



September 22, 2009

Dear Staff:

***“In so far as you did this to one of the least...of mine, you did it to me” (Matthew: 25)***

When you donate to Catholic Social Services (CSS) annual *Sign of Hope* campaign, you are joining the staff of CSS as they work to build stronger family and community life. They dedicate their lives to serve people in need - people of all faiths and cultures. People battling addictions, persons with disabilities, street youth who are sexually exploited, and families devastated by domestic violence are all individuals served by CSS. Here's one such story recently shared by our staff –

*Kathy's experience with domestic violence began a few years into her marriage to Don. Verbal abuse turned physical and it was not long before each evening was spent dreading his return home. Drunk and delusional, his threats to her and her children would continue throughout the night. Don forbid her to work outside the home and her self esteem plummeted. She received calls from the school that her nine year old son was acting out – and bullied other children. Her five year old daughter was withdrawn and would not let her mother out of her sight.*

*Ashamed to turn to her family for help, Kathy felt very much alone. Concern for her children ultimately led her to seek safety in a women's shelter. At the end of her 28 days – the maximum stay at a shelter – she was uncertain where to go. Then she heard of La Salle – a safe place for women and their children. La Salle would offer them safety and support – and best of all, they could stay for as long as one year.*

*From the moment of her first call to La Salle – Kathy felt welcomed, supported, and encouraged by the staff. She and her children received counselling – both individually and as a family. Her youngest learned to play and to express herself. Her son received specialized counselling to deal with his anger and violent behaviour. After nearly a year of calling La Salle their home, Kathy was again employed, and she and her children moved to their own place with the strength and skills to start a new life together.*

*La Salle* is now operated by Catholic Social Services and relies heavily on the *Sign of Hope* for funding.

**It is your financial support that will keep the doors open at *La Salle*. It is your support that will stop the violence and abuse.** Please consider supporting Catholic Social Services. Now, more than ever, those we serve need your help.

**This year our goal in Edmonton Catholic Schools is to raise \$125,000.** The *Sign of Hope* campaign also provides a wonderful opportunity to involve our students in raising funds for Catholic Social Services through Kids Care Challenge. Last year, under the leadership of staff members, Sandra Talarico and Terry Volk who have spearheaded this campaign for the last 13 years, Kids Care Challenge raised \$54,250.00.

I invite all of you to consider supporting this campaign. You can donate directly and indicate your wish to support the education sector, or donate electronically by logging onto [www.ecsd.net/signofhope](http://www.ecsd.net/signofhope). Each year we begin a new campaign; **deductions are not carried forward.**

The *Sign of Hope* ‘**confronting the issues – responding with hope.**’ Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,