It happens quite frequently, but usually out of the blue. A letter arrives from adoptive parents whose children are all grown up. An email pops into the CCSEM inbox from an adult who was adopted as a child. Someone makes a donation, and by the way, the reason Catholic Charities was selected, they say, is because a family member adopted or was adopted through Catholic Charities and the joy that decision brought them has been immeasurable.

November is National Adoption Month, and so we take this opportunity to focus your attention on what captures ours – the beauty of adoption.

One recent note from a donor was attached to a gift in memory of a much-loved husband and father who had passed away. The couple had adopted three children, the first more than 45 years ago. The children had thrived and brought their parents great happiness.

"Because of all this joy," the wife and mother wrote, "we would like to donate this money to you in remembrance of the most wonderful father our children could have."

Then, the author of "The Christian Santa" contacted us and shared his own adoption story. Brian Crenshaw is donating 20 percent of the proceeds from the sale of his book to Catholic Charities because a niece and three nephews were all adopted through the agency (see story on page 7).
Hello!

On October 1, I celebrated my first anniversary as CEO of Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan. In the past year, I have met a great many friends of CCSEM, but there are still those of you who do not know me. Let me tell you briefly about myself. I was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, and attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. While at Miami University I was very active in an evangelical, Protestant organization. At this time I also grew in my faith and deepened my relationship with the Lord. While there I began to explore the beliefs of Protestantism (I was raised a Methodist) which eventually led to my conversion and to becoming a Roman Catholic. I went on to receive a Master’s in Theology from the Pontifical College Josephinum and later a Master’s in Nonprofit Administration from the University of Notre Dame. I worked for a Catholic parish, Greater Columbus Right to Life, and the Diocese of Toledo before starting my current position as CEO of CCSEM. I am married and my wife, Melissa, and I have three children – ages five, three and one.

Throughout my life, service has always played a large part. Growing up, my mom wanted us to know that faith was not just something that we did on Sundays but was a part of our lives seven days a week. My mom worked as a teacher in the inner city and I remember for many years she organized an adopt-a-family program for Christmas. I have a distinct memory of this one year when we helped a family that we knew and in order to remain anonymous we wrapped the presents and put them in large black trash bags with bows on them. My parents dropped my sister and me off around the block and we snuck up to this house, left the bags on the porch and ran away. My parents impressed upon us the importance of remaining anonymous but I will never forget feeling overwhelmed at the impact we had on this family. It was a terrific experience for my sister and me. It shaped who we are today.

I believe that everything from my upbringing to my education to my faith in Jesus Christ has played a part in leading me to where I am now – serving those in need in Southeast Michigan.

In October, Pope Francis gave a homily on Luke 11:5-13, Jesus’ parable about prayer. He reflected on Jesus’ command to “ask, seek, and knock” and he urged us to “pray courageously” recognizing that God has the heart of a father and will grant us all that we ask for and more. I am asking for your support in this way – in prayer. We always appreciate monetary and in-kind donations (and you may use the included envelope if you feel so inclined), but prayer is what keeps us going! Will you join me in praying courageously for CCSEM? Through prayer we give of ourselves and we get a wonderful gift in return – a relationship with our Heavenly Father. Let us pray boldly and courageously and watch the Lord work in our midst!

As we draw closer to Christmas I pray that you feel the joy of the Holy Family in your families. Merry Christmas!

God bless you,

Jason Shanks
SENIOR & VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Site Visit

Through Catholic Charities’ Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparents Program and Senior Companion program, adults 55 and older spend 10 to 20 hours per week volunteering for a wide variety of programs and projects that provide quality and meaningful services to those in need, including special needs children and adults, and other seniors. Dr. Erwin Tan, director of the Senior Corps for the Corporation for National & Community Service in Washington, D.C., and Michigan State Director Cathy Sharp visited recently and toured CCSEM programs. They also met with Senior & Volunteer Program Director Herschell Masten and CEO Jason Shanks about launching a new program for seniors (see photo).

Go Ventures!

