



Chronicle

FALL 2010

YOUR PUBLICATION FROM COMMONWEALTH CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Commonwealth Catholic Charities

1512 Willow Lawn Drive
P.O. Box 6565
Richmond, VA
23230-0565
(804) 285-5900 phone
(804) 285-1630 tty
www.cccofva.org

Joanne D. Natrass
Executive Director

Richard Ciofani
Chief Financial Officer

Edward M. Smith
Chief Development Officer

Krystal Thompson
*Chief Operating Officer
Children's Services*

Susan B. Whiteside
*Chief Operating Officer
Adult and Aging
Services/Help in Crisis*

Morgen McElroy
*Public Relations &
Marketing Manager*

Commonwealth Catholic Charities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit social service organization aiding residents of central and southwestern Virginia. Services are provided to all people.



You're Invited to the Holiday Festival of Music

*Join us in welcoming the season at the
Cathedral of the Sacred Heart*

You make this event the most wonderful time of our year! Begin your holiday season with CCC's annual Holiday Festival of Music by reserving your tickets today. Joining us on Monday, November 29 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart is a terrific way to support CCC and have

- Performers from the Richmond Symphony
- Cathedral Adult Choir singing, with soloists Michele Orr and Michael Renninger
- Hot chocolate and treats during intermission

a fun evening. Soaring solos, resonant traditional hymns, and a carol sing-a-long are sure to warm even the most Scrooge-like spirit!

Tickets are \$35 each; \$150 Patron Tickets include two tickets with reserved seating, a pre-event reception, and your name in the event program. Your ticket purchases and sponsorships support important programs that get thousands of people in our community back on their feet. Call (804) 285-5900 or email events@cccofva.org. Also, ordering tickets online is safe and easy—visit www.cccofva.org to buy.

**LEARN
MORE!**

**Bring a friend or pick up tickets as a gift!
Visit www.cccofva.org or call (804) 285-5900 to learn more
about buying tickets or becoming a sponsor.**

Your Help Gives Foster Children Real-Life Success

Independent Living

How did you learn most of what you know? Most often, our parents passed on practical know-how to us. But for kids in foster care, learning to write a check or navigate government processes (Taxes! Yikes!) can be daunting.

Independent Living classes give children in foster care important lessons in practical day to day living. Recently, thirteen teens tasted independence via a fun Independent Living course—visiting stations simulating real-world agencies (housing, government, banking), stores (grocery, clothing, entertainment), and basic needs (real estate, transportation, medical, insurance, personal care) to apply the things they've learned. Volunteers and foster parents donated time and energy in manning stations and acting as merchants and employees. Thanks to everyone who participated and incorporated some laughs into the learning!

School's Out For High School Seniors

Remember what a great feeling it was to toss your cap in the air and relish the possibilities ahead? Twelve high school seniors in the Foster Care program are preparing for the same joy by graduating this year! All of them have worked incredibly hard, with several taking academic courses, evening classes, and receiving tutoring. Many of the upcoming graduates entered the program with limited education or English proficiency, which makes this accomplishment huge.

Senior year can be very expensive with senior dues, caps and gowns, senior rings, prom and senior photos. We'd like to make sure that all of these deserving graduates are rewarded with the full senior experience. **You can help make the dream real for them via your cash donations or purchased items like a cap and gown. Let us give you the details—call us at (804) 285-5900 or email Anita.Prasad@cccovfa.org.**

Movers & Shakers

Carl*, one of our very special 2010 high school graduates, received several scholarships totaling \$39,000! Accepted into the School of International Studies at American University in Washington D.C., this college freshman wants to work for the United Nations in international affairs and is well on his way—he was recently elected a senator by his freshman class.

Your belief in our ability to nurture children makes successes like Carl's possible. Please keep CCC Foster Care in your hearts and minds when making your donations. You're creating fantastic futures with every gift.

