



CONNECTIONS

SECOND QUARTER NEWSLETTER

Catholic Social Services of Baldwin County

SUMMER 2013

"Providing Help. Creating Hope."

Staff Members

Sherry Ball
Thrift Shop Clerk

Phyllis Beam
Office Manager

Lynn Bingert
Receptionist

Carol Chandler
Thrift Shop Clerk

Linda Farrell
Thrift Shop Clerk

John Finch, LPC
Therapist

Jeannie Fleek, LPC
Therapist

Annette Hicks
Case Manager

Stella Knight
Immigration Specialist

Colleen McNorton
Director

Peggy Peterson
Volunteer Coordinator

Connie Plemmons
Disabled Homeless
Project Coordinator

Donyale Rawson
Case Manager

Robin Suggs
Disabled Homeless
Project Assistant

Rose-Ann Tuck
Thrift Shop Clerk



The typical summer heat and intermittent rain showers are upon us, but they aren't hitting as hard as one little bit of lightning did on June 9. It visited at night, slipping through the Thrift Shop by way of the telephone land line. It took out all the telephones, most of the computers and some other electronics in our little operation here on Highway 59. It was a rude awakening the next morning to arrive to find that nothing worked. We have now recovered, but our insurance company took a major financial hit for us. Office manager Phyllis Beam helped us wade through the salvage period and negotiated the waterways with the insurance company.

Otherwise, business here has been brisk and steady since last we visited. Immigration Specialist Stella Knight waits for news from Washington, D.C., about changes in the immigration laws. Many important people are working on these alterations in our nation's capital. Stella suspects this may be the year the federal government creates a path for citizenship for illegal immigrants. It could double her case load, but she is prepared for that.

Case managers Annette Hicks and Donyale Rawson have experimented with a change in their routine. During the summer months, they are taking walk-in clients rather than taking appointments for case management. The trial period is only half over, but so far, the test has been a success. And the energetic duo continue their bi-monthly trek to Atmore where they bring some peace of mind to those in need. That, too, has proven to be a great achievement.



Two women help unload food from Annette's car in Atmore at Christian Services Ministry.

Volunteer coordinator Peggy Peterson continues to add volunteers to the register, but says there's always room for more. If you've been contemplating a change of scenery, give Peggy a call and she'll put you to work over here. She has plenty of places where you can help out. Also, she is preparing for Project REACH (Reaching Educational Achievement for Children) to get into full swing for the new school year.

Connie Plemmons and Robin Suggs celebrated as the 11th year of the Disabled Homeless Program concluded and they were approved for a 12th year of the program. In their second grant program, five of the eight spots are filled, with the goal being to fill all eight by the end of the grant year.

Since Under His Wings opened in June in Robertsedale, counselor Jeannie Fleek has been seeing some of the clients and their parents. The Christian group home is a temporary refuge for troubled teenage girls.

The four friendly faces of the Thrift Shop - Sherry Ball, Carol Chandler, Linda Farrell and Rose-Ann Tuck - are waiting for you to pay a visit to their home away from home where there is something for everyone at a discount price.

And please read inside about staff newcomer John Finch, a Licensed Professional Counselor, who works part time with us.

Remember, you'll always find a happy welcome at the front desk from receptionist Lynn Bingert, so please stop by and see us. We welcome all who grace our doorway.

Colleen

Catholic Social Services, Archdiocese of Mobile Mission Statement

Catholic Social Services, in the Archdiocese of Mobile, is an organized expression of the Church's concern for social justice and well-being. As such, all activity is to mirror the loving care and concern of Christ for those in need. We evidence this first as professional providers of both direct and indirect services. At the same time, we are called upon to act as effective advocates, leaders, prophets and consciousness-raisers.

Meet the New Guy



John Finch, the newest employee at CSS Baldwin, has been a Licensed Professional Counselor his entire career, but nothing else would have suited this young man who came from a strong Christian background.

The Mobile native earned both his bachelor's degree in psychology and his master's degree in marriage and family counseling from the University of Mobile. He knew during his years there that his calling was in individual and family counseling.

He said his mother, a registered nurse, was insistent upon her children not just attending church, but also investing in it. When John got to be 18, his mother told him, "It's all up to you," meaning, if you want the church in your life, make it happen for yourself. John took those words to heart for his life's work.

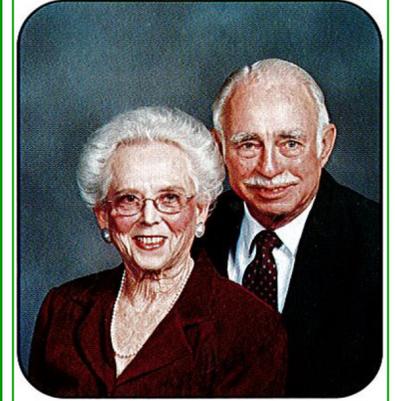
As a UM student, John joined a special ministries team that held performances using Christian drama and music. He said he met a lot of people through this medium that influenced him. He realized this was the way to connect with people.

