

## Investing in Teens — and Our Community

### *Northside Child Development Center Expands Services to Teens*

- ▼ Parents everywhere share a common concern: what to do with 13- or 14-year-olds after school.

Left to their own accord, they could easily find themselves in trouble.

And in North Minneapolis — where the state's highest crime rate is recorded — trouble is not hard to find.

Catholic Charities' Northside Child Development Center in North Minneapolis recently expanded to meet the need for an out-of-school-time program for children ages 13 – 15. The expansion provides parents and teens with safe, educational options.

In North Minneapolis, very few programs and resources exist for this age group, making teens there at risk of

falling into the crime or gangs that are prevalent in their neighborhood.

"If we keep children off the streets and doing positive things, there's less time for them to do negative things," said Damont Jones, manager of the teen program at Northside.

### **Skills for Success**

Mentoring teens during this crucial time in their lives has an effect beyond filling their afternoons. The program's enrichment opportunities increase a child's chances at academic and social success and proactively invest in a child's development, Jones explained.

All activities — from job-skill development to discussions on self-esteem —

ready a teen for transition to adulthood. The program teaches and helps teens practice skills: solving problems, making wise choices and accepting personal responsibility.

Staff members also collaborate with each teen's school, working closely with teachers and social workers to ensure academic progress.

Participation in after-school programs such as Northside is linked to improved grades, higher aspirations for college, better work habits, better interpersonal skills

and reduced drop-out rates, according to research by the Minnesota Commission on Out-of-School Time.

### **A Positive Alternative**

Jones understands why parents eagerly awaited Northside's expansion. Having grown up in North Minneapolis, he knows the temptations teens face.

"I've seen what the streets can do to a kid who doesn't have the support of a program such as this," said Jones, who has spent 20 years helping children at Northside build skills for success.

"At Northside, we work to give each child hope and a skill set to be successful."

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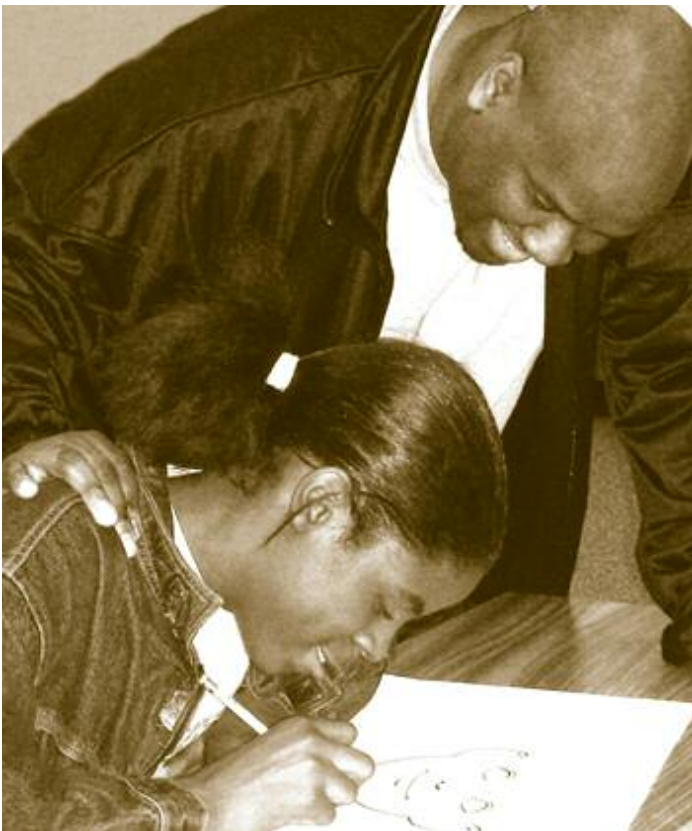
***"I've seen what the streets can do to a kid who doesn't have the support of a program such as this."***

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Parents frequently expressed their concern and anxiety about leaving their child home alone once he or she turned 12 years old and were too old to attend Northside. They know research's findings: after school is the peak time for an unsupervised teen to commit a crime, be a victim of a crime, smoke, drink or use drugs.

"We want to show children how to become well-rounded adults. That's our ultimate goal," Jones said.

"It's in everybody's best interest. It invests in our youth and helps build a strong community." ♦



Damont Jones, program manager of Northside's new teen program, helps teens learn skills and transition into adulthood

## News Briefs

### ▼ Calling For Justice in the 2008 Legislative Session

▼ Catholic Charities' Office for Social Justice partners with lawmakers, parishes and other organizations to advocate for the needs of people living in poverty as part of its mission to serve those most in need and call for justice in the community.

