

CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICE INC.

A Newsletter To Our Friends



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Rural Community Organizing Project Begins

Goal to expand programs and services in Lubbock Diocese

Catholic Family Service was recently awarded a grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development to begin a Rural Community Organizing Project. The need for this Project was a direct outgrowth of the strategic planning process that CFS has been involved with for the past two years. Part of the planning resulted in a goal to expand programs and services to more rural areas of the Diocese of Lubbock. One result of this goal has already been implemented: in September of 2003, CFS hired a part time adult and family counselor to work in Plainview, serving more of the northern counties of the Diocese. But those involved in implementing the strategic plan realized that in addition to this position, CFS needed to hire someone who would help to identify and train leaders from some of the rural communities, and then help them to organize around issues that they feel are important.

Once the community organizer is hired for this Project, they will have a big task ahead of them, including building up a Project Board, recruiting and training local leaders, recruiting churches and other institutions to become members of the newly-established organization, and conducting fundraising to strengthen the rural organizing project. The community organizer will conduct a pilot project the first year in two targeted counties of the Diocese, and will expand the Project in subsequent years.

A needs assessment that was conducted in Crosby County during 2003 by CFS staff helped to surface some of the social problems that are a reality in this primarily rural county. It also helped to identify a problem common to the rural communities: that of isolation and lack of collaboration to address social problems. It is hoped that through this new Project

of CFS, the rural areas of the Diocese of Lubbock will be assisted in building bridges of communication through community organizing efforts, and be able to work together more effectively to address the most pressing social issues they face. As this new Project moves forward, we will keep you informed of its progress in future newsletters.

Legalization Program Addresses Special Needs of Immigrants

Catholic Family Service's Legalization Program has been in continuous operation since 1986, the year when a national amnesty law was passed by Congress, and thousands of immigrants began applying for residency. Since that time, the Legalization Program has provided service to thousands of families and individuals, and continues today to serve each family's unique needs as CFS paralegals work with their case. A recent situation is typical of the special care that Legalization clients receive from the CFS staff.

A family that lived in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas comes every summer to work in the cotton fields of West Texas, and three years ago, came to our office to renew what they thought was a legal work

(See Legalization Page 2)



Legalization Staff (l to r): Rosario Jimenez, Juanita deLeon and Estefana Rendon



**Catholic Family
Service, Inc.
Diocese of
Lubbock**

102 Ave J
Lubbock, Texas 79401
806-765-8475
806-765-8630 (fax)
www.cfslubbock.org

Directory of Programs and Services

Central Administration:

CFS Primary Office Site
Lubbock 765-8475

Administrative Services, Finance, Emergency Assistance, Immigra- tion, Adult Counseling, Self Sufficiency Program

At-Risk Youth Services

Lubbock 806-765-8475
..... 1-800-530-4704
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Haskell 940-864-5188
Levelland 894-4233
Quanah 940-663-2876
Vernon 940-553-3334

Resale Center\Thrift Store

Lubbock 763-8315

Elderly Outreach Services

Lubbock 765-2611

Program Directors

Jeff Malpiede

Executive Director -

Jeff@cfslubbock.org

Cynthia Quintanilla

Administrative Assistant

Dick McCann

At-Risk Youth Program Director

Tony Garcia

Family Life Service Coordinator

Virginia Alamanza

Emergency Assistance Coordinator

Ernest Esparza

Legalization Outreach Coordinator

Sabrina Robbins

Self-Sufficiency Program Coordinator

Cheryl Franke

Resale Center Director

Rosario Jimenez

Immigration Coordinator

At Risk Youth Program Having Busy Year

At the mid-point of 2004, the At Risk Youth Program is moving at a brisk pace with a number of new developments. A new requirement in the State of Texas At Risk Youth (STAR) program is to provide Universal Child Abuse Prevention Services in the 30 counties served by the grant. So far, the youth counseling staff has been exceeding the required numbers of contacts, and has successfully given out prevention information at any number of events and locations.

The staff is hopeful that their additional efforts this year are raising the awareness of this widespread social problem, and that better information will ultimately lead to a reduction of child abuse in our area.

CFS youth counseling staff has also seen an increase in the number of youth and families served so far in 2004.

Even with significant State budget cuts, the counseling staff has been most resourceful in their outreach efforts, and have been able to help families work toward solving communication and other problems, and for the youth to work toward

positive change in their lives.

The CFS Youth Activity Center has hosted two "Teen Summit" gatherings, which involved a local judge who works with delinquent youth, CFS youth counselors, and young people, who shared some of their concerns with the adults present. CFS plans to host more of these gatherings, as they provide a healthy forum for youth to express their needs and concerns. The Youth Activity Center has also hosted various activities for some local church youth groups, as well as the "Youth Power" program mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

Finally, CFS has applied for a fifth, three year renewal of its Runaway and Homeless Youth program, funded through the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Staff is very committed to this program which the agency has run for the past twelve years, and is confident that this needed service will continue in the 21 counties of the South Plains covered by the program.

Legalization Program *(Continued from Page 1)*

permit. The man petitioning was a legal permanent resident who was applying for his wife and five children. He stated that an attorney helped him fill out the original petition form, and showed the CFS paralegal an approval notice and a form that was supposed to be a permit to remain lawfully in the United States until their process was completed. The attorney was charging the family \$20 per month per person until they obtained their green cards, and informed them that if they stopped paying him, US Immigration would close their case and they could be deported.

