



The Mission

"Care With Dignity...Life With Hope"

Catholic Charities

Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York

www.catholiccharities.cc

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A Place Called Home

Once Catholic Charities decides to open a new residential program, we must answer a difficult, essential question: "Where?" Even when funding is in hand, it is not always easy to find a community fully willing to accept new neighbors, especially those with special needs. Fortunately, Catholic Charities was able to answer the question "Where?" this year with three new residences.

We proudly dedicated the Beebe and Bustamante residences on June 7th, marking a fruitful end to years of cooperative effort with Our Lady of Grace Parish and others in the West Babylon community. Built adjacent to the parish grounds, these sites will be home to 12 people with developmental disabilities. Like all of Catholic Charities' 13 community residences, the new houses will encourage residents to be as independent as possible while assuring that they are connected with the community. The parish has been particularly open to its new neighbors, engaging them in educational and volunteer activities, as well as social events. It is a comfort to residents' families to see them in such a welcoming setting, as some are living away from their families for the first time.

"The separation has been rough, but he's happy to be there," said Joyce Luciano, whose son Anthony moved into the Bustamante Residence. "I see him settling in, which makes me more comfortable. Our community of West Babylon welcomed these new residences with open arms. The parish has been so supportive. They are extending the meaning of what church is."



Anthony, left, with his family after the dedication.

In addition to the West Babylon houses, Catholic Charities dedicated its fifth Teaching Family Home in October. The Manorville residence will provide a stable, therapeutic home environment for children age 5 to 17 whose emotional troubles make living at home difficult

for the moment, but who do not need a more institutional living arrangement. Each of the Teaching Family Homes is staffed by a married couple who live on-site. These "teaching parents" provide a supportive structure that helps the children acquire more discipline and approach home and school conflicts more constructively. Meanwhile, staff social workers and family counselors address mental health issues with the children and help their parents resolve any home conflicts. The goal of the program is to return a well-adjusted, self-assured child or adolescent to a more peaceful, supportive home.



Photo ID: From left, Paul Engelhart, Chief Program Officer; Howard Duff, Administrator, Mental Health Residential Services; Laura Cassell, Chief Executive Officer; Michael Hoffman, Associate Director for Children & Youth, NYS Office of Mental Health; and Most Rev. Emil A. Wcela, Auxiliary Bishop of Rockville Centre Diocese, at the Manorville home dedication.

One young resident spoke at the October 26th dedication. "I like feeling like I'm part of a family," he said. "Linda and Jeff [the teaching parents] give me the support I need. My brother and sister have been able to visit and have dinner over, and they're happy with how well I'm doing. I have made new friends and I'm learning a lot. I'm grateful to have the chance to be here and to experience what a loving family and teamwork are all about."

Places like the Beebe and Bustamante residences and the Manorville Teaching Family Home are more than just social services programs. They are concrete signs that the Diocese of Rockville Centre is pursuing its mission of compassion. As the results of collaboration between countless individuals and families, government agencies, non-profits, and parishes, these homes are also signs that the greater Long Island community can make room in its back yard—and its heart—for the most vulnerable of us.

Parish Social Ministry:

Responding to the Gospel Mandate to Love One's Neighbor

In an area as affluent as Long Island, one might not expect to find many people who cannot meet their basic needs. However, in 2004 68,000 people came to Catholic Charities for help meeting their basic needs. Given the very high costs of living here, particularly housing, families often face urgent need even if they earn above the federal poverty level. Furthermore, in suburban regions like ours, social problems are more easily ignored, as low-income neighborhoods are usually out of sight of more affluent developments.

Long Island's 134 Roman Catholic parishes are local hubs for meeting needs beyond Catholic Charities' response, with paid staff and many committed volunteers. Parishes provide food, financial assistance, transportation, advocacy, information, referrals, and support groups or other services for all members of the community, regardless of their religion. The support Catholic Charities provides through the parish social ministry (PSM) department helps local parish programs fully develop their capacity for ministry and avoid operating as limited, isolated efforts, each standing alone. Catholic Charities provides training, networking, and other capacity-building services to assist local parishes in both developing immediate responses to needs and organizing to address root causes of those needs.

