

## Many Thanks to Supporters of A Cardinal's Christmas

Catholic Charities hosted its fifth annual fundraising luncheon, "A Cardinal's Christmas," with His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo on December 14 at the River Oaks Country Club.

Many thanks for the support of generous donors and ticket purchasers who helped this year's "A Cardinal's Christmas" gross more than \$260,000. All proceeds benefit the Nurturing Children and Strengthening Families programs at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

The annual event featured activities and entertainment to delight guests young and old including arts and crafts, music, and a live bell choir. The 2013 "A Cardinal's Christmas" luncheon was chaired by Michelle and Hector Herrera, with Deana Blackburn serving as Underwriting Chair. These



individuals went above and beyond to ensure that this was a fun and festive event for the hundreds who attended.

With so much focus put on the commercial aspects of Christmas, the annual "A Cardinal's Christmas" offers families a Christmas tradition that celebrates the true spirit of the season. While guests gather to spend an enchanted afternoon with family and friends, Cardinal DiNardo invites the children to gather around him as he shares a story that illustrates Christmas' true meaning.



UPCOMING EVENTS

### The Cardinal's Krewé

February 27, 2014  
Sugar Land Marriott

### Annual March Meeting

March 25, 2014  
Catholic Charities Main Office

### Spirit of Charity Gala

May 17, 2014  
Hilton Americas

For more info please contact  
Diane Cervenka at 713.874.6624  
or [dcervenka@catholiccharities.org](mailto:dcervenka@catholiccharities.org)



Cynthia N. Colbert, MSW

Dear Friends,

Happy 2014 to all of you! As we reflect on the past year and prayerfully look ahead to 2014, I am happy to share with you the goals of our new strategic plan “Building Bridges to the Future.” This plan sets forth our priorities for serving children, families, seniors, refugees, immigrants and others.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our strategic planning process through surveys, interviews and listening sessions. Based on your feedback, our analysis of poverty, demographics, service needs and gaps, the Board of Directors approved the 5 strategic goals. During 2014-17, Catholic Charities will be guided by the following goals.

- 1 Catholic Charities will provide quality and compassionate services that are aligned with our mission and core competencies. We will attend to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of those we serve as we promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person.
- 2 Catholic Charities will develop and implement a unified case management model throughout agency programs. We will base our model on best practices and strive to not only alleviate poverty but also help our clients build self sufficiency.
- 3 Catholic Charities will work to strengthen our partnership with parishes, Catholic ministries and other community organizations in order to meet increased needs in our Archdiocese and to effectively advocate for the social justice priorities of the Texas Bishops.
- 4 Catholic Charities will maintain excellence in fundraising and fiscal management with dedication to accountability and transparency. We are committed to extending our Four-Star Charity Navigator Rating through 2017 and beyond.
- 5 Catholic Charities will recruit, train and support an engaged and quality workforce and a volunteer base who work together to help us achieve our mission and vision.

As you read the papers, reports and the news, you know that the population is increasing, that there are more people in poverty today than 5 years ago, that the senior population is growing as the baby boomer generation ages into retirement, and that many families are challenged to find affordable housing, medical care and jobs that can sustain their families. We see them everyday at Catholic Charities and I know you serve them through parish programs as well. Together, we can make a difference as Pope Francis and Cardinal DiNardo encourage us to do. May God bless all of you this year and may God continue to bless the work and the ministry of Catholic Charities.

In Christ’s Peace,

Cynthia N. Colbert, MSW  
PRESIDENT/CEO

*To love God and neighbor is not something abstract, but profoundly concrete: it means seeing in every person and face of the Lord to be served, to serve him concretely. And you are, dear brothers and sisters, in the face of Jesus.*

(Pope Francis, Address during Visit at the Homeless Shelter “Dona Di Maria,” 5/21/13)