Catholic Charities' 2008 legislative agenda covers issues such as funding for supportive housing, expanding access to health care, working to end poverty and protecting renters from the impact of foreclosures.

*For more information about these legislative issues and how you can help create lasting change to benefit people in need, visit [www.ctwincities.org](http://www.ctwincities.org) and click on "Advocacy."* ♦

### Year-round School Supports Learning at St. Joe's

As spring break approaches for many schools, St. Joseph's Home for Children



is looking ahead to summer — summer school, that is. St. Joe's partners with Minneapolis Public Schools to hold an onsite year-round school.

This partnership allows St. Joe's to provide academic education paired with specialized treatment for children with behavioral or emotional issues. During the summer, charitable contributions subsidize the cost of the school so children can continue making progress with their treatment.

The benefits of students attending summer school are numerous.

"Summer school promotes increased structure, academic achievement, positive peer relationships and it helps support families," said Linda Tunell, St. Joe's Day Treatment program director. ♦

## From Fr. John's Desk

A recent national study found more people in Minnesota receive assistance from the state's three Catholic Charities than in any other state in the nation. Your generosity allows us to serve families and individuals lacking basic needs.

Though we remain grateful to be able to provide assistance, this top ranking, the 14.1 percent increase in food shelf usage and 19 percent increase in demand for emergency housing aren't points of pride for us.

Staff at Seton Services in St. Paul report more people who need help feeding their families. Ten dollars in groceries may not seem like much. But our clients are thrilled to receive a \$10 gift card to a grocery store because it feeds their family a meal they otherwise may have

not had.

Last year, the Dorothy Day Center opened a long-term women's shelter. The beds were full within a week. Our emergency shelter for families recently added beds. Those were filled within days.

Sadly, the situation isn't likely to improve soon. We expect to serve more people this year than last.

We rely on you to help us live out our mission of serving those most in need, and we are grateful for your steadfast support.

Fr. John Estrem, Chief Executive Officer



### More Families and Children in Need Seek Help

More families are turning to Catholic Charities for help with their most basic needs.

Demand at the Dorothy Day Center has increased 117 percent — from 264 to 574 families — since 2005. Overall, the agency's emergency shelters saw a 19 percent increase in requests for housing.

Catholic Charities added more beds for families at the Family Service Center, a 30-day emergency shelter that helps families obtain stable housing.



The number of families seeking shelter and food at the Dorothy Day Center has more than doubled since 2005

The number of families in need of food has increased. Last year, a 14 percent increase in food shelf usage was recorded at Catholic Charities' three food shelves.

At Branch I Food Shelf, 47 percent of people served were children less than 19 years old.

Families point to the state's foreclosure epidemic and a possible economic slow-down as reasons why they are experiencing instability. ♦

### Parishes Partner With Catholic Charities

Learn how you can be an active part of Catholic Charities' mission when Fr. John Estrem celebrates Mass at the following parishes:

- Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis, April 26, 5 p.m. Mass; April 27, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Masses
- St. Olaf Catholic Church, Minneapolis, May 3, 4 p.m. Mass; May 4, noon Mass ♦

## Hope Triumphs Over Harrowing Story

- ▼ Rebel forces in Sierra Leone publicly hunted Edward.\*
- ▼ “I kept moving from one place to another just to save my life,” said Edward, now a client at Branch I Food Shelf.

Edward opposed the rebels’ practice of recruiting children as soldiers. He wanted to stop children as young as 11 from receiving drugs and weapons and being taught to kill. His opposition made him a hunted man.

Edward narrowly escaped death when rebels attacked his village, capturing him, his father and friends. They were tethered with rope, their hands behind their backs. He watched helplessly as friends were mutilated and executed.

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**“Catholic Charities helped me with food, encouragement and hope.”**

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In a miraculous moment amid chaos, Edward and a few others escaped. Civilians broke him free of the rope that had cut into his stomach, leaving the deep scar he has today. Days later, Edward learned his father was killed during the attack.

After five years of hiding and fearing for his life, Edward was granted political asylum in 2003.

### A New Beginning

Edward was grateful to begin a new life in the United States. But as he tried to move on, his wife and daughter were killed in the fighting in Sierra Leone.

The staff and volunteers at Branch I quickly became his family.

“From the very first time I came here, I was welcomed. This place helped me with food, encouragement and hope,” Edward said. “That day really changed my life.”