The PSM office at St. Bernard's in Levittown shows what a committed community can accomplish in a short time. Soon after becoming pastor there, Father Gerard Ringenback asked all of his parishio-

ners to submit their ideas for what their parish could and should become. From the responses, he and his parish council compiled a list of goals on which to focus, and near the top of the list was parish social ministry.

"I was pleased to find a real acknowledgment that caring for the poor is a Christian responsibility—really a Gospel mandate," said Fr. Ringenback. "I see my role as organizing for the parish some way of acting on that call to feed, shelter, and welcome our neighbors."

Sister Christine Sammons was hired to start and run the PSM



Father Gerry and Sister Christine outside Clairvaux House, the home of the parish social ministry offices in Levittown.

office. A parishioner volunteered his time and talent to fully renovate parish space for the program, with beautiful results. Meanwhile, Sister Christine gave shape to the PSM program, developing a formal intake process and practices for coordinating with the parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society conference, which specializes in home visits, assessments, and financial and in-kind assistance.



Training and consultation from Catholic Charities' PSM department helped her learn how to access public benefits for clients.

In addition to providing services, the new ministry offered

volunteers the opportunity to learn about the hidden struggles around them. "We began to see many different faces of poverty," said Sister Christine. "A typical case might be a single mother who can't collect child support and is struggling. We also have quite a few suffering from domestic violence. In addition, we regularly assist the homeless who live in and around Eisenhower Park and our neighbors at the day treatment program across the street." The office serves, on average, 139 people each month.

Catholic Charities' PSM department helped efforts at St. Bernard's by providing trainings that Sister Christine and many of her volunteers attended. "There's nothing negative I can say about the way Charities operates," Sister Christine recently told *The Long Island Catholic*. "Every time there's a need, I can just call up. They always give us all the support we could need."

Tom Burns, PSM coordinator at Christ the King, Commack, arrived at his position after serving first as volunteer and later full-time coordinator in another parish outreach. He then served as a PSM developer with Catholic Charities. Fr. Joe Staudt brought him in to organize a Christian response to those in need in the Commack community. The purpose of PSM, Tom says, is to “help parishioners understand and act on Catholic Social Teaching, that is, what it means to be and to act as a Christian.” Tom’s approach to this task is fourfold. Initially, he strives to help parishioners become aware of the needs of those in the community, and next gently reminds them of the Gospel mandate to serve the least among us. “Third, a parish should provide concrete ways to serve. This means empowering volunteers by training and providing resources. Then the volunteers are ready to welcome those less fortunate and appropriately respond with Christian compassion.” In addition to addressing food, financial assistance, and other basic needs, PSM at Christ the King frequently assists people struggling with mental illness, homelessness, and domestic violence. Another committee works for social justice nationally and globally. In total, PSM at Christ the King provides ongoing service to 50 people each month. There are approximately 85 volunteers involved in both direct service and social concerns work.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the work, Tom explains, is witnessing the goodness of parish volunteers on their spiritual journey. “Many of our volunteers are surprised to learn about the hidden brokenness around us and want to do something about it,” he said. “Outreach is awesome because it connects people who want to help with those in need.

“To be a part of this ministry, the only requirements are compassion and the desire to move one’s faith into action. Everything else can be taught.”

Estimating the numbers served by outreach efforts at PSM offices across Long Island is a job in itself. Veronica Fellerath, a Catholic Charities PSM developer who has a background in research, has been working to do just that. A total of 86 parishes have either provided her with monthly outreach service numbers, answered a survey about local PSM programs, or both. “Our findings are preliminary, but compelling,” Ronnie said. “If our findings from participating parishes are representative of PSM across the diocese, then parishes are likely to be serving in the neighborhood of 75,000 people each year.”

According to Anthony Mullen, Catholic Charities director of parish and community services, “This remarkable response results from years of collaborative effort by countless parishioners, pastors, and Catholic Charities staff. Over the past 30 years, so many people of faith and vision have labored to establish what is now a respected and established PSM model. We are keenly and humbly aware, to put it biblically, that ‘we reap what others have sown.’”

