

The Boy Who Almost Failed 3rd Grade

BY CHRISTOPHER TORRES

I was thinking of what I might write for my first regional article and after some thought, I decided to tell you all a story about an 8 year old boy whom I once knew. His story may be familiar in many ways as we so often hear about children and families who struggle to survive and stay together. But I digress from the story. Once upon a time, 1975 to be exact, there was a little boy. He was a good boy, the second child of three whose father left his mother when he was three years old. His

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mother struggled to survive to support him and his siblings and he struggled in school as a result. You see this boy was very smart but like many other boys he wanted to run, talk, and play. School rules for everyone else. So when he began to fail in his math and English classes and wasn't doing his homework, his mother became "concerned" which is a nicer word that I can say in this article. So if we cut to the chase, he passed 3rd grade, graduated from high school, went to college, got married, got a job and now is helping his kids with their homework.

The End



Christopher Torres

It's a happy ending don't you think? I often wonder how such children make it in our society while so many others don't or struggle to find their place. This past year I had enough time to read one book in its entirety. It was published last year and is called "Why Nations Fail" by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. I really enjoyed reading it as I am a fan of history and that the book puts forth a theory as to why some societies do better than others. To summarize, countries or societies that are inclusive towards their citizens do better than those who limit participation or extract resources away from those who need it.

So what does this book have to do with the eight-year-old? How am I making the connection? According to Webster online, the definition of "include" means "to take in or comprise as a part of a whole or group." So who took in that child? I know for a fact that his mother helped him get caught

up with his homework and that his teachers spent more time with him. The lady at the library helped as well along with his older brother. I am pretty sure that there were many others. The point that I am trying to make is that when we touch other people's lives for the better, good things happen. If we include people in our lives we are all the stronger because of it. Some things in life are easier to give than others but we

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are all given a choice as to what to give. Time, talent or treasure given to those who need help can go a long way.

I think that is one of the reasons that I like working for Catholic Charities. We help people. My hope is that we can support the next 8 year old child on their journey to adulthood and with your help we can touch people's lives for the better. I am so honored to be in a position that allows us to do just that. We can help ourselves by helping others. Thank you for all the work you do to support our mission.

OUR MISSION

Catholic Charities fulfills the Church's role in the mission of charity to anyone in need by providing compassionate, competent and professional services that strengthen and support individuals, families and communities based on the value and dignity of human life.

The Food Pantry That Was...

Have you ever asked the question, “How in the heck are we going to be able to do that?” I am sure that many of you have heard this question in one or more of its many forms before. It’s usually an open ended question as it often makes us think about what we should do; what we will do; and what we can do. It so happens that this question came up about two years ago at Saint Irenaeus Parish in Park Forest. The question started like many others which were based on a need. I wasn’t there of course but I believe it went something like this. “Good Morning Father Terry.” You know, it would be really nice if we could help our parishioners and the community



Colette Wisnewski

out by offering food to those who need it.” For with the Father Terry most likely replied, “That’s a great idea but how in the heck are we going to be able to do that?”

This is the part where my predecessor, Fred Shannon, comes into our story. Everyone already knows that Catholic Charities has a food pantry in South Holland. We in fact have many regional pantries throughout Cook and Lake County which serve thousands of clients. With that operation come tons of experience and technical knowhow. So when Father Terry reached out to Fred through our parish outreach program, the agency responded. Catholic Charities donated equipment, set up a supply chain for products and helped to train the staff. Colette Wisnewski who is in charge of the pantry has taken an idea and along with the many other volunteers has made something out of an open question. “At first we imagined



a model of pantry involving pre-packed bags. But within six months of operation, we realized a client choice model would much better serve our community and that parts of our school building could be repurposed to fit this model. Having food and choosing foods that respect one’s culture and family traditions as well as any health restrictions is part

The food pantry ... allows clients to come in and choose what they need.

of human dignity. We needed only to reconfigure our room and shelving and work out categories and number of items to follow the guidelines of Catholic Charities suggested foods and amounts.”