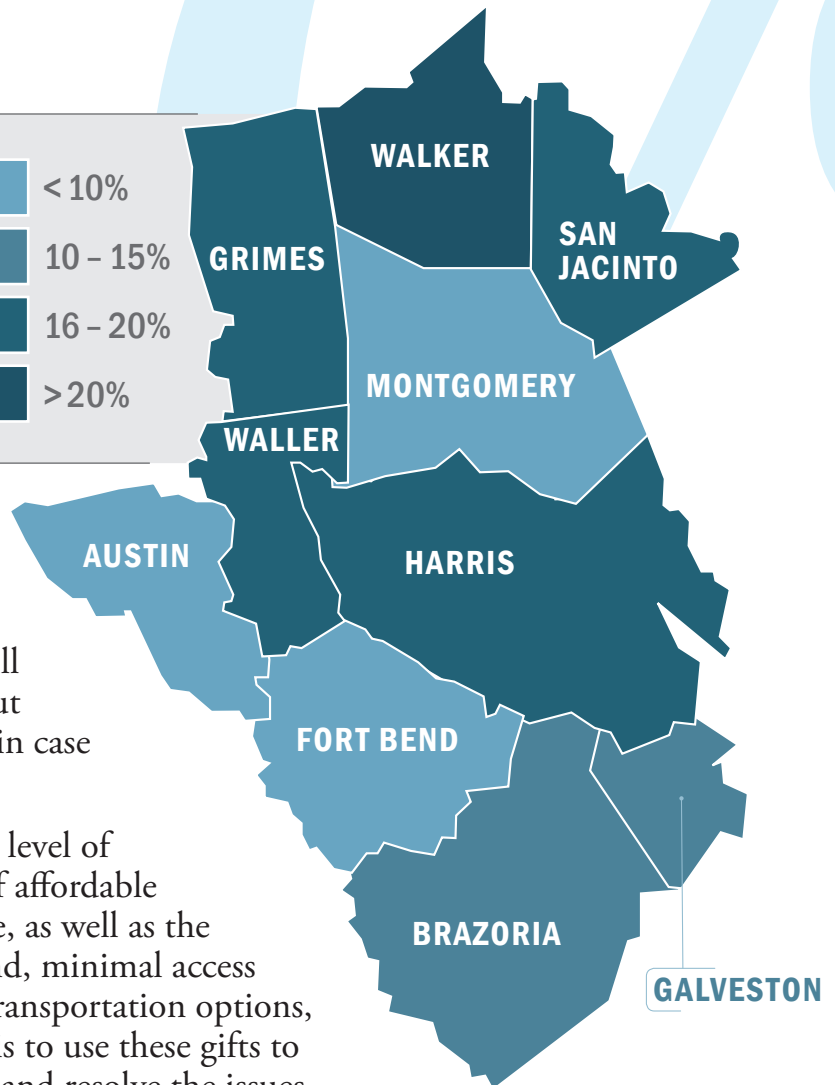
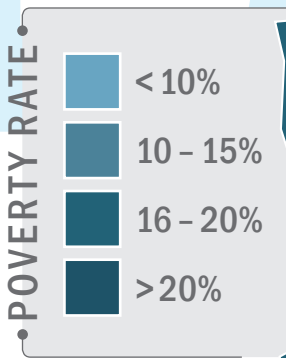
# Challenge Grant Awarded for Basic Needs Programming in Galveston

In a wonderful display of support, the trustees of the Moody Memorial First United Methodist Church have provided a challenge grant of \$12,500 to help Catholic Charities raise funds for our Basic Needs programming on Galveston Island. We are working with area parishes to request the matching funds, and are looking forward to initiating the increased services these gifts will make possible.

The services to be funded by the challenge grant and matching gifts will involve the support of 170 low-income households on the Island, each of whom will receive rent and utility assistance, with about half of these households to also participate in case management and employment services.

These services will help address a significant level of need in Galveston, which reflects the loss of affordable housing options as a result of Hurricane Ike, as well as the seasonal nature of employment on the Island, minimal access to affordable childcare, inadequate public transportation options, and ever-increasing tuition fees. Our hope is to use these gifts to stabilize families — helping each to address and resolve the issues that led to the financial crisis.

Participants for the program will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis, without regard to religious affiliation. Those selected will have demonstrated an immediate need for assistance (via an eviction notice or utility shut-off notice) and be assessed as having the ability and desire to regain financial stability through engagement in case management services, budgeting and financial literacy instruction, job preparation and/or job search assistance.



# 17%

*Seventeen percent of all residents in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston are living in poverty. That's 2 percentage points higher than the national average of 15%.*

If you would like to support these efforts through a gift or by serving as a program volunteer, please contact Norma Roche at 409.762.2064 ext. 2100.

## International Law Firms Among Top Volunteers for Pro Bono Help



*Pro bono attorney Maria Kutnick  
with Winston & Strawn LLP*

Staff attorneys for Catholic Charities' St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigration Legal Assistance truly appreciate the volunteer work of lawyers in the community. Many of these attorneys are part of the Houston Pro Bono Joint Initiative helping immigrant clients.

The Houston Pro Bono Joint Initiative (HPBJI) members are in-house corporate legal groups such as Halliburton, Marathon Oil, Exxon Mobil, BP, and law firms such as Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, Mayer Brown LLP, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, Cozen O'Connor and Baker Botts, LLP. The goal of the HPBJI is to coordinate pro bono activities across all member firms and corporate legal groups in an effort to better serve the pro bono legal needs of the greater Houston area.

