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Blessed Sacrament Parish Offers Scholarships to Homeless Families

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Parish, Lawton, provides a ministry that addresses issues of homelessness in Lawton through an outreach ministry. This program is a community-wide, non-profit organization that assists homeless families with children to find stability. Twelve hosting churches comprise the volunteer body for this community-wide effort. Over 40% of the homeless are families with children, and Family Promise of Lawton responds to this great need for family stability.

While in the program, families are provided temporary shelter while they are being assisted with job counseling or attending school. A case manager works with the family to develop budgeting skills and build resumes. Participants also save towards future housing and are aided in finding affordable housing.

Volunteers from Blessed Sacrament Catholic Parish host and prepare meals for the families once a month. A local Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) grant was awarded Blessed Sacrament to help provide resources to assist participants. Grant funds were used to pay for tuition, books, and supplies needed. Further training or education is the key to opening up new job opportunities which promotes stability and sustainability.

A participant who was working as a night parking lot driver requested assistance. He confided that he had always had an interest in becoming a Pharmacy Tech, but never had the opportunity to pursue that career. Through the CCHD grant, he received tuition and book assistance. Another father desired to be trained in truck driving and received funds toward the \$2,000 driving school tuition.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's domestic anti-poverty program. Each year, the CCHD grant fund is supported by a special collection in parishes. November 23 and 24 are the dates of this year's collection. The collection funds national grants and also supports programs in our parishes which address the root causes of poverty and work for peace and justice. Last year, over \$20,000 were awarded in local grants to programs in the Oklahoma City dioceses like Family Promise.

Family Promise holds an annual community awareness effort, Family Promise Box City Homeless Event. Each participant spends the night in a box, receiving only soup for dinner. This experience is a learning opportunity for participants as well as an awareness tool for those who pass by.

For more information about the Annual Family Promise Box City Homeless Event, or to volunteer, visit their website at www.familypromiseoflawton.org. To learn more about local CCHD grants, or to apply for a grant in your parish, contact Becky VanPool at (405) 523-3009 or e-mail at cchdoklahoma@gmail.com

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