It’s a wonderful day in the neighborhood

By Gene Fadness

BOISE - Catholic Charities of Idaho has new neighbors near its Franklin Street location, making the area practically a one-stop shop for at least half of the Catholic Charities’ clientele who are refugees and immigrants.

The International Rescue Committee moved in at 7291 W. Franklin Road, while Tidwell Social Work Services planted roots next door at 7285 W. Franklin Road.

In the building immediately to the north is Catholic Charities at 7255 W. Franklin Road. All three offices are just to the west of the north parking lot of Bishop Kelly High School, near the intersection of Franklin Road and Curtis Street.

The three agencies recently hosted an open house to introduce each organization’s service to the larger community.

The International Rescue Committee is a national non-profit organization that helps refugees resettle in their communities by coordinating with local and state agencies to find refugees homes and provide basic needs such as household furniture, clothing, personal hygiene items, computers, used cars and bicycles.

IRC helps refugees fleeing war-torn countries, victims of sex trafficking and immigrants find employment and place their children in schools.

Catholic Charities and the IRC, using monies awarded from a federal grant, work together to provide workshops to help refugees and immigrants become U.S. citizens.

“We share a common population, and there is a lot of complementary services of our work,” said Doug Alles, executive director of Catholic Charities.

When the lease at IRC’s offices on Emerald was about to expire, the two agencies began discussions for IRC to move closer, making it more convenient for them and, more importantly, the clients they serve.

IRC then recruited Tidwell Social Work Services to move along with them.

Tidwell Social Services is a Boise-based and Boise-founded agency that provides mental health services to those experiencing trauma related to the losses they experience as a result of having to flee or emigrate from their homelands.

Each agency is independent of the other with their own distinct missions and boards of directors. But each sees the need to work collaboratively for a common cause.

“Catholic Charities is a bridge institution between church and community,” Alles said. “We will collaborate with all organizations that promote the common good and benefit populations in need.”

The agencies will be able to learn best practices from each other to better be able to serve people. Alles added. “We see this as a great opportunity for us to enhance the way we understand our work. Being so close together makes us more aware of the work we are doing, so that we do not duplicate, but complement what each one is doing,” he said.

“This is really good for the community and, in the end, that is our primary concern,” Alles said.

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St. Luke’s in Jerome not forgetting contribution of Benedictine Sisters to health care in the area

By Theresa Henson

JEROME – While St. Luke’s Hospital in Jerome may no longer be St. Benedict’s Hospital, St. Luke’s is not forgetting the contribution that the Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict made to health care in this Magic Valley community for nearly 60 years.

A newly refinished armoire at St. Luke’s Hospital in Jerome bears a placard that reads “Sister Barbara’s Closet.” Inside are clothing and miscellaneous items for patients in need.

The armoire was inspired by Sister Barbara, who now lives at St. Gertrude Monastery in Cottonwood.

Further, the St. Luke’s Magic Valley Health Foundation, with enthusiastic support of the St. Luke’s Jerome employees, has also renamed its Social Services Fund the “Benedictine Sisters Patient Care Fund,” which will help patients meet basic needs.

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“Sister Barbara’s Closet has been created as a way to honor her service. The armoire will always be fully stocked to support our patients and fulfill our mission and core values.”

Sister Barbara, who now lives at St. Gertrude’s motherhouse in Cottonwood, was delighted to hear the news.

“I have a closet named after me,” she laughed.

While at St. Luke’s, Sister Barbara made a concerted effort to reach out to the underprivileged.

Her projects included keeping clothes on hand for patients who did not have fresh clothes to wear home.

At the holidays, she and St. Luke’s employees would adopt and assist “Christian Families” who were in need. After the holidays, they would replenish food pantries with up to 3,500 pounds of food. Another project included gathering backpacks and school supplies for kids.

“It was important to me to advocate for the employees as much as I did the patients,” explains Sister Barbara. “A happy staff equals happy patients.”

The Benedictine Sisters Patient Care Fund will honor the longstanding legacy and contribution of the Sisters in advancing health care, Maier said.

“The mission of the former St. Benedict’s Family Medical Center was to care for the sick and needy thereby serving Christ. I can’t think of a better way to continue the sisters’ legacy than with the renaming of this fund,” he said.

The Sisters’ near century of ministry of healthcare in the Magic Valley began in 1923 when, at the request of the bishop, they bought an old hotel in nearby Wendell and established St. Luke’s in Jerome.

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From left to right, Cynthia Sibrian, Wendy Lahmon, Martha Alejandre and Donna Malone of Catholic Charities of Idaho. (ICR photo/Vero Gutiérrez)

Middle photo are staff members for Tidwell Social Services. From left, Lindsey Nelson, Mina Askaryar, Anthony Garabal, Holly Bukky, Annalise Jacobson, Ben Wenet and Andrew Lynes (ICR photo/Vero Gutiérrez)

Bottom photo, staff of the International Rescue Committee include, from left, Executive Director Juliane Donnelly Taul, Senior Advocacy Advisor Adam J. Olson, former state Sen. Betsy Dunlin and Development Manager James Browson (ICR photo/Vero Gutiérrez)