

*Providing help.
Creating hope.*

324 W. Buffalo St., Ithaca, NY 14850 / 272-5062

*from our
executive director*

I recently read an article* about what makes people happy and found that the five things listed apply well to the work we do here at Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga (CCTT). I think we all know what these five things are, but a reminder never hurts, especially during these challenging and uncertain economic times! So, here they are, with a little commentary on how each relates to our mission:

Be grateful.

The people who walk through our door each day are in a vulnerable position, needing assistance and dependent on the good will of our supporters. Especially now, with unemployment at a record high, many families have never before had to ask for help and are embarrassed to approach us. When they do ask, we are grateful that we are able to help, and they in turn are grateful to us, to you, our supporters, and to the generous community members who donate clothing, personal care items, and monetary gifts for those in need.

Be optimistic.

The Board, staff and volunteers at CCTT all have an optimistic perspective about our work. We find over and over that we

continued on page 2

Catholic Charities

Tompkins/Tioga

Spring 2010

news and notes

**A special, special
thanks to ...**

St. Catherine's for their
Giving Tree Donations!

Immaculate Conception
School for their shoe box
Christmas gifts!

First Congregational
Church for their shoe box
Christmas gifts!

Area Day Care Centers for
their donations of diapers!

In This Issue

Board Member Insight	3
2008 Supporters	5-8
Warm Feet, Warm Hearts	8
Meet The Staff	9
The Benefits of Sharing the Warmth	10
Family Empowerment	
Director is honored	11
Everyone Counts!	12
Help that Works	12

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director continued

can trust our community to respond with generosity whenever we ask for help. This point became evident in an especially poignant way this year during the Rotary Share the Warmth drive for winter clothing. Once an appeal was sent out for warm coats, gloves, hats, boots and scarves, it was like winter clothing rained from the heavens! Over 900 families received warm blankets and winter outerwear at our Samaritan Center, and we are optimistic that next year we'll be able to help even more!

Count your blessings.

We are blessed with volunteers at CCTT. Our dedicated volunteers staff our clothing closet, help sort clothes, do book-keeping and process mailings, keep our building clean and even put out the trash! We have a strong volunteer Board of Directors, who provide advice and counsel, and also step in to help sort clothing, repair our building, and bring us chocolate when things get hectic. We take none of this for granted. Without our volunteers, we would be much more limited in the work we could accomplish. The work of CCTT is a community venture, and each contribution is a blessing.

Use your strengths.

When we partner with our CCTT program participants, we seek to approach each situation from a position of strength, focusing on what resources people already have. From there, we can look together at each person's needs and work with them to overcome barriers. Often all that is need-

continued on page 4

from a cett board member's perspective



Pilar Parra, a Research Associate and Senior Lecturer at Cornell's Nutritional Sciences Program, has served on the CCTT Board since March 2006. Her work on integrating the needs of immigrant workers and rural communities has helped CCTT greatly as we have built our Immigrant Services Program to serve the unique needs of immigrants and refugees in the community. She shares below some of her thoughts about serving on the Board:

"I joined the CCTT Board 4 years ago, and I have to say I was a bit reluctant due to my long days at work. As I thought whether or not I should accept this commitment, I reflected on the meaning of serving beyond our work and family. I realized that this was a special opportunity to go beyond my professional work on poverty and health and get in contact with the people in organizations that are at the front-lines, working to alleviate poverty.

I am grateful to be able to be part of a vibrant, committed group of people. I have been able to witness the staff working tirelessly to find ways to improve the lives of many who would otherwise not have any other place to go for assistance. One aspect that I consider most important is how the services are performed at

CCTT's offices. People may come for the most basic things they can't afford like clothing and personal care items. These women, men and young adults do not look hesitant or reluctant to have to extend their hand for "charity." They come with confidence because CCTT goes beyond just "helping the poor." CCTT's work is lived and acted "in solidarity" which is nurtured by two main forces: one is social justice and the other is love. Everyone is treated with at most respect; their human dignity cherished.

