

November
2004

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McAuley Manor
Pregnancy Support &
Adoption Services
St. Francis House
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Catholic
Social Services

Compassionate community solutions for anyone in need

Kodiak shelter prevents homelessness

Brother Francis Shelter/Kodiak, which has served the Kodiak Island population since 1991, has seen a 15-percent increase in nights of shelter provided in fiscal year 2004, and a 25-percent increase in meals served.

“The dominant scenario in Kodiak is that people are having a harder and harder time paying their bills,” Shelter Director Monte Hawver said in a recent interview.

The Kodiak shelter’s immediate goal (like the Brother Francis Shelter/Anchorage goal) is to provide emergency night shelter, and help with housing, finding jobs and treatment for addictions. But Kodiak’s long-term mission is to *prevent* homelessness, which it has been doing since its founding more than a decade ago.

Its Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) receives about \$110,000 in federal and state grants yearly through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. Additional funding in the amount of \$20,000 from Kodiak Island Housing Authority for the last year has helped bolster the HAP program as demand for services has steadily increased. “This is an

ongoing partnership to provide homeless prevention services to Kodiak’s Native and Indian populations,” Hawver explained.



Brother Francis Shelter/Kodiak on a recent rare sunny day.

The Kodiak Island Housing Authority refers clients who are in danger of being evicted and clients who need to establish a household, such as victims of domestic violence, or folks forced to move into town from villages for health or other reasons.

“Homeless population dynamics change frequently in Kodiak, and this year was no exception,” Hawver said. “We have seen a higher number of seriously mentally ill clients this year than most years — and we have

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Beyond Shelter Program expands to Matanuska-Susitna Valley

Beginning July 1, 2004, Catholic Social Services’ Beyond Shelter Program subcontracted with Maximus on a “welfare to work” project for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Maximus is a national company that manages programs for federal, state and local governing entities.

The project, named Ticket to Work, consists of six case managers, two case management support technicians, one lead case manager and one project manager. Beyond Shelter employs and supervises three of the case managers — Andrea Benson, Elena Stanley and Elizabeth Gabbard — who are based in Wasilla.



From left, Andrea Benson, Elena Stanley and Elizabeth Gabbard help Valley residents find jobs.

Because the Mat-Su Borough has an unemployment rate of 11 percent, the project focuses on the employment needs of individuals, including assessment of skills, and guidance in job searches. The project currently serves 598 adults, and 35 percent of them are earning an income.

“The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is a unique population to serve,” said Jamie Albers, Case Management Supervisor for Beyond Shelter, who oversees the Wasilla operation. “Many of the adults we serve are able to take advantage of employment opportunities in Eagle

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New shelter on horizon



At newsletter press time, the Anchorage shelter rebuild was progressing at a steady pace as workers prepared the site for winter work. The foundation had been laid and walls were going up.

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River and the Municipality of Anchorage — but those who live in remote areas have a disadvantage in transportation, especially if they don't own a vehicle, and public transportation is limited.”

With public assistance having a limit, case managers are finding many families and individuals who have almost used or have exhausted the 60-month timeframe. Ticket to Work plays a crucial role in helping families and individuals become work-ready, move into the workforce, and become wage earners, thereby becoming self sufficient. 

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sheltered far more women than usual.” During the summer of 2004, many cannery workers were stranded when one of the canneries folded without making its payroll. Brother Francis Shelter/Kodiak fed and sheltered those workers for many nights.



From left, Kodiak's Resource Specialist Zee Roe and Program Director Monte Hawver, are shown in their office.

The drastic changes in fishing activities have also contributed to the declining economy and increased need for shelter services. “The chasm between the haves and the have-nots is widening greatly in Kodiak,” Hawver said. He cites the changing face of fisheries such as Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs), where fishing for some species has been concentrated in fewer hands, which has made it harder for some deckhands to make a decent living.

Another factor is the high rate of occupational injuries in commercial fisheries. “We deal with a lot of people who got


‘Waste Not Want Not’ helps hungry

Using the national model called **Waste Not Want Not**, the St. Francis House pantry is working more efficiently with available resources to maximize the amount and quality of food for its clients.

In addition to an exchangeable basic bag, clients — more than 4,500 a month — may now select items from a “choice” shelf offering a wide array of ethnically diverse, exotic and “fun” foods. Additionally, two more shelves are loaded with certain abundant surplus foods from which families can take as much as they need.

In fiscal year 2004, St. Francis House accessed 400,322 pounds of food from Food Bank of Alaska, a 345-percent increase from 89,913 pounds the previous year. Much was available at no charge. None of it cost more than 18 cents per pound.

Adding the approximately 100,000 pounds of food acquired

from donors, St. Francis House distributed over 500,000 pounds of food last year to hungry families. That philosophical shift and the acquisition of a walk-in refrigerator/freezer donated by the Rasmuson Foundation, which increased food storage capacity, were the two key factors enabling St. Francis House to keep pace with the 17-percent overall increase in demand for services. 




Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Dr. Alma Golden (left) presents a \$50,000 check for St. Francis House's **Waste Not Want Not** project to Catholic Social Services' Executive Director Yvonne M. Chase.

hurt and couldn't fish, and all of a sudden they're way behind,” he explained.

Add to the changing economy the continual high cost of living in the island community — \$5-plus for a gallon of milk — and it's easy to see what an important role the shelter plays in the community.

“Increasingly, people seem to have to choose between paying rent, feeding kids, or paying their electric,” Hawver said. “When a 6-year-old kid comes in with his mother to talk and I'm eating my lunch at my desk — and he stares at it and says, ‘That looks really good’ — you guess he hasn't eaten in a while,” Hawver added. That scene took place in early October.