In reviewing this case, the CFS paralegal determined that the so-called permit was fraudulent, and explained to the family what needed to be done to correctly apply for work permits. CFS staff worked closely with this family, who decided to move permanently to West Texas, and obtained temporary permits for them as they approached the date for their final adjustment of status with US Immigration. They were recently approved for legal permanent resident status, and the family no longer has to live with the uncertainty of being

deported. They were most grateful to CFS staff for this assistance, and the paralegal working with their case was commended by US Immigration staff on successfully submitting a case that could have ended very badly for the family.

This case is typical of so many that are handled by CFS Legalization staff. Immigrant families are particularly vulnerable to unscrupulous people willing to take advantage of their status, and are frequently charged exorbitant fees for services that do not help them or even may jeopardize their status. The staff at the CFS office in Lubbock, as well as the Legalization Outreach Coordinator, constantly speak with individuals who are paying fees for services that are not helping their case. Our staff intervenes in many of these cases, and helps to correctly file the needed forms that will actually move their case forward. This service is invaluable to the many immigrants in this part of the state who need professional assistance to work with US Immigration to keep their families united and working as residents of our country.

CFS Sponsors Summer “Youth Power” Program

Helping young people to build life skills that will enable them to develop as healthy, well-rounded individuals

At the beginning of June, Catholic Family Service started a new summer program for young people called “Youth Power.” The program serves youth ages 9-17, and operates during weekdays at CFS’s Youth Activity Center at 123 North Ave. N, near the main CFS office. The program is under the direction of Brad Carter, who has coordinated the Community Youth Development project for CFS over the past year.

The program operates from 10 am till 3 pm each day, and a hot lunch is served to the youth participants. The primary focus of “Youth Power” is helping young people to build life skills that will enable them to develop as healthy, well-rounded individuals. Group activities, focused discussion sessions, interactive games, and viewing and discussing of videos are all part of this



summer program. Some of the topics explored through discussions and activities are: peer conflict and fighting, drug and alcohol abuse, and becoming community leaders. The youth are given daily tasks to keep the Youth Activity Center clean and

useable for the next day’s activities, and are encouraged to have a sense of ownership for their Center and the program as well.

Once the summer “Youth Power” program concludes shortly before the beginning of the school term, an after school program is being planned as a continuation of “Youth Power,” which will be staffed by CFS At Risk Youth counselors, as well as mentors who will be trained for the program. CFS staff hopes to continue to expand this program during the coming school year, as the need for quality after school programs is great, and such a program fits very well with the services already being provided through the At Risk Youth program. For more information on the “Youth Power” program, please contact Brad Carter or Dick McCann at the CFS office.

Emergency Assistance — *Bringing Help and Hope*

The Emergency Assistance staff at CFS daily hears stories of people in desperate need, oftentimes asking for help for the first time because of a personal crisis due to the loss of a job or sudden illness. A recent example was that of a woman who came in for help with prescriptions, and was quite embarrassed at needing to ask for help. She had never been in such a situation of needing to ask for assistance, having been covered by health insurance at her job. Because of illness, she had quit her job about six months before, and was desperate for help with her medications. The CFS caseworker quietly listened to her story, and she became much calmer, feeling accepted and understood in her predicament. She was able to be helped with medication, and also applied for utility assistance. She expressed her gratitude for



Emergency Assistance Staff (l to r): Lupe Mendez, Virginia Alamanza and Gloria Riojas.

the help and listening ear she received.

Although we cannot help everyone who comes to us in crisis with all that they need, our staff strives to be attentive to the whole person, and to do whatever we can to enhance their dignity and self esteem.

Self Sufficiency Program Update

The Self Sufficiency Program at Catholic Family Service continues to graduate low-income college students who are also parents. The program is running well, with ten graduates so far in 2004, and several more slated to graduate before the end of the year.

CFS also administers a Comprehensive Energy Assistance (CEAP) grant, working with the City of Lubbock. This program assists low-income persons to gradually assume responsibility for more of their utility bills, providing case management that helps them move toward energy self sufficiency. As a part of this program, the participants are required to take part in a workshop which helps them with managing household expenses, keeping utility bills as low as possible, and other life skills training. Enrollment is ongoing in this grant program.

(See Self Sufficiency Page 4)

Night To Remember XIII - Gala Evening a Great Success

Catholic Family Service held its annual fundraiser on Sunday, June 6, at the Catholic Renewal Center in Lubbock, with 300 supporters in attendance. This event marked the thirteenth year of A Night to Remember as the major fundraiser for CFS, and the gala evening was successful on all counts.

The evening featured a variety of food and refreshments, musical entertainment, and both a live and silent auction, which have grown over the years to include a large number of auction items. A Night to Remember also provides an opportunity for the many supporters of CFS to take time to visit and reflect on the growth of the agency during its 20 years of existence. The atmosphere at this 2004 fundraiser was

quite spirited and lively, and those in attendance enjoyed the summer garden theme in which the Renewal Center was decorated.

The Board, Staff and volunteers of Catholic Family Service are most grateful for the tremendous generosity of those who supported A Night to Remember XIII. The proceeds from this event help support all of the programs and services of CFS, and without the success of this annual fundraiser, CFS would be much more limited on how many people are helped each year through its services. Those who helped in any way with this event, from sponsors, to ticket buyers, to auction donors and others, all share in the Mission of CFS to help "the least among us."

Self Sufficiency

(Continued from Page 3)

For additional information on the CEAP program, please contact Claudia Bustos or Sabrina Robbins at the CFS office.

The GED Assistance Fund is operating on anonymous donations and Women's Empowerment funds. CFS has applied for additional grant money to keep this program operating, and awaits positive responses. With GED's (General Education Degree) now costing \$100 in Texas, many young people have trouble paying the full cost of the test. CFS is able to help eligible persons with up to \$50 toward their GED.



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