Fifteen members of the Bishop Foley Football Team volunteered to move 250 heavy boxes full of old records from the basement of the Adult Day Health Services building in Southfield so that the agency could place them into long-term secure storage. Thank you, Ventures, for all your help!

HISPANIC OUTREACH SERVICES

G.E.D. Center update

Hispanic Outreach continues to seek funding to support the opening of its G.E.D. Center in January. HOS has drawn support from a number of individuals and organizations thus far, but approximately $1,000 is still needed. Support has come in all shapes and sizes. Chrysler Group LLC, for instance, through its Dimes for Charity program, donates recyclable cans and plastic containers to HOS on an ongoing basis, which generates indispensable revenue.

“We are very grateful to Chrysler,” says Gayon-Telleria. “It may seem like a small thing, but to us it’s very important.”

Write Gayon-Telleria at gayon-tellerial@ccsem.org or call (248) 338-4250 if you would like to help support the opening of the G.E.D. Center.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Grants Awarded

The Department of Human Services has awarded two grants to the program serving Monroe County: a three-year, $90,000 grant to provide both in-home and office-based group and individual parenting education; and a three-year, $60,000 grant to provide Supportive Visitation Services to clients referred by DHS.

The Ethel and James Flinn Foundation, a private grant-making foundation that uses its resources to improve the quality, scope and delivery of mental health services in Michigan, has awarded Catholic Charities a two-year, $110,000 grant to fund the implementation of an integrated treatment program for co-occurring mental and substance use disorders.

Andrea Foley, director of Behavioral Health; Operational and Clinical Manager Wendy Klinski, Monroe; Associate Director Jackie Smith and Clinical Therapist Kirsti Reeve secured these grants.

A New Book


A New Book


For Co-Occurring Mental and Substance Use Disorders

Andrea Foley, director of Behavioral Health; Operational and Clinical Manager Wendy Klinski, Monroe; Associate Director Jackie Smith and Clinical Therapist Kirsti Reeve secured these grants.

A New Book

Please mark your calendar and save the date – Saturday, May 10, 2014 – for Catholic Charities Spring Gala at the Westin Book Cadillac Detroit! The evening will include dinner, a spotlight on one of our key programs, engaging live and silent auctions, and an afterglow.

For the first time, the Spring Gala will encompass three counties (Oakland, Macomb and Wayne), illustrating our new reach as a regional organization. And for the first time, it will be held in Detroit, demonstrating our commitment to extending services there to the most vulnerable. “Stronger Together” will be our theme. With the merger that has brought us together, we are stronger – able to maximize resources and deliver more services more effectively than ever before.

To help Catholic Charities raise awareness and draw support in Wayne County, the agency has invited Dr. Isaiah “Ike” McKinnon, former Chief of Police for the city of Detroit, to serve as the Honorary Chair of the event (see profile below) and recruited two talented volunteers from Our Lady Star of the Sea parish in Grosse Pointe, Debby Veltri and Joyce Janowski, to serve on the Gala planning committee.

In addition to the new recruits, the committee is securing new sponsors and advertisers, and collecting exciting new auction donations in Wayne and Macomb counties. It also is implementing an innovative mobile and online bidding system designed to make the auction process faster, easier, more profitable, and more fun.

For more information, or to purchase tickets and tables, call (248) 573-3300 ext. 3304, visit Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan on Facebook and click on Events, or go to our new web site (ccsem.org) beginning in January.

A conversation with Isaiah “Ike” McKinnon is part history lesson, part humorous anecdote, part insight into the social evolution of the Detroit Police Department (DPD) and part journey through a purposeful life.

McKinnon served the DPD for 30 years, four of them as Chief of Police. Known for bringing innovations to the department that included an emphasis on community policing, curbing gang activity, and crime prevention, McKinnon is now retired. He is now an Associate Professor of Education and Human Services at the University of Detroit Mercy, an in-demand motivational speaker and the author of three books ("Stand Tall"; "North Between the Houses"; and "In the Line of Duty"). He also sits on a board committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and on the governing board of Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan. Recently, he sat down with CEO Jason Shanks to talk about his new role – Honorary Chair of the CCSEM Spring Gala.

