



Spring Break Cleaning

A group of twelve volunteers from South Carolina's Midtown Fellowship eagerly cleaned St. Patrick's Shelter for Homeless Women in March. Another group volunteered at St. Ambrose Family Shelter.

Among their many tasks, the group washed windows, raked yards, painted a shed, pictured above, and scrubbed the kitchen. "It's great hearing them appreciate what we are doing," explained one of the volunteers. "You don't have to be interacting directly with people to make a difference."

MidTown Fellowship, a Christian church from Columbia, South Carolina, flooded the Boston area with 192 volunteers March 8, 9, and 10. In total, 15 different groups of volunteers visited various non-profits in the Boston area. The participants came from a range of backgrounds including many students from University of South Carolina and Columbia College. In the past, the group visited Washington D.C., Chicago, and New York City.

Offering Legal Immigration Assistance to Local Haitians in Need

The recent earthquake in Haiti caused widespread devastation, damage, and loss of lives in Port-au-Prince and other surrounding areas. For Haitians in America, the days following the earthquake were filled with uncertainty as many were unsure about the well-being of their loved ones back home. Various forms of support were needed, ranging from searching for family members, basic needs, legal immigration, and culturally-sensitive grief/trauma counseling.

One critical area of need that arose following the earthquake was for legal immigration advice and assistance, particularly around eligibility and application for Temporary Protected Status or "TPS" for local Haitians. To meet

this urgent need, the Refugee and Immigration Services (RIS) Division of CCAB started a series of TPS legal clinics for Haitians in the Archdiocese of Boston.

The TPS Clinics assist eligible Haitians to complete the TPS and related applications as well as provide legal guidance free-of-charge. The TPS Clinics are staffed by RIS Immigration Legal Services and would not be possible without the support of pro bono immigration attorneys and paralegals from the firm of Mintz Levin and the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). Pro Bono attorneys assess, guide, and help complete TPS applications for Haitians as well as provide honest advice for non-TPS

legal matters such as reunification with family members still in Haiti and travel to Haiti.

According to the Director of RIS, Ms. Marjean A. Perhot, over 100 volunteers have provided support at the TPS Clinics, with a minimum of 30 volunteers involved with each Clinic. Our pro bono attorneys and volunteers return Saturday after Saturday, spending 4-5 hours each day providing free, quality legal assistance to Haitians.

Over 600 Haitians thus far have accessed assistance through the TPS Clinics in Dorchester, Lynn, and Brockton. RIS is in the process of scheduling a TPS Clinic in Somerville as well as repeating Clinics in Lynn and Brockton. Haitians attending the Clinics include clients of other CCAB programs as well as many Haitians who have not previously received services from CCAB. "RIS routinely serves Haitian clients, so this is not a new population that we are working with. We are very fortunate to partner with Mintz Levin and

AILA in this effort. A majority of the pro bono attorneys are the top immigration attorneys in Massachusetts who have been willing to give up weekend time usually spent with their families to travel to our clinics in Dorchester, Brockton, and Lynn to spend hours giving their expertise to Haitians in need. These attorneys are simply amazing, and we would

“These attorneys are simply amazing, and we would not be able to serve the Haitian community with TPS without their expertise and support. Their spirit of wanting to help despite their busy careers and tight schedules is wonderful.”

not be able to serve the Haitian community with TPS without their expertise and support. Their spirit of wanting to help despite their busy careers and tight schedules is wonderful,” said Ms. Perhot. She added that the clinics will run until March and will take a short break in April. Services are expected to resume in late April 2010 through mid-July, which is the end of the registration period for TPS.

If you would like to volunteer at a legal clinic or get involved with RIS in other ways, please contact Marjean Perhot at marjean_perhot@ccab.org.

NOTEWORTHY



National Volunteer Week: April 18-24, 2010

National Volunteer Week is coming up next month, and we want to take this chance to thank all of our volunteers for their good work throughout the year. As the other articles in this newsletter should make clear, we couldn't do our work without you! Thank you, once again, for your support.

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP

Administrative Volunteers

Our Development Department at 51 Sleeper Street in Boston is looking for on-call volunteers who would be willing to help out with mailing projects on an as-needed basis, particularly during the spring months. The projects will generally take place during business hours. If you are interested in being on the on-call list, please contact Jessica at volunteer@ccab.org or 617-451-7986.



