

WORLD

2013

ANNUAL REPORT



St. Vincent Catholic Charities
PROVIDING HELP. CREATING HOPE.

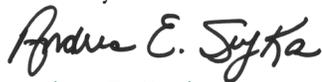
Dear Friends & Supporters of St. Vincent Catholic Charities,

Many of you know that I started my career at St. Vincent's in the accounting area. In this people business, there are certain numbers that never fail to give me pause. One of those numbers is 4,500. That is the number of people we served through our six service programs in 2013.

This is a huge responsibility for the nearly 200 staff and hundreds of volunteers that join together to create a safety net of help. As a contributor, you represent another important number – the number *one*. It is you and your singular commitment to give the gift of financial support which we so desperately need to fulfill our mission to care for those in need.

Every one of those 4,500 men, women and children have a story to tell about their time of need and how they were helped by St. Vincent Catholic Charities. In this booklet we present just a few of these stories in the hope that they will inspire you to be *one* that we can count on to continue to help.

Sincerely,



Andrea E. Seyka

CEO, St. Vincent Catholic Charities



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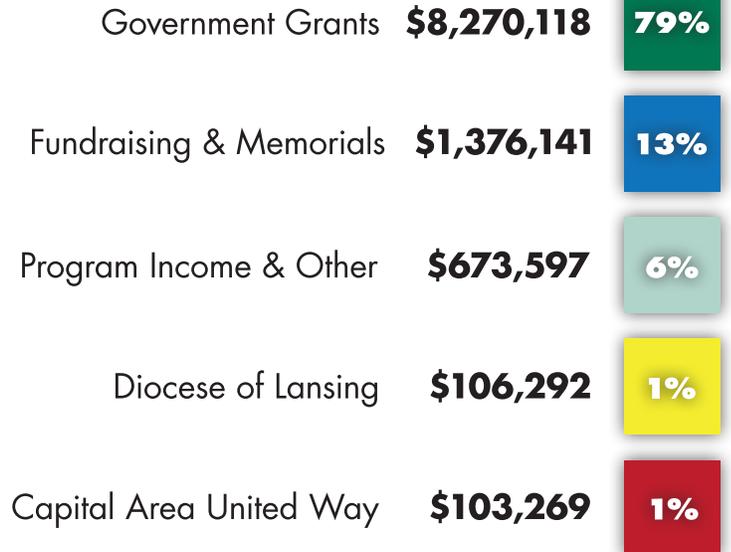
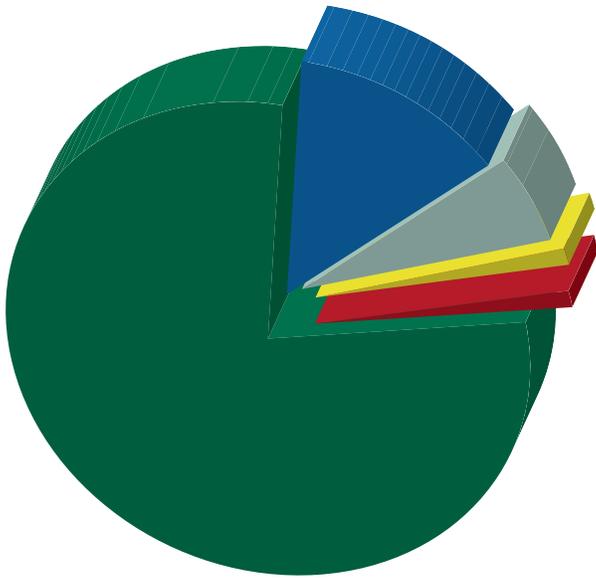
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St. Vincent Catholic Charities annually provides services to thousands of people of all beliefs, in need, living in this community.

