to move backwards? What will happen to these vulnerable women and children if they cannot find help?

As you read about the Santa Rosa-based Family Support Center’s Learning Center and other programs, think about this: Can we afford to move backwards?

What will happen to these vulnerable women and children if they cannot find help?

Over 15,000 children and adults this year will depend on Catholic Charities for safety-net services like our food, shelter and housing programs. Please consider making a special gift today to ensure our ongoing ability to provide that critical help. Your first gift has been the gift of your time to read about the wonderful people we serve. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Larry Lakes, Executive Director



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### Napa County News

#### Rainbow House, Home Base to have much needed renovation

Watch for big changes to our Jefferson Street transitional housing sites by summer's end.

(photos to right - top Home Base, bottom Rainbow House)

The State of California Emergency Housing Assistance Program/Capital Development, has provided much needed funds to renovate these century-old buildings. The women and children will have a much improved building, with a new foundation and many other changes when the work is complete early next year.

#### "Where are the people who found help in our Napa County programs now?"

The professional support offered through **Rainbow House and Home Base** programs help turn lives around for the long-term. Here are updates on three clients we profiled in past publications, Tarah, Britney and Ashley.

**Tarah's** life turned around when her two youngest boys were born. After years of drugs and irresponsible decisions, she buckled down in Rainbow House, and took full advantage of the programs to help her children blossom while she learned to earn a living and studied to become a



Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

Tarah is four years beyond drug addiction, raising two sons on her own and maintaining the same apartment since she left Rainbow House. She continues to work as an in-home CNA while working towards a Registered Nursing degree. Tarah recently stopped smoking with the help of smoking cessation facilitator Jim Wallace from CANV.

Britney's goals in 2008 were

to become stable, gain independent housing, work on a degree in social work, and regain custody of her daughter. She worked hard with Child Protective



Services to complete their requirements, and was awarded full custody of her daughter. Today she maintains her sobriety and volunteers with a local non profit as a peer mentor.

**Ashley** kicked drugs and found new friends when she became pregnant and entered Rainbow House. Her goals were to find

college scholarships, stay clean and sober, and find work and housing. She now has her own apartment, works part-time, and continues her education at Napa Valley College, while parenting her son.

We are proud to have worked with, guided and watched these families and others move towards self-sufficient lives.



**Catholic Charities Napa Programs office** has relocated to 1248 Hayes Street, Napa. Come by and see our new office.

CLIENT PHOTOS: THIS PAGE, TARAH AND SONS; AT RIGHT, BRITNEY

## Lake County News

### Housing Help Lake Co./HHLC

Seventy people attended our community information meeting on June 9 at Clearlake City Hall to learn how to qualify for federal programs to assist people experiencing hardship due to today's economy. Catholic Charities and partner agencies interviewed prospective clients in



need of financial assistance, such as payment for rent in arrears or past due utilities and expenses to re-enter the rental housing market. Staff also presented information on qualifying for food stamps, and are now directly assisting ten families. Partner agencies are Lake Family Resource Center, Community Care, and Lake County Community Action Agency. Catholic Charities was awarded the grant for Lake County to provide limited rent and utility assistance in Lake County through the **Housing Help Lake County (HHLC)** program.

**Our next community meeting is July 28, 11:30 AM** at St. Mary Immaculate Church, 801 No. Main Street, Lakeport. Seating is limited, call 987-8139 to reserve.

There is no need to wait for the meeting: if you live in Lake County and think this program can help, go to [www.srcharities.org](http://www.srcharities.org).

### Other News

Sheriff Rod Mitchell and two deputy sheriffs facilitated a meeting with 30 women from south county at Catholic Charities Middletown office to discuss Personal Safety Awareness. Many of the women in this group help us with our volunteer programs for Rural Food Program, Spirit of the Season and other community outreach programs.

Twenty-five people enjoyed our April fundraiser with Fr. Tom Bonacci at United Methodist Church of Middletown. He lead a discussion and presentation on the Book of Revelation. \$600 was raised for Lake Programs.

Salvation Army continues to utilize our office once a month to give vouchers to clients so that they can purchase \$50 worth of food at local grocery stores.

