



BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

ASSOCIATED CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Nathan Pera, Chair
William S. Crawford
Eugene "Dickie" Gauthreaux
Mary Kathleen Hicks
Deacon Chuck Lightcap
Frank McFadden
Thomas Scherer
C. Thomas Whitman

CATHOLIC CHARITIES, INC.

Alan G. Crone
Marva Gumbel
Deacon Richard Griffith
Eileen C. Hivner
Craig Hofer
John Paul Koch
Karen Love
Richard Lynch
Willie Martin
Mike Mattingly
Haynes McNeill
Keith Norman
Darryl Pleasant
Ellen Rardin
Virginia Scherer
Nettie Tipton
Bambi Williams

DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS HOUSING CORPORATION

Mary Kathleen Hicks, Chair
Rev. William F. Burke
Arlenia H. Cole
Eileen C. Hivner
Craig T. Hofer
Diane Markee
Lynn Peaton Menendez
James. R. Pate, Jr.
Sharon Ruble
Ed Savage
Walter Scott
James E. Topp
Jules Wade
Gloria Wolfe

ST. PETER VILLA NURSING & REHABILITATION CENTER

Eugene Gauthreaux, Chair
Dave Archer
Chris Bieber
Adonna Caldwell
Wayne Coleman
John Calipari
Greg Costa
Deacon Bill Davis
Kenneth Dick
Bobby Fisher
Lee Gattas
Frank Gattuso
Wayne Golden
Eileen C. Hivner
Craig T. Hofer
Bill Kilgore
Angelo Lucchesi
Geri McCormack
Jim McMahan
Ernie Mrozek
Ray Pohlman
Jim Quinn
Cathy Schanzer, MD
Jim Shields
Teresa Sloyan
Mike Spano
Dell Stiner
Mike Taylor
Patty Taylor

STAFF

EILEEN C. HIVNER

Executive Director, Associated Catholic Charities

CAROLYN TISDALE

Director, Catholic Charities, Inc.

DAVID FIELD

Director, Diocese of Memphis Housing Corporation

KAE WERKHOVEN

Director, St. Peter Villa Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

Welcoming the Stranger

A WEEK AT ASSOCIATED CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Thank You. Those two words seem so simple, so inadequate, yet as we enter this Season of Thanksgiving, I can't think of a more powerful declaration and tribute to all of you for your support of the efforts of Associated Catholic Charities. I am particularly mindful of and grateful for the outpouring of support and compassion through time, talent, and treasure during the Associated Catholic Charities (ACC) Katrina Relief Effort.



During the past few months, I have been reminded once again of the dedication and compassion of the men and women who make up the staffs of Associated Catholic Charities. Their professionalism is one of the reasons our relief efforts--the clothes closet and food pantry, counseling, and St. Peter--ran so smoothly. Within their own programs--St. Peter Ministries, Refugee & Immigration Services, Homeless Services, Extended Child Care Services, St. Peter Villa Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center, and Diocese of Memphis Housing Corporation--these men and women nurture, shelter, counsel, and console people in need every day.

We came together as a Catholic Diocese and as West Tennesseans to help families-by providing shelter, clothing, information, and counseling-who survived one of the most devastating natural disasters in our nation's history. When our efforts received national attention and people from Washington, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and New York began calling to offer support, the ACC staff and I were honored and humbled.

The elderly in need of a nursing home or retirement facility; the young girl in search of answers about adoption services; the smiling faces of young children who have a special Christmas because of the Gifts for God's Children program--these are a just a few of the strangers ACC staff welcome every day.

I remember well the Tuesday morning meeting at the ACC administrative building that followed the destruction of the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Grounded in the belief that welcoming the stranger is the foundation of our ministry, the staff and I knew that we had an obligation to answer the call to serve these families who had lost everything. The Emergency Services component of St. Peter Ministries, a well established community outreach program, would allow us to distribute clothing, personal hygiene items, and food. However, one major question stilled loomed: How could we provide shelter for families displaced by this disaster?

When the survivors of Hurricane Katrina arrived in our community, the ACC staff welcomed them as strangers in need and embraced them as the newest members of the Associated Catholic Charities family. I am truly grateful for the privilege of working alongside such a special group of people.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. The ACC staff is a living example of Gandhi's words, and I proudly share with you the way in which the staff consistently loses itself in the service of others in this special insert.

Once again, thank you for all you have done, are doing, and will do in support of the Associated Catholic Charities mission of providing help and bringing hope to the strangers among us.



Wishing you the blessings of the Season of Thanksgiving.