Maria Mitchell, Catholic Charities' legal director and pro bono coordinator, said she and her staff are thankful for the support the HPBJI and law firms in the Houston area provide to the Cabrini Center. They are especially thankful for the international law firm of Winston & Strawn, which has 17 offices in the world including Houston who recently sponsored and hosted a DACA Workshop.

"Our pro bono attorneys help with immigration cases across the board, including U.S. citizenship clinics and helping young immigrants known as *Dreamers* covered under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals," Mitchell said.

As one of the top volunteers in Houston helping Catholic Charities' immigration legal cases, Maria Kutnick recently joined Winston & Strawn in its newly created position of pro bono coordinator. Kutnick comes to the firm from the Legal Assistance

Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago where she was senior attorney in the Immigration Project. Kutnick recently flew from Chicago to Houston to help Catholic Charities' Cabrini Center host its first DACA workshop at Winston & Strawn's Houston office.

Members of the Houston Pro Bono Joint Initiative also said they as attorneys and community volunteers are grateful for the opportunity to serve the Citizenship Clinics and were pleased with the excellent results. The U.S. citizenship clinics, held at Catholic Charities' offices at 2900 Louisiana and at other locations around the

*story continued*

## Bringing Joy to Children, Seniors and Families

Churches, donors and volunteers brought joy to more than 5,000 children, senior citizens and their families as part of our Annual “Share Your Blessings” Christmas program.

New community partners included BEL Furniture of Texas which coordinated food drives throughout their Harris and Fort Bend area stores to benefit Catholic Charities’ food pantries at Guadalupe Center and Mamie George Community Center that distribute fresh fruits, vegetables and canned goods.

BEL Furniture President Sid Mollai states, “We are very happy and pleased that we can do this donation effort. It is of the utmost importance to give back to the Texas community that has supported us and we



feel that Catholic Charities and its many programs make a huge difference for the good of many people in our communities.”

Longtime parish donors from St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church of The Woodlands, who have contributed truckloads of toys and gifts cards for years, were joined by first-time donors from Our Lady of Cedars Maronite Catholic Church in southwest Houston.

Led by Our Lady of Cedars Pastor Rev. Milad Yaghi and Assistant Pastor Rev. Pierre Elkhoury and parishioner Eliana Jaoude, who recently completed the Catholic Charities’ Parish Social Ministry class, the parish donated more than

\$15,000 worth of toys, laptops, bicycles, televisions and other gifts to 30 women and their 40 children in our military veterans’ program. The families are clients whom

Catholic Charities has helped find housing, education and employment.

Home Instead, a company which offers in-home care services for the elderly, also graced “Share Your Blessings” with donations for our senior services program. Their warm blankets and gift cards touched the hearts of senior clients attending a Catholic Charities’ Christmas party complete with Santa Claus bringing them cheer. The success of “Share Your Blessings” depends on the generous spirit of individuals, churches and those in the community. We are so grateful to all of our supporters!

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area, offer free legal assistance to applicants. The applicants, such as in the photo showing twin older ladies originally from Germany and now living in Lufkin, can attend a clinic, receive help filling out the citizenship application, have passport-style photos taken and possibly even qualify for government fee waivers. As the clients leave the workshop, they are given books and information to study for their citizenship test and can call back for any further questions.

In 2014, there are U.S. citizenship workshops scheduled monthly, including Jan. 28, Feb. 25, March 25, April 22, May 23, and several others

through Dec. 9. Lawful permanent residents of five years or more or three years for spouses of U.S. citizens who are interested in assistance with applying for citizenship should call 713.874.6570 for information or to register.

Cabrini attorney Julie Pasch said, “We benefit from the assistance of 30 to 40 volunteers at every workshop and it would not be possible for us to serve our clients without them. Training is provided and no legal background is required. We have a particular need for Spanish-speaking volunteers although we serve people from all around the world who have come to call Houston home.”

## Fort Bend Strengthens Senior Services at Mamie George Community Center

Several generous grants, including the renewal of funding from the George Foundation, and a new fundraiser scheduled for February in Sugar Land, will continue to strengthen senior services and basic needs assistance at Mamie George Community Center.

The George Foundation renewed its \$100,000 grant for 2014 to help the community center continue providing meals and wellness program activities for seniors. The Gulf Coast Medical Foundation in 2013 provided Catholic Charities with a \$25,000 gift that supported efforts to assist low-income families to embrace the benefits of good nutrition.