2013 Total Revenue \$10,529,417



Clients Served
4,553



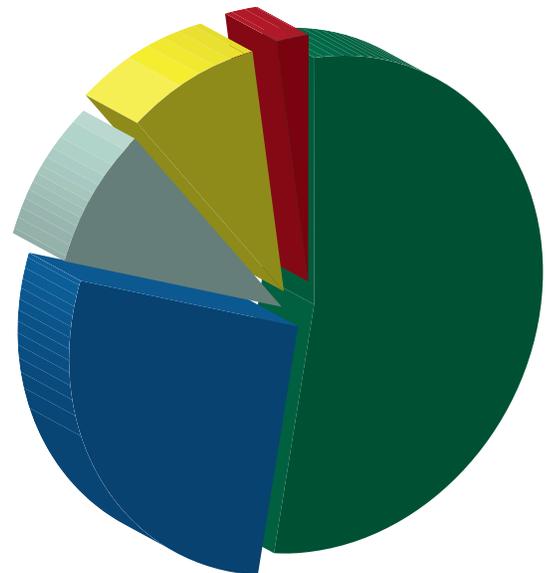
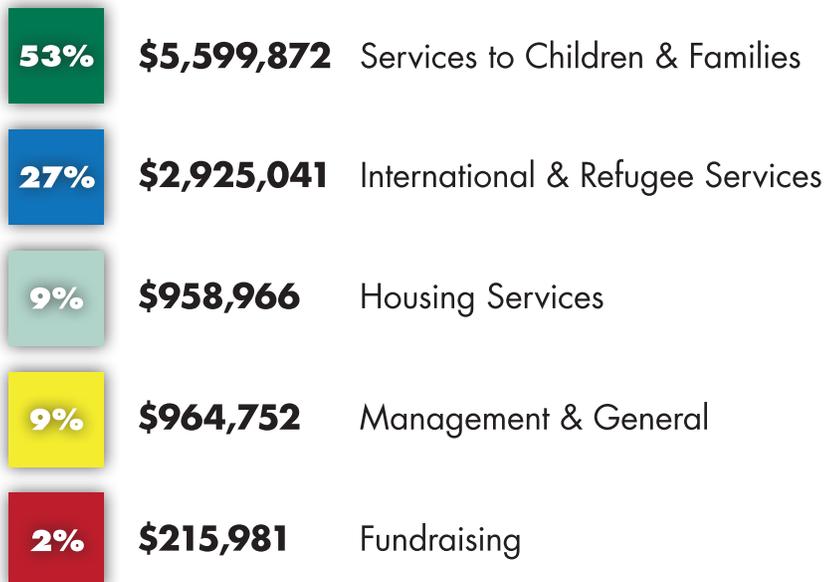
Volunteers
330



Staff
196



2013 Total Expenses \$10,664,612





COUNSELING SAVED MY LIFE

COUNSELING SERVICES: Provides affordable individual, couple, family and child counseling. Issues addressed in a safe and supportive environment include but are not limited to: depression, anxiety, grief, self-esteem, abuse and emotional trauma, couple and parent-child relationship issues, childhood problems, substance abuse and communication skills.

Amelia knew nothing about the counseling services at St. Vincent Catholic Charities. In fact having never pursued counseling before, she knew nothing about choosing a therapist. But this she did know – if she didn't make some changes in her life, and soon, she was headed for ruin.

“At the time I was a college student and had next to no money,” shared Amelia. “So, I googled ‘sliding scale counseling fees’ and the first thing that popped up was STVCC counseling. God’s hand was definitely in this, because as it turned out I was assigned to Amy and there couldn’t have been a better match for me.”

This all began in 2008 as Amelia had just completed her undergrad degree. Like many of her college peers there were lots of occasions for drinking. But for Amelia, the drinking was symptomatic of a deeper problem with alcohol; usually triggered by

