

Among the nation's largest social service providers, Catholic Charities USA traces its roots back 275 years. Today, through innovative programs like the Family Resource Center, 1,700 Catholic Charities member agencies and institutions fulfill a mission of providing help and creating hope for more than 7.1 million people annually, regardless of religious, social or economic backgrounds. According to Rev. Larry Snyder, President of Catholic Charities USA, "these remarkable programs are successful because they create strong partnerships with vulnerable families and organizations in the neighborhoods where they live. Equally important, the programs work to increase the families' economic assets with education, jobs and savings."



FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICE, DIOCESE OF JUNEAU, AK

Award-winning Program: Family Resource Center

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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2006 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

POSITIVE EXPOSURE

For parents in and around Juneau, Alaska, achieving family stability and self-sufficiency can be just as demanding as the region's climate. Catholic Community Service established the Family Resource Center (FRC) in 1999 to help these parents overcome the challenges of employment that is often seasonal and long winters that can isolate them from support. More than 4,000 parents and children have now benefited from FRC's programs and the links they find there to other families and community resources that help them succeed.

FRC stays flexible in both its expectations and its services for families in Juneau, outlying rural towns and Alaskan Native villages, all spread across a large geographic area. "Many of our families 'succeed' in a matter of months," says Executive Director Rosemary Hagevig. "Others require more than one opportunity to rebuild their lives. We change the curriculum or the location of a program virtually on the spot to meet different needs."



UP HERE, IT SOMETIMES FEELS LIKE WE LIVE IN ONE BIG NEIGHBORHOOD. FOR A WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD TO SUCCEED, A FEW FAMILIES HAVE TO STEP FORWARD, RAISE EXPECTATIONS AND MOTIVATE THEIR NEIGHBORS. WE WORK TO MAKE SURE THERE ARE MORE FAMILIES IN THE LEAD.

—Rosemary Hagevig, Executive Director, Catholic Community Service, Diocese of Juneau, Alaska

RAISING EXPECTATIONS AND FAMILY ACHIEVEMENT

FRC's intensive case management helps families with crises that range from substance abuse and domestic violence to homelessness and the emotional fallout that accompanies divorce. At the same time, FRC has its eyes firmly on improving the long-term prospects for all of the region's families.

Staff teach parents to advocate for themselves and other families, access services and manage their finances to build family assets. FRC has partnered with regional health care providers to improve family health and to educate community members about dangers such as fetal alcohol syndrome.

Weekly classes at FRC on topics such as anger and stress management, nutrition and positive discipline help parents create a strong home environment for their children. FRC staff also work directly with parents and teachers to create the relationships that will support children in school. The Center's staff work with halfway houses and prisons in the region to children of incarcerated parents.

Strong relationships with families themselves and with other service providers are key to FRC's work. "Alaska has many proud parents who are determined to succeed," Hagevig says. "We help them build on their families' strengths and access the resources they need."

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Catholic Charities USA, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize Catholic Charities with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.