Follow us on Twitter!

Follow Catholic Charities on Twitter at www.twitter.com/charitiesboston. Our Young Professionals Group (YoPros) is at www.twitter.com/YoProsCCAB.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

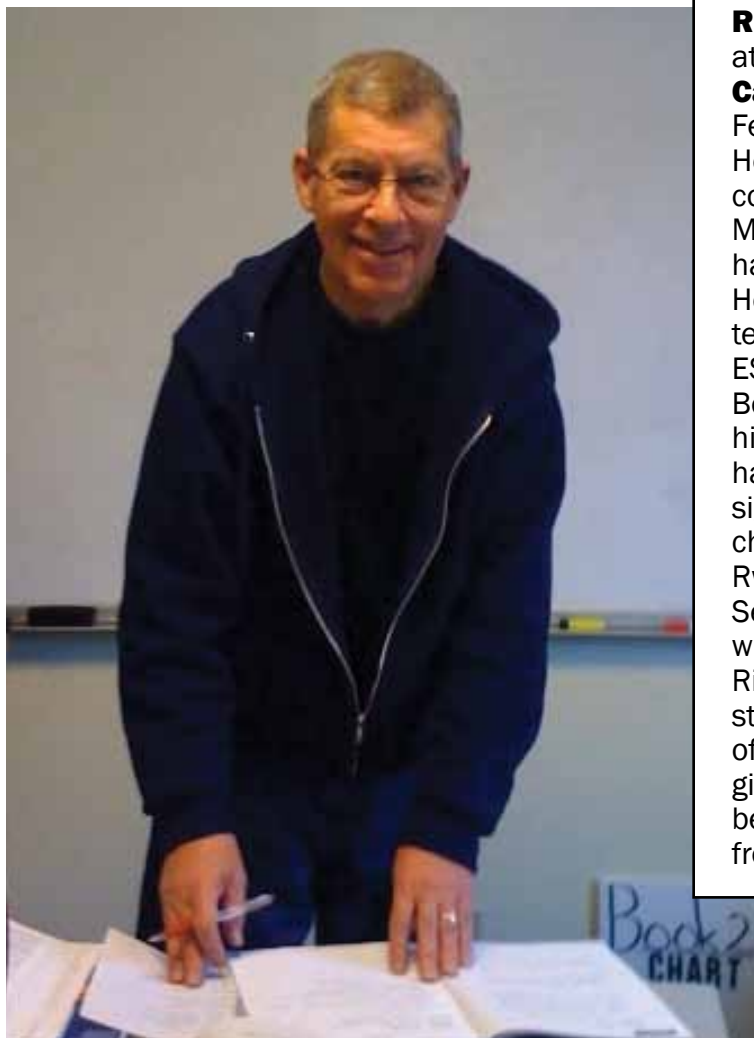
CHACI CIANO

Chaci Ciano found out about **T.E.A.M.** (Together Engaging Adolescents through Mentoring) through his work at the Mass Service Alliance, where he supports mentoring programs across the state. Instead of just writing about how great mentoring was, he decided to dive in and see for himself! Since April 2009, he has been meeting up once a week with his mentee **Wakeem**, a funny and outgoing 8th grader from South Boston. The two have connected through apple picking trips with T.E.A.M., cooking nights, afternoons spent walking through the North End where Chaci used to live, and even a Black Eyed Peas' concert (a special treat for Wakeem's birthday)! Chaci cites food as being their biggest shared interest and they have found a way to work it into most of their outings. Beyond food, Chaci's enthusiasm and commitment to his weekly get-togethers with Wakeem have helped the pair to develop a strong friendship characterized by trust, fun, and mutual learning. -Catherine Kirwan-Avila



RICH CULLINANE

Rich Cullinane began his volunteer duties at the **English Transcultural Center at Catholic Charities South**, Brockton in February 2009. He was referred to us from Head Injury Community Services (HICS), a community services organization in Quincy, MA. A retired accounting professional, Rich has always been interested in teaching. He now volunteers three mornings a week teaching a small group of adult students from ESL teacher and reading specialist Sr. Ann Boland's literacy class. Rich has truly found his niche in teaching. The particular group he has tutored since September has progressed significantly and is currently working on check-writing exercises. His students are from Rwanda, Cape Verde, Ecuador, and Haiti. Several students have jobs, grown children with college educations, and grandchildren. Rich says the best part of teaching is watching students progress and seeing their own sense of accomplishment; he's also not afraid to give lots of homework assignments, especially before a school vacation! Many thanks, Rich, from students and staff. - Janet Chukiu