"We are grateful for and humbled with the generous support of the George Foundation and other donors in our community as we embark to serve Fort Bend County in 2014," said Mamie George Community Center Director Ernest Lewis.

Almost 100 individuals visit the Mamie George Community Center each day at 1111 Collins Road in Richmond. They participate in services that include its Trini's Corner Market food pantry and Senior Wellness Center. H-E-B grocery stores also donated \$2,000 in gift cards recently for the center.

The Gulf Coast Medical Foundation grant focused on helping clients select healthy groceries in the community center's food pantry and also take part in nutrition workshops.

The GCMF gift to Catholic Charities was made in memory of Hilmar Moore, former mayor of Richmond who was the longest serving mayor in U.S. history.

Moore supported the initial development of the Mamie George Community Center, providing personal donations and also encouraging his fellow board members to approve grants for the community center. His son, Jack Moore of Lytle & Moore LLP, honors his father's legacy, providing support to Catholic Charities and serving as a member of the foundation board.

For the first time, Catholic Charities is hosting a Mardi Gras-themed "The Cardinal's Krewe," 2014 Fort Bend Catholic Charities Dinner as a fundraiser set for 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27, at the Sugar Land Marriott Town Square.



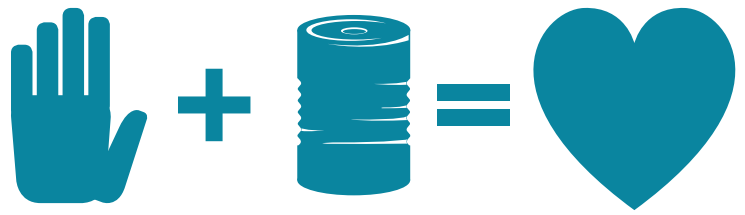
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston  
Benefiting Fort Bend County

To be part of the special event, those interested can contact Susan Ryan at 281.980.8550 or at [rockingrf@aol.com](mailto:rockingrf@aol.com) as well as Diane Cervenka, Vice President, Development & Marketing, at 713.874.6624 or at [dcervenka@catholiccharities.org](mailto:dcervenka@catholiccharities.org).

*All proceeds generated from this dinner in the Cardinal's honor will remain in Fort Bend and provide support to thousands of Fort Bend County residents in need through Catholic Charities, regardless of religious affiliation.*

## Dedicated Volunteers

Nourish Food Pantry Clients with Christ's Love



Dedicated volunteers continue in 2014 to donate their Saturday mornings distributing bags of fresh fruits and vegetables to hundreds of Catholic Charities' clients and their children waiting in line at the Guadalupe Center food pantry.

Volunteers Jim and Jan Townsend, who are parishioners at St. Hyacinth Catholic Church in Deer Park, enrolled in the Parish Social

commitment to Guadalupe Center with St. Hyacinth supplying about half of the volunteers needed to run food fair distributions for the center.

"We don't call ourselves 'volunteers,' Jim said. "It's a nice word, but it doesn't convey ministerial commitment. We're 'disciples,' doing no more than what Jesus commanded of us: to be disciples and to make disciples." Jan added, "We're only doing what Christ said for us to do in his home on Earth."

Other volunteers have also become anonymous donors, giving large pallets of food donations. Even an area restaurant, El Tiempo on Navigation, joined in giving food donations to our Guadalupe Center.

"I see the long lines of people waiting for food at the center on my way



Ministry Certification program offered through Catholic Charities and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston to become Parish Social ministers. Course requirements required hands-on experience, so the Townsends volunteered to assist with Food Fairs at Catholic Charities' Guadalupe Center on Houston's east side near downtown at 326 S. Jensen.

It wasn't long before they began supervising volunteers at the twice-monthly distribution of fresh produce to families in need. The Townsends also launched a new Saturday-morning ministry to perform corporeal works of mercy in the community and recruited other St. Hyacinth parishioners to join them. Called Light of Christ Disciples, the ministry includes a standing

to work—senior citizens, children. We want to help," said restaurant manager Jorge Mora. BEL Furniture also held a food drive at its area stores recently and delivered donations from their customers and staff to Guadalupe.

Natalie Wood, Vice President, Strengthening Family & Senior Services, said the volunteers' efforts and donations are invaluable to help many in the community in need. Volunteers say they in turn receive as much as they give.

"It's beautiful work," Jan said. "A few families there to receive help have become some of our most stalwart helpers. You can't always pay back a kindness. Sometimes you can only pay it forward."

# GOOD NEWS NOW

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