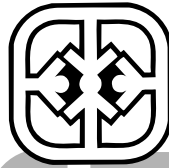


CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICE INC.

A Newsletter To Our Friends



August 2005 • Volume 2005 • No. 2

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Preparing the good soil

On a recent summer Sunday at Mass, I listened attentively to a homily on the parable of the farmer sowing his seed. I was moved by what I heard, as I realized once again that I need to cultivate my own good soil if I am going to live out the gospel mandate to serve “the least among us.” Without depth and moisture and sunlight, my soil will not be a very hospitable environment for the Word of God to take root, and I will likely not be very effective in sowing the Good News among the people we help through Catholic Family Service.



Jeff Malpiede

The season of summer with its green, growing fields reminds me that the work of Catholic Family Service never stops growing, and that the ways we strive to empower people should always be based on Gospel values of dignity and compassion for others. With the needs of the people we serve sometimes seeming so overwhelming, and our resources so limited, it is easy enough in our service to lose sight of our mission. It can become just a job, and we can begin to see people as problems to be dealt with rather than the image and likeness of God. I find the gospel of Matthew, from which is taken the parables on the growth of the Kingdom, very reassuring, because it reminds me that the harvest is not really dependent on my limited abilities.

Rather, I need only attend to the quality of my soil, and how receptive I am to the Divine Sower planting the word of truth in me. It is truly this Sower who gently prods us to be sowers of good deeds and the works of mercy.

As we at CFS continue striving to expand our mission of service to those most in need, we are called to be creative and resourceful as we use our limited abilities to empower people to improve their lives. As Board, staff and volunteers who try to witness the compassion of Christ to others, we need to always be attentive to the unmet needs of those around us. But our first obligation is to cultivate the soil of our own spiritual life, and to continue growing in our relationship with Christ. If we are open and receptive to the seed of God’s Word, the good deeds we sow among those we serve will be nurtured by God, and lives will be changed.

May these summer months remind us to be grateful for the growth of God’s Word in our lives, and may we draw on the depths of our own spirituality in order that we might more effectively and compassionately serve “the least among us.”

Sincerely,

Jeff Malpiede
Executive Director

The traits of a healthy family

Too often we concentrate on what is wrong with the family or what is happening that is deteriorating today’s family. It is like the weather forecaster stating “the day will be partly cloudy.” Here we will take a different perspective and discuss what makes up something marriage and family therapists call a functional or happy family. This article will concentrate on the traits of a healthy family.

Several years ago Delores Curran, a social worker and author, studied the question, “*What makes families in the United States become healthier than others?*” She writes about the following traits which are still as valid today as when they were over twenty years ago when she wrote her book. She writes that a family who is functioning well:

- communicates and listens
- affirms and supports one another
- teaches respect for others
- develops a sense of trust
- has a sense of play and humor
- exhibits a sense of shared responsibility
- teaches a sense of right and wrong
- has a shared religious core
- values service to others

These values are a part of all of the
(See **Healthy Family**, Page 3)



Catholic Family Service, Inc. Diocese of Lubbock

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Directory of Programs and Services

Central Administration: CFS Primary Office Site Lubbock 765-8475

Administrative Services, Finance, Emergency Assistance, Immigration, Adult Counseling, Self Sufficiency Program

At-Risk Youth Services Lubbock 806-765-8475 1-800-530-4704 Plainview 296-7044 Crosbyton 675-0474 Dimmitt 647-0323 Haskell 940-864-5188 Quanah 940-663-2876 Vernon 940-553-3334

Resale Center\Thrift Store Lubbock 763-8315

Elderly Outreach Services Lubbock 765-2611

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Virginia Alamanza Emergency Assistance Coordinator

Vickie Hernandez Rural Community Organizer

Sabrina Robbins Self-Sufficiency Program Coordinator

Cheryl Franke Resale Center Director

Rosario Jimenez Immigration Coordinator

It's a busy summer for the at risk youth program



The summer months at CFS's Youth At Risk Program are anything but slow. The youth counselors receive many referrals from Juvenile Probation officers and others during the long summer days. Unfortunately, with more time on their hands and oftentimes not enough positive activity to occupy them, kids can get into trouble, and CFS staff are often there to help guide the youth toward more positive behaviors. CFS has been able to offer, for the second summer in a row, a daily program for area youth at its Youth Activity Center near the main CFS office in Lubbock. Youth counselors work alongside our Youth Activity Coordinator to provide a fun environment for the youth who participate five days a week. A computer lab made possible through a foundation grant affords the youth educational and recreational time. Ping pong, a large variety of games for youth of various ages, a pool table and exercise equipment round out the furnishings of the Center. The summer program has averaged 20 kids a day. The youth participants are also fed two snacks a day.

Beginning with the new school year, CFS will collaborate with the Guadalupe-Parkway Neigh-

borhood Centers, another United Way partner agency, to provide an after school program five days a week at our Youth Activity Center. Staff and resources will be shared between the two agencies to provide a healthy, learning atmosphere for the youth who will come to the program from the local neighborhood and other neighborhoods in Lubbock. We are very pleased that this collaboration is taking place, and that area kids will have a center they can call their own.

A couple of other developments in the Youth At Risk Program are worthy of noting:

- CFS has applied for funding for a Federal Runaway and Homeless Youth grant, which, if awarded, will be for three years and cover 16 counties of West Texas.
• Due to increases in funding available in the new Texas state budget, CFS will receive a substantial increase in its funding for the Youth At Risk Program, which will allow us to hire additional youth counselors. The increase in funding is at least in part due to a very concerted effort by many organizations involved in youth services to ask lawmakers to restore funding to previous levels.

