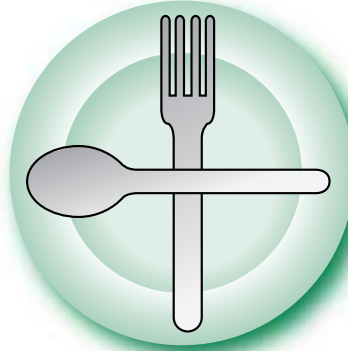




The Center of Hope, Inc. is a homelessness prevention program and 100% of your contribution is used in direct service to the poor.

FASTING: THE LENTEN CALL TO JUSTICE



This Lenten reflection was graciously offered by Fr. Joe Nassal, cpps, at the request of Sister Stella. Father has contributed to HOPELINE on previous occasions and is known to many of our readers.

Like many of us, Martha wanted to lose some weight but she hated dieting. She belonged to a diet club and dreaded the weigh-in every Tuesday when her club met. Martha ate as she pleased most of the week but fasted on Tuesday before her weigh-in, so her progress in losing weight was dreadfully slow and terribly frustrating.

One morning Martha stepped on the scale and blurted out, "I wish I could lose some weight." Her 10-year-old daughter was standing by the door and said, "I know how

you can do it, Mom. Just pretend that every day is Tuesday."

Fasting is one of the spiritual exercises we associate with the season of Lent. Fasting is not about dieting or losing weight. Fasting is not about denying ourselves a delicious dessert or daring to skip a meal or two of our favorite foods so that we might feel good about our Lenten attempt at self-denial.

We can fast from food but if our fasting does not lead us to a change of heart, then we might as well eat and drink to our stomach's desire.

The prophet Isaiah put our practice of Lenten fasting into perspective: "This is the fasting I wish: releasing those bound unjust-

ly, untying the thongs of the yoke, setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own (Isaiah 58: 6-7).

"Fasting is not a solitary activity for self-purification so much as an act of solidarity and compassion with the poor, the homeless, and the hungry. We fast to feel in some limited sort of way the hunger of the poor ones in our world who will search through trash heaps this day looking for food and for the leftovers from the tables of the rich.

"When we practice the kind of fasting that causes our stomachs to groan over the injustice perpetrated on our sisters and brothers, we will recognize God in all the hungry ones we meet along the way.

"We fast to feel in some small way the pain of the majority of the children in our world who tonight will try to sleep even as the pangs of hunger increase. We fast to taste the tears of those who are oppressed and homeless, a taste that becomes an appetizer for the banquet feast of heaven where all tears will be wiped away."

Celebrating 25 Years of Service

By Mary Jobe-Waddill

With this issue, Center of Hope begins its 13th year of publishing a newsletter, but its service ministry reaches back to 1983. It was in that year that Sister Stella Rosenhamer, A.S.C., established St. Anthony House, a shelter for homeless women and children. As community needs and services changed, this ministry evolved into the Center of Hope. As Sister Stella recently recalled:

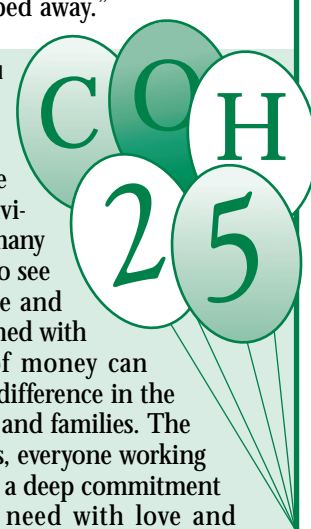
"We made the change after operating the shelter for seven years. It was a great experience and we were able to transition several hundred women into healthy, happy lifestyles during that time.

"When we began the 'prevention' program the name changed to Center of Hope and we no longer housed the people. True, in fact, there were no agencies doing prevention ministry in the sense that we desired

(and now do) and there was no funding from government of any kind for such programs. But, the private contributions from wonderful people who believed in the program began to grow by leaps and bounds (some who helped us at the beginning continue to be our donors)."

