



Our Response to

By George Dinkel, Executive Director

Without doubt, it is a good thing for us to look on the many blessings God has given us. Especially in view of the many problems in the world today, the declining economy, the oil spill disaster, natural disasters such as floods, volcanoes and tornadoes. Truly these are turbulent times, but also a time filled with many blessings; our family, friends, jobs, homes, abundant food... truly these are all blessings. At times we may question how God could allow a disaster to occur, but how often do we really thank God or give a response to Him for the many blessings we have. At times we may even take credit for the good things in our lives believing we have received these solely through our own efforts. With this manner of thinking, we can get so wrapped up in pursuing these gifts with our complete attention and desires, that they can actually lead us away from God.

I was fortunate to recently view a program on discipleship presented by Fr John Lanzrath. It helped me to understand that I first have to be open to receive the gifts God wishes to give me and that these gifts demand a response on my part. So the question is what should my response be to God for these gifts, and how do I actually make this response? The first thought I have is to find a quiet place where I can be alone with God and to personally thank Him in my prayers, just as I would thank a friend for a kind deed or gift. I am sure God is very pleased with this but at times, when I come to realize the enormity of God's gifts, I feel compelled to do something more. When I truly focus on all He has done for me, including suffering to the point of His death, I feel like I have to do something in return to truly show my gratitude. For me, this response has been to try to help the poor. Scripture is filled with passages concerning the poor. You cannot open scripture and fail to see God's love for the

poor. These passages clearly reflect that God is mindful of the poor and that they are pleasing to Him. He is their helper and protector and He hears their cries and prayers.

For many of you, our donors, I see the same response in your simple willingness to help the poor in our community through your donations. So many of these families are struggling with tremendous anxiety, some are on their third extension of unemployment with still no job possibilities in sight and face the ever-increasing burdens of utility costs, insurance, the cost of transportation, the cost of food.

Just this past month I helped a young man with six young children who was under such anxiety he was receiving professional help and was on the point of giving up and was afraid he would do something harmful.

Another young man left his wife and young children as he just could not cope with the stress of the mounting financial obligations he could not meet. He has been gone for awhile and his wife has not heard from him for the past three weeks. She told me he was a good man. He just couldn't face the feeling of not being able to meet his obligations and provide for his family.

It is through the Center of Hope that these poor families meet the many followers of our Lord, His current-day Disciples, who come to minister to these families in need.

To be a true Disciple, a follower of Jesus, we must follow His lead. Turn to prayer, lead a simple life, renew our minds to not be overly concerned about the things of this world, to sacrifice a little to help our brothers and sisters, just as Jesus did for us. How easy it is for us to contribute a little of our surplus money- a small sacrifice which can bring us closer to God and help our neighbor. How simple. How good!!!!

"Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received...but only what you have given: a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage." St Francis of Assisi

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ANNUAL DINNER REPORT

The Center of Hope Annual Dinner was held Sunday, April 11, 2010 at the Newman University Dugan Library and Conference Center. A wonderful evening of fun and fellowship was enjoyed by 260 of our Center of Hope donors to help support our ministry of providing homeless prevention to the poor families in our community.

Many successful bidders were awarded special prizes through our auction and raffle which included free airline reservations for two.

One of the more exciting moments was at the end of our auction when Fr Bernard Gorges, our guest auctioneer was struck with a thought of genius and auctioned off an item labeled Angels of Mercy. For this auction item, the successful bidder offered to help cover one month's rent to prevent a family from being evicted or to prevent their utilities from being cut off.

There were 19 successful bidders for this auction item which alone raised \$9,100 for our prevention program. Thank you all for your kind generosity and for all of you who did not attend this year's Annual Dinner, we hope to see you next year. You truly are making a difference in someone's life.

Our constant thoughts are with the clients we see each month. In addition to what financial assistance we can provide, they are in desperate need of your prayers. Please Pray for:

Families We Have Served

J, a 44-year-old man who lives with his 15-year-old son. J and his son are homeless after being evicted.

K, a 43-year-old lady who lives by herself. K's husband passed away in February and she currently has no income and has filed for disability. Friends have been helping her pay her monthly bills which only amount to \$500 including rent, utilities and medications. She lives very simply.

