

# Catholic Charities to Dedicate Our Daily Bread Employment Center on May 24 to help People Escape Poverty

On May 24, 2007, at 8:45 a.m., Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Baltimore will dedicate Our Daily Bread Employment Center ("ODBEC"), the city's comprehensive resource center designed to help people escape the impact of poverty on themselves and their families through employment and stable housing. The newly completed three-story, 52,000-square-foot building is located at 725 Fallsway

ODBEC houses three existing Catholic Charities programs-*Our Daily Bread* daily hot meal program; *Christopher Place Employment Academy*, a residential program for formerly homeless men aimed at employment and permanent housing; and the *Maryland Re-entry Partnership*, a program that enables formerly incarcerated men to successfully reintegrate into the community. The Center also provides case management and an array of services by Catholic Charities as well as partner providers. These services include eviction prevention services, emergency and referral services, job-readiness assistance, job referral services, job placement, job retention and follow up, adult basic education, medical services (limited), recovery support, assistance with criminal background issues, access to computers and telephones, mail distribution, and workshops on home ownership, financial literacy and healthy relationships.

Catholic Charities believes that ODBEC offers society's best effort to provide opportunities for people to help themselves. Harold A. Smith, Executive Director, says: "We are writing the ultimate turnaround story here. Those who are supporting us in this bold effort recognize that providing opportunities for people to turn from lives mired in chronic poverty to lives of self reliance through employment and stable housing is worth this investment in people and in the economic impact they

will make on Baltimore.”

Through the employment opportunities offered at ODBEC, the Agency expects 350 people to be employed every year. By the end of their first year of work, annual wages of over \$6.5 million will have been put back into the community. With benefits, even more. There is also the related impact of re-unifying and supporting families and the payment of taxes and child support.

Catholic Charities was chosen by Baltimore City to develop this unique resource center concept in 2002. The Center was funded by the broad-based support of many individuals, corporations and foundations as well as City, State, and Federal governmental sources. The total cost of construction, furniture and fixtures is approximately \$15 million.

Mr. Smith adds: “Catholic Charities is approaching its 26th year of compassionately welcoming and feeding people at Our Daily Bread and we have a 10-year track record of effectively preparing men to become self sufficient through Christopher Place Employment Academy. We have a strong cadre of employers who value our support of the graduates who they hire. With the opening of ODBEC, we can do more. Stable jobs with benefits and housing form a foundation for strong families. Nothing is more important to this community than that.”

Catholic Charities is Maryland’s leading private, nonprofit provider of human services. Through cherishing the Divine within all, the Agency serves 160,000 people annually in 80 programs at 200 locations throughout the state. Its 2,000 employees are supported by 10,000 volunteers. In addition, a quarter million meals are served every year to the hungry citizens of Baltimore City.