*Name has been changed to respect privacy



Refugee Resettlement Program Seeks Car Donations

Have an old car? Donate and give someone the keys to their future

Donate a car and help refugees become self-sufficient members of our community! We're looking for operating used cars to be given directly to our refugee clients. Jobs can be hard to find with no reliable transportation. When you give a car to CCC, you'll help refugees secure employment, provide for their families, and help out their community.

Your car could make a world of difference in a refugee's transition to America. Sula, a refugee client from Bhutan, let us know how eager he is to pay his gift forward:

"I assure you all that I will make a good use of a car that has been donated to me. I will help people to visit doctors, groceries, work place, churches & others as per their needs, time and situation. I would like to render devotional thanks and heartfelt gratitude appreciating your kind and great help."

Call Jeff Sulik at (804) 545-6295 or Jeff.Sulik@cccovfa.org for more information.

Refugee Resettlement Needs Volunteers!

We need your help! Richmond's Refugee Resettlement program is in desperate need of homework tutors, ESL instructors/tutors and employment assistants. You can make a difference in a refugee's life as they learn English, find jobs, and integrate into our community. Meet the world, expand your horizons, and build a stronger America by volunteering now. You can create big impact in only two hours per week. Call (804) 545-6293 today or email Alison.Spillane@cccovfa.org to learn more about these opportunities.

We can't do it without you!

Adoption program, CCC's oldest and most-recognized service. Creating forever families is our specialty!

Can you speak another language? We need you!

CCC's Interpreter Services would love your help. Our interpreters play an important role in making sure people receive the right services and get the care they deserve, especially in critical situations such as dealing with legal professionals or emergency room doctors.

If you're interested in helping others and making some extra money, we'd love to talk to you. CCC offers an intensive, interactive, forty-hour course in professional interpretation. This course is designed for bilingual individuals seeking to enhance interpreting skills for employability, job retention or career change.

All trainings are taught in English for multi-lingual groups. Our course covers code of ethics, interpreting modes and techniques, cultural competence, memory development and professional conduct.

You're eligible if:

You pass a two-hour language proficiency test to determine fluency in English and a second language.

Cost:

\$50.00 for the assessment (test).
Once you pass the assessment you're eligible to take the course.
\$500.00 for the 40-hour course.

For additional information or to enroll in a training, please call Rosemary Rodriguez at (804) 355-4559x16 or email her at Rosemary.Rodriguez@cccofva.org

Uniting Soulmates— A Happy Adoption Update

When Kollin arrived at CCC on April 23, 2007 after being placed for adoption by his birth mother, we knew his journey to a forever family might be a long one. Born with hydrocephaly (fluid in the brain) as well as a limited brain and brain stem, Kollin was given a devastating prognosis—doctors said he'd only live a year, never walk, never talk, and never develop any real skills.

Kollin went to live with Shelley Wagner, a temporary foster parent. CCC searched for a permanent home for him. But Shelley quickly fell in love with the little boy with the round cheeks and sweet brown eyes. Before long, Shelley asked to adopt Kollin. It was a perfect fit.

Now Kollin is three years and thriving. Shelley's phenomenal mothering and pride in Kollin is obvious, as she enthuses, "Kollin is off all medications, putting sentences together and making eye contact. He'll take steps while we're holding him. He definitely has NO down pat and if you ask him what the cat says he'll say MEOW...he'll smile when he recognizes faces in the room, like his brothers or grandma. Thrillingly, he laughs and smiles, something the doctor told us he'd never do!"

Kollin is in occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy. Shelley is pleased to report he's a pleasure and a blessing to everyone around him. "Kollin continues to amaze me, of course, but also the doctors...EVERYTHING they said he wouldn't do, he's doing just the opposite, which is a HUGE, HUGE, HUGE surprise to the medical field! He's a bright spot in my day, but also to anyone who meets him—he's a huge flirt as well!"

Thanks to you, we can create loving families through the power of adoption. Amazing stories like Kollin's are possible due to friends and donors like you.

"Thrillingly, he laughs and smiles, something the doctor told us he'd never do!"



Food, Glorious Food!