John interned at CSS in Mobile and, with the exception of five years at the Alabama School of Math and Science, he has remained a loyal CSS employee.

John's calm voice and mannerisms lend to the refined way he deals with his clients. His reputation as a gentleman is well known and people return to his care each time they are in need. "There's an art to confronting people in love," John says of his profession.

His off-time is spent playing disc golf and in "knowing what you enjoy and doing so with childlike glee," he says. But his love of science fiction, including comic books, computer games and super heroes, keeps him grounded to the rest of the world. He says he's somewhat of a geek. He knows how to turn his own stress into play.

John works only one day a week in the Baldwin office, but both his clients and his co-workers are happy he's on-board.



NETH, Floyd & Janice

+ We mourn the loss of Janice Neth, a long time supporter of Catholic Social Services of Baldwin County and a former Board Member, who died July 6. She will be dearly missed by family, friends and the community she served in Baldwin County as part of her ministry at Catholic Social Services.

May she rest in the peace of Christ. +



FROM THE COUNSELOR

Group home Under His Wings is now open for business in Robertsdale. The residence will be home to girls ages 13 through 19 who are having emotional and behavioral issues. The mission and vision of Under His Wings is to provide a six-month residential, Christian care ministry and regionally-accredited education program for girls in crisis. Jeannie Fleek will be providing counseling for the girls. For an application, call 251-947-HOPE or send an email message to

Hope.UnderHisWings@gmail.com.

FROM OUR CASE MANAGERS

There was an increase last quarter in the number of people seeking assistance from CSS for help with utilities, especially those on a fixed income. We also had quite a number of people coming in who had picked up a seasonal job but who still needed food. The extra income from a summer job keeps them from qualifying for the Food Stamp Program.

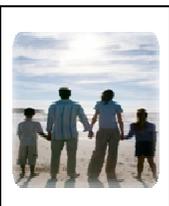
In Atmore, we are seeing a rise in the number of clients who are asking for utility and rent assistance. Also, the Tri County Medical Clinic in Atmore has agreed to accept our vouchers for low income individuals with no medical insurance. CSS can provide up to two vouchers for each individual who qualifies, allowing the client one doctor's appointment plus a follow-up visit. This gives the individual time to prepare for future appointments. We also have this relationship with Franklin Clinic in Loxley and Foley.

Our summer walk-in schedule has been a huge success. It has cut down on the no-shows and has enabled us to schedule follow-up visits. We can reach more people in need. Next quarter has us gearing up for Project REACH, the school supply program.



Volunteer George Pulliam, left, assists Tony McConnell, the driver from Bay Area Food Bank, as food is unloaded into the pantry.

BRIDGES OF BALDWIN



BRIDGES of Baldwin is currently establishing ecumenical partnerships for the program advisory board. Contact has been made with several community churches, including Church on the Eastern Shore, Fairhope United Methodist, St. Lawrence Catholic Church, Fairhope First Baptist, Trinity Presbyterian and Summerdale United Methodist, with more on the horizon. Representatives at EMI in Fairhope, Church on the Eastern Shore and Summerdale United Methodist Church have agreed to serve as members. Work continues in the building of the advisory board for the BRIDGES of Baldwin initiative. If any religious entity has an interest in serving on the board, please call Robin at 251-947-2293.

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE GOLD STANDARD AT CSS

During the second quarter of 2013, 61 volunteers delivered 1,744 hours to our ministry.

- In the Thrift Shop, 17 volunteers provided 1,416.75 hours.
- In the Food Pantry, nine volunteers gave 113.25 hours.
- In the Bread Pantry, eight volunteers served 78 hours.
- Two Emergency Food Assistance volunteers contributed 46 hours.
- Two Immigration Program volunteers furnished 46.5 hours.
- Helping with mail-outs was one volunteer who worked 15.75 hours.
- Three hours were logged in by one volunteer for Project REACH.
- Five volunteers offered their services in-house recording 24.75 hours.

Catholic Social Services employees, donors and board members have a great respect for the unrelenting efforts of these faithful volunteers. We thank them sincerely and we thank God for blessing us with them.



Volunteer Cathy Nicholls pauses a moment from stuffing envelopes to mail out for Project REACH.

DISABLED HOMELESS PROJECT



We get calls every day from folks that are in the crisis of homelessness. Most of the calls are from people that do not qualify for assistance through our HUD supportive housing grants. Their stories are heartbreaking. Sometimes all we can do is refer them to another agency. It's called the "hand-off," a term for what happens when someone calls an agency and is handed off to another agency, then another and another, due to the lack of information about the services and eligibility requirements between agencies in Mobile and Baldwin counties. We are now working with agencies across both counties on a centralized intake process for homeless assistance. Hopefully, this process will minimize the hand-off.

