

We reach out

Figures indicate number of people served by parishes in 2008.



Housing Programs

129



Food Programs

175,205



Health Related Programs

21,744



Socialization and Neighborhood Services

46,586

How parishes help

By Lou Baldwin

SPECIAL TO THE CS&T

It is really people helping people. In 2006, according to a report compiled by the Archdiocese, local parishes assisted 326,721 people. In 2007 that figure climbed to 384,615, and in 2008 a whopping 484,992 individuals were assisted.

Were Catholics responding to greater needs during a deepening recession, or was it just better reporting?

Probably a combination of both, said Robert J. Miller, director of the archdiocesan Office for Research and Planning, which compiled the report based on self-reporting by the parishes.

"It's a relatively new report and we are still dealing with it. It takes between three and five years for a report to settle in and I'm just starting to feel comfortable with the figures," he said. "But the current environment would argue the parishes are doing more because people need more."

If anything, the report at this point isn't giving the entire breadth of the charitable works done in the parishes. Not every parish reported special outreach programs, and one assumes they were not as the Gospels put it, "hiding their candle under a bushel." They simply never got around to sending the report, or reporting all of their outreach programs.

The reports breaks social outreach down into a number of categories: food programs, housing programs, addiction services, health related programs, education and enrichment programs, basic needs assistance, socialization and neighborhood services, pregnancy services and other services.

The largest category is the most basic — food services with 175,205 people served in 2008. This could take a number of forms. It could be feeding programs (soup kitchens), home food delivery, a food cupboard for distribution of groceries, holiday distribution, for example baskets at Thanksgiving or Christmas, and food collections for others, usually by parishes that do not have extensive poverty.

Parishes with strong food outreach programs are sometimes in places one would not necessarily expect. For example, St. John the Baptist in Ottsville served 7,650 through their food cupboard. Obviously many if not most are multiple visits by individuals but that is still a very large number.

"We have a real mix of very wealthy to

very poor, the need is there," said the pastor, Father Raymond Diesbourg, M.S.C.

St. John's program, directed by parishioner Cathy Leidke, is called "The Lord's Pantry." Parishioners of the 1,300 household parish bring food to Mass with them weekly and the volunteer-operated pantry is open three days a week.

There is an ecumenical dimension; the local Lutheran congregation and other Protestant congregations are also generous contributors to the pantry. As further outreach, the parish has added a health clinic with volunteer doctors and nurses giving health assessments to visitors to the pantry.

One of the subcategories under education and enrichment programs is pastoral care for migrants and refugees, with 12,286 individuals served, but 10,000 of them are at a single location — Mision Santa Maria Madre de Dios in Avondale, which serves an immigrant and migrant Hispanic population. That's a round number; is it more than 10,000 or almost 10,000?

"It's probably close to 12,000 now," said Msgr. Francis J. Depman, the Mision chaplain. "The numbers keep increasing — the community has a high birth rate with lots of children and lots of young adults."

In addition to spiritual service, the Mision distributes donated clothing, food, furniture, household items and bedding, with many of the items coming from other parishes throughout the Archdiocese.

The Mision also provides translation services, an important service for people who do not speak English but must cope with immigration matters and other legal issues. It has a dental clinic, does advocacy work for the people and tries to help them find housing or work.

"It's a challenge that keeps us going seven days a week," Msgr. Depman said.

The archdiocesan report clearly shows the challenge of addressing the needs of our often needier brethren is being met by Catholic parishioners in all five vicariates of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

It might be a strong bereavement program at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Southampton; thousands of toys collected annually each Christmas at St. Joseph, Aston; thousands of meals delivered

to homes at St. Francis of Assisi, Springfield; a strong literacy program at Incarnation of Our Lord in Philadelphia-North; or nursing and health ministry at St. Francis de Sales in Philadelphia-South. The work of the Lord goes on.

Lou Baldwin is a member of St. Leo Parish and a freelance writer.

Are you being served?

Yes — the following indicates people served in the Archdiocese in 2008:

Parishes
484,992

Catholic Social Services
165,532

Total
650,524

Catholic Social Services

Community-based services 141,000
Housing and homeless services 8,121
Juvenile justice services 7,063
Youth programs 6,369
Developmental programs 2,979
Total 165,532

Nutritional Development Services

Meals provided 10,483,159

Catholic Health Care Services

Nursing care, assisted living, independent care beds 1,529
Resident days 540,660
Parish nurse visits and calls 33,378

Catholic Social Services provides similar, but different, outreach

Parish Social Ministry is but one aspect of Catholic outreach in the Archdiocese. Another major component is archdiocesan Catholic Social Services, but the two are so radically different they do not present easy comparison.

