



Catholic Charities
OF NORTHEAST KANSAS



hope connection

Fall 2009

Educating Our Very Young

Two years ago, I attended an eye-opening conference sponsored by the Kansas Health Foundation. It focused on how high-quality early childhood education affects infants and children from low-income families. The results were stunning.

Compared to other children, those who receive quality early education have tested 20 IQ points higher, are more likely to finish high school and

post-secondary programs, are less likely to be held back or require remedial help, and are less likely to become pregnant, to be arrested, or to access social services as adults.

As a result of that conference, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas



Jan Lewis,
President and CEO

began transitioning our existing "day care" in the urban core of Kansas City, Kan., into a high-quality early childhood education center.

While the exterior of St. Benedict's Early Education Center looks unchanged, the transformation inside has been amazing. It now has a bilingual director, enhanced curriculum, age-appropriate equipment, especially for our infants and toddlers, and most importantly, staff with the qualifications and credentials required for an accredited early education learning center.

One of the keys to breaking the cycle of poverty is education, and we now know that education starts at birth. We are excited about the changes happening inside the old building on South 9th Street. We are even more excited about what these changes will mean for the children long after they leave St. Benedict's.

Jan Lewis
President and CEO

Making Big Changes for Little Students

Lorena Holguin was working as a receptionist at St. Benedict's Early Education Center when she decided to send her daughter, Sydney, there.

"I saw how they treated the kids," she said. "They know every child and they take care of every child."

After just one year at the school, Sydney, who had only spoken Spanish at home, was now fluent in English.

"Sydney was starting kindergarten soon," Holguin said. "I couldn't picture her not knowing English when she started school."

When Holguin's second child, Victor, was born with developmental delays, she knew it was the right place for him, too. He required extra care, including being fed through a g-tube, and she knew the center would provide that extra special care.

For Holguin, the center is a nurturing environment for her kids, and a place that makes a difference in their futures.

St. Benedict's primarily serves children of low income families, teen moms, immigrant and refugee children, and children with special needs. Most receive subsidies through Head Start, Early Head Start or Medicaid.

Kasie Garlington, director of St. Benedict's Early Education Center, said that to better prepare these at-risk students for the future, the school has been transitioning from a childcare center to an early childhood education center. Now teachers have a minimum of an associate's degree in early childhood education, and will soon all have bachelor's degrees.

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Critical learning comes early at St. Benedict's.

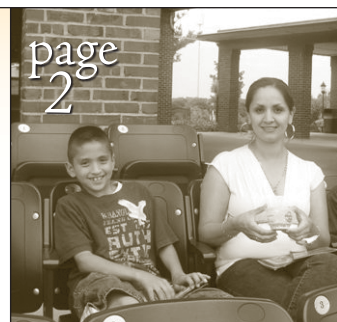
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Events Calendar

Family Nights at St. Benedict's Early Education Center

Last Friday of Every Month, 5-7 p.m. – Bring the family to St. Benedict's Early Education Center, 220 South 9th Street, Kansas City, Kan., for free dinner, projects for kids, and valuable parenting information. Contact Kasie Garlington at kgarlington@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 621-7403.

TurnStyles Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

Sunday, Nov. 15, 1-3 p.m. Volunteers and their family and friends are invited to TurnStyles, 9750 West 87th Street, Overland Park, Kan., for food, drinks and bingo. Contact Doug Clopton at dclopton@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 648-6795.

Viviano Variety Benefit Show

Saturday, Nov. 21, 4:30 p.m. Join us at Rockhurst High School's Rose Theatre for this Las Vegas-style entertainment show and dinner by Cascone's Restaurant. Contact Rachel Hodgson at rhodgson@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 433-2034.

The 36th Annual Snow Ball

Saturday, Jan. 16, 6 p.m. Save the date for Catholic Charities' biggest fundraiser, Snow Ball, at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center, 2345 McGee, Kansas City, Mo. Contact Kerry Gentry at kgentry@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 433-2046.

TurnStyles Six-Year Anniversary Celebration

Feb. 8-13 – Celebrate at TurnStyles, 9750 West 87th Street, Overland Park, Kan., where volunteers donate more than 50,000 hours annually to help the community. Contact Doug Clopton at dclopton@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 648-6795.