The bottom line, Hawver said, is that “an extremely large number of our population is living week-to-week.” And while a lot of people are trying to find other occupations to replace the historic fisheries jobs, it is a slow process.

Meanwhile, the shelter's presence has effectively ended family homelessness in Kodiak, Hawver said with pride, a tribute to its small, dedicated staff and the tremendous support of the community. 

Guest column: Welcome Hmongs to Alaska

By Robin Bronen, Immigration & Refugee Services Director

At the end of August, Anchorage welcomed the first group of Hmong refugees who have been living in a refugee camp in Thailand since 1992. Up to 70 are expected by the end of 2004. Their arrival in Alaska will hopefully mark the end of their 30-year flight and forced migration from their homes and communities in Laos. It may never be safe for them to return to their ancestral lands.



Robin Bronen

During the Vietnam War, the CIA recruited Hmong to support U.S. military operations against the North Vietnamese and the Communist Pathet Lao. They fought alongside the CIA, risking their lives to protect the U.S. military. The U.S. government promised to provide sanctuary and protection if the United States lost the war. The Hmong feared that there would be terrible repercussions by the Pathet Lao government for their support of the United States. After the war, their fears were realized when the Lao government tortured and killed thousands of Hmong.

The United States is one of approximately 147 countries that provide protection for refugees, based

on the United Nations' Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. In Alaska, the Refugee Assistance Project at Catholic Social Services embodies our international obligations to refugees. The program supports early self-sufficiency by providing access to English classes, vocational training and employment guidance.

Because of 9/11, refugee admissions have dropped dramatically, with an attendant decrease in refugee resettlement funding. It is unfortunate that in this country of abundance we seem to not have the resources to provide for health care and affordable housing for U.S. citizens — but taking away resources from refugees will not equate with an increase in funding for services needed by U.S. citizens.

Many Hmong refugees who entered the United States between 1973 and 1995 are now doctors, lawyers, school teachers, and other professionals providing services to our communities. All of the Hmong refugees resettling in Alaska are coming to reunite with family members, siblings, parents and children, who are Alaska residents. Please join us in welcoming our newest neighbors.

Ed.'s note: Adapted from a Compass article by Robin Bronen, which appeared in the Anchorage Daily News on Sept. 20, 2004



H.U.G.S.S. & Coats for Kids

Josie Outwater, 10, received a backpack during the H.U.G.S.S. (Helping Us Give School Supplies) & Coats for Kids project, a community partnership of Catholic Social Services, Lutheran Social Services, The Salvation Army, Mountain View Community Center and Boys & Girls Club, and the Anchorage School District. More than 200 volunteers helped 4,741 children during distribution in August.

Holiday Collectibles Silent Auction

Rare collector pieces, from complete villages to unique individual accessories.

WHERE: ConocoPhillips Atrium
7th Ave. & G St.

WHEN: December 11, 2004
11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

COST: \$5 adult; under 12 free
Coffee, cookies, door prizes, raffle.

Benefits Catholic Social Services.
For information, call 297-7719.



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Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER 13 — **Blues for My Brother**, music and entertainment by blues guitarist Jake Matson, singer Lisa Monroe, plus local blues bands. Benefits Brother Francis Shelter/Anchorage. Nov. 13, 2004, 8 p.m.–1 a.m., Bear Tooth Theatre Pub & Grill. For tickets (\$18), call Gene Faulk at 297-7719, or gene.faulk@cssalaska.org.

NOVEMBER 13 — Catholic Social Services is one of four beneficiaries of this year's **Mayor's Charity Ball**, which will be held Nov. 13.

NOVEMBER 14 — **Bowl-a-thon 2004** to benefit Pregnancy Support & Adoption Services. Park Lanes Bowling Center, Nov. 14, 1:30–4:30 p.m. Collect a minimum of \$50 in pledges and enjoy an afternoon of free bowling, food, fun and great door prizes. Call Gene Faulk at 297-7719, or gene.faulk@cssalaska.org.

NOVEMBER 15 — **Thanksgiving Blessing**. Provide a holiday meal for a family in need by donating food or cash to St. Francis House, 3710 E. 20th Ave., by Nov. 15. To volunteer, or for more information, call Linda McDevitt, 297-7706, or linda.mcdevitt@cssalaska.org.

DECEMBER 11 — **Holiday Collectibles Silent Auction**, see page 3.

DECEMBER 21–23 — **GIFT**, annual distribution of toys and food to families in need, **Dec. 20, 21, 22**. Deliver your donations by Dec. 16 to St. Francis House, 3710 E. 20th Ave. To volunteer, contact Linda McDevitt at 297-7706, or linda.mcdevitt@cssalaska.org.

DECEMBER 24 — Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz says **Christmas Eve Mass** at Brother Francis Shelter, 6 p.m.

JANUARY–FEBRUARY — **Seamus Kennedy**. Popular Irish entertainer in concert at St. Patrick Parish Hall, Jan. 22, 28, 29; Feb. 4, 5. Benefits Clare House, Charlie Elder House and McAuley Manor. For tickets, call Gene at 297-7719, or gene.faulk@cssalaska.org.

MARCH 10 — **Mind Games 2005**, annual fund raiser for Immigration & Refugee Services (see column, page 4). March 10, 5:30–10 p.m., Snow City Café. Deadline to sign up: March 1, 2005. Sign up by Dec. 15 to receive 4 free spectator tickets, a \$100 value! Contact Saba Flanagan, 297-7788, or saba.flanagan@cssalaska.org.

APRIL 23 — **Charity Ball 2005**, annual fund raiser for Catholic Social Services includes dinner, champagne toast, silent & live auctions, plus wonderful entertainment. Egan Center, April 23, 6 p.m.–midnight. Contact Barbara Whitehurst, 297-7752, or barbara.whitehurst@cssalaska.org.