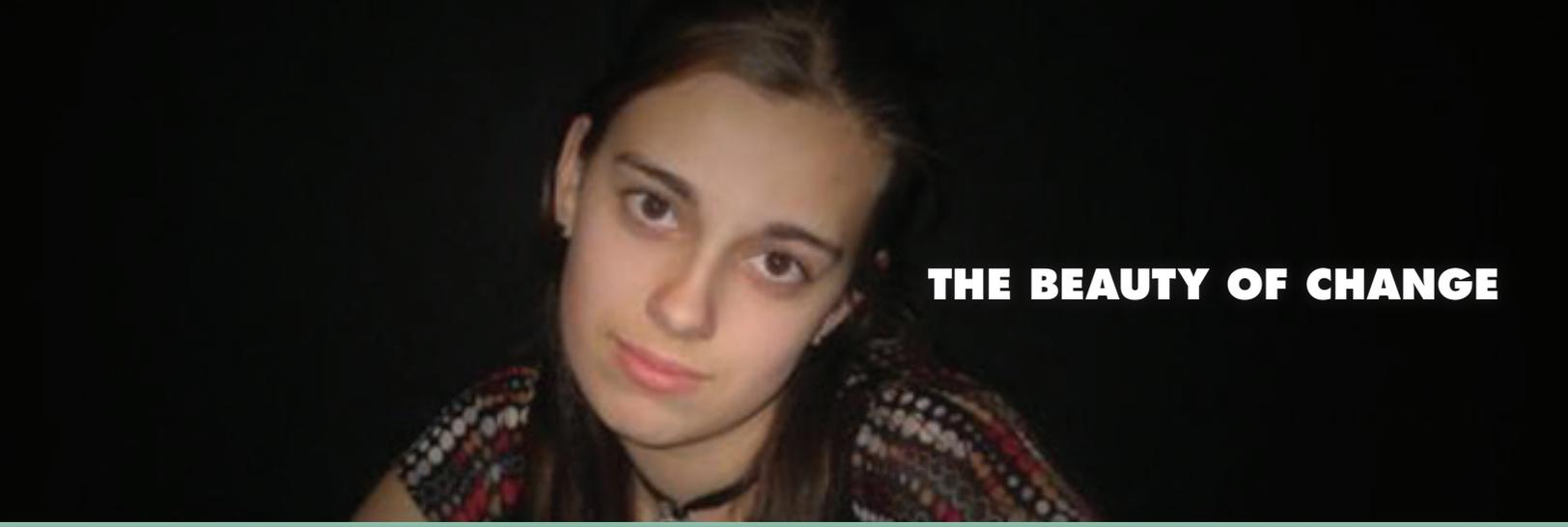
stressful events in her life. “I was drinking like a normal person (I thought) but was having unpleasant consequences from my drinking. After one particular night I woke up and realized I needed help. Even my fiancé knew I had a problem and had let me know that if I continued on the path I was on he didn’t want to stick around.”

At STVCC, it was well known that Amy specialized in helping clients with substance abuse problems. Amy knew that Amelia was not ready to name her problem as alcoholism. During the course of her time with Amelia, Amy established an environment of supportiveness, trust and non-judgment. It was 2011 when, getting sober through entering a recovery program, Amelia was able to admit that she was an alcoholic. “Amy patiently held that space for me, waiting for me to come to the realization about the role that alcohol played in my life.

Counseling laid the groundwork for me to get sober.”

When asked to speculate on the course her life might have taken without counseling and recovery, Amelia admits that it was likely that she would not have gotten to the recovery program without the counseling. “I was literally on the path to destroying everything I was working for if I hadn’t stopped drinking. I would have lost my job, lost my relationship; I just didn’t care. At the time I just wanted to drink, alcohol was my coping mechanism.”

Now, over two years sober, Amelia went back to school and got her masters degree, moved to a new place, and has a job she loves. “I genuinely want to thank Amy and STVCC, if not for Amy and the counseling program I wouldn’t have the purpose and ability to really live my life. I am forever indebted.”



THE BEAUTY OF CHANGE

CHILDREN'S HOME: Offers Long Term and Short Term Residential Care (approx. 4 to 12 months) for children ages five to seventeen. Assessment and stabilization services for children in crisis include individual and family therapy, an on-grounds educational program for children unable to attend public schools and twenty-four hour counseling and role modeling.

"Growing up in my house was crazy," recalled Bernie. "It was difficult dealing with my mother. She was always doing strange things. I knew it wasn't normal." For Bernie the idea of a normal family life was something read in books or seen on television. To further complicate her life, Bernie was sexually abused by her father at a young age, and spent her childhood living with her mother and half sister.

Due to their mother's erratic behavior, Bernie and her sister had to grow up fast. Their mother was unable to provide proper care and supervision, so the girls instead learned to take care of her. "She was afraid to drive, so we walked everywhere. Some days we would walk for miles" remembered Bernie. "She was always afraid something bad would happen, so we couldn't get too far out of her reach." As Bernie grew up, her mother's strange and often alarming behavior continued. It was not until much later that doctors would evaluate and diagnose her as a Paranoid Schizophrenic.

