

### **El Centro de Oportunidades Expands with Aid of Local CCHD Grant**

El Centro de Oportunidades, an outreach program of Mount St. Mary's, enriches the lives of families in its community through various education programs. As a recipient of a local Catholic Campaign for Human Development(CCHD) grant, plans are underway to sponsor a citizenship program this fall. English language training and GED courses are also provided through this program. "El Centro de Oportunidades empowers the Hispanic community by exposing our students to all possibilities available to them through education, helping the entire family break the poverty cycle," Maria Osorio, Outreach Program Coordinator.

The CCHD grant has also created the opportunity to provide learning opportunities to children of those participating in the adult courses. Recognizing that over 60% of participants were women with children, Mount St. Mary's students worked with the children to foster enthusiasm for exploring science, math, and technology.

Plans to expand are underway, including citizenship courses being offered in Spanish. Passing the US citizenship exam enables participants to secure higher paying jobs to support their families. Increasing English proficiency and aiding in the citizenship process are important steps in breaking the cycle of poverty and allowing participants to pull themselves and their families out of poverty.

Targeting the root causes of poverty is at the heart of CCHD and acts as the Bishop's domestic anti-poverty program. For over 40 years has supported long-term economic development in low-income communities. This is accomplished through local and national grants given to programs which are designed to give those living at the poverty line a hand up, not a hand out. CCHD works to empower low-income people to make lasting changes in their communities.

This year's CCHD collection is November 23 and 24 and provides the funding for local grants to programs like El Centro de Oportunidades which are helping to end the cycle of poverty. For more information about El Centro de Oportunidades or to apply for a local CCHD grant, please contact Becky Van Pool, Archdiocese director CCHD, at [cchdoklahoma@gmail.com](mailto:cchdoklahoma@gmail.com) or (405) 523-3003.