Today, Edward uses the food shelf occasionally, but more frequently he comes as a volunteer. A job and his schooling give him added stability.

“When I got a job, I thought to myself, ‘I am not going to stay away from the

food shelf,’” Edward said. “I feel so good and happy to be helped — why can’t I make that sacrifice to help other people?”

“To be able to come to terms with his experiences and have the attitude he has on life is amazing,” said Arlene Chosa, program manager of Branch I.

Most inspiring, Chosa says, is Edward’s desire to return to Sierra Leone when the war ends. He hopes to offer help — and hope — by establishing an organization like Catholic Charities.

“There are poor people. There are people suffering. Catholic Charities makes it possible to give help,” Edward said. “That’s wonderful. That saves lives. I was lost. I didn’t have hope anymore. But at Catholic Charities, I built up hope.” ♦

*\*Name changed for privacy*

## March is Minnesota FoodShare Month



People such as Edward made 10,000 visits to Catholic Charities’ food shelves last year.

Donations to Catholic Charities’ food shelves will go even further during the month of March. Minnesota FoodShare will give a percentage of money to the food shelves based on how much food and money each location raises in March.

One of Catholic Charities’ food shelves recorded a 33 percent increase in the amount of food it distributed from 2006 to 2007. Help meet the increased need so men, women and children in our community won’t go hungry. *Mail your contribution today, or visit [www.ctwincities.org/foodshare](http://www.ctwincities.org/foodshare) for more information on how to donate food.* ♦

## Our Programs

### Children’s Services

- Hope Street for Runaway & Homeless Youth
- Northside Child Development Center
- St. Joseph’s Home for Children

### Housing & Emergency Services

- Branch III
- Dorothy Day Center
- Evergreen Residence
- Exodus Residence
- Family Service Center
- Food Shelves
- Glenwood Residence
- Housing First
- Mary Hall
- Secure Waiting Space
- St. Anthony Residence
- St. Christopher Place
- St. Paul Residence
- Visitation Place

### Family Services

- Adoption Services
- Caregiver Support
- Counseling Services
- Hispanic Outreach
- Migration & Refugee Services
- Office for Separated & Divorced
- Parenting Services
- Prenatal Services
- Senior Care Management

### Advocacy

- Office for Social Justice

CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
**VOICE**

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Fr. John Estrem, Chief Executive Officer  
Robert K. Spinner, Chair, Board of Directors

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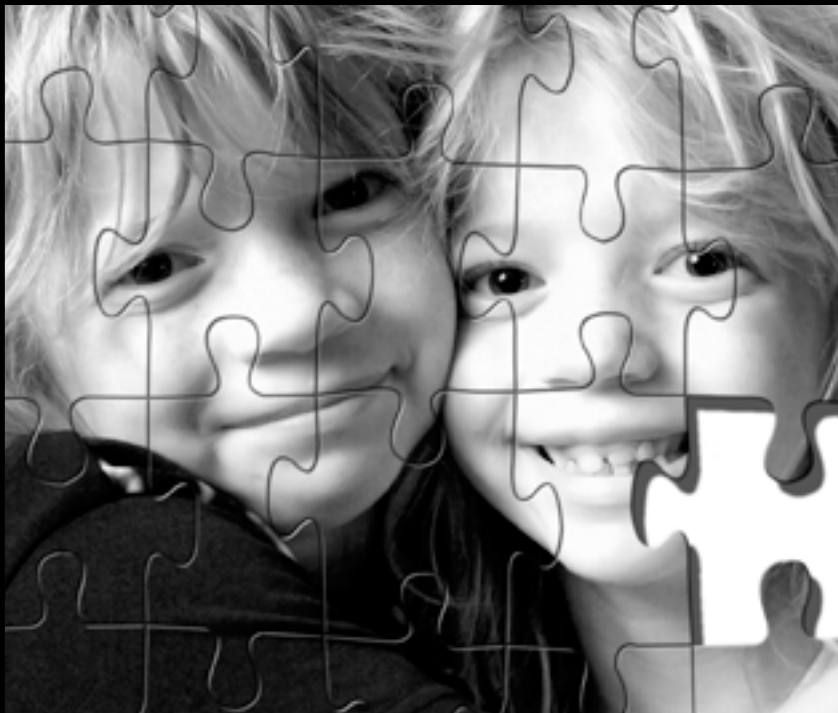
### Double the Impact of Your Gift

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From Early Childhood Education to basic living skills for at-risk teens, your support is more than an investment in their future.

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