Your gifts of nutritious, shelf-stable food are never more needed than right now! Now is the perfect time to coordinate food drives or pick up an extra can of soup or box of cereal at the grocery store each time you shop. Times have been hard for so many recently—who isn't tightening their purse (or wallet) strings? Giving the gift of food is inexpensive, easy, and goes far in boosting the health and hearts of people who need it.

In RICHMOND—
Bring your food to 1512 Willow Lawn Drive any time Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or call (804) 285-5900. We can also pick up from your group or business!

In ROANOKE—
Bring your food to St. Francis House, 824 Campbell Avenue SW or call (540) 345-9090. We can also pick up from your group or business!

Brown paper bags piling up at home? Bring them to us! Be green and reuse/recycle your brown paper bags by donating them to CCC. Our food pantry goes through approximately 420 bags *per month*, and we're always in need of more. Your donations of bags save money, staff time, and enjoy a new life carting home nourishing food for hungry folks in need!

How You Can Remain Calm Through the Holidays— Stress Reduction Tips from CCC's Counseling Department

- 1 Take time for yourself.** It seems hard, but even 30 minutes of reading a magazine, watching t.v., meditating, filing, etc.—can help, and it's important! You'll feel much more willing to deal with family, friends, shopping, etc. when you've had a chance to relish some of your own time.
- 2 Get organized.** Make a list of all the things you need to do. Then, go back and prioritize the list into 'Urgent'(breathing), 'Necessary' (paying bills, picking up kids), 'Would be Nice' (sew period caroling costume, grow and harvest cranberries for homemade sauce). Make sure you complete the urgent, fulfill the absolutely necessary, but don't worry about the rest. Get to the 'would be nice' when you feel like it.
- 3 Exercise.** Yes, you might think this should be under number 1, but it's separate! You can lower blood pressure, gain perspective, boost mood, and increase metabolism in as little as 20 minutes. Who cares what you do, just go do it.
- 4 Don't compare.** Someone once said 'comparison is the enemy of joy'. The more you think about what Martha Stewart has completed at this point, the less happy you'll be. Put the focus on you and doing the best you can. That's really all that matters.
- 5 Enjoy the moments.** Looking constantly forward or backward robs you of the fun and valuable moments you're experiencing right now. Savor them—even the chaos or what goes wonky—and recognize the perfection in the imperfection.

Commonwealth Catholic Charities

1512 Willow Lawn Drive
P.O. Box 6565
Richmond, VA 23230-0565
(804) 285-5900 phone
(804) 285-1630 tty
www.cccofva.org

The Chronicle is a publication produced for the employees, volunteers, contributors, clients, and friends of Commonwealth Catholic Charities. If you are interested in sharing comments or contributing story ideas, please contact the editor by email at Morgen.McElroy@cccofva.org. The CCC Annual Report is available online at www.cccofva.org.

Your Thoughtfulness Celebrated Annual donor event grows but there's still room for you!

We hope you didn't miss it! CCC held its annual donor event at the Mill at Fine Creek on Thursday, September 16. Friends and guests were treated to music, hors d'oeuvres, drinks, dinner and dessert as our (small) way of saying thank you for all you do.

Your consistent support has allowed us to keep growing, reach out to people in need, and positively affect the community at large. Here's a quick timeline of some things you've made possible in the past few years:

- 1996—CCC expands services to southwest Virginia
- 2004—Homeless Point of Entry created, changing the landscape of services to the homeless
- 2005—Adoption program celebrates 3,000 children placed in loving homes since its start in 1923
- 2008—Clients served numbers reach 24,000 in central and southwest Virginia
- 2010—Refugee resettlement, immigrant services, and interpreter services become programs of CCC. Offices gained in Hampton Roads and an additional office in Roanoke
- 2010—Roanoke's St. Francis House food pantry and clothes closet becomes part of CCC



Top: Sue Whiteside, COO, is all smiles from seeing so many caring donors



Middle: Donors and friends enjoy catching up before dinner



Right: A superb meal and good company are real crowd-pleasers