



A Catholic Social Services Publication | Summer 2016

# Faces of Hope

*Ending homelessness one family at a time*

## Ending Homelessness

ONE FAMILY AT A TIME

 People around Anchorage are starting to stand up and say, “This must change!” Homelessness, and the individuals experiencing it, are increasingly on our minds. Is the reason because the number has increased or because this population is more visible? Indeed, there is something greater going on in our community. A movement is afoot in Anchorage.

There have always been voices championing the message that experiencing homelessness is not right. With the wealth and spirit embodied in our community, we can do better for those in need, yet homelessness continues to persist. Not willing to be beat, more of us are rising up to speak out and strengthen the collective voice against homelessness in Anchorage. We attribute this action in part to civic leaders, like Mayor Ethan Berkowitz, who has made addressing homelessness a mission of his administration. Numerous agencies and coalitions who have spent decades working to alleviate homelessness stand alongside this mission, agencies like Cov-

enant House, Bean’s Cafe, RurALCAP, Salvation Army, Anchorage Community Mental Health Services, NeighborWorks, our own Catholic Social Services, and so many more. There are the press and the storytellers, sharing the lives and tales of the disenfranchised in our city. Whatever has brought us to this moment, let us not squander the opportunity. Let us stand united as a community. In support of our collective vision, the Catholic Social Services Board of Trustees has formally adopted the strategic focus: **the end of homelessness in Anchorage.**

For 50 years, we have worked with this goal in mind, but without putting a name to the effort. As we continue to build and strengthen our organization, we would be remiss not to highlight our case managers. Comprising the Homeless Family Services program, these hard-working people provide support to guests at Brother Francis Shelter, Clare House, and to all those in the community experiencing homelessness. The team provides a plethora of assistance to those they serve, **CONT’D on Page 2**

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# You Made A Difference

AT THE 26TH ANNUAL CHARITY BALL

2016 is the 50th anniversary of Catholic Social Services. In 1966 St. Francis House started in a tiny house on 3rd Avenue. Now, with the support of you and the Anchorage community, CSS serves over 22,000 individuals every year through eight distinct programs. Our 50th Anniversary was kicked off by the Annual Wilma Carr Charity Ball. The event was a celebration of how CSS was started, and provided a springboard to launch our campaign to End Homelessness One Family at a Time. This initiative, owing to you and the generous Anchorage community, raised over \$110,000!

For 26 years, your generous gifts during this gala event helped veterans, protected homeless mothers and children, and enabled our community members to turn their lives around.

PICTURE RIGHT » Lisa Aquino (left), Executive Director of CSS, and her family enjoying this year's gala.

The work is not done. Funds raised during Charity Ball will go towards ending homelessness through well-researched programs born out of best-practices such as the **Housing First model**. We will focus on providing permanent shelter to those who want it, and give them the tools to sustain their permanent housing solution. All of this is within reach, working with city officials, social services partners, and people like you, we will end homelessness. **THANK YOU!**



## Ending Homelessness Cont'd

ONE FAMILY AT A TIME

 (from page 1) the most basic of which is permanent housing. A roof over a family's head helps them cope with and address other issues they face. Without housing, focusing on other needs is very difficult. Our case managers walk with individuals and families, helping them navigate essential services and face challenges in order to cultivate independent lives.

The experience of homelessness is different for every person. For Roger, it's "a full time job." Roger never planned to be homeless. As a guest of Brother Francis Shelter, Roger started working with a case manager who helped him plan, save, and eventually construct a successful life in his own home. His grandchildren now visit him regularly and his life has completely changed. Roger's story exemplifies the power of case management in helping end homelessness in Anchorage.

Currently, case managers face a crisis of their own. Funded primarily by state and federal grants, Alaska's present economy predicts a struggling future for our

program. Many difficult decisions will soon need to be made, but it is imperative to recognize the power of the work done by our case managers. Homelessness is a sinkhole that ensnares many who balance precariously on its edge. Case managers are the hand to pull them back from the precipice and the rope to help them climb out of its depths.

