

Harvest of Hope Gala to honor Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston

The rescheduled Harvest of Hope Gala benefiting Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas will be held Friday, January 30, at 7:00 p.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel in Beaumont. The event will honor the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston, Texas. It will be a way for family, friends, and the community to celebrate the service that the Sisters have given to the community and continue to give throughout the world.

The Congregation was founded in 1866 when three sisters answered the call of Bishop Claude Marie Dubuis, the second Catholic bishop of the Diocese of Galveston, which then included the entire state of Texas. In 1867 the Sisters opened the first Catholic hospital in the state, St. Mary's Infirmary in Galveston. They have been active in the Diocese of Beaumont since 1891 when they opened Sacred Heart School and Sacred Heart Hospital in Orange.

Over the last century, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of Houston have expanded their ministry to include two of the largest health care systems in the nation, Catholic Healthcare West and CHRISTUS, in addition to health support and services in Ireland, El Salvador and Kenya. They also provide AIDS ministry in Kenya and Romania; care for the abandoned elderly in Guatemala and Ireland; support for literacy centers in Texas, El Salvador, and Guatemala; and support for street children and women's groups in the United States, Kenya, and Central America. The sisters also help women develop employment skills and offer elementary education services in Houston, Texas and Kenya. Today the Congregation remains committed to their founding call while constantly adapting its ministries to meet the evolving needs of society.

"The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (C.C.V.I.), Houston, Texas, and Catholic Charities share a similar but common mission. I am impressed by the title of their video, 'Called to Serve.' While they too offer various ministries and are involved in Social Justice, through Solidarity they provide services to El Salvador, Guatemala, Ireland, Kenya and the United States," said Dean Terrebonne, president of Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas. "It is most appropriate that they be recognized at the Harvest of Hope Gala for their dedication, example and service to the community of Southeast Texas."

Janey Phelan is chairing the Gala, which will feature entertainment by the Night & Day Orchestra, conducted by Wayne Dyess. She is assisted by co-chairs Carole Mattingly and Torchy. Will Jenkins, Jeremy Saba and Dade Phelan are in charge of seat and table sales; Grace Cordts is coordinating the dinner menu; decorations chair Kathryn Phelan is assisted by Michelle Phelan, Lindsay Bennett and Judie Bennett; Suzanne Maloney and Tammy Holbeck are in charge of entertainment and video; Karen Fontenot and Lisa Parigi are handling reservations; Heather Petkovsek, Anne Boutte, and Carolyn Wood are overseeing the cocktail party, and Dana Melancon and Camille Mouton are handling publicity.

Tables of ten are available at different underwriting levels, and individual seats start at \$100 each. Call Catholic Charities at (409) 924-4410 for more information or visit www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org

Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas is a non-profit, multi-program service organization providing help and creating hope for the lowest-income members of the community. The programs of Catholic Charities are available throughout the nine-county service area of the Diocese of Beaumont and are offered to all members of the community regardless of their religious preference or affiliation. The programs include:

- 1) Child Care Contractor Services, which administers child care subsidy under a competitive contract with Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas. Childcare subsidy clients are low to moderate income families and reside in Hardin, Jefferson and Orange Counties, served 3,339 clients last year.
- 2) Counseling Services, which provides short-term professional counseling services on a sliding fee scale basis. Individual, family, and group sessions are available. This program ensures that access to low cost professional counseling is available for those persons who cannot afford private practitioners or do not qualify for public assistance. 355 clients were served last year;
- 3) Disaster, Trauma and Loss offers a continuum of services through two programs which address client needs through preparation, response, and on-going service.
 - Disaster Response - Catholic Charities' staff and volunteers continue to provide disaster education, preparedness, and recovery case management services. As recovery efforts subside, this program focuses on preparation and inter-agency cooperation. 1,650 clients were served last year;
 - Elijah's Place provides ongoing grief support services to children, ages 5-18 and their families, who have experienced the death of a parent, or sibling. Parents and guardians also participate in a separate group which offers support and assistance related to the loss and parenting a grieving child. 73 clients were served last year;
- 4) The Hospitality Center, in Port Arthur, provides a nutritious meal 365 days a year to the homeless, disabled, low income, elderly and temporarily needy. The Center served 51,266 nutritious meals during the last fiscal year to 4,467 clients;
- 5) Immigration Services, through which trained staff assist individuals with immigration and naturalization issues including Family Unity Applications, Family Visa Petitions, Naturalization Applications and VAWA Self-Petitions for battered immigrants. Catholic Charities is the only non-profit in Southeast Texas recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals to provide legal immigration services. Immigration Services served 803 clients last year;
- 6) Parish Social Ministry offers resources to empower parish groups and civic organizations to respond to the needs of our community through service, action, education and advocacy. Each parish group designs their own local ministry in keeping with the needs of their parish members and community. 877 clients were served last year;

7) Asset Building Case Management, a new project, provides comprehensive case management services that assist low and moderate income families to achieve their self-sufficiency and housing security goals. Families are offered education and support in the areas of budget and money management, credit counseling/repair, and home buyer education. 214 clients have been served since February 2008.