PHOTO CREDIT THIS PAGE: JOHN LINDBOUM

PHOTO TO LEFT: AGENCY PARTNERS ASSIST HHLC APPLICANTS  
PHOTO BELOW: PROGRAM COORDINATOR LEE FARRELL EXPLAINS HOW TO QUALIFY FOR ASSISTANCE



Regional Director Hedy Montoya attended a week's training at an Intertribal Conference in Durant, Oklahoma that addressed domestic violence issues within the indigenous peoples, and specifically addressing the needs of the six tribes in Lake County, related to domestic violence. She will follow up by attending Domestic Violence training by the Lake Family Resource Center this summer.

Long-time Rural Food supporters William and Carolyn Tobin asked that donations be made in lieu of flowers to **Lake Programs** as a tribute to William G. Tobin, who recently died at age 102 years. The late Mr. Tobin was our eldest Lake County Programs volunteer. Over \$1000 has been donated in Mr. Tobin's name, a touching tribute that will help feed hundreds of hungry people in Lake County.

### Rural Food Project Needed More Than Ever

You've read it before, but we are serving more people each successive month. The total number of people served in May was 679 compared to 651 for April, whereas we served 531 for March. Knowing the reason - the economy - does not make it any easier to see more families in need each month. Thankfully, we have more to offer - Food Stamp applications, and the programs mentioned earlier.

If you are able to help with funds to buy food or a direct donation of food, please contact Hedy at 987-8139. If you can afford \$20 a month out of your bank account or can write a check, you can make a big difference in Lake County.



### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Community Information Meeting

A meeting will be held to explain how you or others you know can qualify for financial assistance for rent, utilities or other qualified expenses through a program administered by Catholic Charities. (see description of HHLC on left-hand page)

Wednesday, July 28  
11:30 AM

St. Mary Immaculate Church  
801 No. Main St., Lakeport  
RSVP to reserve - 987-8139  
Seating is limited!

#### Middletown Luncheon Club

Wednesday, August 18th  
11:30 - 1PM

United Methodist Church  
Middletown  
\$5.00 per person, proceeds to Catholic Charities Lake County Programs (LCP).  
Lunch served by LCP volunteers.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OFFICE AND COMMUNITY CENTER AT  
21257 CALISTOGA STREET, MIDDLETOWN

## Food Stamp Program is Most Successful in CA.

With the economic downturn, more people than ever before qualify for supplemental nutrition assistance, or "food stamps" (now distributed via debit-style card).



PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN LINDBOM

Catholic Charities **Food Stamp Outreach** is in full swing, screening potential recipients at all Catholic Charities Rural Food Project sites, setting up help-desks in front of major grocers and at events, and collaborating with the County of Sonoma, Redwood Empire Food Bank and Community Action Partnership agencies to essentially cover the region to sign up people in need. Part of our summer endeavors include on-site assistance in Rohnert Park and Sebastopol. While on a statewide level application assistance is lagging, Catholic Charities is ahead of schedule, thanks in large part to a well-trained cadre of food stamp outreach volunteers. Of 343 applications to date, 252 (73.5%) have been assisted by volunteer staff. This is just one of many ways Catholic Charities stretches funding dollars to serve more people. For more information or help for yourself or someone you know who wants to apply, call 575-0215.

### Medical Respite Shelter for Homeless Clients Expands

We welcomed a new Nurse Intake Coordinator for our expanded homeless medical respite project, **Project Nightingale**, thanks to a grant from Kaiser Permanente No.

California Fund for Community Benefits at the East Bay Community Foundation. The respite program moved to a more accommodating facility near our shelters; volunteers continue to keep a watchful eye and bring meals. It provides 24-hour shelter for homeless adults discharged from hospitals.

### Senior Services Hosts National Conference

We recently hosted staff members from various Catholic Charities' agencies from Brooklyn, NY; Nashville, TN; Providence, RI; Juneau, AK; and eight California cities, all members of CCUSA Aging Section Steering Committee. Discussions focused on best practices and public policy issues. We found commonalities in funding cuts that meant trimming or dropping of various programs; and, applicable to our program, creative ways to keep the program alive with fewer funds.



### 40 Graduates to Prepare for U.S. Citizenship

Our recent **Citizenship** class of 40 proud students held a graduation party in May complete with a festive international potluck. Mary, our citizenship counselor, continues to help some students improve their test scores in preparation for their real test in San Francisco. We were recently notified of a continuation of a grant for our work by the Ca. Dept. of Education, so we will offer classes again beginning in August.

