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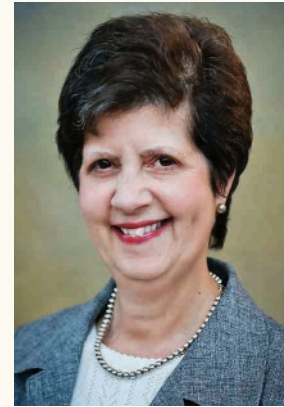
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Faith in the Future



FEBRUARY 2025

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



The magnitude of beginning my journey with Catholic Charities just as the agency embarks on its second Century of Service in the Archdiocese is not lost on me. It is important to pause and acknowledge this profound significance while I navigate and acquaint myself with the nearly two dozen programs here. These programs have been integral to shaping the South Louisiana community for the last 100 years, inspiring generations to look out for one another.

Any trepidation I might have felt as one starts a new career was easily unfounded. Just as Catholic Charities welcomes everyone with no bias, I too have felt the same inclusiveness. As we embark on this new Centennial, I have quickly experienced what has made this organization so singular over the last 100 years. I was fortunate enough to be able to spend several weeks with Sr. Marjorie as she prepared for retirement after 12 years at the helm. I am grateful for

her time, attention, and continued support. Her impact here will be felt for many years to follow.

I was also blessed to be present during some notable milestones and events for Catholic Charities. At the Centennial Mass at St. Louis Cathedral in November, I realized how powerful 100 years of service truly is. It filled me with deep gratitude that further inspired me to unite with everyone to continue this agency's vital mission. I also saw firsthand the compassion of our neighbors during our Thanksgiving basket drive and Christmas drive. There is no doubt I am in the right place, where God has called me to be.

Additionally, I witnessed how the community bands together during times of heartache. Following the devastating events on New Year's Day on Bourbon Street, Deacon Martin and I were invited to represent Catholic Charities at an interfaith prayer service at St. Louis Cathedral, attended by then President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden.

We each carried a candle up the main aisle memorializing one of the victims. It was an incredibly emotional experience that I will never forget. I believe this solidarity I shared with those gathered is a reflection of the legacy and work of Catholic Charities over the last century as we offer hope, comfort and services to all. I want to assure all those seeking refuge in the shadow of desperation that they can always rely on Catholic Charities.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Fr. Tim Hedrick, the pastor of St. Catherine of Siena. His inspiring leadership has not only enriched my life as a Catholic but also ignited my passion for parish ministries. Through his guidance, my spirituality and relationship with Christ have flourished.

I'm invigorated by what is to come in 2025 and beyond and look forward to learning everything about our programs as well as developing relationships with staff, volunteers, supporters and friends. I look forward to taking this journey with all of you as we honor the past while building a brighter future together.

With gratitude and blessings,

Cynthia T. Hayes
President and CEO

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans



Cynthia carries a candle during an interfaith prayer service for the victims of the Bourbon Street attack. Photo courtesy of the Clarion Herald.

SECOND COLLECTION

Please donate today to help Catholic Charities continue our mission of helping our neighbors meet immediate needs and face long-term challenges!



Held during weekend Masses on February 22 and 23, 2025



Use QR code or go online to make a secure donation at www.ccano.org/secondcollection



Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans provides life-giving programs that deliver health and human services to the most vulnerable and needy throughout 8 civil parishes in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. We serve people regardless of race, religion, age, ethnicity or economic status.

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Please remember Catholic Charities in your will.

Get to Know Cynthia Hayes, our new CEO

How did you meet your husband?

I met my husband **Steve** when we were both teaching at Holy Cross High School. My first year was his last year. He was completing his master's degree and moving on to his Ph.D. coursework. We have now been married for 43 years.

Steve teaches at Jesuit High School – also in his 43rd year. He teaches U.S. History and Civics. He was also an adjunct professor at Tulane University's School of Professional Advancement for 14 years.



Do you have any children?

Yes, I have three sons:
 ■ **Justin** is the oldest and he is an infectious disease physician practicing in Tucson, AZ at the University of AZ College of Medicine. He was just promoted to Clinical Associate Professor.

■ **Bryan** is our middle son, and he is in private banking. He is a Senior Vice-President at Hancock-Whitney here in New Orleans. My daughter-in-law **Kristen** is an attorney with Baker Donelson. We are blessed with three grandchildren: **Tucker**, 5; **Layton**, 3; and **Brielle**, 1.

■ **Darren** is our youngest son. He works at Tulane University and is the Manager of Campus Engagement and Executive Communications. He also enjoys local theater and has been in numerous plays with starring roles.