We currently have 14 participants and are accepting applications for the three openings in the Baldwin Community Housing grant. This grant is restricted to folks who are disabled and have been homeless for at least a year or who have four documented episodes of homelessness in the past three years. HUD refers to them as "chronically homeless."

Of the persons we are serving in the Disabled Homeless Project:

- ◆ One of our single moms was awarded disability and will receive back pay, which will allow her to purchase a car.
- ◆ Two of our clients have qualified for Section 8 housing and are still on the waiting list for housing that is wheelchair accessible.
- ◆ We have purchased bicycles for three of our clients so they can get around town without having to pay for public transportation.

We completed another year of our original homeless grant and started our 12th renewal on May 1, 2013. We continue to serve with your prayers and support.

IMMIGRATION

There are many stories in this country about those who gain their United States citizenship. We read often about someone overcoming tremendous odds to come to the U.S. In some cases, it takes an individual many years to become a naturalized citizen of the United States.

Ismael Rodriguez's journey has taken over 25 years.

He came to the United States from Mexico in 1978. During that time, immigrants were able to travel back and forth during various crop seasons. It was during President Reagan's years that Mr. Rodriguez had the opportunity to apply for legal residency through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. He has been a permanent legal resident since 1988.

Now after 25 years, he has applied for permanent citizenship.

On his first try, Ismael passed his citizenship exam, but failed to answer some personal questions correctly. CSS Immigration Specialist Stella Knight is helping to get the misstatements that Ismael made to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services clarified through the Baldwin County Voter Registrar's Office.

Mr. Rodriguez has lived in Baldwin County for 18 years and has worked in the construction business for over 10 years.

He currently lives with his wife and four of his 14 children in a modest home in Orange Beach.

Those pursuing U.S. citizenship come from all over the world, each with a unique story. One might want to pursue a dream or just keep their family together.

Whatever the case may be, they all show great determination and personal effort pursuing the long path to citizenship. Some have lived in the United States just a few years, while others have lived here for decades. If we listen to their stories, we learn that each individual gives some kind of contribution to their community.

Mr. Rodriguez is looking forward to attending his citizenship ceremony after working hard toward achieving this, his lifelong dream. He is fully prepared to give his oath to a country that he now calls home.



Ismael Rodriguez poses for a photo while waiting in the Baldwin County Voter Registrar's Office July 12, 2013. Voter Registrar Board Member Albert Lipscomb assisted Ismael that day in verifying that Ismael's name was not on the official voter log in Baldwin County. Ismael misunderstood a question he was asked in Atlanta on the citizenship test about whether or not he had ever voted. Ismael had voted in a Baldwin EMA poll, but not in an official Baldwin



OZANAM CHARITABLE PHARMACY

April: 9 clients, 42 scripts: \$1,598.90.

May: 10 clients, 41 scripts: \$1,401.68.

June: 9 clients, 41 scripts: \$1,127.87

Quarter total for prescriptions: \$4,128.45

April: One 4-prong cane, \$29; two shower chairs, \$150; one ankle contracture boot, \$69.

May: Two wheelchairs, \$218; three shower chairs, \$225; one cane, \$21.

June: Two shower chairs, \$150; one wheelchair, \$109; two walkers, \$100.

Quarter total for medical supplies: \$1,071.

THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop earned **\$31,527.33**

during the second quarter of 2013.

We helped 53 clients shop for free at a value of **\$1,401.20**.

Other funds included:

Share: **\$965.23** for 8 clients;

Riviera: **\$1,636.84** for 11 clients;

Neighbor To Neighbor: **\$4,711.08** for 30 clients.



One Young Boy Can Make a Big Difference

Jaden Maye, the son of Diane and David Maye of Loxley, may look like a typical 8-year-old who's about to enter 3rd grade, but he's so much more than that.

This A/B Honor Roll Loxley Elementary School student went above and beyond the proverbial call of duty this summer when he took on a project to help the poor.

Jaden chose a sunny day in July to ask his mother if he could have a yard sale so he could "raise lots of money for the poor." She turned him down for logistics reasons.

This little dynamo then decided instead that he would go through his neighborhood and conduct a food drive. So he went door to door asking his neighbors to fill his box with food. And with the help of his mother, he brought the food he collected to Catholic Social Services to give to the poor.

Jaden said he didn't know any poor people, but he said he remembered how at Christmas time members of his church, Family Harvest Central Church in Robertsdale, collected shoeboxes which had items inside that were like gifts and those shoeboxes were given to people that might not have anything else for Christmas.

The memory of that Christmas outreach has stayed with this young boy, because he wanted to do something of equal importance for the poor. He said his father tells him it's essential not to waste food. These two concepts resulted in an impromptu food drive on a summer morning.

Jaden's heart is as big as his smile, and the people served at CSS in Baldwin County are the big winners. We hope it's not the last time we see this young man.

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Archdiocese of Mobile



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A United Way
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