Because of her experience with the homeless in the 1980's, Sister Stella realized that there is less disruption and emotional trauma to individuals and families if they can be prevented from being homeless. It also became apparent that from a financial standpoint, it made more sense to help keep people in their homes and apartments rather than paying for temporary housing, paying deposits for rent and utilities, paying for all the costs associated with starting from square one when it comes to setting someone up in housing.

Through the years, I've been privileged to visit with many COH clients and to see first-hand how love and compassion combined with a small amount of money can make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families. The staff and volunteers, everyone working through COH, has a deep commitment to serve those in need with love and compassion and this shines through as a distinguishing characteristic of COH. To many clients, it's as important as the financial assistance.



Mark your calendar now for a special 25th anniversary event on Sunday, July 20, 2008.

COH Board of Directors:
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Vice Chair: Curtis Warren
Secretary: S. Renee Kirmer, ASC

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Jim Daniels
Martha Flaherty
Dana Fugate
Sue Gardner

Marian G. Girrens
Donna Harris

S. Barbara Hudock, ASC
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Craig Plank
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S. Charlotte Rohrbach, ASC
S. Tarcisia Roths, ASC
Michael Vess

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George Dinkel

Director Emeritus
Sister Stella Rosenhamer, ASC

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Sister Jeannine Bahr, ASC
Sister Becky Balthazor, ASC
Kendra Davis

Mallory Huntoon
Judy Lambert

Jean Vestal, AmeriCorps

Volunteers:

ASC Associates
Maralene Balthazor

Pat Bujarski
Kay Carroll
Peggy Duick

Mary Ann Farmer
Martha Flaherty
Barbara Peters

Barb Helm-Powell
Robert Johnson
Jo Karlin

Frank Kastor
Donna Larson
Mike Lavigne
Jane Means

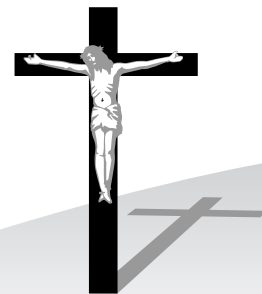
Carol Meyer
Treva Schaffer

Fr. Kenneth Van Haverbeke
Robert C. Waddill
Janice Wurth

www.centerofhopeinc.org

But *Why* Death on a Cross?

Jesus did not have to die on the cross. One Word from our Lord would have been sufficient for our redemption. One tiny drop of blood would have been sufficient for our redemption. Why did Jesus go through all this suffering – what was sufficient for redemption was not sufficient for love. (Fr. Mallo, IVE and St. John Chrysostom)



FAMILIES WE HAVE SERVED

Please Pray For:

K, a 32 year old mom with four young children. K lost the job she had worked at the past 5 years in November. She has used up her savings and now is struggling to keep her apartment. She needs to find another job soon.

T, a 19 year old who is taking care of her 11 year old niece. T does receive SRS cash assistance of \$326 but it's not enough to cover rent of \$370.

G, a 29 year old mom who lives by herself. G is struggling with depression right now and could hardly stop crying as she explained her situation. Her three children are currently in foster care. G was a victim of a serious crime and only has partial use of her right leg and is limited to the type of work she can do. She hopes to get her children back soon but SRS won't allow them back until she has more stable employment. She is on the verge of losing her car. Her X-husband had promised to help with Christmas presents, but wound up committing suicide in December. G has no family to turn to and doesn't see much hope. Her children can come visit her a few hours each week, but it just destroys her when they have to leave to return to their foster parents.

C, a 48 year old lady who lives by herself. C lost her job in November and had to make a decision to pay her rent or her car payment in December. She chose to pay the rent and now her car was repossessed. She did start another job, but needed help to pay her January rent. Now she needs to work on getting her car back – she needs to come up with \$500 to do this.

R, a 37 year old man who lives with his wife, their three teenage children and one teenage child whose father and mother have passed away and is staying with them until he finishes high school. R had brain surgery in April. Shortly after the surgery, a disc in his spine ruptured and now he has no feeling in his hands and arms and is on medical leave without pay from his job in the aircraft industry. His wife suffers from being bipolar and is not able to work. Their only income is cash assistance of \$532 per month. They owe over \$5,000 in credit cards that are not being paid, but continue to accrue interest. They hope to qualify for social security disability by the end of February.