Any pets?

Yes, we have a black lab named **Kaye** that we rescued during the pandemic. She is very smart, super spoiled, and sweet. Our vet says



that she has won the doggy lottery!

What are some things you like to do outside of work?

I really enjoy my church ministries – especially those that the St. Catherine of Siena Women's Club serves. Volunteering and doing my part in assisting those who are less fortunate is truly a calling. Calligraphy and painting also allow me to unwind. I especially love painting dogs and have painted my dog, family dogs, and those of my friends.

Favorite book?

To Kill a Mockingbird – It's a poignant display of racial inequality, courage, determination with conviction, and compassion.

Favorite movie?

A Man Called Otto – Tom Hanks is such a gifted actor. He portrays Otto who is outwardly disgruntled after losing his wife, and treats his new neighbors who are being kind and considerate with rudeness. Ultimately, he leaves his house to those neighbors who were surprised by this. It brought who he really was into focus. It is not just the surface – understanding why and what is beneath is of ultimate importance.

Favorite Mardi Gras parade?

Orpheus – my husband and I had the opportunity to ride one year through an invitation from the Sheraton Hotel. It was an extraordinary experience. Seeing it from a rider's perspective is amazing. There is no leg room once you store your throws. My goal was to give them away quickly. They did last through the ride, though. Mission accomplished!

What is your favorite place to eat?

Mandina's in Mid-City – a hidden gem and neighborhood favorite. It is what I feel is a real New Orleans experience. Great food – the best fried seafood anywhere (a guilty pleasure that is worth the calories and any health consequences!). The servers are very friendly and accommodating. It is my go-to for anyone that I am hosting from out of town.

Adoption Services Helps Couple Start Their Forever Family

When Lane and Toni Dugas were contacted regarding the potential adoption placement of their daughter Sarah, they were eager to let their six-year-old son Dominic know about the new addition. When Toni shared the news with Dominic, he excitedly stated, "Let me go tell Dad!"

The joy and enthusiasm in the Dugas household were undeniably contagious. The couple had been working with Catholic Charities' Adoption Services to adopt Sarah for about 18 months. Adoption Services is a full-service program that seeks to link children of all ages to their forever families. Although Sarah's adoption was closed, where the birth parents are not in contact with the adoptive parents, there is always flexibility later to make it open if everyone is in agreement.

Toni and Lane had struggled to start a family for quite some time prior to the open adoption of Dominic through Catholic Charities, which took about two years. They first worked with a fertility institute, which became cost prohibitive.

"It wasn't a good fit for us. They try to help you get pregnant at all costs. It didn't make sense to me. If you have a child, you should provide a good environment and not be in debt from fertility treatments. We wanted to provide a stable

environment for our family in which they could flourish," Toni said.

After looking into other options, Toni and Lane began giving adoption real consideration.

"We came to Catholic Charities and liked how the protocol worked. They try to keep the baby and mom together, offer counseling and support for mom so when she decides to do adoption, it is really what she wants to do. We felt strongly about that. It mattered how the parents felt about their decision. We see the child as such a gift, and we want the parents who gave us this gift to be happy and feel satisfied about their decision," Toni said.



Toni and Lane with their son Dominic and baby daughter Sarah.

For parents in similar situations, Toni and Lane recommend keeping an open mind, trusting the process, and to be comfortable with waiting.

"Danna and Cindy at Adoption Services were knowledgeable and careful about each step in the process. Concern for the birth mom and the adoptive family were always their main priority. The waiting isn't easy, especially when it's close to getting a baby placed with you. But there is comfort knowing that you are dealing with an agency that has your best interest in mind," said Lane.

For more information, visit ccano.org/adoption.

Notre Dame and Holy Cross Unite for Expecting Mothers

During the 2025 Allstate Sugar Bowl, the Notre Dame Alumni Association and Holy Cross School united to create beautiful welcome bags for expecting moms! These heartfelt gifts, complete with cozy blankets, will support local nonprofits like Pregnancy Services at Catholic Charities.

A huge THANK YOU to Notre Dame Alumni and the Holy Cross Tigers for your incredible kindness.

Together, we're making a difference in our community!







Catholic Charities

Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal

Join us in honoring the incredible legacy of Archbishop Philip Hannan. Each year, Catholic Charities proudly presents the Archbishop Hannan Community Appeal (AHCA) to raise essential funds for our life-changing programs. This year, we aim for a goal of \$1.75 million! Your generous donation can transform lives and uplift those in need. Together, let's continue this vital mission. Support Catholic Charities today and make a real difference. Scan the QR code or visit www.ccano.org/ahca.

