

Groups say Catholic Campaign for Human Development grants are crucial

Sandra Spears knows that she is leading a purpose-driven life when she looks at her 26-year-old daughter, Ayanna Scott.

Ayanna has severe autism, mental disabilities and is non-verbal. As coordinator of the City-wide Effort of the Maryland Disability Law Center, Spears fights for educational opportunities for people like her daughter.

Spears represented her group Aug. 18 at the annual Catholic Campaign for Human Development Awards, which honored 11 poverty-level income groups trying to build communities in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

“Me being involved as a parent is what has brought me to this point,” Spears said after receiving a local grant of \$12,500 at a luncheon at St. Francis of Assisi. “It is very fulfilling to help other parents hopefully get the services they need.”

Groups honored offer a wide variety of community services, including protection for homeless workers’ rights in Baltimore City, job training for the homeless in Anne Arundel County and equipping youth with social justice principles.

CCHD was started by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1969. CCHD distributed national and local grants totaling \$305,000 to the groups in the archdiocese. An archdiocesan CCHD collection last November in parishes raised \$244,242.

Brian Stevens, the grant specialist for CCHD's national office, said the work done by the groups is "helping bring the Gospel to life."

Rasheeda Alford, project director of Our For Justice/Alternative Directions, said her organization's mission of helping ex-convicts adjust to society will be enhanced thanks to the national \$30,000 grant they received.

"We're going to be able to have a full-force staff, and have the trainings and workshops that we do," Alford said. "It's great."

Linda Kohler, founder of Students Sharing Coalition, said grants like CCHD help sustain her organization as the country continues its economic struggles.

Monsignor William F. Burke, CCHD's longtime archdiocesan director and pastor of St. Francis of Assisi, said the luncheon is always inspiring.

"The poor are making the decisions and initiating the action," Monsignor Burke said. "(The giving) is a great sign the Catholic Church is not removed and we do care. The key is really on the parish level, with their social justice committees, to talk this up and let everyone know the good that's being done."

Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden said the CCHD's outreach will help others in similar situations.

"St. Vincent de Paul reminds us that when we choose the poor, we choose Jesus Christ," Bishop Madden said. "The late Pope John Paul II called on us to 'make a fundamental choice for the poor.' The campaign continues to address the root causes of poverty in our nation. Our schools and parishes are urged to promote and conduct social justice education."

National CCHD grants were presented to: United Workers Association (Baltimore),

\$50,000; United Workers Association (Baltimore), \$45,000; Save Middle East Action Committee (Baltimore), \$45,000; People Acting Together in Howard, \$40,000; Youth As Resources (Baltimore), \$40,000; and Out For Justice/Alternative Directions (Baltimore), \$30,000.

Local CCHD grants were presented to: Maryland Disability Law Center/City-wide Education Effort (Baltimore), \$12,500; Neighborhood Housing Service (Baltimore), \$12,500; Students Sharing Coalition (Baltimore), \$10,000; Proyecto Esperanza (Baltimore), \$10,000; Arundel House of Hope (Glen Burnie), \$10,000.

CCHD PROCESS

To apply for 2010-2011 grants, organizations must fill out an eligibility quiz by Nov. 1, and a final grant application by Dec. 15.

The grants range from \$5,000 to \$50,000, and organizations need not be Catholic to qualify.

For organizations interested in applying for grants, a Technical Assistance Workshop will be held Sept. 8 from 6:30-9:00 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Baltimore.

Board members from CCHD can provide technical assistance to projects in Western Maryland via phone and e-mail, and will travel to the region if necessary.

To learn more about CCHD and how to apply for grant money, and to view a list of past grant recipients, visit www.cchdbaltimore.org or call Ab Logan at 410-628-0068, Marc Ferretto at 410-661-6720 or Glyn Bailey 410-769-8049.