A Healthier Start for Our Smallest Patients

When you visit new babies, you can't help but think they are the most perfect things in the world. Unfortunately, many babies are born having less than perfect health, making their first months of life a struggle. Often when babies leave the 24-hour care of the hospital, parents aren't sure what to do. Sometimes, the situation is compounded by poverty or a difficult home life.

It's a fragile stage of life for babies and moms, one that few service agencies address. At-risk families find an invaluable service in Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas' Mom-Baby program.

Mom-Baby nurses visit infants and mothers in their homes to provide growth and development assessments, nutritional evaluations, and help with medication. The program also offers parenting and social service resources. Mom-Baby serves families in Johnson, Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties in Kansas, and Jackson, Clay and Platte counties in Missouri. As with all Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas programs, no one is turned away for lack of insurance or payment.



The Mom-Baby program would like to thank the following donors for generously helping these little patients with financial help as of Oct. 1, 2009:

*Ben and Mellissa Clouse
Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City
Kansas Health Foundation
Oppenstein Brothers Foundation
Wyandotte Health Foundation*

Shower These Babies With Love

Your small, simple gifts can help sustain the vital work of the Mom-Baby program, which is currently in need of the following items:

- Bottles
- Similac, Enfamil and Neosure formula
- Boy and girl clothing, size preemie to 24 months
- Socks, onesies, bibs and blankets
- Baby shampoo and lotion
- Diapers (size preemie to 4), wet wipes and diaper rash cream

Donations are accepted at the Catholic Charities Healthcare Office at 9720 W. 87th St., Overland Park, KS 66212. For more information contact Terry McCaffery at tmccaffery@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 433-2057 or Shirley Holland at sholland@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 433-2010.

Making Big Changes for Little Students

(continued from page 1)

Inside, the school was given a facelift, making it more vibrant, organized and welcoming. The curriculum and equipment have been improved for students, and the school is involving parents more through monthly family nights and a parent advisory board.

Garlington said these steps have improved the quality of education at St. Benedict's, helping its young students break the chains of poverty.

"We want to give our children the strong, stable foundation that will help them once they get into public school," she said. "Students who receive quality early



St. Benedict's students on a visit to Starlight Theatre.

childhood education are less likely to drop out of school or use public assistance, and are more likely to have a meaningful job later on."

Stability, Support Help Teen Mothers Succeed in Their New Lives

Alexis and her two-year-old daughter Leaya start their day like many mothers and babies. They wake up early – at 5 a.m. – to leave the house on time. Sometimes Alexis wishes they could sleep in and stay home together. Then she thinks about why she's an early riser: to finish school, to go on to college, to be a good example for Leaya.

Unlike most moms with babies in daycare, Alexis doesn't go to work in the morning. She goes to high school. Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas' Teen-Mom program was designed with young mothers like her in mind.

Beyond Childcare

The program provides teen moms and their children with transportation to daycare at St. Benedict's Early Education Center, and on to high school for the mothers. The program aims higher than just keeping the babies safe and helping the mothers finish high school, though. Breaking the cycle of poverty, for both the

mothers and their children, is the ultimate goal.

The Teen-Mom program offers a variety of educational opportunities for the young

women to help them learn the life skills they need to not just be better parents, but to develop sustainable careers.

On Wednesday afternoons, the mothers attend mandatory sessions in which they learn parenting skills, personal finance skills such as setting a budget and balancing a checkbook, and career explorations. Careers that provide opportunities to earn a living wage, whether they require college degrees, trade school or a high school diploma, are emphasized. To stay in the program, the mothers must meet attendance goals, maintain a 2.0 grade point average and cannot become pregnant again.



Alexis and Leaya

Needing Help

The summer after eighth grade, Alexis had Leaya. A good student, she intended to return to high school. Her grandmother told her about the Teen-Mom program, and she registered.

Since joining the program, she has transferred from her neighborhood high school to Sumner Academy, a college preparatory school with tough academic standards. Her career goal is to become a neonatal nurse.

"I want Leaya to have it better than I did," Alexis said.

That's been the focus since the program was started almost 30 years ago. The staff works with each of the young women to set individual goals and track progress toward those goals. The program currently serves 18 mothers and their babies.

The Teen-Mom program also gives the children a better chance at a fulfilling life. They will enter school with the skills and nutritional support they need to be on par with children from more advantaged backgrounds, and with the confidence that comes from a safe, stable and secure daily environment.

