The 13th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Gala set all-time records and earned $235,000 for the programs of Catholic Charities. Attendees enjoyed the variety of auction items, complimentary champagne, green beer and Barefoot wines, amazing desserts, a performance by Celtic Steps Irish dancers, and a roaming leprechaun.

Freedom Financial Services, Chuck Murphy, and Murphy Constructors were honored for their 10-year commitment to sponsoring the gala and serving on the committee, and Jane Reilly Gorab was recognized for chairing this year’s event. The highlight of the evening was the client presentation by former clients Karen & Scott, who brought the audience to tears with their family’s journey from the brink of homelessness to building a new home.

Once again, the crowd was entertained by the Colorado Springs Conservatory while bidding on auction items, and One More Shot for a night of dancing. Thanks to all who sponsored, donated, and attended this fun night of socializing, entertainment, food, and supporting Catholic Charities of Central Colorado! We appreciate your help. We could not provide the services that help those in our community without you. Mark your calendars now for the 14th Annual event, scheduled for March 14, 2015 at the DoubleTree by Hilton.
Eric has lived in Colorado Springs off and on since 1972 when his father served in the United States Military and was stationed here. When Eric turned eighteen, he joined the United States Air Force and stayed for five years. He often says, “There must be a magnet in the mountains because I can’t seem to stay away from Colorado Springs. This is my home.”

After his military service, Eric became “down & out” because of a lifestyle filled with drugs and alcohol. He says, “One day I decided to go to the Marian House Soup Kitchen to ‘save a buck for beer or dope, which got me what I thought I needed,’ but I found something else there. I found hope. The soup kitchen provided a community, a place to go, and a new purpose.”

Eric explained to us that, “walking into the Marian House was a healthy reminder that people could help just by asking.” He began eating at the Marian House every day. He says he would eat very slowly so he could stay and clean tables or sweep up after everyone finished their meal. He wanted to “pay his dues.”

Soon he developed relationships with staff members and volunteers. He learned that the Marian House was much more than a soup kitchen; he could get other services that could help him move forward in life. In addition to the daily meal, Eric used the Marian House services to provide him with food, clothing and under garments, medical care from the SET Homeless Clinic, job services that helped him interview for positions, and passes to transport him around town and an address for mail pick up. All of this assistance allowed him to begin to get his life back on track.

During this process, Eric became interested in the Catholic faith once again. While he had grown up Catholic, he had not practiced the faith for quite some time. He was amazed to watch the Marian House volunteers helping others and as he says, “getting nothing in return and being perfectly happy about it.” He said, “I knew that if I wanted to try and re-establish my life, I needed to bring God into it.”

Eric decided to get clean. Drugs and alcohol had almost killed him, but he says he is still alive today and thankful to Catholic Charities for getting him on the right track. It was a long journey, but Eric has been sober and in AA for 10 years and has successfully completed the 12 step program. He is newly married and living in his own apartment. And, he has returned to his faith. He proudly told us that he made his confirmation in 2007 with Bishop Sheridan presiding at St. Mary’s Cathedral. Although he cannot work due to a head injury from a motorcycle accident, he receives Social Security Income which allows him to be self-sufficient. Eric still occasionally uses the Marian House Soup Kitchen and says, “I can’t help clean up anymore because there are so many volunteers, but I guess that’s a good problem to have.”

“During these days, instead of offering to clean up, Eric makes it a point to tell ‘everyone with a cardboard sign about the Marian House services.’ He said that after living on the streets for years, ‘you get to meet different people and know their intentions with those cardboard signs.’ It has been ‘hit and miss’ for him trying to tell people about the Marian House, but he says, ‘I’ll keep trying.’

Money is a strange thing. We often seek after it to find security. Even if we have plenty of it, we can be tempted to feel that we still don’t have enough. So much about our sense of financial well-being can be illusory. It is impossible to obtain materially those things necessary for a life rich in meaning and love.

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s words above emphasize for us the power of human interaction, of the impact God can have through us if we focus our energy on developing relationship with those around us. No amount of money can buy love; no financial marker or monetary investment will bring the kind of return that love of God can bring us.

When we truly seek relationship with God, to know His will for our lives, we enter into a profound mystery. Though we cannot fully know God, a being who is Himself infinite love, we can come to know that He created us in His image and likeness. Profoundly, that means that we were made for love, to be so filled by our growing relationship with God that we cannot help but spread His power to all we meet.