## Good News - Sonoma County

### Coach 2 Career Takes Off New ideas engage clients

Thanks in large part to our new **Learning Center at the Family Support Center**, open to people who live at all Catholic Charities locations, 134 people found jobs last year, even in this economy. Working with our immensely successful **Coach 2 Career** program, developed by Jennielynn Holmes, people accessed services such as one-on-one tutorials, coaching to search jobs online, email job application training, how to dress for interviews and mock interviews with evaluation. The Center recently helped six residents to register for junior college and three to apply for scholarships.



The Learning Center at FSC also hosts Homework Lab for children. Middle school students do their online homework, and new learning games help younger children master new skills. For example, a spaceship racing game propels their spaceships as they correctly subtract numbers.

We held a "Mock Job Fair" for forty-three people in Catholic Charities housing assistance programs. Clients "interviewed" with staff members, whose written evaluation were reviewed in individual counseling sessions to discuss strengths and areas for improvement. Clients said the experience boosted their confidence.

### Our First U visa

**Immigration/Domestic Violence** authority Molly Goss, a seasoned, accredited representative for immigrant victims of crime, shared her successful methods of working with law enforcement with a reporter for Catholic Legal Immigration Network, so her colleagues can share in her successes. Working together for victims helps law enforcement prosecute criminals while benefitting both victims and the community.

This spring Molly's first U visa client at Catholic Charities was granted legal permanent residency (a green card). They have been working together for nearly five years, but once filed, the green card was granted in merely three months.

### "What Part of Legal Immigration Don't You Understand?"

If you'd like to see a diagram about how complicated the U.S. immigration process is, go to [srcharities.org](http://srcharities.org) and scroll down to Links and Commentary to "What Part of Legal Immigration Don't You Understand?"



PHOTOS, LEFT PAGE: TOP LEFT: KENNY MOELLER INTERVIEWS POTENTIAL FOOD STAMP RECIPIENT; TOP RIGHT: SENIOR SERVICES PROGRAM DIRECTOR MICHELE OSMON (LEFT) AND SENIOR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS, ANGIE MOELLER, LISTEN TO CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS. THIS PAGE: LEFT, LEARNING CENTER VOLUNTEER JOANNE MACCULLUM WORKS AFTER SCHOOL WITH TWO YOUNG RESIDENTS. ABOVE: IMMIGRATION COUNSELOR MOLLY GOSS, CELEBRATED U VISA WITH CLIENT TO HER RIGHT, AND HER CHILDREN.

## You are invited to a brief tour of Catholic Charities

Please join us for an inspiring, one-hour tour of Catholic Charities' programs. No cost, no donations requested. Hear from our staff and some of the people we serve how our programs change lives.

Tours are on selected Fridays, 12 Noon - 1 PM. Tour schedule at [srcharities.org](http://srcharities.org)

For location and reservations, or if you have questions or want to learn more...

contact Sherrie at 528-8712 x 158, [rsvp@srcharities.org](mailto:rsvp@srcharities.org). Group tours of Family Support Center by arrangement.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa  
PO Box 4900  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
707-528-8712  
[www.srcharities.org](http://www.srcharities.org)

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## Are you ready to volunteer & change a life?



VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR  
GEORGETTE PARRY

Can you see yourself making a meaningful difference by giving a few hours a month? People often say that they "get more than they give" through volunteering.

Whether you want to pound nails, answer phones, read to children, or help families in need, Georgette will find the program best suited to your talents. Volunteers bring fresh ideas and help stretch valuable contributions, so we can serve more clients. Call and find out how your interests can help others: 528-8712 ext 105.

PHOTO CREDITS: L TO R: MICHAEL AMSLER, MJ WICKHAM, DAN BURKHART, FRAN RUSSELL



LINDSEY HAZLEWOOD

Youth volunteer Lindsey Hazlewood raised over \$2200 for Rural Food Project, ran a canned food drive, made a YouTube video, and organized food shelves.

"My intention was to collect toiletry items from doctor's offices and pharmacies, but after volunteering for a month, I saw a need for awareness of the issue of hunger in Sonoma County, and what The Rural Food Project is."

You can read about current volunteer openings at [www.srcharities.org](http://www.srcharities.org)



Together, we can make a difference.