Visit us on the web at our new address -- www.ACCinWestTN.org
Need help? Want to volunteer? The information is there.

monday

AT HOMELESS SERVICES

On a bright, crisp November morning, Jane wakes to the sound of her alarm. A new week begins. After morning chores and breakfast, she and her case manager Alice walk her daughter to the school bus. Both sense the girl's nervousness. A new week, a new school, a new life. Alice puts her arms around mother and daughter and, after a few encouraging words, Jane and Alice wave as the bus pulls away.

Alice invites Jane into her office and listens with an open heart to the story of abuse that has brought Jane and her daughter to Sophia's House for help. Carefully, she helps Jane gather the threads of hope interwoven in the sad story. This Monday morning marks the beginning of Jane's journey back to wholeness.



Over the next several weeks, a plan for a new life will emerge. Alice will arrange for Jane to attend individual and group counseling sessions, and she will meet with her on a regular basis to help her work through her problems and celebrate her successes. When Jane enrolls in a GED program, Alice will buy her flowers of congratulations and encouragement. When it's time for Jane to go to work, Alice will arrange for her to meet with Betsy, the employment counselor for Homeless Services.

There is so much Sophia's House and our other homeless services programs have to offer Jane and others like her. Alice and all the staff are there not just this Monday but every day of the week to provide help and bring hope to those in need of a home, healing, comfort and support.

tuesday

AT ST. PETER MINISTRIES

On this unseasonably warm Tuesday morning, Anne, Joe, Esther and Courtney wake up with the knowledge that the work they do will be unpredictable, challenging, at times, heartbreaking, but always gratifying.

* * *

Michelle patiently waits in the crowded lobby of Associated Catholic Charities. She's just given her MIFA food voucher to Ethel, the agency receptionist, and is waiting to pick up the food order from Fig Tree. Michelle never thought she'd find herself in this position. A couple of months ago, she had a good job and was able to provide a comfortable living for herself and her two children. Then it happened. One day she got to work early, as always, and her supervisor asked to meet with her. What followed was her worst nightmare: unexpected decreases in profits, budget cuts, layoffs. Now, Christmas is just around the corner. How will she explain this situation to her children?

Ethel tells Michelle that her food order is ready to be picked up. She notices Gifts for God's Children flyers on the desk and she approaches and asks for one. As Michelle reads about the program and qualifying criteria, she becomes hopeful. With an inner sigh of relief, Michelle smiles and thinks, "My children will now have a special Christmas. Who says wishes don't come true?"

* * *

It's lunchtime and Susan and Eric are waiting for Joe and their first counseling session. As they sit in the lobby, exchanging glances when the other one isn't looking, Susan and Eric wonder how they got here. They've been married for 10 years, have successful careers, 3 adorable children, and they *do* love each other. Why are they unhappy? When Joe appears,

providing help, bringing hope

they both think, "He seems friendly enough, maybe there's hope, maybe we can open up and get to the heart of the matter."

An hour later, Susan and Eric emerge from Joe's office with less fear and anxiety. No, they didn't solve all of their problems, but they're on the right track. There is no magic trick to make everything perfect in the blink of an eye, but they're committed to putting in the hard work to save their family. "I'll see you two same time next week," says Joe.

As Anne heads to Millington, she notices the beautiful Tuesday evening sunset. She's meeting with Agnes and Tom for a home study. For Anne, helping put families together is the most rewarding part of her job. Agnes and Tom are just starting the long, complex adoption process. Tonight's home study is the first one, and Anne explained that this visit will be the most intensive and longest-lasting--about 2 1/2 hours. Two and half hours, Agnes thinks. What if we say the wrong thing? Are we dressed properly? Did Tom remember to pick his clothes up off of the bathroom floor after his afternoon run? Should I run the vacuum one more time?



They see Anne as she pulls into their driveway, give each other a quick wink, take a couple of deep breaths, and cross their fingers.

"That wasn't so bad," Agnes and Tom say to each other as Anne drives away later that evening. I can't wait to take my son to his first baseball game, Tom thinks to himself as turns off the porch. Thank the Lord for St. Peter Ministries.

wednesday

AT ST. PETER VILLA

Lorraine wakes up in her room at St. Peter Villa on a rainy Wednesday, but she's smiling. As far as she's concerned, it's a gorgeous day, and it would be even if there were six feet of snow on the ground. Lorraine's granddaughter is bringing her first great-grandson for a visit today. She's been telling everyone on staff and the other residents about the special event for days and always with a beaming smile. Lorraine is anxious to get over to the rehabilitation center for her physical therapy appointment with rehabilitation manager Nicole. The stroke she had a few months ago affected the mobility of her left arm, but she's been working really hard to regain use of it. The hard work paid off. She's going to hold her little great-grandson.

Lorraine hasn't missed an episode of The Young and the Restless in 30 years, and she especially enjoys watching it the Villa's lobby with her friends. I can't wait to see what Victor and Nikki are up to today, she thinks.