B, a 30 year old lady who lives in a halfway house. B just got through a drug rehab program after being on drugs for 15 years. Her mom is so happy for her. Her eyes welled up with tears as she told us about how well she felt being free from drugs.

R, a 32 year old mom who lives with her husband and 7 year old son. Her husband lost his job in December. Their car broke down and they cannot afford to fix it. They walk or bike to wherever they need to go. R has walked or biked to 40 different job applications and has been turned down by all them. One of their bikes was stolen this past week. R had cervical cancer some years ago which she had an operation for. Now she thinks the cancer is back as she has several lumps on her side. She has no health care and cannot afford treatment.

P, a 50 year old mom with a 15 year old daughter. P just started a job which should provide enough income to cover her rent expenses. She had been staying in a shelter and before that was living in her car. P hopes to make it in this apartment.

Feinstein Foundation Matching Contribution

We are pleased to announce that the Center of Hope will again participate in the 2008 \$1 Million Give-away to Fight Hunger. Although our primary focus is on rent and utility assistance to prevent homelessness, we do offer food and personal hygiene items to the many families we serve. All donations received during March and April are eligible for the Feinstein national matching contribution. Simply write "food" on your check made payable to the Center of Hope and mail it or drop it off in March or April.

Ash Wednesday Collections

We are very thankful to all the pastors and Catholic Parishes in our Diocese that participated in the Ash Wednesday Collection for the Center of Hope. Through this giving of what we have to those in need out of love of God, we immolate the sacrificial love of our Lord. Without doubt this is most pleasing to our Lord Jesus and will bring about many blessings.

SOCIAL CHANGE ADVOCACY GROUP

Ready to TAKE the next STEP

An advocacy group composed of eight motivated individuals is gearing up to tackle an issue that several COH clients said is a major concern to them and their families: limited access to affordable housing.

TAKE the next STEP, a social change advocacy group, was started in October 2007 after the Director of Case Management, Sr. Becky Balthazor, ASC, encouraged individuals from the community to join a group that would examine how to create needed change at a systemic level.

"Center of Hope is outstanding when it comes to providing direct emergency assistance, and the role of the advocacy group is to uncover why families are in need of this assistance," Sr. Becky said.

Since the beginning of the new year, the group has met twice and has focused its efforts on pinpointing the major concerns of clients who walk through COH's doors.

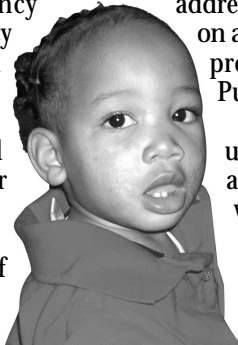
"In order to advocate on behalf of clients, it was important for the group

to first ask clients what issues they felt were important and needed to be addressed on a larger-scale," said Kendra Davis, case manager.

After two weeks of passing out surveys to clients, the results were in: 55% of clients who participated in the survey said they would like to see the group focus its energy on finding ways to provide families with more affordable housing.

According to Sr. Becky, the group has some internal work to complete before taking on such a huge task. To begin work in this area, a representative from the City of Wichita will address the group at its next meeting on already existing subsidized housing programs, namely Section 8 and Public Housing.

"It's important that we understand what is in place in the area of these housing programs if we are to take positive action for our clients," Sr. Becky said. "Our first course of action is educating ourselves."



SPECIAL OCCASION AND MEMORIAL TRIBUTES

HONORARIUMS

Dale & Ann Nice
Msgr John Gilsenan
Msgr James Conley
Sr. Stella Rosenhamer
Sr. Jeannine Bahr
Mel Kahn & Family Christmas
Rev. Benjamin Shockey
Bob & Fleeta Jennings
Jim & Patricia Kastens Family Christmas
Sr. Becky Balthazor

MEMORIALS

Mike Farmer Memorial
Margaret Keenan Memorial
Angie Squires Memorial
Maxine Schudt Memorial
Richard Schaffer Memorial
Charles & Theresa Beckett Memorial
Olive Casey Memorial
Fr. Joe Bahr Memorial

Welcome!

