



A Catholic Social Services Publication | Fall/Winter 2016



# Faces of Hope

*Ending homelessness one family at a time*

## Supporting Our Veterans

ZOE LOST HER HUSBAND BUT DID NOT LOSE HER WILL TO CARRY ON

 Zoe and her husband were deployed to Ft. Wainwright near Fairbanks in the 90s. They moved around a bit before settling back in Alaska with their son and two daughters, now adult age. Zoe took care of her husband every day until he passed away this year from chronic health issues.

“It feels like I haven’t seen him in so many years, but the pain is so fresh,” said Zoe.

Zoe left her job after her husband passed away to help her 90-year-old mother out of state. Zoe came back to Alaska but a few situations fell through and left her living out of her car.

Veterans Affairs referred Zoe to CSS Supportive Services for Veteran Families Case Manager Sarah to help her find a home.

“Within days I had a roof over my head,

a bed, food, household items, and I wasn’t in my car,” Zoe said. “Sarah is like a flower that grows out of concrete, no matter what she comes right through. She’s an amazing person.”

Sarah connected Zoe to a landlord who wanted to give back to veterans allowing her to stay at the apartment for 60% of the rental rate for the first nine months. Donations from the community fell in place at the right time. She found a job as a dental assistant. Her older daughter who recently finished basic training is now living with her, and she visits her grandkids when she has time.

“I didn’t know what to do without my husband,” Zoe said. “But he told me to look at it as a deployment and keep moving forward, and to take care of the kids.”

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**PICTURE BELOW** » Army Veteran Zoe with CSS Case Manager Sarah.



**CSS CONNECTS ABOUT 100 VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES EVERY YEAR TO HOUSING AND BENEFITS.**

# We Will All Do Our Part

A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISA AQUINO

It is the season of Christmas, and it has been a monumental year in many ways. We at Catholic Social Services welcome Archbishop Paul Etienne to Anchorage and look forward to continuing our work and partnership with exiting Archbishop Roger Schwietz.

Archbishop Schwietz has left an indelible mark on Catholic Social Services. In thinking of him, many here were reminded of a discussion he had with our staff and Board. He spoke of parishioners at St. Patrick's who took it upon themselves to provide mentorship for individuals experiencing homelessness and financial challenges. Those parishioners inspired him, and Archbishop

Schwietz reminded those gathered that "we should all do our part." As members of this community, we

should help each other, those in need, and those without support. Meeting people's needs and providing support can lead to success.

At Catholic Social Services, we are working every day to do our part, and to be the instrument of so many of you doing your part to help our neighbors in Anchorage.

Thank you Archbishop Schwietz for inspiring us and thank you Anchorage for partnering with us! As we end the Year of Mercy, I was reminded of the specific call to shelter the homeless as a part of the jubilee celebration. I end with a quote from Pope Francis and wish for Christmas blessing for everyone reading this, and everyone touched by the work of Catholic Social Services.

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**"WE CAN FIND NO SOCIAL OR MORAL JUSTIFICATION, NO JUSTIFICATION WHATSOEVER, FOR LACK OF HOUSING."  
—POPE FRANCIS**

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PICTURE ABOVE » Archbishop Schwietz reminds us that we should all do our part.

## Robyn's Dedication to Serve

CSS VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORTER FINDS VALUE IN GIVING

Robyn Rehmann, volunteer at St. Francis House, long-time donor, and educator in Anchorage, has a deep history with CSS. Robyn and her husband Jim settled in Anchorage in the 70s. They used to respond to calls from the Alaska State Troopers when moose were killed along the highway to collect food for St. Francis House Food Pantry.

"We would go out to butcher the moose on the side of the road, throw it in the back of the truck, and haul it away to be processed," she said.

Robyn has an affinity for Clare House. She grew up in a home that experienced poverty and hunger from time to time. The mom of five children volunteers at and

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**"CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES IS A PLACE OF HOPE FOR THE FUTURE."**

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donates to St. Francis House regularly. She also uses her background as a teacher and principal on the CSS Program Committee.

Robyn says helping those in need is important in Alaska, since many people may not have a support system in the state. Volunteering creates a community that values every person.

"I don't own anything, I'm a caretaker," she said. "I make sure whatever I have I can give."



PICTURE ABOVE » Robyn volunteers at St. Francis House and is on the CSS Program Committee.



## **A Helping Hand Lifts Families at Clare House**

### **LORI'S STORY OF HOPE**

Lori and her two grade school daughters stayed at Clare House for emergency shelter for a few months and now live in progressive housing. Case managers worked with her on her goals of paying off debt, working on a budget, and finding a place to live.