We are called, then, to give what no amount of riches can obtain. In spreading God’s love, we become capable of acts for one another than our limited imaginations cannot fathom. Our whole realities can be transformed, and we can give moments of dignity and assistance that can astonish us.

The volunteers that come to encounter those in need at Catholic Charities bring this spirit to their daily work. April was Volunteer Appreciation Month. We are so incredibly blessed by the amazing number of volunteer hours and the tireless dedication of those who answer the call to help their brothers and sisters in need.

I would like to personally thank all of our volunteers and donors who make the work of Catholic Charities possible. We could never replace all you do for us!
HEART
Homeless Engagement & Response Team

Catholic Charities launched its HEART - Homeless Engagement and Response Team - program in the Summer of 2012 and has been steadily growing it since to build community awareness of Catholic Charities’ services and to connect at-risk people to those services. HEART teams are comprised of Catholic Charities’ staff, Christ in the City street missionaries, business & government leaders, and community volunteers. Teams canvas the downtown area with the objective of developing trust, addressing immediate needs, and providing linkages to resources for the individuals they meet. Repeated engagement with individuals builds trust and encourages positive change. Response from businesses and individuals has been positive over the past year and relationships with clients have been enhanced.

In the past five months, HEART has logged over 1,700 street outreach encounters with individuals. Nearly half of those encounters resulted in conversations that lasted from 5 – 45 minutes. HEART is working with at least 35 individuals who engage with them regularly. For instance:

• “Harry” is an elderly man who lives in his truck with two small dogs. He’s well-educated and works a minimum wage job on the weekends. He’s a faith-filled man who enjoys serving others, but he has had some health problems and other set-backs. He says the HEART team gives him hope and makes him want to engage with his grand kids.

• “Mary and John” are a married couple the HEART team first met back in September. They were sleeping outside after being kicked out of the shelter for being intoxicated. John was a construction worker, but an injury a year ago put the couple in economic decline. The couple is generous and friendly. In November, John’s disability request came through and the couple moved into an apartment. They are hopeful they will be able to re-unite with John’s children soon.

• “Stan” has been homeless nearly 30 years. The team first met him in September in the downtown area and had several conversations with him in the months since. An avid camper and problem drinker, Stan still managed to meet most of his needs with a part-time repair job. In September he told the team he doubted he had what it took to quit drinking. The team last saw him in February when Stan shared that he was on his way to rehab.

HEART has hosted two afternoon gatherings and numerous bible studies at the Marian House. The first was a holiday movie party which attracted 20-30 individuals, and the second event was a St. Valentine’s day party with 40-50 guests. The team is planning more opportunities to invite the people they encounter back to the Marian House for enrichment and fellowship.

Charities News

BRIARFEST TO BENEFIT MARIAN HOUSE

Save the Date – September 5 - 7, 2014 for Briarfest. The weekend includes carnival midway rides, games, free concerts, entertainment, Briarfest Bolt (5k run), arts & crafts shopping, food booths, drinks (beer & wine tasting), and a silent auction. Proceeds will benefit the Marian House, Special Olympics & the Wounded Warrior Project. For more information or sponsorship opportunities, go to www.Briarfest.org. The event is sponsored by and held at St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 8755 Scarborough Drive, Colorado Springs.

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Catholic Charities’ Parish Social Ministries (PSM) is implementing a pilot Ambassador Program, where members of parishes work directly with PSM staff to further the mission of Catholic Charities (CC).

The Parish Ambassador program will equip one or two people from each parish with an orientation on Catholic Charities’ direct service programs. They will also learn more about how parishes and parishioners are a part of that work. Those who become Ambassadors maintain information about CC for the parish and help staff, clergy and parishioners understand CC programs and activities. If you or your parish are interested in having an Ambassador at your parish, please call Corey Almond at 719-866-6510.

LIFE CONNECTIONS WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Michelle Wright recently joined the Life Connections team, providing counseling services and management of various educational programs. Michelle grew up in Texas and completed her MA in Clinical Counseling from the University of Northern Colorado. She interned with Pikes Peak Hospice and Palliative Care, working with all age ranges and populations dealing with grief and loss through individual and group counseling.

