CATHOLIC CHARITIES OFFERS SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM HELP—AND HOPE—TO FLOODING VICTIMS

Help with immediate needs and temporary housing, home repairs and long-term case management.

Flooding of historic proportions affected almost all of southern Missouri from December 23 through January 9, 2016.

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) quickly partnered with the Red Cross and Salvation Army, and staff attended county COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disasters) meetings, Resource Fairs and MARCs (Multi-Agency Resource Centers) to meet with disaster victims.

DEVASTATING LOSSES

CCSOMO Regional Director, Kyle Schott, chairs the COAD that serves Cape, Scott, Bollinger and Perry counties, and reported that approximately 100 homes were impacted in Scott and Cape Counties alone. “It’s a devastating time for these families,” Schott said. “Many have lost everything and their houses will take a lot of repairs to get folks back home.”

COUPLE EXPERIENCES MULTIPLE DISASTERS

The flooding also affected homes in southwest Missouri. CCSOMO provided temporary housing to nine families in the Carthage area that lost their homes, and Shea Lane, CCSOMO’s Director of Disaster Preparedness and Response, reached out to those impacted by the flooding along the Elk River. The wife of one couple is disabled and on oxygen, and she told their story to Shea through tears.

“This couple’s story is amazing,” said Shea. “In 2011, they lived in Jasper County and their home was destroyed by flooding. They moved to Joplin and their house was destroyed in the tornado of 2011. After moving to McDonald County, they left to recover and visit family in Florida. While there, they lived through a hurricane. Now, their home that never flooded before was swamped. They lost their hot water heater, their

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Bear one another’s burdens, and so

furnace, washer and dryer, insulation, sheet rock, and flooring. And when the river receded, it dumped tons and tons of gravel and sand on their property.” Shea pointed to wording on a CCSOMO flyer and said, “See, we’re in the business of offering hope. It’s going to get better. I promise you.” By the time the couple left, the wife was smiling, and Shea teased her, “Be sure to call me before you come to Springfield so I know a disaster’s coming!”

Another victim “watched her house wash down the Elk River, bobbing up and down,” Shea said. She had lived in an RV but it had no tires and couldn’t be moved to escape the rising water. “Everything she owned was in it,” he said.

FEDERAL DISASTER DECLARED
On January 21, President Obama

officially declared 16 counties within the diocese a federal disaster area. This makes individual assistance possible through FEMA, and CCSOMO case managers will be able to guide survivors to these resources, but much more help is needed.

“There’s no easy, fast solution. It will take a lot of repairs to get folks back home.”

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR LONG-TERM RECOVERY
Some parishes and individuals have made direct donations to the flood response and Maura Taylor, CCSOMO Executive Director, was immensely grateful saying, “There are fewer resources available to help than there have been in previous disasters in southern Missouri. There will be no huge influx of dollars from federal or state sources. So every donation will have a greater impact on meeting needs. Even for those families who do receive government funding, it’s not enough to place them back into their pre-flood situation. The maximum grant from FEMA for a home that is completely destroyed is only $33,000. And very few victims receive the maximum award. So we are thrilled to receive this support.”

CCSOMO is committed to helping our neighbors impacted by these floods through the long-term recovery process. Taylor stated, “It will be a long road to recovery for many families but we’ll be there for them for as long as it takes.”

As recovery progresses, volunteers will be needed to help in the repair and rebuilding of damaged homes.
If you would like to volunteer, contact Jill Bryant, CCSOMO Volunteer Coordinator, at (417) 720-4213 or jlbryant@ccsomo.org.

If you would like to help with a donation, please send your check (note “Flood response” on the memo line) to CCSOMO, 424 E. Monastery St., Springfield, MO 65807. You can also donate online at www.ccsomo.org or call (417) 720-4213.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES
HOMELESS VETERAN STRUGGLES WITH DISABILITY. YOUR HELP GIVES HIM AND HIS FAMILY A HOME AND A FRESH START.

John (not his real name) is in his mid-30’s. He’s a Marine Veteran whose specialty was aircraft maintenance. John was honorably discharged with a service-related disability, and has struggled ever since. His wife has stayed by his side throughout the difficulties. They have been married 12 years.

Veteran was honorably discharged with a service-related disability, and has struggled ever since.