Extended Family

Alexis said it takes more than determination to be a good mom and a good student. It takes support: from her mom and dad at home, and from Rasheda Allen, the Teen-Mom program manager.

"She's almost like a second parent," Alexis said. "You can call her any hour of the day."

For many of the young mothers, the Teen-Mom program is their primary support system. Some of the teens are homeless. They're trying to support themselves and their babies while staying in school and staying in the program. The Teen-Mom program doesn't make their lives easier. It can't provide more time or money or fewer complications. But it does make their lives better. It offers stability. It offers resources. Most importantly, it provides an extended family for the teens and their babies. 🏠

Thanks to You

The Teen-Mom program would like to thank the following donors for helping our young mothers and their babies as of Aug. 28, 2009.

Vern Allen
Joseph E. and Dolores Bosiljevac
William and Shirley Ann Brownfield
Church of Ascension
Church of the Nativity
Margaret S. Clabaugh
John David
Robert H. and Ann Doudican
Lynn and Janet Duby
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
Frances J. Groh
William and Helen Hill
Holy Trinity School – Lenexa
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Gary L. and Mindy Sadowski
N. E. and Mildred Schnakenberg
Lee R. Stolfus
J. A. and Donna Stubenhofer
Steven L. and Chaunzey Tenbrink
J. M. Turnbull
Deborah J. Zinn

Let it Snow — Have a Ball

On Saturday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m., you can be part of the Snow Ball – a black-tie gala that helps Catholic Charities support more than 85,000 children and adults of all faiths in our community. The elegant evening will take place at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center, 2345 McGee, Kansas City, Mo. Visit www.catholiccharitiesnowball.org to learn more and register online, or contact Kerry Gentry at kgentry@catholiccharitiesks.org.

hope connection

Catholic Charities
of Northeast Kansas
(913) 433-2100

Catholic Community Hospice
(913) 621-5090

To Volunteer
(913) 433-2080

To Make a Contribution

Catholic Charities Foundation
of Northeast Kansas
9720 West 87th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212
(913) 433-2033

www.catholiccharitiesks.org

If you would prefer not to receive
our newsletter, please e-mail us at
sprigel@catholiccharitiesks.org
or call (913) 433-2033.



United Way
Member Agency

Locations

Emporia

(620) 343-2296

Leavenworth

(913) 651-8060

North Johnson County

(Overland Park)

(913) 384-6608

South Johnson County

(Olathe)

(913) 782-4077

Topeka

(785) 233-6300

Wyandotte County

(913) 621-1504

Thrift Center

TurnStyles

9750 West 87th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212
(913) 648-6795

St. Benedict's Early

Education Center

(913) 621-7403



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OF NORTHEAST KANSAS

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Viviano Variety Show Turns 25

For the past quarter-century, the Viviano family and their friends have sponsored and organized the annual Viviano Variety Benefit Show, donating all proceeds to local charities. This year's silver anniversary show will be held Saturday, Nov. 21, with Catholic Charities Foundation of Northeast Kansas as the beneficiary.

Join the Viviano family and Catholic Charities for a truly exciting evening of Las Vegas-style entertainment! Enjoy an Italian buffet by Cascone's Restaurant, musical impersonations, live music, comedy, dance routines, a female barber shop quartet, juggler Vince Vega, acclaimed jazz artist Joseph Vincelli, and much more.

The doors will open at Rockhurst High School's Rose Theatre at 4:30 p.m. with dinner and beverages, followed by the Miller Marley Mini-Tainers and the Boulevard Band leading up to the 7 p.m. show time.

Tickets are \$35 for reserved seats, \$25 for general admission and can be purchased from a variety of sources:

- Rachel Hodgson at (913) 433-2034, rhodgson@catholiccharitiesks.org
- Holy Cross Church at (913) 381-2755

Enjoy a fun night and help make a difference in the lives of people in need – what a great way to kick off the holidays! 🍷

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OF NORTHEAST KANSAS

Leave a Legacy

We hope you will consider including a gift to Catholic Charities Foundation of Northeast Kansas in your estate plans. Support received through wills, trusts, retirement plan assets and insurance policies helps ensure that Catholic Charities' programs and services are available to those in need for years to come. If you have already planned for such a gift, we extend an invitation for you to join our Legacy Society. Please contact Eileen Brown at ebrown@catholiccharitiesks.org or (913) 433-2086 to request information about becoming a member of the Society.