As she works to become self-sufficient her daughters are able to continue going to the same school thanks to the Child in Transition program at the Anchorage School District.

"I tell my daughters to be grateful for what you have," she said. "There are kids starving around the world and you must be grateful that you have something to eat and a place to stay. My kids know that."

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**PROGRESSIVE HOUSING AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE HAVE HELPED REDUCED THE NUMBER OF MOMS AND KIDS RE-ENTERING THE SHELTER FROM 15% TO 3%.**

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Lori and her daughters were staying at friends' homes before they made it to Clare House. Her daughters lacked stability and didn't have a space of their own.

Progressive housing provides the family with their own living space at a reduced rate for Lori to work toward her goal of becoming independent.

Through trauma-informed care, case managers are cognizant of the signs and symptoms of trauma in families

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Advent Concert**

**Friday, December 2 at 7:00PM**

**Where: St. Patrick's Parish**

Join St. Patrick's Parish for an Advent concert to benefit Brother Francis Shelter. The parish will be collecting warm clothes and donations for Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House.

### **Shop For a Cause**

**Sunday, December 4 at 11AM-6PM**

**Where: 1300 W. Northern Lights Blvd.**

Shop at fair trade store GrassRoots December 4 where 10% of proceeds will go directly to Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services!

### **Mitzvah Mall**

**Sunday, December 4 at 12-3PM**

**Where: Congregation Beth Shalom**

The alternative gift fair will be an opportunity to donate to nonprofits, including CSS.

### **Christmas Eve Mass**

**Saturday, December 24 at 6:00PM**

**Where: Brother Francis Shelter**

Everyone is welcome to join us at the shelter in celebrating mass.

### **Charity Ball 2017**

**Saturday, May 6, 2017**

**Where: The Hotel Captain Cook**

Get involved with Catholic Social Services! For more information on these events or to volunteer, contact Wes Hoskins at [whoskins@cssalaska.org](mailto:whoskins@cssalaska.org) or 907-222-7344.

and connect them with the services that fit their needs.

"I really appreciate everything that Clare House does for us," she said. "Staying here is a safe place for my kids, and it's a great opportunity for us to save up and plan our budget so we can find our own place to stay."

## Thank You Alaska National Insurance!

Alaska National Insurance is a dedicated supporter of Catholic Social Services and has been for over 23 years! We appreciate their generous partnership across the board in many of our programs especially Brother Francis Shelter.

Your support makes it possible for men and women experiencing homelessness to connect with the services and support they need to make their lives more productive and fulfilling. Guests are provided a warm bed, a hot meal, access to medical care, and community-wide resources to become self-sufficient. THANK YOU Alaska National Insurance!



## Thank You Alaska!

PICK.CLICK.GIVE. DONATIONS MAKE IMPACT

Thank you Alaska for donating over \$80,000 through Pick.Click.Give. this year. Your donations will help a family find a home, help a veteran obtain the services needed to become self-sufficient, and put food on the table for a family struggling to make ends meet.

Beginning January 1st, you can give to CSS through the Pick.Click.Give. website by searching "Catholic Social Services" to donate all or part of your PFD next year. Thank you for stepping up and providing hope to thousands of Alaskans!

Thank you for  
joining the movement.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

Lovalaska  
Pick.Click.Give.



## Holiday Giving

Make Christmas possible for a family through Helping Holidays, find a wish list and sign up at [cssalaska.org](http://cssalaska.org).

Share the spirit of the season with everyone at Brother Francis Shelter and Clare House by giving needed gifts.

### Please drop-off these items to Brother Francis Shelter:

- Shirts, jackets, hats, gloves, hand warmers, socks
- Candy, granola bars, nuts, gum, mints
- Notebooks, pens/pencils, small games
- Combs, toothbrushes, soap, razors, shampoo, nail clippers, lip balm, tissues

### Please drop-off these items to Clare House:

- Shampoo, deodorant, shavers, lotion, face & body wash, baby shampoo
- Bathroom & kitchen cleaning supplies, trash bags
- Gift cards for Fred Meyer, Target, etc.
- Pillows & waterproof zip-up bedcovers
- Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Napkins

**Drop-off Instructions:** Bring items unwrapped, in a bag or box. Full list at [cssalaska.org](http://cssalaska.org).

### Christmas Gifts Drop-off Deadline: Monday, December 19

Join us **December 20-23** at BFS to help sort items and make gift packages to be handed out the week preceding Christmas. Contact Wes Hoskins with any questions at [whoskins@cssalaska.org](mailto:whoskins@cssalaska.org) or 907-222-7344.

THANK YOU!



Catholic  
Social Services

