

*Providing help.
Creating hope.*

324 W. Buffalo St., Ithaca, NY 14850 / 272-5062

*from our
executive director*

We have been extremely busy at Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga's Samaritan Center this year, trying to help the many families and individuals who are experiencing hardship as the economy declines and prices increase. High gas and food prices have hit our families hard. In the first six months of 2008, our Samaritan Center provided support to over 600 households. Over 200 were families coming to us for help for the first time. Eighty-eight percent of the households are classified as "very low income", with incomes less than 30% of the median income in Tompkins County.

These numbers don't even begin to tell the whole story, however, of how people are struggling to get by. Each number reflects a face, a family, a home. We have included some quotes throughout this newsletter so you're able to get a clearer picture of the lives of those we assist. We are also including an interview of René Funke, who has been Samaritan Center Director here since 2005, and an in-depth profile of one of our clients.

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Catholic Charities

Tompkins/Tioga

Fall 2008

news and notes

The following churches and religious organizations supported Catholic Charities with donations in 2007:

- Area Congregations Together
- Immaculate Conception
- Penn Yan United Methodist
- St. Anthony's
- St. Catherine of Siena
- Vineyard Church of Ithaca

A special thanks to Immaculate Conception Parish for their "white bag" collections during Lent!

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The Samaritan Center

René Funke
Shelby Piotti

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Immigrant Services

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Justice & Peace Program

Edie Reagan

NOEP

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This summer René was featured in an article about our Linen Closet in the Ithaca Journal. In the article we hoped to get across the need among those we assist for everyday necessities like shampoo, toilet paper, and laundry detergent, and essential items such as bed linens, towels, and clothing. We find that providing these items is a lifesaver to families, and helps them re-direct their

longest standing board member

Sally True



Sally True's association with Catholic Charities goes back to the 1980's, when she was asked to join an Advisory Committee to help start a local office in Tompkins County. The Advisory Committee

was made up of a diverse group of local residents, most of whom were not Catholic. At that time, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester had established that there was need for Catholic Charities programs in both Tompkins and Tioga Counties. Local residents felt there were gaps in the human services network that the strengths of Catholic Charities would help to fill.

The Tompkins County office of Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier opened in 1997, with the Samaritan Center as its flagship program. In 2003, the office became Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga with its own board of Directors. Sally became a Board member then and remains on the Board now, serving on the Board Finance and Nominating Committees.

Sally enjoys serving on the Board of Directors. She appreciates working with "an interesting and dynamic group of people who share interest in a very vital mission." She finds a great deal of satisfaction in seeing that the services of Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga meet the critical needs in the community. She

believes that it is important for an organization to ensure that there is continuity and that consistent services are maintained.

Sally is a partner in the law firm True, Walsh & Schubert. She and her husband, Tony Parise, have three children.

Client quotes ...

A woman came in and looked around & picked out some clothes. She only comes to town on Friday and is grateful we are now open then. She said, "It is so good to be able to dress well even though you can't afford new clothes. I feel so much better. This place has done so much for me."

A special thanks to TOPS & WEGMANS

for their ongoing
support of our
SmartBuy Program.

They donated paper
& plastic shopping bags
for the monthly
SmartBuy Program.

**Thank you
from all of us!**
Catholic Charities
Tompkins/Tioga

client spotlight

Mary Tribuzio

Mary has been a client of the Samaritan Center at Catholic Charities for almost six years. She visits the clothing closet on a regular basis and receives personal needs products. According to Mary these services are a huge help and make a significant difference.

René Funke, the director of the Samaritan Center, has worked with Mary since her first visit. Mary says that René is a wonderful woman “who opened her eyes to a lot of things. She’s been great and supportive!”

Mary was referred to the Samaritan Center for help when she was in Supportive Living. At that time, she received a security deposit from the Samaritan



Center which helped her transition to independent living.

Like a lot of the Samaritan Center clients, Mary came when

she was feeling bad about herself and just needed a little help. Mary says, “the people at the Samaritan Center were encouraging. I felt comfortable because it was a safe environment. They gave me the positive support I needed and the impact was significant.”

immigrant services program update

The Immigrant Services Program (ISP) is pleased to announce a new citizen. Mr. Aun Win came to the ISP program a year ago when efforts of other agencies seemed to be failing. It was crucial for him to become a citizen as soon as possible in order for him to receive needed medical treatment. Mr. Win’s difficulties with the English language were creating barriers, and we spent many hours trying to understand each other and gather paperwork necessary to complete the task. The ISP was able to help and today Mr. Win is a proud new citizen.



Mr. Aun Win becoming a proud citizen.

meet the staff

René Funke

René is a hardworking professional with vision and goals. Since the beginning of her leadership at the Samaritan Center, she has worked to improve it. Her focus is always on the people who are served. René would like to move the Samaritan Center in a new direction — to address the issues of poverty and to move people out of poverty.



René, the director of the Samaritan Center, started at Catholic Charities five years ago in 2003 as the Facilitated Enroller for Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus. In 2005, she

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The ISP also helped undocumented members of the community receive

was promoted to co-director of the Samaritan Center and in 2007 became the director.

