



In Joy and Hope

by

Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy

CCS makes a difference in people's lives

Deep within the human heart is the desire to live our lives in such a way that we are able to make a difference. We dream of what we might say or do to make peace a reality in the world today. We ask how we must prevent the hunger and starvation that robs people of the gift of life when we know how much food is wasted and squandered. We seek ways to offer every person gainful employment to earn a living and maintain each person's human dignity. We hope that somehow or other the root causes of poverty and homelessness might be addressed to offer people a quality experience of life.

Yes, these are questions that haunt many people in the world today. Yet, despite our hopes and dreams, the contradictions to human life and dignity remain powerful realities in our society. Is there any solution? Is there any answer?

Catholic Community Services

Here in Western Washington, we are fortunate in having Catholic Community Services asking the same questions that we raise so often. However, the difference is that Catholic Community Services looks for the solutions and the answers by reaching out to help people in concrete ways that do make a difference. CCS is able to fulfill its ministry and mission through the help and assistance that we offer.

Catholic Community Services has grown to become the largest private, multi-service agency in the state of Washington. Each year, CCS provides more than 93,000 low-income children, families and elderly persons with caring human services through 96 agency programs.

Catholic Community Services describes its mission by saying, "We believe that a child should grow up in a loving and nurturing environment. We believe that the elderly should be able to live with dignity. We believe in help and compassion for the impoverished and the poor. We believe in the struggle to bring about change in the systems that cause human suffering. We believe in all of these things for all people, whatever their color, or whatever language they speak or however they worship. CCS not only articulates its mission in powerful words; CCS helps to make these words come alive by making a difference in people's lives.

Stories that need to be told

I am impressed, as I suspect you are, to read the statistics regarding the ministry and mission of Catholic Community Services. However, I have learned over the years that behind each statistic is a human face. The face of the poor is often voiceless. The face of the needy can easily be ignored. The face of the homeless can be forgotten. Each cries out for help. It is amazing how Catholic Community Services responds to this cry.

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Joan is a woman in her 50s, but she looks much older. Chemical dependency and personal problems made her life one of tragedy and despair that made her homeless and hungry on our city streets. She discovered Catholic Community Services and now is part of a loving and caring community where her life has taken on a new meaning and she is beginning to offer her gifts and love to others.

John has been alone for years. Homebound and crippled, his days can be long and boring. However, a CCS worker stops in each day to break the silence and assists John in fulfilling basic human needs. Heather is young, single and pregnant. She knows her choices, but wants to give birth to her unborn child. Who will help? Catholic Community Services provides assistance and housing to Heather and her life suddenly takes on new purpose and meaning.

What is the common thread behind each of these stories? It is the help and assistance that Catholic Community Services offers that makes a difference in people's lives.

Will you help?

For every person such as Joan, John or Heather, there are a hundred more crying out for help in our communities today. Catholic Community Services wants to offer such help, but it needs support and assistance. Each year at the beginning of December, Catholic Community Services appeals for help to continue its mission and ministry. The contributions that people offer at this time touch human lives and make a difference.

Catholic Community Services is an invaluable and essential part of the mission and ministry of the Church in Western Washington. It continues the mission and ministry of Jesus in hearing and responding to the cry of the poor. May we hear that cry as well. Will you help? May God's grace and peace be yours.