As Honorary Chair, McKinnon is connecting CCSEM to potential sponsors and advertisers, promoting the Gala to his friends and contacts, and filling a table. He also is helping Shanks to develop a Wayne County Advisory Board and advising him on what he sees are the community’s greatest needs.

“Ike is great,” Shanks says. “I was mesmerized by his stories. He’s got incredible insight and vision about what has happened in Detroit and what is needed to turn it around. He knows everyone. He’s got boundless energy. I wish I had 10 more volunteers just like him.”

McKinnon holds a Doctorate of Philosophy from Michigan State University, a master’s degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Detroit, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mercy College of Detroit. In addition, he is a graduate of the FBI Academy in Virginia, and the United States Secret Service Dignitary Protection School in Washington, D.C., and is certified by the American College of Forensic Examiners Institute in Homeland Security at Level 111 (the highest level).

The father of two adult sons and grandfather of a five-year-old granddaughter, recently celebrated his 38th wedding anniversary. The McKinnons often visit their sons and their families in Chicago and California. They are members of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Detroit.
**2ND ANNUAL CELEBRITY SPELLING BEE**

What’s the Buzz? CCSEM will host the 2nd Annual Celebrity Spelling Bee on Saturday, January 18, 2014, in Monroe! More fun than competition, the Bee is an opportunity to see some of your favorite local celebrities step up to the microphone and spell some rather interesting words! The inaugural event drew more than 200 people to see business and community leaders, including State Senator Randy Richardville (the first winner), try their best. The celebrity line-up for the 2nd Annual Bee includes: musician Alexander Zonjic; Fox Handler; Kaye Lani Rae Rafko; Dave McNew; Connie Carroll; Dr. Kojo Quarty; Judge Joe Costello; State Representative Bill LaVoy; Jenny Biler; Molly Moore; April Demers and Josie Stephens. The event also includes raffles, prizes and a buffet dinner provided by Joy Langton’s Bring Home the Goodness. Proceeds benefit behavioral health programs that serve children, adults and families in Monroe County. Tickets are $15. Sponsorships are still available. For more information call Joe at (734) 735-8004 or email patrickd@ccsem.org. To purchase tickets, please go to Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan on Facebook and click on Events.

**Bee Committee**
Carolyn Morrin • Greg Schafer • Bill Sunderland • Joe Theisen • Crysti Esper • John Patterson

**BEST DESSERT CONTEST**

A favorite event in St. Clair County, the Best Dessert Contest, took place August 8 in Marysville. More than 200 guests attended the event, which featured a buffet dinner, entertainment by The Caskettes, and delicious desserts from popular bakers and pastry chefs. Alexander’s Banquet Facility won first place in the Judge’s voting with their Wildberry Cheesecake entry. Lynch’s Irish Tavern won the Popular Vote with their Bread Pudding. Our thanks to the winners and to the other contestants for competing and for donating the desserts for judging. They include: Pastries & More; Elks Lodge #343 Banquet Facility; Cupkies; Chef Mike’s Catering; and Alice Rieves.
Energy = CCSEM + SVdP

Catholic Charities is now partnering with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) to provide energy assistance to the individuals and families we serve. Client eligibility is based on need, and designed for individuals and families whose total household income is at, or below, 150 percent of federal poverty guidelines. The Low-income Energy Assistance Program will cover electric, natural gas, propane and heating oil bills only – not water or wood – and provide up to $3000 for a combined account (gas/electric) or up to $1,500 for a single account. Also included is a component to help recipients move toward self-sufficiency. Catholic Charities’ caseworkers will help clients determine their eligibility, apply, and acquire budgeting tools and other resources. The program is open to residents of the six counties that CCSEM serves, including Monroe, St. Clair and Lapeer, where there are underserved populations. For more information, please contact the CCEM Crisis Navigator at (248) 537-3300, ext. 3317, or email hughesb@ccsem.org.

State Employees Charitable Campaign (S.E.C.C.)