“She’s his rock,” John’s case manager Chris said.

Just a few months ago, John and his wife were homeless, sleeping at night in houses under construction, and leaving during the day. Their children stayed with family members.

John took all of this hard, according to Chris, his case manager. “John is a really likable guy and could get jobs easily, but he couldn’t keep them due to his disability. He doesn’t feel like he has much worth if he’s not working. He wants to get back to where he can work. He’s disappointed in himself.” His wife was able to find a part-time job.

Chris immediately worked to get the family housed. CCSOMO provided the deposit and rent. CCSOMO’s Veterans program follows the “housing first” model, based on research that finds the homeless do much better long-term if they are housed as soon as possible, and THEN receive the supportive ser-

>> Continue story on page 6.
THE YEAR YOU CHANGED EVERYTHING: LISA’S STORY

You helped this homeless, pregnant woman find a safe home, overcome drug addiction, deliver a healthy baby, and keep her family together.

Lisa is a small young woman with porcelain skin and crystalline blue eyes. And a troubled childhood.

“I believed I was worthless. I felt hopeless.”

“Mom and dad were alcoholics and drug addicts. Dad was in and out of prison.” Lisa spent three or four years in foster care. She started experimenting with drugs in high school, eventually becoming addicted to opiates. “I believed I was worthless. I felt hopeless,” she said.

Lisa lived in horrible situations—sometimes the “rent” for staying with someone was to get them drugs.

Lisa had a son, but when he was eight months old, he was taken from her and placed in foster care. That was Lisa’s wake-up call.

“I love my son and I know I wasn’t doing right by him. I immediately went into a drug treatment outpatient program. My boyfriend and I were both trying to stay clean. But we lived in a house with another girl who was using, and I relapsed. We both did. Then I found out I was pregnant. I went to a drug inpatient program and they told me about LifeHouse.”

A new journey was starting for Lisa, a journey of healing, hope and possibility.

Lisa said that her perception of life and her circumstances changed almost overnight. “I was given the definition of what love was and it was not at all what I thought it was. You can say you love this person but not act like it.”

With the help of LifeHouse’s counselor and support team, Lisa learned to set goals and achieve them. She completed her drug treatment program; she received prenatal care; she got her driver’s license; she got a job; she took classes; she did everything possible to prove she could be a good mother. Lisa delivered a full-term, completely healthy baby boy—with no signs of distress or drugs. A short time later, Lisa got her older son back and he happily moved into LifeHouse to be with her and his adorable new brother.

Lisa is taking brave steps into a bright future. And at the same time, it is an emotional journey. It takes time, dedication and support to rebuild your life and leave the past behind.

Whenever you support LifeHouse, someone like Lisa is working hard to honor your generosity.

“I need to keep and maintain my relationship with God—that keeps me grounded. As long as I do everything possible that is in my
control, then let go and let God for the things that are not in my control, then everything will work out just how it is supposed to."

Today, after living at LifeHouse for 17 months, Lisa and her boys are living in their own happy home. And Lisa has achieved another goal—she always dreamed of working with animals and she recently obtained a job as a veterinary assistant. She loves her new job!

Lisa is so grateful for the love and guidance she received at LifeHouse.

Before she moved out, she stated, "There's really no other words to say, other than Life-House saved my life."

This is why we have LifeHouse. So people like you can help people like Lisa.

Thank you for giving her the support she needed to deliver a healthy baby. Thank you for giving her a safe place to live and the help she needed to change her life, for the better, for good.

And thank you, Lisa, for your hard work and determination. We are so proud of you and so happy for the new life you are building for you and your family!

There's really no others words to say, other than Life-House saved my life.”

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHERN MISSOURI PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Developmentally Disabled Service Coordination
- Disaster Preparedness, Response & Long-term Recovery
- GoodFinds Resale Shop
- Homelessness Prevention
- Home Repair & Rebuilding for Disaster Survivors and Low-Income Seniors
- Housing and Financial Counseling
- Income Tax Preparation Assistance
- LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home
- Mental Health & Family Counseling
- Pregnancy & Parenting Support/Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Program
- Support Services for Veterans and their Families

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, founded in 2009, is a faith-based non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to serving our neighbors in need regardless of religious belief, race, age or ethnicity.

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info@ccsomo.org

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Serving Jesus by serving others.

