

# THE CURRENT

A little good news from the Center..... Summer 2011



## ~THANK YOU~



Dena Marie describes her experience at the Center as “being on a *My Favorite Things* segment of the Ophra show”. She said Trish Duffy, the Center’s Director of Client Services, told her what she needed to hear, not what she wanted to hear, and that made all the difference. Dena said a huge burden was removed from her heart when we helped with her gas bill, provided food and helped her find a job. She advises everyone that “you have to be listening and ready because when God moves he moves quickly”.



Jeanette is an unemployed single mom of three who writes: “When you’re feeling down and thinking that nothing good will ever happen—don’t give up—it’ll happen”. Jeanette lost her job and was in danger of losing her apartment but managed to hang on to her positive attitude. The Center helped her with food, rent and medical assistance, and on her way home her car broke down. Jeanette went into an area restaurant to call for help and saw a help wanted sign. She talked with the manager and was interviewed and hired on the spot!



Everything the Center does is made possible by the generosity and support we receive from donations, businesses and foundations. This thoughtfulness is vital to our ability to serve the poor, the aging and the homeless in our community. We thank you for believing in and supporting our mission: Oppenstein Brothers Foundation; MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; United Way; Society of the Precious Blood; DST Systems; Reynolds Foundation; Health Care Foundation; McGee Foundation; Sullivan Charitable Foundation; Entertainment Properties Trust; Francis Family Foundation; Gates Family Fund; Stacy Charitable Fund; Waris Charitable Foundation.

For many of the Center’s clients, it’s just the beginning of another day of struggle. For others, the recently disabled or unemployed, it is a new way of life as they learn how to navigate a system they never thought they’d need. Many are the “working poor” who live so close to the edge of poverty that a minor obstacle such as a car breakdown can lead to a downward financial spiral that’s impossible to reverse. They are trapped in a cycle of dead-end jobs without benefits or opportunities for advancement and struggle every day to simply survive.

Donations are always down in the summer months as people plan vacations, weekend outings, where to send the kids to summer camp, etc., and this summer is no exception. But poverty continues...every month, every season. It never takes a vacation, it never takes a day off. Your donations to the Center will keep families in their homes with the utilities on and food on the table. Thank you for caring.



**Before and After** pictures from Notre Dame de Sion's annual food drive benefitting the Center. Their November collection total was a record breaking 21 tons!



### Making a Difference

The Center thanks the many people who help us make a difference in the lives of people in need. We couldn't do it without you!

- Almar Printing...Sam is an incredibly generous and supportive friend of the Center & always helps with a last minute crisis!
- Members of the Center's Century Club who provide critical and ongoing financial support for our programs.
- Volunteers who deliver meals and smiles to participants of our Saturday Meal Delivery to the homebound program.
- John Smith... Building Facilitator for the Center who is involved in all aspects of what we do. John always goes above & beyond what is required!
- Mel Metzinger & John Behr...always on hand with strong backs to help John pick-up and unload equipment, donations, tons of food, etc!
- The 175 volunteers who assist the Center on a regular basis averaging 562 hours a month! You are the heart of the Center!
- Spalitto's Pharmacy...our newest partnership in the Center's Medical Matters program. They work with each client to meet their special needs.
- Notre Dame de Sion High School...their annual food drive for the Center totaled 21 tons of food and \$9,000 in donations! Those girls go the extra mile and beyond!
- And our wonderful staff...you always do whatever it takes (even when it's no where in your job description!) to accomplish the Center's mission!

April marked my five year anniversary with the Center and our staff, volunteers and Board have achieved significant milestones that we are very proud of!



Diana Kennedy,  
Director

- Expanded our service area from 12 to 21 zip codes (315,584 individuals) in response to the overwhelming need. This area includes the top four zip codes having the most requests for assistance.
- One of the top three agencies providing multiple client services from a single site.
- We provide assistance for 8 of the top 10 most requested needs
- Medical Matters... benefits the medically fragile -the elderly, the underserved and the medically indigent- by assisting with prescription medication payments and durable medical goods.
- Saturday Meal Delivery To The Homebound... doubled in size & is staffed by volunteers.
- Transportation: only agency providing both reduced fare monthly bus passes and one-ride tokens.
- Elderly: only agency providing Saturday meal delivery, minor home repairs and emergency assistance to the elderly.
- Food: only agency providing food assistance twice a month.
- An exciting new Texas Hold'em poker tournament fundraiser this October!