The food pantry is also unique as it allows clients to come in and choose what they need. Colette explains, “People choose what they need, sometimes not even taking the full amount we offer based on our inventory and their family size. It saves money and cuts waste, a win-win for both client and pantry.”

Thanks to a donation from the Ryan’s Joy program, the pantry also received fresh produce from Catholic Charities Crisp! Mobile Grocery (www.crispgrocery.com) and through a partnership with S.A.F.E (a sustainable agricultural not for profit) located in Manhattan, Illinois. (www.facebook.com/pages/Sustainable-Agriculture-Food-Exchange/419985234758100).

I don’t know about you but I am always impressed when people come together with an idea and turn it into something real. The food pantry is open every Monday from 10 a.m. – noon.

Volunteer Corner



BY LAUREN GRINAGE

It’s a pleasure for me to introduce our longest serving volunteer in our region.

Maridel Moffett, started her volunteer journey with the agency in 2002. During those years she has volunteered at the annual health fair, children’s Christmas program, various clothing fairs, and now she comes weekly as a receptionist on Thursday.

Maridel was a key member in getting the clothing room up and running when it first began. “I enjoy volunteering at Catholic Charities, being of service to others, giving back to your church and community is a good thing, make you a better person. Also working with nice people,” said Maridel.

Maridel worked in the school system and health care field for 25 years before retirement. Maridel spends her days traveling to see her son, daughter and grandchildren in Texas, Atlanta, and New Orleans.

Maridel is a member of the Knights of Peter Claver Lady Auxiliary since 1995, she has served a past Vice Grand Lady. She belongs to and serves on the bereavement committees at St. Thomas the Apostle. Past awards Maridel has received from The Knights of Peter Claver are Adele Stadeka and Sister Thea Bowan Humanitarian Award.

On behalf of the staff and clients, I would like to thank Maridel for her dedication and helping the community over the years. We look forward to many more years of you volunteering here at the Catholic Charities South Regional Office.



Domestic Violence Counseling and Case Management Services

Services we offer...

- Individual Counseling
- Case Management
- Domestic Violence Psychoeducational Workshops
- Domestic Violence Training
- Referrals
- Bilingual services English/Spanish

Description of our Services

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Our trained professionals provide one-on-one counseling to victims of domestic violence. Victims have the opportunity to learn how to be safe, explore the impact that their relationship has had on their lives, and learn about the dynamics of domestic violence.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Assistance with linkage to resources, housing, food pantry, daycare, etc.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Short-term support groups where victims and survivors of domestic violence have the opportunity to share in a safe and supportive environment. They can learn about the dynamics of abuse, cycle of violence, ways to stay safe, coping skills, and ways to regain control of their lives.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING

Our professionals provide domestic violence training to parishes and community agencies to give them the necessary tools to help families affected by domestic violence.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE SERVICES CALL:

(312) 655-7725

EMERGENCY

24-hour Hotlines: NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE:

(800) 799-SAFE (7233) TTY Hotline: (800) 787-3224

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 911

Counseling Services



BY ZINNIA CARVAJAL

Hello! My name is Zinnia Carvajal and I am a counselor with Catholic Charities through our Community Casework and Counseling Department. We provide professional counseling and case management services to families, couples, and individuals who are experiencing a wide range of social and personal problems. Some of these problems may include: depression, anxiety,

Problems may include:
depression, anxiety,
marital problems,
domestic violence,
sexual abuse, family
issues, illnesses,
homelessness.

marital problems, domestic violence, sexual abuse, family issues, illnesses, homelessness, and other problems that affect the families or individual's ability to cope. Services provided include: responding to a crisis, referral to services needed, accessing services and benefits, advocacy, and professional counseling and family therapy. Services are provided in English and Spanish. Many times finding services in the South Region can be a barrier so I offer services in South Holland and local parishes.

For more information please call: (312) 655-7725.



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News You Can Use

FOOD PANTRY

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Bring ID and proof of residency

CLOTHING ROOM

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to schedule an appointment

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(formerly known as LINK or food stamps) benefits come in

Mon.-Fri. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

ask for Lauren