

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark receives \$388,000 grant

September 29, 2008 -- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark is pleased to announce it has been awarded a three-year, \$388,600 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its New Jersey Health Initiatives program to help young men and women build the skills needed to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

The grant funds will allow Catholic Charities to partner with five local Catholic High Schools to implement the "Safe Dates" Program, an evidence-based program designed to educate young people about healthy relationships in order to prevent dating violence. With the Safe Dates program, Catholic Charities will expand its existing school-based prevention work adding a new model to its complement of services and new schools to its education partnership.

Ninth grade students from Marist High School (Bayonne), Benedictine Academy (Elizabeth), St. Patrick's High School (Elizabeth), St. Joseph of the Palisades High School (West New York), and Roselle Catholic High School (Roselle) will participate in the program. Workshops, classroom activities, and creative projects will be a part of the program and will focus on developing such competencies as positive communication, anger management, and conflict resolution skills. They will also provide important resources to help any students (or their friends) who find themselves in abusive relationships.

The program will serve 1,500 ninth grade students (500 annually) in Hudson and Union Counties. The involvement of parents and school personnel will be critical to the success of the project.

Tracing its roots to 1903, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark, is one of the oldest not-for-profit social service agencies in New Jersey, providing a broad array of social services to residents of Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union. Catholic Charities touches the lives of more than 69,000 individuals and families each year through 50 programs, including adoption, advocacy, education and special education, shelter care, transitional and permanent housing, older adult services, immigration and refugee resettlement, children and family services, restorative justice and workforce development. In the 2007-2008 school year, 33 schools throughout the Archdiocese received school based counseling, teacher training, workshops and support services from Catholic Charities.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses its funding priorities on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change.

For more information about RWJF, visit <http://www.rwjf.org>.

For additional information about Catholic Charities School-based services, contact Shelley Steinberg, Program Manager of School Social Services at Catholic Charities at 973-266-7983 or ssteinberg@ccannj.org.