S, a 20-year-old mom who lives with her infant daughter. S's boyfriend recently left taking all of her money with him. She only receives \$326 a month in SRS TA cash benefits, which does cover her rent of \$250 per month but doesn't leave much for additional needs.

R, a 36-year-old lady who lives by herself. R is homeless, mentally ill and not stable. She has been homeless for two years.

B, a 74-year-old lady who lives by herself. B's husband passed away in July of 2009. She fell behind in her rent after paying funeral expenses. In addition, a relative took her Social Security money recently. She currently owes \$1900 in past rent and has received an eviction notice. Stressful, especially when you are 74 years old.

C, a 25-year-old lady who lives by herself. C has a job at a call center, but her hours and pay are spo-

radic. She only made \$558 this past month which is not sufficient to meet her monthly obligations. C has a lot of stress over her bills. She is fighting depression and is seeing a psychiatrist. She is planning to enroll in school to be a RT tech.

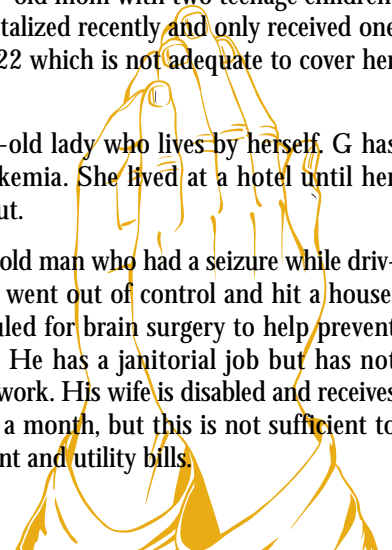
Y, a 34-year-old mom with two young children. Y currently has no income. Her husband left her three months ago.

S, a 26-year-old mom with two young children. S just finished school with a medical assistant degree, but can't find employment. She currently has no income.

M, a 31-year-old mom with two teenage children. M was hospitalized recently and only received one check for \$322 which is not adequate to cover her rent of \$450.

G, a 45-year-old lady who lives by herself. G has terminal leukemia. She lived at a hotel until her money ran out.

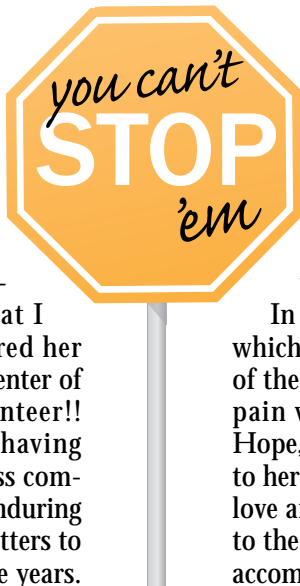
R, a 32-year-old man who had a seizure while driving—the car went out of control and hit a house. He is scheduled for brain surgery to help prevent the seizures. He has a janitorial job but has not been able to work. His wife is disabled and receives SSI of \$448 a month, but this is not sufficient to meet their rent and utility bills.



VOLUNTEERS KEEP ON TRUCKING

The Center of Hope has been blessed with some of the most dedicated volunteers around. Many of our volunteers enjoy their volunteer position so much, they are in fear of losing it. Recently one of our volunteers had a stroke and was hospitalized. I would expect most stroke victims to take several months to recuperate. This volunteer called me immediately after being released from the hospital and was back in her position within two weeks. Her only fear was that I would give her position to someone else. I assured her that she would always have her position. Once a Center of Hope volunteer, always a Center of Hope volunteer!!

In addition, our own Sr. Jeannine has been having some back problems which have caused her to miss coming to the Center of Hope for a couple of weeks. Enduring this pain, she continues to hand write thank-you letters to donors such as many of you have received over the years.



This past year, Sr. Jeannine has handwritten 1,500 thank you notes which included 279 Christmas cards. The thank you notes are written to individuals, groups and churches who deliver food, supplies and other resources to our storeroom. All the thank you cards Sr. Jeannine uses for this ministry are given "gratis" by family, friends, Sisters and others who want to help in some way.

In addition, she keeps the statistics for our ministry which recaps the number of families we help and some of their demographic information. Some days when the pain was too great for her to come to the Center of Hope, she was intent of having the information brought to her at the Convent so she could work on it there. Her love and concern for this ministry is a great attestation to the great charity in her heart and the good she sees it accomplish.