New Case Manager, Kendra Davis

As the COH Case Management Program continues to expand, the staff of three is kept busy helping selected clients make positive changes in their lives. Kendra Davis replaced Heather Mikus, a former case manager who recently returned to her home in Detroit before going on mission in Tanzania.

Kendra is no stranger to COH having served her practicum here as an undergraduate student at Newman University. She is now in the Master's Social Work program at the University and brings a passion for helping people to this position.

One of the important aspects of COH, Kendra says, is that by helping the parent, one is also helping the children of the family. Her great interest is in working with children and in addition to her work at COH, Kendra also manages an after-school program for elementary school children in the North Riverside area.

New COH Board Members

The following individuals were nominated to serve on the COH Board at the November 2007 board meeting. At the January meeting, the slate of nominees was elected to serve a 3-year term. We are grateful for the expertise each individual brings to the COH board.

DONNA HARRIS is a retired social worker who comes to the COH Board after 10 years with the Veterans Administration Medical Center, 10 years in Washington, D.C. and two with the hospital in Wichita. Most recently, Donna directed the Homeless Program for Wichita's VAMC and was part of the Community Coalition for Homelessness.

In D.C., Maryland and Virginia, Donna was part of a case management team that evaluated and developed comprehensive,

cross-functional care plans that spanned psychiatric, medical and social issues. Counseling, advocacy and referral were a significant portion of her job.

Donna is a native Kansan hailing from Andale. She attended both WSU and KU as an undergraduate and completed a Masters of Social Work at State University of New York. Donna and her husband, Charlie, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary this year. Their family includes four children, seven stepchildren and 25 grandchildren. Donna and family are members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

SUE ELLEN GARDNER is a licensed Master Social Worker in the State of Kansas and holds a PhD in social work from the University of Texas at Arlington. She is currently serving as an associate professor of social work at Newman University and president of the Southwestern Social Work Association.

Sue Ellen is an honorable retiree of the United States Marine Corps. During her service, Sue Ellen received the Navy Commendation Medal for outstanding service in revamping the treatment program of the Naval Hospital Alcohol Rehabilitation Center at Camp Lejeune, NC. She received an identical commendation for planning, development and implementation of the Marine Corps' first Family Service Center in Cherry Point, NC.

A native of New Orleans, Sue Ellen moved to Wichita in 2000.

CRAIG PLANK brings a wealth of experience in brand building, awareness and consumer and business-to-business communications that will be of great value to COH.

Craig is a marketing professional with nearly 25 years experience in a variety of roles with area businesses. His background includes entrepreneurial start-up and leadership roles with Vornado Air Circulation Systems in Andover, KS and with Alpha BioSystems of Wichita. He has also worked for ad agencies, sold printing and currently runs a marketing consulting business.

Craig is a 1980 graduate of WSU. He has been married for 21 years and has two children.

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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 24 years of service to the Wichita community

Editor, George Dinkel

Writer, Mary Jobe-Waddill

because  cared

These past six months of our fiscal year, the Center of Hope prevented 973 families from having to experience homelessness. Included in those families were 1,324 children. \$259,826 was dispersed for rent, \$37,451 for utilities and \$8,096 for other emergency needs. On average, \$314 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 canned and boxed food, paper products and personal and home cleaning products. Most recently, St. Cecilia Parish, St. Francis Parish, Church of Magdalen, Hometown Buffet, Santa Flannigan, ASC Associates, H.J. Ruvalcaba, Joe Karlin and Treva Schaeffer have blessed us with 198 bags of food and supplies.

Free Tax Preparation Site

The Center of Hope has been blessed with seven very capable volunteer tax preparers this tax season. As of mid February, we have completed over 150 tax returns obtaining over \$230,000 in refunds. These returns are prepared at no cost to the taxpayer. Our volunteers are required to complete an IRS training program and pass a test to become certified to prepare these returns. To qualify for this program, the taxpayers must meet specific low income guidelines.

Did You Know?

Did you know that of those we help with homeless prevention services, two thirds never come back for additional assistance. Of the one third that do come back for additional assistance, more than 80% are single parents with children, which we would expect to need help for several years due to the many demands of family life which often limit the earnings capacity of the single parents.