Catholic Social Services' 2008 Annual Report shows 165,532 clients served and a budget of more than \$111 million. The parish report shows 484,000 people served but no dollar figure is given.

The reasons are simple. Many of the clients served by Catholic Social Services are receiving extensive services, in some cases total care. The staff is for the most part trained professionals with a small number of volunteers.

According to the annual report 86 percent of the revenue comes from government contracts, including Philadelphia Department of Human Services and Community Behavioral Health. Another 2 percent comes from fees paid by clients, and the remaining 2 percent comes through donations, the Catholic Charities Appeal and United Way.

Parishes may or may not have a paid staff member directing outreach programs, but the overwhelming number of workers are strictly volunteer. Almost everything distributed comes from donors in the parish or other parishes.

Parishes on their own could not operate facilities for people with disabilities, or comprehensive family service centers, or residential programs for children. They would not have the expertise or the funding. The two, Catholic Social Services and individual parishes are partners, each with their own special gift. And there is a third component. That is the outreach programs run by individual religious congregations, by schools and by Catholic organizations such as the Knights of Columbus, which no report covers.

"All of this is the Catholic Church," said Robert J. Miller, director of the archdiocesan Office for Research and Planning.

— Lou Baldwin

Parish services: a 3-year look

	Parishes serving			People served		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Feeding Programs	35	31	34	34,903	40,288	52,326
Home Food Delivery	102	118	112	15,708	17,988	25,135
Food Cupboard	84	88	108	20,742	25,849	30,222
Food Distribution (Holidays)	168	181	190	19,403	20,897	31,508
Food Collections for Others	131	138	138	24,122	27,750	36,014
All Food Programs				114,878	132,772	175,205
Habitat for Humanity	16	15	13	157	604	78
Home Mortgage Assistance	10	15	15	67	44	51
All Housing Programs				224	648	129
Alcoholics Anonymous	78	62	65	3,292	3,818	4,061
Narcotics Anonymous	29	15	15	985	873	953
All Addiction Services				4,277	4,691	5,014
Nursing and Health Ministry	51	76	77	5,271	7,924	9,014
Health Support Groups	11	14	23	411	319	649
Blood Drives	123	132	133	9,736	11,575	12,081
All Health Related Programs				15,418	19,818	21,744
Bereavement Programs	118	124	120	7,628	7,301	6,703
Pastoral Care of Migrants	26	24	33	1,541	13,073	12,286
Literacy Programs	22	20	24	956	890	1,389
Child Care Programs	22	21	27	719	628	913
Head Start Programs	18	10	18	973	513	1,036
CARES (Extended Day)	130	142	144	5,413	7,097	6,814
All Education and Enrichment Programs				8,061	9,128	10,152
Abstinence Education	22	22	27	1,919	2,153	4,728
Marriage Promotion Programs	62	72	73	2,755	3,191	3,464
All Family Programs				4,674	5,344	8,192
Cash Assistance	83	84	100	1,683	1,581	2,262
Clothing Drives	143	154	166	11,437	18,074	18,598
H.O.P.E. Programs	43	43	45	2,526	2,081	4,282
Fundraising for Social Ministry	128	150	147	13,490	19,120	38,842
Gift or Toy Collections	182	206	216	50,033	54,953	63,626
All Basic Needs Assistance Programs				79,169	95,809	127,610
Sister Parish	23	44	46	4,972	5,961	18,848
Camps	56	58	68	4,274	4,535	5,457
CYO Social Ministry	132	134	140	14,965	15,362	19,718
Senior Citizen Programs	129	134	141	13,067	12,374	12,611
Community Organizations	26	27	32	2,790	2,172	2,157
Other Neighborhood Services	22	29	33	2,208	1,801	6,643
All Socialization and Neighborhood Services				37,304	36,244	46,586
Services for Unemployed	16	21	20	529	505	365
Homemaker Services	33	37	41	686	914	1,134
Homebound Senior Services	136	143	154	8,703	8,733	7,262
Transportation	103	103	114	2,636	2,620	3,931
Tuition Assistance	120	127	146	2,504	3,112	3,921
All Social Support Services				15,058	15,884	16,613
Newborn/Mother Support	56	65	71	2,337	2,873	3,223
Counseling Parenting Prenatal	20	19	21	325	751	790
Support for Those Affected by Abortion	26	23	22	163	322	291
All Pregnancy Services				2,825	3,946	4,304
Other Services				30,692	33,996	31,606
Totals				326,721	384,615	484,992

We reach out



Addiction Services

5,014



Pastoral Care of Migrants

12,286



Sister Parish

18,848



Other Services

31,606



Bereavement Programs

6,703



Education and Enrichment Programs

10,152



Basic Needs Assistance Programs

127,610



Social Support Services

16,613



Family Programs

8,192



Pregnancy Services

4,304