OUR SOCIAL MISSION: Girls! Girls! Girls!

by Judy Whitmarsh

Some of you reading the title of this article will think of Girls! Girls! Girls! the 1962 musical film starring Elvis Presley as a penniless fisherman who loves his life on the sea and dreams of owning his own boat. And because it is an Elvis movie, he is of course caught between two women, one sweet and one not so sweet. If he picks the wrong one, there goes the boat.

But enough on that because I am not writing about an Elvis movie. What I am writing about are girls, girls, girls who are capable of doing just about anything. And they are inspirational.

Look at Samantha Larson, who in 2007 at age 18 became the youngest person to climb all of the Seven Summits including Europe's Mount Elbrus, North America's Mount McKinley and Australia's Mount Kosciuszko.

Or Nola Ochs, who graduated from Fort Hayes State University in May of 2007 at the age of 95. She is the Guinness World Record holder as the world's oldest college graduate and she had the pleasure of graduating alongside her 21 year old granddaughter.

And let's marvel over Jackie Mitchell, one of the first female pitchers in baseball history, who in 1931 at the age of 17, struck out Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig in succession. After the game, she was removed from baseball by the then commissioner who stated, "Women just do not have the stamina for baseball." Pure nonsense if I ever heard it.

How about Cha Sa-Soon, a 68 year old Korean woman who passed her written driver's license exam on her 950th try. She was quoted as saying "You can achieve your goal if you persistently pursue it." I probably would have given up after attempt number 10.

And who can forget Billie Jean King beating Bobby Riggs in 3 straight tennis sets. Riggs was 55 when he took the challenge claiming that there are just too many differences between men and women for a woman to beat a man at tennis. He was obviously very wrong.

But not all the news about girls is good. And some things have to change for all girls to get the chance to become as accomplished as Samantha, Nola, Jackie, Cha Sa, Billie Jean, and countless others.

According to Physicians for Human Rights located in Cambridge, girls are the fastest growing population in juvenile justice, yet the system has failed to respond to the special needs of this vulnerable group. Girls of color are particularly impacted, disproportionately representing two thirds of those incarcerated. Girls in the justice system experienced childhood victimization at much higher rates than boys. As a result, girls present with extremely high rates of serious mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress, psychiatric disorders, attempts at self-harm, and suicide. There is a dire need for the juvenile justice system to develop gender-specific practices that address the unique needs of girls and that protect their health and human rights.

To address the issues posed by the increasing population of female juvenile offenders, Congress, in reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, required states to assess the adequacy of services, especially for girls, as a condition of receiving these federal funds. The 2004 Florida Legislature passed Ch. 2004-333, Laws of Florida, which directs that juvenile justice programs be gender-specific and thus designed to comprehensively address the needs of the targeted gender group.

And in Massachusetts, Representative Cheryl Coakley Rivera filed H 3418, a bill that would create a Commission to establish gender specific responses to high risk and system involved girls.

The Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy reports that teen pregnancy is a leading reason 26% of youth in the U.S. drop out of high school each year. Recent research by the National Women's Law Center has shown that an alarming number of girls are dropping out of high school and that these female dropouts are at particular

economic risk compared to their male counterparts. An estimated one in four female students does not graduate with a regular high school diploma in the standard, four-year time period. While all high school dropouts pay significant costs for their lack of education, economic costs are particularly steep for women, who face especially limited employment prospects, low earnings potential, poor health status, and the need to rely on public support programs.

The Law Center advises that we reduce the school dropout rate for girls by requiring schools to monitor dropout rates and provide dropout prevention programs targeted toward the needs of girls, including pregnant and parenting students.

And here at Catholic Charities through funding from the United Way's Today's Girls...Tomorrow's Leaders, we offer a gender sensitive afternoon and evening program for girls in the Teen Center at St. Peter's program. The program offers female youth workers, peer leaders, and counselors in training, supervision for youth female leadership, athletic activities for girls, female discussion groups, and relationship building activities. The program creates an environment in which girls feel secure, develop meaningful relationships with adults, and explore non violent methods of dealing with conflict.