We are grateful to the many foundations and donors who believe in and continue to support our mission during these challenging economic times.



### Check us Out!

Check out the Center's fabulous new website at [www.kcsocialservices.org](http://www.kcsocialservices.org)!

We are thrilled with the fresh, new look and thank David Merdian, website developer extraordinaire and a member of our Board of Directors. David also made it user friendly so we can continually update it.



## Wishing Upon a Star

- The Center's computer system began a slow and painful death last summer culminating in a winter "burial". An incredibly generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous gave the Center a completely new system including printers and updated software! We now have eleven *brand new* computers (words that are seldom in our vocabulary!) and couldn't be more thrilled. Center Board member David Merdian installed and monitors the entire system to be sure that everything runs smoothly.
- We thank the many people who helped us with our Critical Wish List! The children of Center volunteer Janet Lillis... Sheila, Tim, Katy, Carol & John... donated money for new phones for the Center as a birthday surprise for their mom who is known as "the Voice of Waldo"!
- Kathy and John Kane, and Kelly Schwalbe and his wife Kathleen Fenton, donated money for the purchase of wonderful new chairs for the client waiting room and new blinds for all of our windows!



**Vivian came to the**  
Center for rent assistance  
and went into labor! She  
came back to show off  
her beautiful three month  
old son, Jacob.

### Center Factoid

**Volunteer hours contributed in 2010: 6,850**  
**Volunteers assisting in 2010: 2,100**



**United Way** agency number...674.

## For Your Health



**Mammograms...**free mammograms will be offered at the Center in conjunction with the St. Luke's Mobile Mammography program. This Health Maintenance service is for low income women who are under insured or without insurance.

**Tuesdays & Thursdays...**Nurses from Park University School of Nursing are on hand to take client blood pressure readings and answer general health questions.

**Healthy Choices, Healthy You...**our food pantry program provides clients with fresh fruits & vegetables, poultry, meat & dairy year round.



**Thank you** to the employees of Martin, Leigh, Laws & Fritzlen and MoKan Title Company for choosing the Center as their 2011 "adoptive" charity. And a special thanks to Trish Soltys, the firm's CFO and a Board member of the Center, for making the "adoption" happen. Their "ShamRockin for Redemptorist" event raised over \$1,700 through the sale of paper shamrocks! We greatly appreciate the money and the numerous clothes and household items they have donated, all of which will go to help individuals and families in need. Volunteers from these two companies are at the Center helping out wherever needed.



### Mark Your Calendars

Check our website for details!

- September is Sock It to Poverty...** our annual, citywide collection for new socks and underwear. Call the Center to participate!
- 9/23...**free mammograms for low income women...call to schedule your appointment.
- 10/9...**Crop Walk for Hunger, volunteers will be needed to help with registration at Loose Park. This is a wonderful opportunity to represent the Center!
- 10/21...**the Center's first annual Texas Hold'em poker tournament!
- Nov. & Dec...** volunteers needed to help with holiday food basket distribution!



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## ~ON THE HOMEFRONT~



- New faces! The Center welcomes Carol Hookham as our Administrative Assistant! With her wonderful office skills, sense of humor and compassion, Carol is a great asset to the Center's team. We also welcome Trish Echavarria who prepares the delicious meals for our Saturday Meal Delivery program to the Homebound. Trish cooks for her large family preparing everything from scratch! She is a student at UMKC School of Dentistry.
- Julian Limos, a treasured friend and longtime volunteer of the Center died over the winter. Both Julian and his wife, Mary, volunteered as backup drivers for our Saturday Meal Delivery program. Mary volunteers weekly in our Clothing Room and Julian would always take time to chat with everyone he knew when he dropped her off. His friendly wave and hearty "hello" will be forever remembered.

***Thought for the day...*** If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain. (Maya Angelou)