In addition to offering counseling services, Michelle will manage the Prenatal Nurturing program, Childbirth class, and school-based RealCare® Baby program which utilizes interactive technology providing experiential learning solutions.

Michelle will also assist with our growing Early Literacy learning efforts providing access to books in the homes for families served throughout Catholic Charities programs and by creating greater awareness of the importance of reading and early literacy. To learn more about these services or to volunteer in our Literacy program, call 719-866-6535.

Ways to Give

• PRAY FOR US
• CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES, IRA ROLLOVERS, STOCKS & SECURITIES
• EL PASO COUNTY ENTERPRISE ZONE (1.5% tax credit for Marian House)
• CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTION (15% tax credit for Life Connections)
• IN-KIND GIFTS & VEHICLE DONATIONS
• MATCHING GIFTS THROUGH YOUR EMPLOYER AND CORPORATE GIVING GRANTS, EVENTS, DRIVES, AND VOLUNTEER PROJECTS
• MONTHLY GIVING
• PLANNED GIVING – Leave a Legacy
• TRIBUTE GIFTS IN MEMORY OR IN HONOR OF A LOVED ONE
• SIGN UP TO RECEIVE Catholic Charities updates via e-mail at www.ccharitiescc.org and click on “Helping Hands” Newsletter.

To Donate
Call 719-866-6440 or visit us at www.ccharitiescc.org

Ongoing

Travel With Us!
Catholic Charities will benefit from a planned 13 day Mariner Shines Pilgrimage to Portugal, Spain & France with a three night Mediterranean cruise. The trip will be from April 22 - May 4, 2015, and coincide with the 100th anniversary of Fatima.

Mark your calendars for the Early Bird Discount presentation / Deposit Night on June 27, 2014. Attendees will receive $250 off the cost of the vacation package.

For a complete itinerary and more information, contact the tour operator Cruise Planners - ABC Travel at 855-445-8755. The trip is planned in conjunction with Pilgrimage Tours & Norwegian Cruise Line.

MARIAN HOUSE SPONSOR A DAY

Thank you for participating in the Marian House Sponsor A Day Program!

First United Methodist Church - May 24

First United Methodist Church - May 24
Whether delivering food, furniture, immigration help, or disaster planning, Catholic Charities (CC) has been meeting with, extending services, and learning from communities in the eastern plains.

Recently, CC staff travelled to Cheyenne Wells to meet with Fr. Rafael Torres-Rico of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Cheyenne County Emergency Preparedness staff, Cheyenne County Health Care Coalition, and community leaders to present information regarding CC services and to learn about the needs in Cheyenne County. Utilizing information on Cheyenne County’s population and demographics as a starting point, the team identified needs and un-met needs, partner agencies, and resources available in the area. There was a group discussion on disaster and emergency preparedness and response, where it was learned that Cheyenne County already had a comprehensive disaster plan in place. Since CC is currently taking the lead on developing a Diocesan Disaster plan, this information will be of great benefit.

Next it was onto Yoder and Ellicott to visit several food pantries to determine how CC could offer assistance in these rural areas. In 2012, CC received a grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation to purchase a new truck which resulted in increased assistance to the rural communities in our diocese. The number of trips to rural areas have doubled as a result. With increased trips to rural communities and the addition of the CC Castle Rock office, Catholic Charities has been able to deliver more services to rural communities than ever before. If you have a need in your area, please contact us to see how we can help.

Catholic Charities Family Immigration Services (FIS) staff has been travelling to St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in Burlington on a regular basis to offer services to help immigrants in need of information and assistance. FIS staff presented their Know Your Rights presentation which provides information on rights and responsibilities of living in the United States. They also spent time conducting consultations to help individuals and families address their specific needs.

CC Goes to the Plains
Mission Statement

In response to Jesus Christ’s call to affirm the value and dignity of each human life, to build solidarity within the community, and to advocate for justice for the poor and vulnerable, Catholic Charities of Central Colorado humbly engages in the ministry of charity for those in both economic and spiritual poverty so that all – staff, volunteers, and clients – may fully achieve their God-given potential.

To Donate
Call (719) 866-6440 or visit www.ccharitiescc.org

Help a Child Find a Forever Family

Everyday there are women who struggle with crisis pregnancies. They are scared and need information, counseling, and support. Please give generously to Catholic Charities to help these women find loving families for their child.