Dear friends of Catholic Charities,

As a human service agency, the last thing Catholic Charities wants to do is grow. We would prefer to be unneeded, out of business, at peace in the knowledge that even the most vulnerable people among us have their needs met.

Unfortunately, we are not there yet. The enormity of need in our communities is staggering—from a person needing help to stay in a home, to a woman and her children needing a safe place to escape abuse, to an abused child needing a loving, stable family. Sadly, we see more and more people coming through our doors, and we do not have the resources to help the ever growing numbers.

Psalms 19:8 reminds us, “But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.” So we continue to work hard, giving every person the respect and compassion they deserve. For this, I can only praise our wonderful staff and volunteers. They are dedicated, caring, and generous contributors—the envy of any organization.

With such valuable staff, volunteers and your support, we will continue to meet the challenges we face in serving those most in need. We pray that you will continue to generously support our mission to build just and caring communities for vulnerable children, families at risk, and people in crisis.

Peace and blessings,

Paul J. Martodam, MPA
CEO
Catholic Charities

It has been a challenging year, one fraught with economic challenges. Yet, there is so much for which to be grateful and so much to do—indeed even more than before. At the same time, there are fewer and fewer economic resources to do God’s work. Jesus teaches us the blessing of giving even in times of our own need. Remember when Jesus looked up and saw the rich making their offerings in the Temple coffers (Luke 24:1-4), He also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins, and He said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

Blessings to those who make the work of Catholic Charities possible.

Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix

For further detail, visit catholiccharitiesaz.org
As the ripples of the economy caused a tsunami of need, we struggled to meet the rising swell with fewer and fewer resources. We lost some of our staff and some of our funding, but we did not lose our faith. Instead, we took the opportunity to strengthen our resolve and our creativity. We remained committed to serving our community’s most vulnerable: to sheltering the homeless, assisting the abused and disadvantaged, and making a difference one life, one family at a time.

Throughout Central and Northern Arizona, there was an increased need for rent, mortgage and utility assistance; temporary and transitional housing; food; and other community services. Many of those who came to us were in need of our services for the first-time—especially in the rural areas. Some just needed assistance for a short while until their circumstances improved, but others needed sustained assistance as they worked to improve their lives.

In fiscal 2008, we created a new program of sustained assistance, one in keeping with our economic times and with Catholic Charities USA’s initiative to reduce poverty in the United States by 50 percent by the year 2020. We created Project HOPE (Help Out of Poverty forEver). The three-phase program is the first of its kind in Arizona and gives motivated individuals and families the tools and resources they need to break the cycle of poverty and move toward a life of stability… the life of their dreams.

The final phase includes Circles of Support, where our trained volunteer mentors offer guidance and coaching in the areas of job acquisition and career building, insurance, housing, and budgeting and finance. Phase III may continue two years or more, depending on the needs of each of our families.

Project HOPE received its first major funding from The Walmart Foundation and launched in fiscal 2009.

With a full complement of programs that provide short-term and long-term assistance, we are poised to help rebuild shattered lives, hopes and dreams as the economic tidal wave recedes.

Ricardo just needed a hand to help him get by. He and his family were almost evicted when Ricardo fell behind on the mortgage after being laid off from his construction job. We were able to prevent this tragedy with mortgage assistance and urgently needed food. Ricardo started working full time again just a week after his family would have lost their home.

Barbara, a single working mother in rural Arizona, wanted a better life for herself and her son. When she first came to us, Barbara was living in unaffordable housing and needed assistance on many levels. She is one of the first to participate in our new program, Project HOPE, to give clients the education, information, tools and ongoing support they need to break the cycle of poverty and build a financially secure future.