One day during an argument at home, Bernie's mother became angry and called the police. She told them Bernie had assaulted her and Bernie was quickly removed from the home. "It was not true. But no one knew she was sick so it didn't matter" said Bernie.

Bernie was briefly placed in juvenile detention but ultimately ended up in the foster care system. She settled into her new life with her foster family. As the youngest child in her own family, she enjoyed the new responsibility of being an older sister to her foster siblings. But despite everything that seemed to be going right in Bernie's life, she was still battling past and present emotional issues, most of which stemmed from the sexual abuse she had experienced and the dysfunction in the relationship with her mother.

After staying with her foster family for a little over four years, it was decided that Bernie needed help to cope with her problems. At the age of 17 she was brought to the Children's Home at St. Vincent Catholic Charities. At STVCC she was placed in the care of therapists, case managers and staff who were trained to help children struggling with issues of abuse or neglect.

Bernie lived with a group of teenage girls who had experienced similar issues of abuse in their childhood. The girls worked with staff on positive strategies to cope with and express their emotions. They were also taught valuable independent living and social skills. For Bernie the home was like a breath of fresh air. Bernie especially liked hanging around staff members and helping them

to diffuse conflicts between the other children. "I've always been the type to get along better with older people," said Bernie. "I think it was during this time I decided I wanted to become a Child Psychologist, because I realized I was really good at helping people."

Bernie attended high school at the Children's Home. STVCC staff also helped her dual enroll at Lansing Community College (LCC) so she could begin working towards her goal of receiving a college degree. Within a year, Bernie earned her high school diploma and had several credit hours completed at LCC.

When she turned 18, Bernie knew she would soon have to leave the Children's Home. In order to provide her with a strong network of support, staff members went to the State of Michigan and petitioned for the right to remain in contact with her after she left their care. Their request was granted. STVCC helped Bernie transition into an independent living home for young adults and find employment.

Today Bernie is working and attending school at Lansing Community College. Her goals of one day becoming a Child Psychologist keep her motivated and she still regularly calls staff at St. Vincent Catholic Charities for advice and support.

TERRIFYING JOURNEY TO FREEDOM AND A NEW LIFE



REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: Offers intensive services to refugees, asylees and human trafficking victims. Staff locates housing, basic household items, and food. Also organizes individuals to pick-up refugees at the airport to welcome them to their new home. STVCC offers services such as cultural orientation, assistance in applying for necessary documents and programs funded through the US Department of State.

“It was a scary time,” recalled Mohamed. “People were looting homes, raping women and killing each other. Everyone we knew had started buying guns to protect themselves. We are not the type of people to have a gun or fight. We decided to leave instead.”

It was 1993, and 14 year old Mohamed and his family were living in fear in Somalia’s capital city Mogadishu. For years the people of Somalia had experienced the deprivation of war. In 1991, the government was overthrown and mass violence broke out among different tribes, fighting each other for power. Food was scarce and it was nearly impossible for children to attend school or obtain medical care. While most of their neighbors lacked the financial resources to flee, Mohamed’s parents made the decision that no matter the cost, they had to leave.

“The safest way out of the country was by boat,” recalled Mohamed. “The inland border was not safe - people

who tried to cross were at risk of being killed. My parents were able to get us on a boat for a two day trip to Kenya. But that was dangerous too.”

“There was an upper deck to the boat. Some people were placed up top while my family was told to go to the bottom,” said Mohamed. “The top of the boat was destroyed in a big storm. Everyone standing up there died. It was scary because we were all just sitting there in the middle of the ocean. People were running out of food and getting sick.”

The group struggled to stay alive for nearly a month until they finally reached land. By the time the group made it to Kenya, more than a quarter of the original 200 passengers had died and Mohamed and his family were weak and malnourished. They were taken to a refugee camp called Santa Anna.

For nearly five years, Mohamed’s family lived at the camp. As the years passed, the camp had slowly become overcrowded and

uncomfortable. The UN had started interviewing refugees who could potentially be resettled to the United States and Mohamed’s family was selected. In 1997, they packed their belongings and flew to Lansing, Michigan.