Lorraine heads down to the beauty salon after lunch. She wants to look especially pretty for her family, and Patsy is waiting to her magic touch to create a beautiful coif. "There you go Miss Lorraine. You're ready to meet your little man now," Patsy declares.

Lorraine is sitting in the memory garden when her granddaughter and great-grandson suddenly appear, accompanied by Sister Betty and Miss

Werkhoven. Holding a camera, that sweet Mary Catherine is with them. "Are you ready to hold your great-grandson?" "It's what I've been looking forward to for months."

Ah, he feels wonderful. He's beautiful. The camera flashes. When I look around, I realize we all have tears in our eyes. This is my family.

The staff and residents celebrate and care for one another as a family. After all, St. Peter Villa is truly a home away from home.



thursday

AT DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS HOUSING CORPORATION

It's Thursday and over-cast, Sherman thinks as he looks out of the window of his sixth floor apartment at St. Peter Manor. Today marks his first full week at the Manor. Sherman and his family made the decision to sell the family home a couple of months ago after his wife's death. He initially had some reservations about living in a retirement community. Sherman retired from the VA hospital 15 years ago, but he's still very active.

Skeptical by nature, Sherman's looking around to find out if everything is as friendly and "happy go lucky" as property manager Mary made it seem when he and his son talked to her. He is determined to find out for himself.

The game room: that's my first stop, Sherman decides. They say that it's on the eighth floor. He spots it the instant he enters the room...the pool table. Pool has always been his game, and he isn't ashamed to admit he's made a little extra cash with his cue stick. Sherman would be the first to tell you that he's no Minnesota Fats, but he's pretty good.

Now, let me find that computer learning center, Sherman thinks. His grandson is a sophomore at Duke University, and Sherman wants to send him an email, but he needs to learn how to use a computer first. He is immediately impressed with the computer lab. Fellow resident Henry greets him and asks if he wants to sit next to him. Henry explains how the computer works, and by the end of the quick tutorial, Sherman sends his first email. Sherman thanks Henry, and takes his exploration to the lobby.



The elevator door opens, and Sherman runs into that nice Mike, who's the assistant manager. "How are you doing today, Sherman," Mike asks. "I hope everything is comfortable enough. Let me know if you need anything."

Sherman walks through the lobby, and stumbles upon a baby grand piano. I can't believe I missed this on the tour, he thinks. A piano player since the age of five, Sherman can't wait to tickle the ivories. He sits down and begins to play lightly. A warm smile comes to Sherman's face. Ah, I've found my new home.

St. Peter Manor, like the other seven DMHC properties throughout West Tennessee, is grounded in the ministry of creating community and family for its residents.

friday

AT EXTENDED CHILD CARE

2:59. For Katie, it seems as if the school clock has been stuck for 10 minutes. Fridays always seem to last forever. Finally! The school dismissal bell rings at St. Francis of Assisi elementary, Katie races off to after school care. She's greeted by program director Pam with a bright smile and hug. Katie quickly eats her snack, and does something quite unusual, rushes to do her homework. Pam notices this extraordinary happening and asks Katie what's going on. You see, Katie is a good student, but a well-known talker, who never misses the opportunity to socialize with her friends.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire! Now Pam understands. Katie's parents are taking her to the movies tonight, but she's got to finish her homework or she can't go. Katie explains that she needs help with her math homework. Fractions are the pits, she declares. Rita, Katie's teacher in the aftercare program, is waiting for Katie when she walks into the classroom, and they immediately start working on fractions. Thirty minutes later, Katie is all smiles. She understands fractions, but they're still the pits!



Katie joins the rest of her friends outside during play time and awaits the arrival of her parents. Harry Potter!!

The Extended Care staffs at Immaculate Conception, St. Francis Elementary, St. Louis Elementary, and Sophia's House provide the perfect blend of learning, fun, and caring to hundreds of children every day.

saturday

AT REFUGEE & IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Antonio has been waiting for Saturday all week. He's anxious to get to his English as a Second Language (ESL) class.

Antonio and his family have been in Memphis for two months. They're from Cuba. Antonio wants to tell his teacher Fatemeh about the English he used to help his son learn to read. Reading to your child is one of a parent's fondest memories, Antonio thinks to himself.

Cat in the Hat. That's the book his son is reading. Antonio proudly tells Fatemeh about the joy he experienced while reading the book with his son. Fatemeh smiles brightly, realizing what a special moment this is for Antonio.

The Refugee & Immigration Services staff has been making dreams--big and small--come true for thousands of strangers among us for more than 30 years.

**The people in these stories are composites. The names are fictitious.*