Scores of state of Michigan employees learned about Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan at the S.E.C.C. kick-off at Cadillac Place in Detroit on September 10. CCSEM staffers described programs, answered questions, distributed information and encouraged attendees to select CCSEM as their charity of choice for donations through payroll deduction during 2014. Thank you to all those state employees who did!

Thank you to all the good people who supported the fundraiser at Buffalo Wild Wings in Warren on October 9! Our Adoption & Foster Care program received 15 percent of the pre-tax sales between 5-9 p.m. or $272.84!
PARISH CONNECTIONS

Our Lady Star of the Sea

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Grosse Pointe, has monthly “Service Sundays” where parishioners bring specially designated items, such as diapers, bedding, and craft supplies, to Mass to donate to charity. CCSEM has been chosen to benefit from Service Sundays during 2014 at OLSOS. CCSEM and OLSOS are exploring volunteer opportunities for the parish and other ways to partner. Thank you OLSOS!

Craft Show Benefit

St. Mary Parish, Monroe, selected CCSEM as one of two charities to receive part of the proceeds from their annual Craft Show on October 19. The contribution will benefit CCSEM programs in Monroe focused on children and families. Thank you St. Mary Parish!

THE CHRISTIAN SANTA

Ever struggle with how to share the meaning of Christmas with your children? Brian Crenshaw did. So much so, that after much thought and prayer, he wrote a book about it — “The Christian Santa”— to help others.

Crenshaw struggled with the commercialization of Christmas. He and his wife, Marcy, wanted to teach their two children the story of Jesus’ birth yet also wanted them to experience the enchantment they had as children with the legend of Santa Claus. Their solution was to “define Santa as a person who loves Jesus Christ and loves to share the real Christmas story and provide gifts in honor of Jesus’ birthday that somehow miraculously appear on Christmas morning to the delight of children.”

To aid other parents, Crenshaw decided to share his perspective through “The Christian Santa,” a retelling of the Christmas story from his point of view with lovely illustrations. He also decided to donate 40 percent of the book’s proceeds to charity; CCSEM will receive 20 percent. Why?

“It’s simple,” Crenshaw says. “I have one niece and three nephews that resulted from adoptions through your [agency]. … I want to give back to you for future Aunts, Uncles, Moms and Dads. In addition, my book includes a reference to adoptions and so I think Catholic Charities is a very fitting [beneficiary].”

Christmas Giving

Catholic Charities’ Christmas Giving program is under way and continues through December 13. Thus far, a number of parishes have signed up to adopt a child or family served by CCSEM, including Our Lady Star of the Sea, Grosse Pointe; St. Lawrence Parish, Utica; Holy Innocence/St. Barnabas, Roseville; St. Gerald Parish, Farmington Hills; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Troy; and St. Michael Parish, Sterling Heights. If you would like to participate, please call (248) 537-3300, ext. 3317, or email hughesb@ccsem.org.

For more information or to order a book, go to: www.thechristiansanta.com

“Like” us on Facebook
Calendar

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<td>Christmas Appeal</td>
<td><a href="mailto:patrickd@ccsem.org">patrickd@ccsem.org</a></td>
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<td>December 24 &amp; 25</td>
<td>CCSEM Closed – Merry Christmas!</td>
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<td>CCSEM Closed – Happy New Year!</td>
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<td>Share the Warmth Winter Coat Drive</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hughesb@ccsem.org">hughesb@ccsem.org</a></td>
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<td>Spring Gala</td>
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From the CCSEM photo album...

Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan staff from six counties attended a Fall Gathering on September 30, at Sacred Heart Major Seminary. The Gathering included a novel icebreaker, a presentation on Catholic Social Teaching, a recognition ceremony, lunch and Mass with Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron.

Clockwise from top left:
Marsha Moran-Sackett was recognized for 36 years of dedicated service.
Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron addressed CCSEM staff and said Mass following the Fall Gathering.
HR Manager Jessica Edwards coordinated recognitions for the staff.
CCSEM staff members absorb presentation on Catholic Social Teaching.
Staffers break for a delicious lunch.