When they arrived, workers from St. Vincent Catholic Charities met the family at the airport and transported them to their new home. STVCC helped Mohamed’s parents find jobs and enrolled him and his siblings into school.

“It was nice to have help. We needed to learn the language and learn how to get to work and things. It was nice having someone you could ask and that could help explain.”

After completing high school, Mohamed took a job working with a local automobile manufacturer. But when the economy went downhill in 2010, he was laid-off and decided to take his savings and start his own business, Sunrise Market on Lansing’s east side.

DREAM COME TRUE Family Traded in a Convertible for a Mini-Van



ADOPTION: Finds permanent, qualified families for children of all ages. The children in our adoption program are waiting in foster care for a permanent home. We also offer Pregnancy Counseling for women facing an unplanned pregnancy. Our counselor provides free confidential counseling, support and information to help women process various pro-life options.

The following scenario is from a home visit in 2012 - Children's laughter can be heard all the way from the street near the Buck family home. Four year old Max and seven year old PJ happily follow their mother down the hall as they ask for a snack of popcorn and juice. Three year old Liz stays close to her dad in the living room, watching her brothers with amusement in her eyes. The playful scene is the perfect depiction of a loving family. One that Chad and Melissa Buck almost believed they could never have.

After their marriage in 2005, the couple tried desperately to have children of their own. "We tried everything, even fertility treatments" recalled Melissa. After having no luck conceiving, the couple began exploring other options. "We started to look into becoming foster parents" said Melissa. "We knew one day we would adopt, but thought it was best to do it slowly."

After hearing through a friend at church about a young child who needed a home, Chad and Melissa decided it was time to act. They turned to St. Vincent Catholic Charities to become licensed foster care parents. "Our caseworker was amazing" recalled Melissa. "She helped explain everything to us and addressed any concerns we had. I couldn't imagine maneuvering through the process without her."

It was 2009 when the Bucks welcomed their first foster child into their home. He was a five year old boy named Jacob. "We were so unprepared" said Melissa. "I was still driving a convertible. There was no room for a car seat. I ended up trading it in for a minivan and slowly our family started to grow." Jacob eventually left the family's home but not before they welcomed two more children, Max and PJ.

"They were brothers and it was important that we keep them together"

said Chad. With the help of St. Vincent Catholic Charities the couple also located the boys little sister, Liz, who had been living in another foster home. "We wanted them all together" recalled Melissa. "They lost everything. They lost their parents, their friends, their home. We couldn't let them lose each other too. No matter what happened, they were always going to have each other," said Chad. "We never set out to have three children but we wanted them to be a family and in return they have bought so much love into our home," claimed the Bucks.

Since adopting the sibling group, with the help of St. Vincent Catholic Charities, the Bucks were called upon to foster another child. Winnie joined the family in September of 2012 and in July of 2014 the whole family showed up to court to finalize the adoption of Winnie into the Buck family.

Guardian Society

Our Guardian Society is made up of dedicated and compassionate individuals and families who strongly believe in St. Vincent Catholic Charities' (STVCC) Mission of service to our community. By making a five year pledge commitment to STVCC, Guardian Society Members embrace the importance of long term sustainable funding. Their investment enables us to forecast available resources five years into the future.

A special thank you to our Guardian Society Members for their long term investment in the Mission of St. Vincent Catholic Charities and the quality of care for those we serve.

Guardian Society Members as of August 15, 2014

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Nancy S. Passanante

Gift of Hope

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Chris and Lori Conner
Mark and Rebecca Dantonio
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Patty Ballentine
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Christine Bourque
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AWARD WINNING FOSTER FAMILY



FOSTER CARE: Provides stable family care for temporary and permanent wards of the court with the hope of reestablishing the natural family or finding permanent adoptive homes.

Since 2009 the Torok family, Melissa, Matt, and teenage daughter Alyssa have fostered 12 kids. Since agreeing to be a foster family the Torok family has fearlessly accepted some challenging situations, a sibling group of three children; children from situations of abuse and neglect; and most recently an infant born with complications from trauma or toxic exposure sustained during his first trimester.