RESPONDING . . .

Catholic Charities’ response to needs on Long Island would be impossible without support from individuals and organizations that share our concern for the most vulnerable. We thank them for helping us provide Care With Dignity. . . Life With Hope.

Regina Maternity Services Celebrate Life Dinner



A second successful dinner raised critical funds for services at Regina Residence for mothers and babies. The November 16th event, held at **Milleridge Cottage**, honored **Bernadette Casey Smith and Owen T. Smith**, for their involvement in many church and philanthropic activities that promote the sanctity of human life and address the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. Also honored was **Patricia Langan**, a 10-year volunteer in the Regina mentoring program, which connects young women in crisis with positive role models. Our donors’ generous pledges for the dinner totaled \$111,760.

Third Annual Golf Classic

Once again at the **Huntington Crescent Club**, our annual golf classic proved to be a great day and a successful fundraiser. Our honoree was **Richard F. Chapdelaine**, founder of Chapdelaine & Co., who has generously supported many ministries of the Catholic Church on Long Island. The September 26th golf classic included two rounds of golf with a total of 144 golfers. Pledges for the day totaled \$186,543 including golf sponsorships, raffle ticket sales, and other donations.



Recent Grants

- A new vehicle in our Nassau County Meals-On-Wheels program will bear the logo of **The Roslyn Savings Foundation**, which provided a \$10,000 grant this year to help maintain consistent, timely meal delivery to frail seniors.
- **United Way of Long Island’s Community Impact Program** provided a grant of \$25,400 to renovate our Meals-on-Wheels site serving homebound seniors in the Freeport-Hempstead-Uniondale area and nearby Nassau County neighborhoods.
- A sixth consecutive year of support from **Maternity & Early Childhood Foundation** will benefit the volunteer mentoring program at Regina maternity services. The \$37,500 grant will allow year-round, one-on-one mentoring for 33 teens and young women managing the challenges of parenting, education, and work.

■ **Catholic Charities Immigrant Services Department** hosted its annual Mass and party at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre on Sunday, November 13th. **Msgr. Robert Brennan**, Vicar General, presided over the Mass celebrating the diversity that so many immigrant groups bring to the island. This year's celebration, as in years past, drew hundreds of people from many backgrounds for worship, music, and dancing. This year the celebration took place on the feast day of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, patroness of immigrants.



Photo ID: Left: Thea Bowman Choir at the Immigration Mass; Below: Bishop Murphy greets a senior at the St. Joseph Day Celebration.

■ **Twenty-five years ago, Catholic Charities opened its first affordable senior apartment complex in Selden.** The 200-unit **St. Joseph's Village** began a ministry that has grown to **1,263 affordable apartments at 14 facilities.** Hundreds of seniors came from our housing sites, senior centers, and elsewhere to a September 12th Mass at St. Agnes Cathedral to celebrate this anniversary. **Bishop William F. Murphy** presided at the service in honor of St. Joseph, patron saint of the aging and, appropriately, carpenters.



■ In the wake of **Hurricane Katrina**, individuals, churches, and organizations nationwide have given more than \$100 million dollars to **Catholic Charities USA** to support relief efforts. So far, Catholic Charities USA has allocated more than \$36 million to 58 local Catholic Charities, dioceses, and other Catholic organizations. This includes \$25.6 million allocated to Catholic Charities of New Orleans for recovery work over the next two to three years. Here on Long Island, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockville Centre selected a group to travel to Dallas for a two-week effort to assist the local Catholic Charities by training volunteers and providing direct service to relocated evacuees. The group included Catholic Charities PSM Developers **Ronnie Fellerath, Martha Graziano, and Laura Messano.** They were accompanied by coordinators from four parishes, **Tom Burns of Christ the King (Commack), Ele Fritsch of St. Frances de Chantal (Wantagh), Lisa Hudson of Cure of Ars (Merrick), and Mary Rubert of St. John the Evangelist (Riverhead).**

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