Only by coming together as a community, from state leaders, to the many organizations dedicated to this effort, to you, will it be possible to fill in that sinkhole and defeat homelessness. Here at Catholic Social Services, we stand in solidarity, as a partner in the mayor's plan, with the belief that we can all reach this goal. We sincerely hope that throughout this newsletter, you find inspiration to take action. Read on, and you will find opportunities to make a difference by attending an event this summer, volunteering at St. Francis House Food Pantry, or donating to one of our eight programs. With your help, we can **End Homelessness, One Family at a Time.**

# Skate-A-Thon Organized by a Young Alaskan

HELPS MAKE EASTER SPECIAL FOR KIDS AT CLARE HOUSE

Sarah Mixsell—through her nonprofit organization Alaska Kids for Kids—presented Clare House with a \$1,630 check and donated household items to Clare House to support women with children and expectant mothers experiencing homelessness.

Sarah is the dynamic catalyst for the Alaska Kids for Kids Skate-A-Thon which took place in March at the Dimond Center Mall ice rink. A broad showing of community support made the day a memorable party.

Sarah also prepared Easter baskets for the children at Clare House. They were excited and joyous to have such a fun activity; this was a celebration that is not commonplace for families struggling to find permanent housing.

Sarah is an inspiration to us all and is making a difference in the lives of kids across Alaska one boy or girl at a time. Thanks for your support, Sarah, and thanks to everyone involved!



**PICTURE RIGHT** » All of her hard work paid off! Sarah Mixsell (middle left) hands the check to Clare House staff.

## Stories of Hope

ASHLEY'S STORY



Since arriving at Clare House, Ashley has been able to begin bouncing back from a chaotic life; additionally, she put her three young children into preschool and day-care. The warm shelter, attentive care, and needed safety at Clare House has allowed her to pursue her education without worrying about the safety and health of her young children.

Ashley says the support of her case manager has given her the chance to accomplish so much in her life. She says her kids finally have a safe and happy place to stay. “If my kids are not happy, then I’m not happy. And here, I’m happy,” she says.

Ashley says the people at Clare House have supported her emotionally, physically with housing, and helped with her kids while she studies. She is hopeful for a good future for her and her kids.

“I just want people to know that you can do it no matter how tired you are,” Ashley says. “No matter where you’ve been, you can still come up from the lowest low. It’s possible.”



## Continental Auto Group & Subaru Shares the Love

Locally owned Continental Subaru chose Clare House and Charlie Elder House to be the recipients of their “Share the Love” program. Together, Subaru of America and Continental Subaru shared a whole lot of love—in April they presented checks totaling \$43,000 to our two programs. That love will go a long way, providing many safe nights of shelter for homeless women and children as well as teenage boys. **Thank you Subaru and Continental Auto Group!**

## Thank You Hotel Captain Cook and Wells Fargo!

Wally J. Hickel, Jr., CEO of Hickel Investments and the Hotel Captain Cook (left) with Joe Everhart, Wells Fargo Alaska Regional President (right) at Charity Ball. The Hotel Captain Cook and Wells Fargo are very gracious donors to Catholic Social Services, and we appreciate the major part they play in supporting us in our goal of ending homelessness one family at a time.



## Upcoming Events

### Marie’s Insomnia Night

Come out for great deals on beauty products from 6pm until 10pm. Proceeds of the raffle tickets will go to support Clare House. The drawing will be August 4th. Please pick up raffle tickets at the store located on East Benson.

**When:** July 20

**Where:** Marie’s Beauty Supply,  
570 E Benson Blvd Suite 25, 99503

### Plein Air—art show and fundraiser for Clare House

**When:** Saturday and Sunday, July 30-31

**Where:** 5801 Barry Ave. 99507

### Come Play in the Dirt at Clare House! Clare House Playground Campaign kick-off

**When:** Wednesday, September 14

4:30pm—6:00pm

**Where:** Clare House, 4110 Spenard Rd.

Comments will be made at 5:30

**Get involved with Catholic Social Services!** We have volunteer opportunities available. For more information about these events or to volunteer, please contact Kara Casanova at 907-222-7335 or [kcasanova@cssalaska.org](mailto:kcasanova@cssalaska.org)

A bequest could be the most important charitable gift you ever make. To find out more, please contact Tricia Teasley at 907-222-7355 or [tteasley@cssalaska.org](mailto:tteasley@cssalaska.org)



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