The family's approach to fostering has captured the attention of the staff at STVCC. Recently the Torok family received the newly formed Chris Ball Outstanding Foster Parent award named for the recently retired Foster Care Home Licensing Program Manager at St. Vincent Catholic Charities. "They have such

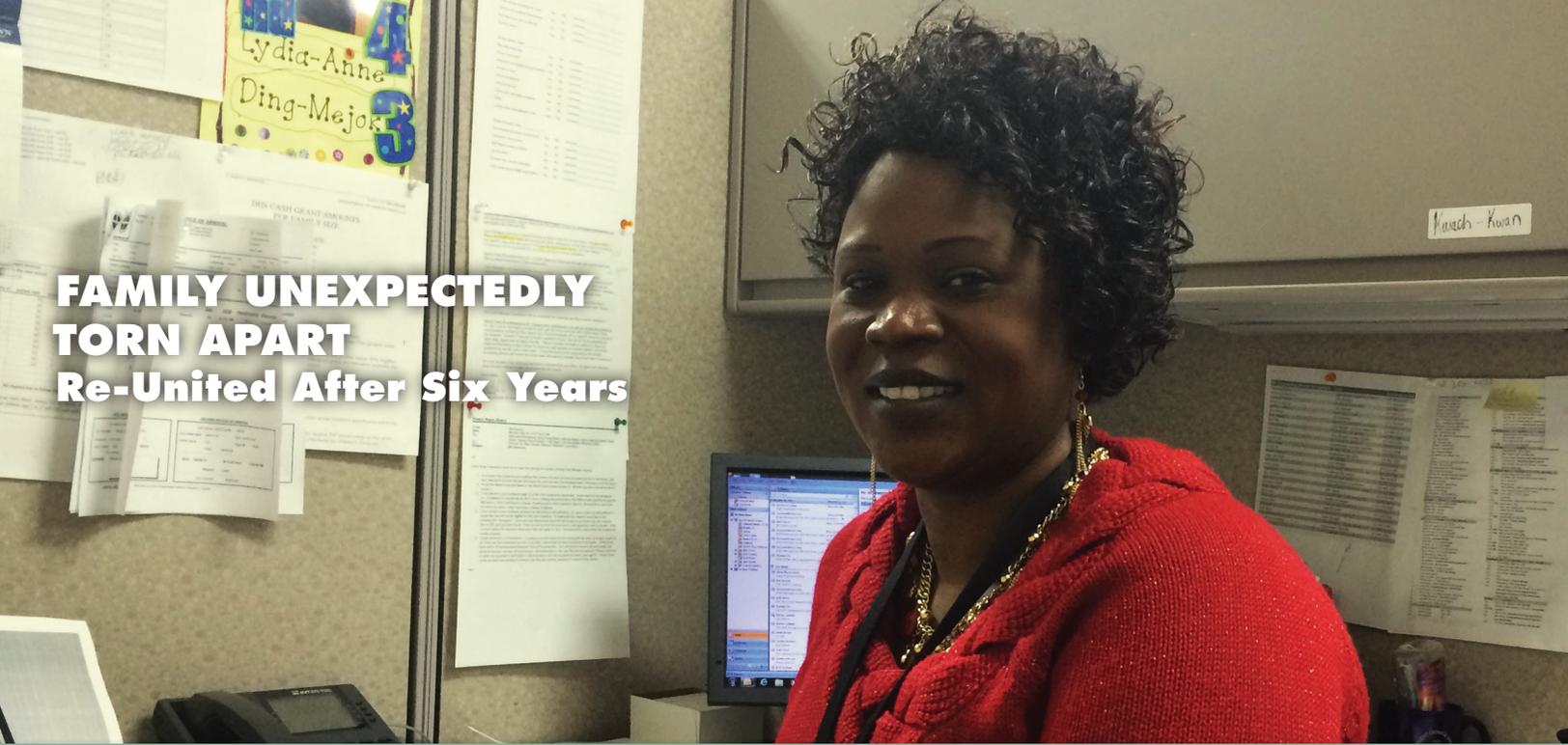
a gift for working with birth parents and they work very well with our agency staff," said new Foster Care Home Licensing Program Manager Stephanie Wilcox. "They do a really great job with both their birth child and the foster children and they gracefully accept cross-racial placements, recognizing their role in preserving a cultural connection."