DISASTER RESPONSE/HOME REPAIR & REBUILDING

YOUNG COUPLE WITH TWO SONS EXPERIENCE FLOOD AND DESTRUCTION. WITH YOUR HELP, HOME IS REBUILT AND FUTURE RESTORED.

Chris and Chyna are a young couple living in rural Marshfield with their 6 and 8-year old sons. Their home was completely destroyed by a flood in June 2015.

It was the middle of the night when they were woken by cries from the boys. The house was filling with water. Chyna described the chaos, “The boys’ life jackets came floating by and I grabbed them and put them on the boys. I watched my couch cushions float out my front door... It was the scariest thing I’ve ever been through.”

The water reached over five feet high before beginning to recede. They lost everything. Chyna has an upbeat, positive personality but she was worried. The family had struggled to keep up with their bills before the flood, and she didn’t know how they would manage now. “We had no idea how we were going to go forward, or how we were going to get back to where we were before.”

A big grin spreads over Chyna’s face as she says “And in walks Christie Dade with Catholic Charities, and says ‘I’m Christie and we’re going to help.’” Chyna tears up, “I don’t know what we’d do without her. She took my information and said to call her. When I did, she asked me to be at the house on a certain day. I had no idea what she was going to be able to do for us.” Chyna’s face lights up again. “Then Christie pulls up in this giant box truck stacked high with drywall and mud and tape and screws. These great people came and stayed four days working on my house. When they left, Christie said ‘Don’t worry. I have another group of volunteers coming in a few days.’ It was amazing.”

“I don’t know who all has contributed to Catholic Charities, but all I can say from my family is THANK YOU!”

While the home was being rebuilt, a woman dropped by the Catholic Charities office to deliver these hand-made quilt for Chyna’s sons. The woman didn’t know the family but wanted to help. Aren’t people wonderful!

Flood survivor Chyna with CCSOMO Director of Construction Christie Dade.

It took many months and many volunteers, but the house was eventually rebuilt—new drywall, new insulation, new flooring, a whole new kitchen, and bathroom.

Chyna and her family are thrilled to be back in their home, and tremendously grateful. “I don’t know who all has contributed to Catholic Charities, but all I can say from my family is thank you!”

This is the kind of work that will be undertaken in the next year to help the survivors of the recent historic flooding throughout southern Missouri. Please consider helping these neighbors in need with a donation today.

MESSAGE FROM MAURA TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We’re delighted to share these stories and reflections of a few clients and staff members with you.

In every office and place where we meet clients, each and every day, we witness precious moments of success, change, hope and gratitude. These moments are possible because of you.

Thank you for all you do to make it a better world!
Today, a life is better because of you.

It was nighttime when this Veteran family received their donated car, but the dark couldn’t dim their smiles and excitement. The little boy yelled out 
“We don’t have to walk to the park anymore!”

get to his doctor’s appointments or fill prescriptions when needed.

Thanks to the caring concern of a generous person, the transportation issue was resolved. This individual called to say that his mother-in-law had died and the family wanted to donate her car. He knew about our work with Veterans and wanted the car to go to a Veteran in need. Knowing that missed doctor appointments were affecting John’s well-being, Chris and his supervisor were thrilled to choose John.

There was so much excitement and laughter when the family received the car. One of the kids yelled, “We don’t have to walk to the park anymore!” He said that he was sometimes too tired to play by the time they reached the park because it took an hour to walk there. Mom was thrilled about grocery shopping, saying, “We can get more food than just what we can carry!”

John once told Chris that “being a Marine was the best thing I ever did.” Chris asked him if he’d do it again knowing all the difficulties and problems he’s had. John didn’t hesitate, saying “Yes, in a heartbeat!” Being in the service was very important to John and he is very proud of that chapter in his life.

Thank you for helping John get back on his feet, and with the support you make possible, John will be proud of his future too.

During this Holy Season of Lent, please consider a special donation to support the works of mercy being carried out every day for our neighbors in need.

You’re a vital part of our stories!
To ensure that our stories of help and hope can continue, please donate today.

Whose life will you help make better today?

Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri

YES, I want to help our neighbors in need. Here is my gift of $__________.

You may use this form and mail your donation in the envelope included with this newsletter.
☐ Enclosed is my check made payable to Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri OR
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