People who come to CCTT for help find attentive staff to whom they can express their latest challenge. The staff tries to find ways to resolve their needs, not all but some, and it allows those at the very bottom of the economic ladder to continue in their daily struggle for survival, to regain their rightful place in society and carry out their lives with dignity and renewed strength. I have learned so much, and most important I am honored to belong to such a dedicated group of people."

programs

Tompkins County

Samaritan Center

- Clothing Closet
- Personal Needs
- Emergency Financial Assistance

Housing First (HPRP)

Immigrant Services

Justice & Peace Ministry

Family Empowerment

Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP)

our mission

The Mission of Catholic Charities Tompkins / Tioga is to help build communities that care for all people by reducing poverty, promoting healthy individual and family life, collaborating with faith communities, and advocating for social justice.

director continued

ed is payment of a utility bill or security deposit, and everything is fine. Sometimes we recognize that people may have more chronic problems, like low wages, health issues, or long-term unemployment. In all cases, we believe that stepping in and assisting with compassion and understanding allows our program participants to retain dignity and strength. From a position of strength, they are much better suited to face and overcome some of the difficulties in their lives.

Commit acts of kindness.

Catholic Charities provides many opportunities for you, our supporters, to commit acts of kindness. You can volunteer at our Samaritan Center, donate clothing, and send financial contributions to support our work. You can get together with people where you work or where you worship and collect diapers or personal care items once or twice per year. You can organize a garage sale or spaghetti dinner or concert to raise funds for our programs. We will help you as best we can, and together, we can all continue the good work of CCTT!

Christine Sanchirico

* Moskowitz, Clara, 5 Things That Will Make You Happier, http://news.yahoo.com/s/livescience/20100222/sc_livescience/5thingsthatwillmakeyouhappier.



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Center for Transformative
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Cornell Hillel
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of St. Catherine of Siena
Peace Witness Committee
of the Ithaca Friends
Meeting (Quakers)
Temple Beth-El
Tompkins County
Public Library (In-kind)
Voices For Peace

Our objective is to recognize every supporter. If we've inadvertently left your name off the list of donors, please notify CCTT so that we can recognize you in a future newsletter. We greatly appreciate you and your support.

Warm Feet, Warm Hearts: Give socks.

That's Jacksonville Church's mission for collecting socks during Advent! This mission becomes part of their Christmas Tree decorations, their Christmas story and their children's time.

The collected socks are donated to Catholic Charities' Samaritan Center for the clothing closet. Everyone needs socks!!! And there's never enough.

Jacksonville Church donated 1092 (*much appreciated*) pairs of socks & 22 pairs of children's gloves.

Thank you! Thank you!



meet the staff

Sarah Goonan

Sarah joined the staff of Catholic Charities at the beginning of November as an HPRP Case Worker (Housing Program).

Before coming to CCTT, Sarah worked for Employment Connection in Cortland for three and a half years, helping adults with disabilities obtain and maintain community employment. Prior to that, she was the Academic Coordinator for Fresh Start in Baltimore, MD, helping young men on probation study for and take their GED exams. Sarah holds a BA in Sociology from The Johns Hopkins University and has lived in Ithaca for four years.

Sarah is originally from Massachusetts and is the oldest of her five siblings. She enjoys reading, doing puzzles and misses the ocean.

Laurie Konwinski

Laurie Konwinski joined CCTT staff as Coordinator of Justice and Peace Ministry in October 2009. Since graduating from the University of Notre Dame, her career has been focused on social justice advocacy and economic development.

She moved to Ithaca after living in Haiti from 1995 to 2000 as co-director of Beyond Borders, an NGO that supports grassroots literacy programs and consciousness-raising. She served for 10 summers as an interpreter for Haitian farmworkers in a public health clinic in Central New York. Her experience in the migrant camp

has led to her involvement in the statewide farmworker rights campaign. She is an active member of the Tompkins County Workers Center and a promoter of the Fair Trade movement and human rights promotion. Cornell Catholic Community is her parish home.

Jalisa Lovett

Jalisa joined the Catholic Charities staff at the end of January as receptionist. Born and raised in Ithaca, NY, Jalisa began her work in the human services field in 2004, when she began working at Tompkins Community Action.