Self Sufficiency Program

Creating hope of a better future

As the year 2005 progresses, the Self Sufficiency Program is going very well. Fourteen students have graduated this year. Most of these graduates are nursing students and education majors. All of them have secured good jobs that pay a living wage.

There are currently 16 students on target to graduate in December—against mostly nursing students and education majors. This year there will be a large increase in the number of graduates over 2004.

Forty students are enrolled in the program, but that number will increase significantly at the beginning of the fall semester. Sabrina Robbins, the Self Sufficiency Coordinator, anticipates enrolling 25-30 additional students for the fall semester. The additional funds that were awarded to CFS for this program in the spring of 2005 will help reduce the considerable waiting list for this program.

A couple of examples demonstrate the difference this program is making in the lives of parents who want to provide for their children, and realize that education is

the key:

One single mom called in to get help with books and mileage reimbursement. She has to drive to South Plains College at Levelland and it has been hard for her to pay for gasoline.

She graduates in August of this year. We are helping her with books and mileage reimbursement, which has been a great help to her. Consequently, she has more time to focus on her studies and prepare for her licensure exam, to be taken upon graduation.

Another single mom inquired about our services. She has 3 children and will graduate in December as an LVN. She needed assistance with rent until she finishes. She qualified for the program, was enrolled for this short period of assistance, and will be earning a sustainable wage in her field very shortly after graduation. These next few months of assistance will make the difference between providing decently for her children and remaining dependent on public and private support. This single parent, as are most of those enrolled in the

program, was very grateful for this short-term assistance from CFS.

The Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program is operating at capacity. We currently have 50 plus households being assisted with utilities. This program focuses on households working toward being totally self sufficient in paying for their utilities, and clients are required to participate in budgeting workshops as part of this service.

CFS staff continues to monitor developments with the Community Services Block Grant funding (CSBG) as a part of the Federal fiscal year 2006 budget. Hundreds of cities around the country use these funds to help with innovative and successful programs like CFS's Self Sufficiency Program. Any funding cuts would mean that many motivated young parents in our program would encounter a serious obstacle to completing their education, and would further delay the time when they can become financially self-sufficient and tax-paying members of society.

Traits of a Healthy Family (Continued from Page 1)

programs and services of CFS, including The Family Life Service Program (FLS). The Adult and Family Counseling Program is coordinated by Tony Garcia, who has 29 years of experience working with families in counseling, ministry, and case management settings. Many of the families that Tony works with face serious issues of depression, anxiety, and alcohol or drug abuse. Tony works with many clients who are striving to build some of the family values listed above, as well as others that will help them to communicate better, affirm their own worth and that of their family members, and finding family unity through forgiveness and reconciliation.

In the Elderly Outreach Program of FLS, Eva Chapa serves the needs of families who care for an older parent who lacks the resources to take care of their medical needs. Eva doesn't only help the families obtain medications, dentures, hearing aids or glasses, she also encourages them establish a balanced life of healthy interaction with each other. She presents them with the importance of sharing responsibility for a frail, elderly parent or other family member.

As mentioned in another article in this newsletter, Sabrina Robbins coordinates the Self Sufficiency Program as a part of Family Life Service. Sabrina helps people gain a

sense of independence through earning his or her GED, college degree or technical training certificate. And above the educational component of this program, Sabrina builds a sense of the value of service to the wider community as part of "giving back" for their good education.

Healthy families exhibit many traits, and the Family Life Service Program at CFS strives to help families build these traits that will serve them well. Please call CFS if you would like more information on any of the services mentioned above.

Other program news and notes

The Rural Community Organizing Project is moving forward, with a number of community meetings taking place in Lorenzo, Crosbyton, Ralls, and Post. 53 individuals have taken part in initial training sessions, with more training to take place in the fall.

The Legalization/Immigration Program continues to serve many people seeking family unity in the U.S., even though no progress on immigration reform at the Federal level has been made. One family helped by one of our paralegals have been clients for many years, and they faced a crisis because of an expired work permit for one of their sons. He had moved to Indiana, and when his permit was about to expire, sought help from people who were not trained in immigration law or process. He faced deportation, but working with CFS staff, was able to renew his work permit. He plans to continue using our services, even though it will mean traveling from Indiana to Texas.

The Legalization Outreach Program has been funded once again to conduct an Anti-Discrimination Project, which allows our Outreach Coordinator to make presentations and share information at meat packing plants and other work sites throughout West Texas. This program helps workers to know their rights, and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Emergency Assistance Program has received more requests for food during the summer months, mostly due to children being home from school. Fortunately, because of generous donations from individuals and a number of churches, the food pantry continues to be well-stocked, and we are able to meet the higher demand. And due to increased funding from grant sources in 2005, CFS has been able to assist more low-income people who are in need of emergency dental care. An elderly man who was in severe pain had nowhere else to turn, and he came to CFS to receive help so that

he could have bad teeth extracted. The staff helped him, and the dentist was able to take care of him quickly. He was very grateful for our financial assistance and his relief from severe pain.

The Resale Center is seeking donations of clothing, furniture, and household items. All donations are used to help families in need. Hundreds of households are helped each year with quality items from the store, and the proceeds from items that are sold support all of the programs of CFS. Please call the Resale Center at 763-8315 to schedule a pickup.



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