CASE MANAGEMENT CLIENT REACHES GOAL



It took six years of hard work, time management and persistence to get her high school diploma, but Lindsey accomplished a goal she'd set for herself. Lindsey thanks Sr. Becky for all she's done to help keep her focused on achieving this dream. This accomplishment was celebrated at the Center of Hope office with a party in her honor on June 11.

"I wanted my high school diploma to offer a better life for my family and to open up more job opportunities," Lindsey said on reflecting on why she continued in the program. "What really worked for me was using the Internet program, www.insightks.com, to get my diploma. It's a great program that ships a computer, books and everything you need for your class work," she explained. "And it's all free. I would recommend it to anyone who doesn't have the time because of work or family to attend classes."

Lindsey first came to Center of Hope to get help with utility bills. She was working, raising her two young daughters and struggling with finishing her high school work. Sr. Becky recognized a young woman with ambition and a serious commitment to her education and told her about the Case Management Program. It didn't take Lindsey long to realize that this was help she needed.

While some classes were more interesting to Lindsey than others, she had a little difficulty with a few subjects. Sr. Becky helped secure a tutor for her and that eased her over the rough spots of the high school diploma program.

In addition to her work for the high school diploma, Lindsey met weekly or bi-weekly with Sr. Becky to discuss her progress, to be encouraged and to work on other goals. The program has made a real difference for Lindsey in giving her a sense of accomplishment and hope for the future.

Her 5-year-old daughter graduated from pre-K this spring and is fond of saying that both she and her mother graduated at the same time. Lindsey knows how important an education is for future employment and she will definitely insist that her two girls stay in school and complete their educations.

Congratulations to Lindsey!

HONORARIUMS

Fr. Ken Van Haverbeke
Sr. Tarcisia Roths Birthday
Msgr. John Gilsenan

MEMORIALS

Terry Rhodes
Joyce Waldschmidt
June Stock
Doris McGinn Reynolds
Valerie Maneely
Pauline Evelyn Steckley

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Fr. Robert Spences
Fr. James Jackson

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“Life is a gift that God gives to the universe and to humanity.” Acts of the Adorers’ 18th General Assembly

CENTER OF HOPE, INC. MISSION STATEMENT

The Center of Hope listens to the cries of the poor with compassion and love, and without judgment, seeing all who present themselves as Children of God. A loving presence to those in need and advocates for the powerless, we offer hope to families, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender, as they deal with life’s daily challenges. We help them with emergency financial support for rent and utilities, provide case management toward resolutions of on-going difficulties, and assure the dignity and self-respect of each individual.

VISION STATEMENT

Offering hope for tomorrow through assistance today

CENTER OF HOPE, INC.

Celebrating 27 years of service to the Wichita community

Because You Cared

For the past 10 months, the Center of Hope prevented 2,375 families (an 18% increase over prior year) from having to experience homelessness. Included in those families were 3,561 children.

\$716,315 was dispersed for rent, utilities and emergency needs. On average, \$301 was spent per family. In addition to the financial assistance paid to landlords and utility companies, families were given food and

other personal care products from our storeroom, provided budgeting assistance and counseled for special needs.

Many thanks go out to all the parishes, business, and individuals who brought blankets, canned and boxed food, paper products and personal and home cleaning products. Most recently, Kyle Jacobs, Marcia Moralez, Jim & Lois Daniels, Janet Miller, Amory Cook, Carol Scaff, St Cecelia Parish and an anonymous gift from college students have blessed us with 349 bags of food and supplies.

We need your help!! The volumes of people coming to our door are at record levels. The number of families we have helped has grown from 1,300 families per year when I started at the Center of Hope in 2003 to over 3,000 families this past twelve months.

In addition, we prepared 630 tax returns this past tax season. All of this increase with only four paid employees! This year we will use all of our reserve funds for operating costs and probably most all of our reserve funds for outreach service.

Since I have been at the Center of Hope, we have never turned away someone from

uncertain times

our door as we were out of funds. At times I wonder how we can serve so many people with such few funds.

I guess this is the same question the Apostles had for Jesus when they asked Him how they could feed so many people which such little food. Please keep us in your prayers for I believe with your help and God’s blessings, we can continue to help those in most need in our community.

Editor, George Dinkel
Coordinator, Mary Jobe-Waddill