As co-directors, René and Cecilia expanded the Samaritan Center and made it what it is today. The Samaritan Center is now open more hours a week and provides clothing, personal needs, and short-term emergency financial assistance for low-income individuals. René's goals, from the beginning, were to treat clients with dignity & confidentiality and to increase the services that were offered. She accomplished those goals by expanding the hours of clothing closet as well as client hours and by adding personal needs, security deposits, etc.

René manages the hours and tasks of the Samaritan Center with the help of an assistant, several volunteers and workers from the Welfare to Work Program.

René has worked in human services for 25 years. Previously she was an Alcohol & Drug Treatment Counselor and she has worked with incarcerated youth.

René has a nine year old son, Cameron, so much of her time is spent participating with his activities. She is proud to be a "Lacrosse Mom." René loves camping, traveling and she's an avid reader.

Margaret Bigham Driscoll Annual Speaker Series

You are invited to the inauguration of our new Margaret Bigham Driscoll Annual Speaker Series

Voices of Hope

**“Audacity to Believe:
The Witness of a Political Prisoner”
October 1, 2008 at 7 pm
First Unitarian Church,
306 N. Aurora Street, Ithaca**

2008 Speaker: Sheila Cassidy

A physician, psychotherapist and writer, Sheila Cassidy is best known as the young doctor who was imprisoned and tortured for treating a wounded revolutionary in Pinochet’s Chile. Upon her release and return to England, she became an outspoken advocate for human rights and the author of the international best seller, *Audacity to Believe*.

Working in Hospices and as a Psychotherapist, she has campaigned for better palliative care for the dying and been involved in work with victims of torture.

Among her publications are *Good Friday People* and, most recently, *Made for Laughter*.

\$10 Suggested Donation

Proceeds from this event provide funding to sustain and grow our Justice and Peace Ministry Program in its efforts to promote collaboration among religious



congregations and community groups in addressing the systemic causes of poverty, war and injustice.

For the past 10 years, the Justice and Peace Ministry program has been bringing people together across religious divides to work on issues such as living wage efforts, global climate change, the Rockefeller drug laws, health care reform, and immigration.

Margaret Bigham Driscoll Justice and Peace Memorial Fund

In 2007, Catholic Charities established the Margaret Bigham Driscoll Justice and Peace Memorial Fund.

This fund raises financial support for its Justice and Peace Ministry Program and sponsors Voices of Hope — an annual event in which a nationally known person speaks to a social justice issue of current concern, from a faith perspective.

memorial fund continued

The new fund is named in honor of Margaret Bigham Driscoll, a Newfield resident and lifelong social activist. As a student at Vassar College in the 1930's, Margaret started an enduring friendship with Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement. Margaret worked alongside Dorothy Day in New York City, assisting the poor and working collectively to engender peace and justice. She later returned to Upstate to help found the Catholic Worker movement in Rochester. Upon retiring to Newfield, she helped bring the Hospice movement to Tompkins County, joined the Boards of the Community Good Neighbor Fund of Newfield and of Catholic Charities, and helped to create a Catholic Worker chapter in Ithaca. Shortly before her death in 2003, Margaret was presented with the Vincenza A. DeFazio award conferred by the NYS Council of Catholic Charities Directors in recognition of her "unselfish contributions to the work of charity and social justice".

Client quotes ...

"Do you have any towels? There are seven of us and we only have three towels."

A young man in his 30's came in and was thrilled to find a pair of dress shoes. He also found a nice long sleeved shirt. When he came to the counter he said, "I'm so excited to find these shoes. I have a job interview on Monday." When he left I said, "Good luck with your interview" and he said, "God Bless you all."

"I'm size six because of cancer and I can't afford to buy a whole new wardrobe. This place is wonderful."

programs

Tompkins County

Samaritan Center

- Clothing Closet
- Personal Needs
- Smart Buy

Immigrant Services Program

Justice & Peace Ministry

Family Empowerment

Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP)



our mission

The Mission of Catholic Charities Tompkins / Tioga is to help build communities that care for all people by reducing poverty, promoting healthy individual and family life, collaborating with faith communities, and advocating for social justice.

share the warmth

At this year's *Share The Warmth*, sponsored by Ithaca Rotary, Cornell and Ithaca College, collection times and distribution will be extended so that we can reach more individuals and families in need of winter clothing.

gloves, mittens and blankets ONLY! We need all sizes for children, women and men.

We need your help to make it a success!! Please plan to support *Share The Warmth* so everyone is warmer this winter!

DONATE

Collection Boxes will be set-up around Tompkins County for the last 3 weeks of November. Watch for ads listing drop-box locations.

We will be collecting good, quality winter coats, boots, hats, scarves,

NEED WINTER ITEMS?

All *Share The Warmth* donations will be distributed by Catholic Charities starting the first week in December, Monday-Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and Thursday evenings until 7:00 pm. (*Watch for exact dates!*)

Help that Works ... Hope that Lasts.

Yes, I want to support the work of Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga.

Enclosed is my donation: \$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

_____ I have enclosed my check payable to Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga.

_____ Please bill my credit card: VISA MASTERCARD

Card # _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____

Name(s) Mr. Ms. Mrs. _____

Street _____ City, State, Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

(We like to thank our donors publicly when possible. To keep your gift anonymous, check here)

My gift is in memory of in honor of _____

Please send acknowledgements to: Name _____

Address _____

Please send to: Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga, 324 W. Buffalo St., Ithaca, NY 14850

All gifts to Catholic Charities are tax deductible.