



Immediate Release

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**Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark Hosted Its Annual Spring Dinners
Focusing On Homelessness**

Newark, NJ, June 1, 2009 -Dr. Phillip Frese, President and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark and his executive staff, hosted its Annual Spring Dinners to focus on the problem of homelessness. The dinners were for the residents of Catholic Charities' shelters, including Hope House, St. Lucy's Shelter and Franciska Residence located in Jersey City and St. Rocco's Family Residence and St. Bridget's Residence located in Newark. Dr. Frese and his staff served dinner to over 200 residents. The food was donated by Calabria's Restaurant in Livingston, New Jersey. Reverend James Tortora, Chaplain of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark started each dinner with a blessing of the food.

The first dinner, on April 16th was held at Hope House, a family shelter for women with children. Hope House is staffed around the clock and has capacity for sixty women. Over twenty mothers with very young children attended the dinner. This was a great opportunity for the Catholic Charities' staff and the residents to interact. It was a relaxing evening for the mothers to enjoy a meal while being served. Kabili Tayari, Jersey City's Deputy Mayor presented Dr. Frese with a Proclamation from Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy's Office honoring Catholic Charities and Hope House for its Spring Dinner, which attracted attention to the plight of the homeless. The executive staff offered words of encouragement to the Hope House residents. The mothers were thankful for the meal and pleased to know that people care.

On April 21st, Catholic Charities hosted a dinner for the mothers and children of St. Rocco's shelter which provides housing for sixty women. The children ranged from infants to teen-agers. It was a pleasant evening for both the St. Rocco's residents and the Catholic Charities' staff. The children had fun posing for pictures with the staff and everyone loved the food. Phillip Terwiel from Mayor Cory Booker's Office of the City of Newark attended the dinner and spoke with the mothers about their challenges finding affordable housing. Mr. Terwiel and Allen Daul, Executive Director of Catholic Charities exchanged ideas for solutions to Newark's homelessness problems. Dr. Frese and his staff uplifted the spirits of the mothers and children in this difficult situation. Most of the mothers find themselves at St. Rocco's because of unexpected financial difficulties combined with the lack of available affordable housing.

On May 7th, our largest dinner was held for the residents of St. Lucy's Shelter and Franciska Residence. St. Lucy's Shelter provides supervised emergency housing and food for homeless single men and women 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all within a safe environment. The shelter provides clean beds, clothes, and complete bathroom facilities along with two meals a day to each of its residents. With a capacity of 80 beds, St. Lucy's is one of the largest homeless shelters in New Jersey; accommodating 511 people yearly. Next to St. Lucy's is Franciska Residence which provides housing to fourteen men that are HIV positive. Individuals from both the shelter and residence gathered in St. Lucy's dining room for a dinner served by Dr. Phillip Frese and his staff. Residents were treated to hearty meatballs, baked ziti, chicken francaise, steamed vegetables, salad and fresh fruit prepared by Calabria's in Livingston, N.J. Many residents returned for a second helping of meatballs. The dinner gave residents a chance to have great meal while socializing in a friendly environment. Leona Beldini, Jersey City's Deputy Mayor came and gave Catholic Charities a Proclamation from Mayor, Jerramiah T. Healy, honoring the works of Catholic Charities' St. Lucy's Shelter / Franciska Residence and its Spring Dinner's focus on the homeless population of our State.

Our last dinner on May 21st at St. Bridget's Residence in Newark was a treat. St. Bridget's is a transitional housing program that provides housing and supportive services to single, homeless men that are HIV positive. It can accommodate 30 men. Individuals can stay up to 24 months while the average stay is 11 months. Residents receive on site case management, counseling and 24 hours personnel assistance. At St. Bridget's and our other shelters the employees treated the residents with respect and dignity fostering a nurturing community. The program manager, Ernest McCullough made the dinner a special occasion for the residents by decorating the tables with matching place settings and using small fish bowls with live goldfishes as the center pieces. Adding to the wonderful meal one of the residents, Larry Butler treated us to live entertainment and sang an original gospel solo piece. Catholic Charities and St. Bridget's received a Proclamation from the City of Newark for its Annual Spring Dinner and our consciousness to care for the homeless. Rose Farias, Deputy Chief of Staff for the City of Newark's Mayor's Office also attended the dinner and toured St. Bridget's. The residents of St. Bridget's made it a memorable evening.

Dr. Phillip Frese, President & Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark said: "The joy and satisfaction expressed on the faces of the men, women and children is indeed rewarding to all of us who volunteered at the Spring Dinners. I wish I could take credit for thinking of this myself, but our former President, Henry Amoroso, began serving dinners to our shelters three years ago. It was through this experience that I knew we must continue the tradition. We plan on doing at least two or three a year."

Catholic Charities is a non-sectarian, not-for-profit social service Agency of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark. As one of New Jersey's oldest and largest social service agencies, Catholic Charities aids approximately 100,000 individuals and families each year to gain assistance and a greater sense of self-worth and dignity. Our mission is pursued through a network of caring, effective, and well-managed social service programs within the four counties served by the Archdiocese: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Union. Catholic Charities focuses on strengthening and preserving family life while restoring the dignity of each individual. Catholic Charities is a Ministry of the Church, a real expression of the Church's commitment to ease suffering, bring social justice and hope to all, without regard to religion, race, or culture.

For more information about Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark and its programs please visit our website at ccannj.org or call 973-639-6523.