"We don't see ourselves as 'by the book' foster parents," remarked Melissa Torok. "When we get a child to foster it is our child to love. We just have to be open and to know they are ours to love for as long as we have them."

The Toroks are committed to the prospect of family re-unification which means that as foster parents they know they play an important

role in the life of the birth parent. "With all of the kids that we fostered, we were glad that, when re-unification was possible, the children were going home to a family that was genuinely committed to caring for their children," said Matt Torok. "When you have to say goodbye it is nice to know that and to remember it is not about us."

The Torok family just recently adopted Shane the baby that entered their home for fostering. They have also moved to a larger home to make room for their growing family. Their intention is to continue to foster children and may consider rising to the challenge of welcoming a teenager looking for a foster family into their home.



FAMILY UNEXPECTEDLY TORN APART Re-United After Six Years

IMMIGRATION LAW CLINIC: Provides a wide spectrum of low cost immigration legal services, such as family reunification, adjustment of status, citizenship, asylum and removal defense to community members from across the state of Michigan, regardless of immigration status.

Kwach Kwan Abwol is from Sudan but she has connections in Michigan. Her Aunt lives in Lansing and was resettled here as a refugee from Sudan. Once her Aunt was resettled she had an occasion to use the services of the Immigration Law Clinic (ILC) at St. Vincent Catholic Charities. Little did she know that one day she would be in a position to recommend the ILC to her niece Kwach Kwan.

In 2008 Kwach Kwan, her husband Peter Ding Mejok, and daughter Lydia came to Michigan to visit their Aunt. Their stay in Michigan was expected to be a few weeks, but Peter was expected to return to his work in Khartoum-Sudan sooner. During the course of their visit the political environment heated up and Kwach Kwan's husband was arrested in Sudan because of the religious missionary work he and Kwach Kwan had been doing.

Friends and neighbors contacted Kwach Kwan in the United States

and cautioned her not to return as she too had been targeted for arrest. Their home had been broken into and their personal belongings had been seized for clues about how to find and arrest the couple.

Kwach Kwan took the advice of her friends and did not return to the Sudan. In time her husband was released from prison but it was clear he would not be safe from persecution and further arrests. He fled to Kenya for safety. Back in the United States Kwach Kwan filed for and received asylum. But it would take years before the little family would be re-united.

It was in 2011 that Kwach Kwan's Aunt encouraged her to visit the lawyers at the Immigration Law Clinic for assistance in petitioning to bring her husband to live in the United States.

The happy re-unification happened in May of 2014 through the persistent work of the ILC and in

particular Lesley Glennon. "The Immigration Law Clinic is a treasure and we could not have done this work without their help," commented Kwach Kwan. "We are so grateful to Lesley Glennon for her help and encouragement." Little Lydia Abwol was just 2 years old when the family was separated and when her Daddy arrived she was overjoyed. When her Daddy brought her to school she was thrilled to bring him to meet her teachers, the school workers and her school mates.

Since 2012 Kwach Kwan has been working as a case Manager assistant and then as a case manager for the STVCC Refugee Resettlement program. Her husband recently received his employment card and is working toward certification with an insurance agency. In the fall Lydia will be in the 3rd grade at Marble Elementary School in East Lansing. This re-united family is looking forward to building their new life together in the United States.



➤ A proud supporter of St. Vincent Catholic Charities

As a nonprofit hospital with deep roots, McLaren Greater Lansing has been at the center of our community for more than a century. While we pride ourselves on our legacy of providing compassionate, expert care, we're just as proud to partner with local organizations to support our neighbors in need.

McLaren Greater Lansing is honored to support St. Vincent Catholic Charities.

Journey of Hope

Take a Journey of Hope, a personal experience for you, your family or colleagues, to learn about the vital services of St. Vincent Catholic Charities.

For more information, or to schedule a Journey of Hope, please contact:

Rhonda Abood, Outreach and Events Coordinator

(517) 323-4734 ext. 1205 or aboodr@stvcc.org

“As a Guardian Society Sponsor we take pride in the mission of STVCC and encourage everyone to take a Journey of Hope. Your heart will be opened by the essential work this organization does for our community. Join us in supporting these quality programs and services.”

—Patrick Dean of Dean Transportation



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