Louisa May Alcott, the author of the classic "Little Women" is quoted as saying "Life is my college. May I graduate well, and earn some honors!"

This is what we want for all girls (and boys). And as such, will continue to support public policies that give them that chance.

Judy Whitmarsh is the Director of Public Policy at Catholic Charities of Boston. She can be reached at judy_whitmarsh@ccb.org.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF

Greater Boston

Thank you to all **Catholic Charities and Horizons' Play Space volunteers** who donate their time and energy to the Nazareth Residence for Mothers and Children. Our volunteers worked very hard along side our families and staff in the remodeling of our new and improved play space area. This project had a lot of challenges, which included dealing with chemicals and allergies; sorting, cleaning, and sanitizing of tons of toys and furniture; removing old broken items; putting together new toys and furniture; and moving furniture in order to get the entire basement walls painted and floors buffed. Our newly remodeled play area was donated by **Horizons for Homeless Children** and two very generous and thoughtful donors. The ribbon cutting ceremony was held on January 21, 2010.

– Eva Cross-Boston



Merrimack Valley

The students of **Franco American Catholic Elementary School** in Lowell, MA held a food drive in February with a focus on cereal. They raised over 550 boxes of cereal and donated 300 of them to the Catholic Charities Food Pantry in Lowell. **Assistant Principal Sister Jane Holland** coordinates a food drive with students every 2-3 months, typically centered around a particular theme, and the Catholic Charities Food Pantry is a regular beneficiary.

– Scott Stolze



Betty Quigley and **Gloria Brooks**, both long-time volunteers with the **Grandparents as Parents (GAP)** program, are working on creating the quarterly newsletter that is sent to grandparents raising their grandchildren, funders, and other interested parties. The GAP program supports grandparents raising their grandchildren by providing information and referral, social activities, support groups, and some direct assistance. Without dedicated volunteers like Betty and Gloria, the program couldn't provide these services.

– Dotty Duval



A PASSION FOR SERVICE

By Kathleen Stephan

When I first started as a volunteer at the English Transcultural Center (ETC) I did not know how important a part of my college experience it would become. During my second year at Stonehill College I became a volunteer in order to fulfill a course requirement, but I soon realized that my experience at the ETC would last beyond the semester. Now as a senior I am exploring ways to incorporate the passion I've discovered into my life after school.

Over the past few years I've spent time helping in the classrooms and also working with Director Lara Herosy on administrative tasks in the office. I think many people assume that a volunteer's main responsibility is to provide something to the organization with which they work. However at the ETC, I have received just as much as I've given. Through my experience there I've learned about migration issues and

developed a passion for seeking greater justice in that field. I've also developed practical skills such as grant writing and seen what it is like to manage a not-for-profit center.

The English Transcultural Center will continue to impact my life even after I've left Stonehill College. The influences from the people I have met, stories I've heard, and dedication I've seen demonstrated by the teachers and students, have motivated me to do a year of service program after graduating. All of the programs I've applied to are geared toward immigrant populations and addressing the problems these communities face. I'm very excited to spend a year exploring the issues that the English Transcultural Center has given me a passion for.



Upcoming Fundraisers & Events to Benefit Catholic Charities

March 24, 2010

Solidarity Shopping Through Fair Trade

Laboure Center, South Boston, MA

April 19, 2010

The Boston Marathon

Seven runners take to the streets to run for Catholic Charities

April 29, 2010

Laboure Center's Annual Spring Benefit

The Artists For Humanity EpiCenter, South Boston, MA

May 6, 2010

Catholic Charities North Spring Gala '10

The Hawthorne Hotel, Salem, MA

May 20, 2010

Spring Celebration

JFK Library & Museum, Boston, MA

June 3, 2010

Fashion By The Sea

Catholic Charities North, Lynn, MA

June 10, 2010

Catholic Charities South Springfest

Thorny Lea Golf Club, Brockton, MA

Comments? Ideas for the summer newsletter?

Write to:

Volunteer Office
Catholic Charities Boston
51 Sleeper Street
Boston, MA 02210

volunteer@ccab.org

Website:

www.ccab.org

Heartbeat is a newsletter for the volunteers and staff of Catholic Charities and is distributed quarterly.

Help us save paper (and trees)! If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email volunteer@ccab.org.

Copyright (C) 2010 Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston. All rights reserved.