By 2008, she relocated to South Orange, NJ where she pursued her education in print journalism at Seton Hall University. In May 2009, Jalisa ventured back to Ithaca to continue her education and to pursue work opportunities in the human services field. Writing, photography and cooking are just some of Jalisa's hobbies. She describes her employment as a "gifted experience."

the benefits of sharing the warmth

*The Board & Staff of Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga would like to once again thank our dedicated co-sponsors of Share the Warmth for another successful and beneficial year. **Share the Warmth of 2009 was a HUGE success!***

From Jan Hesbon, Ithaca Rotary, Share the Warmth Coordinator:

A conservative estimate of 3 tons of clothing were collected at 14 locations around Ithaca where the now familiar Rotary red boxes were placed for the 17th Annual Share the Warmth program.

Nearly 50 Rotary volunteers and family members collected and sorted, and Finger Lakes ReUse loaned their truck and drivers to shuttle clothing between the red boxes to the sort center and finally to Catholic Charities. Many volunteers were thanked by shoppers for continuing this program, and many brought clothing even after the red boxes were removed from the store locations.

Immediately after the first sort, a woman from Kendall called saying her hand-made sweater had accidentally dropped into the red box. After searching through all the bags, the sweater was not found. Three weeks later, on the very last night of sorting, the sweater was found with an identifying label of the hand-knitter, and the woman and her sweater were reunited.

Speaking on behalf of Rotarians and other volunteers, Share the Warmth brought a warm fuzzy feeling to all of

us, knowing that this effort provides some benefit to those in need...a Dorothy Day moment.

Share the Warmth is an annual event sponsored by Ithaca Rotary, Cornell, Ithaca College, and Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga.

The following outlines the number of items that were distributed during Share the Warmth at Catholic Charities:

970 people (567 families) came for Share the Warmth seeking warm clothes for a total of 1,621 family members.

560 adults and 495 children received a coat for a total of 1,055 coats.

603 blankets

1100 hats

985 pairs of gloves and mittens

656 sweaters

764 scarves

285 pairs of boots

136 snowpants

family empowerment director is honored

Tommy Miller, Director, Family Empowerment Services at Catholic Charities, was awarded the Ruth Pettengill Award for Distinguished Community Service on Feb. 19, 2010 at the Human Services Coalition's Annual Meeting.

Tommy was nominated by the Staff of Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga; Nancy Potter and Anna Steinkraus, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County; Mary Tse, Franziska Racker Centers; Mary Anne Banks, Patricia Carey, and numerous other staff at Tompkins County Dept. of Social Services.

Tommy has worked at Catholic Charities since 2002, but has worked in the human services field and juvenile justice system for over 30 years. As Director of the Family Empowerment Services Program, he directs both the Parent Partnership Program and Community Connections.

Tommy is dedicated to serving families, making himself available at all times of day and night, following up on their concerns, and advocating for their goals in a respectful & collaborative manner, and earns the respect of all participants.



Tommy is also a Facilitator for Franziska Racker Center & Facilitator / Co-Parenting Educator for Tompkins County Cooperative Extension.

The Ruth Pettengill Award recognizes individuals who, through example, inspire others to assist in creating a caring and equitable society. This award was established to honor an extraordinary woman who devoted her life to the enhancement of human services. Ruth Pettengill was known for her innovative ideas, thoughtfulness, friendship and commitment.

Since 1985 when the award was first given, this award has honored many truly unique individuals for their outstanding contributions to the local community as human service professionals.



Everyone Counts in Tompkins County!

2010 Census

Every 10 years through the U.S. Census, the United States counts everyone living in the United States, as directed by the Constitution. 2010 is a Census year, and you'll be mailed a Census questionnaire this spring sometime between mid-March and mid-April. By taking just 10 minutes to complete a simple, secure 10-question form, you provide the population information that affects federal and state dollars to support our community services, as well as our area's government represen-



tation. The Census counts you where you are living as of April 1. Be sure to be counted. Watch for your Census form. Fill it out. Send it back. For more information, visit www.tompkins-co.org (Click on "2010 Census.")

Help that Works ... Hope that Lasts.

Yes, I want to support the work of Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga.

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