

**Plan**

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Deacon Murphy concurred. "We are trying to address the (presenting problem) by working on the underlying problem."

Part of implementing the plan is developing a process for measuring success, Gonzalez said. In 2009, for example, there were 15 families signed up for one of CCI's Family Strengthening program, and after the session, all 15 were still involved, she added.

CCI is in the process of gathering other markers, some quantitative such as school grades, and others more qualitative, including regular meetings with family members, to track progress more closely, Gonzalez said.



**FOCUS ON FAMILY** — Families, like this one, under the new strategic plan of Catholic Charities of Idaho. (ICR file photo)

Gathering that data is critical because it will drive any changes that need to be made to the plan, Deacon Murphy said. "That's an area where we know we have some work to do."

To oversee the work done at its centers, CCI has established advisory committees for each one. Those committees include clients and local community leaders who have experienced the program.

Because of the input of these groups, "we are constantly assessing our services," Gonzalez said.

In the center in Jerome, families come after school to work on skills, she said. Children will be with some staff for socialization or help with homework, while parents will take English language classes that aim to meet their practical, everyday conversational needs.

The second focus is community outreach and engagement.

This point deals with education on many levels, Gonzalez noted, and each level is important.

One level involves donors, and letting them know where their donation is going, with the goal that such information will lead them to increase their donations and advocate on behalf of CCI to other potential donors, she added.

Communication with other community groups is also important because more can be accomplished through shared ideas, staff and resources, Gonzalez said. Just recently, she received a call from a representative from a social service agency suggesting a partnership with CCI on a program with grant funds available.

Finally, there's communication with the Catholic community and the community at large, including legislators. CCI and the Diocese of Boise

partners and the general public about the agency's efforts.

CCI is also working to expand communication efforts through social networking and the creation of public service announcements, she added.

Deacon Murphy said that two important points must be made. First, CCI won't partner with groups whose mission and work is in direct conflict with the moral and social teachings of the Catholic church. Second, while "Catholic" is part of the agency title, its mandate is to serve people of all religious backgrounds or of no religious background.

"Who is Catholic Charities serving? The greater community," the deacon said. "CCI is responding to the Gospel mandate to serve the poor and marginalized."

CCI also works with parish and diocesan staff as part of its educational mission. "We want to engage parishes," he added. "We want to encourage them to support all the needs in their communities."

Gonzalez agreed. "Parishes are our community bases."

One example where partnering with other agencies makes sense is CCI's participation in Catholic Charities-USA's antipoverty campaign. Whether it's with community action programs or the AARP for poverty among seniors, working with other groups will more likely result in change, while "doing it ourselves is impossible."

Gonzalez said CCI is rooted in Catholic social teaching and has a clear sense of its own identity.

"There are organizations out there we know we can't partner with," she said. "Also, we're not the 'everything to everybody' agency."

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work to effect policy change at the state level.

Gonzalez noted that CCI was only established in 2001, while Catholic Charities in other dioceses have deeper roots, some in place for nearly a century. "At first, people in communities misunderstood our services," she said. "They thought we were only for Catholics."

Gonzalez cited some relatively small but important steps recently made - including a redesign of the agency Web site ([www.ccidaho.org](http://www.ccidaho.org)) and the introduction of its promotional materials in Spanish - that will help inform potential donors, clients,



**PREACHING SUSTAINABILITY** — Bishop Michael P. Driscoll welcomes supporters to the 2009 Loaves and Fishes Gala, which has become a hallmark political - and fundraising - event at Catholic Charities of Idaho. (ICR file photo)