



For Immediate Release

Date: Dec. 3, 2010

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Butter nativity sculpture & tours of newly remodeled homeless shelter highlights of this year's 'No Room at the Inn' event Dec. 4-5

DES MOINES, IOWA — More than 300 nativity scenes from all over the world will be displayed Sat., Dec. 4 & Sun., Dec. 5 at 6th and Grand in downtown Des Moines to usher in the holiday season and increase awareness of the plight of the homeless in our community.

New to the year's event is a hand-sculpted butter nativity by local artist Sarah Pratt. Pratt is the current artist behind the butter art featured at the Iowa State Fair and is creating a butter sculpture of the holy family in a medium that is uniquely Iowan.

"We are continually finding ways to make our messages about complex social issues like homelessness fresh," said Nancy Galeazzi, executive director of Catholic Charities. "The depiction of the nativity scene in any medium is awe-inspiring and the butter sculpture represents an Iowa tradition that will also peek interest," said Galeazzi. "When our committee member came to us with the possibility we felt it could really spark some attention and get more people to think about homelessness."

The butter nativity, along with the rest of the nativity exhibition will be open for public viewing Sat., Dec. 4 from 9 a.m. to Noon and Sun., Dec. 5 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 6th & Grand in Des Moines. Admission to the event is a gift of a personal care item or cash donation to St. Joseph Emergency Family Shelter.

St. Joseph Emergency Family Shelter, funded and operated by Catholic Charities, is Polk County's only emergency homeless shelter for families that takes children and whoever they bring. St. Joseph provides a temporary, safe and dignified living environment and assists families as they seek housing and other resources needed for permanent stability. The shelter is in the final stages of a major expansion that has added five additional bedrooms, an upgraded kitchen, expanded dining room, handicap accessibility and a play room.

In addition to an array of traditional and unique nativity displays from around the world, local choirs and a live nativity scene will be featured on Sun., Dec. 5 from 1-5 p.m. Bishop Richard E. Pates and Bishop Emeritus Joseph L. Charron will also read the Christmas story during the event at 2:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. For a full schedule of weekend events and information about St. Joseph Emergency Family Shelter go to www.CatholicCharitiesDM.org or call 515-237-5078.

Founded in 1924, Catholic Charities of Des Moines is dedicated to offering help and hope to those in need throughout central and southwest Iowa. Catholic Charities, a United Way agency, provides adoption services, pregnancy counseling, individual and family counseling, Hispanic community outreach and refugee resettlement services. Other Catholic Charities programs include St. Joseph Emergency Family Shelter, Phoenix House Domestic Violence Shelter and St. Mary Family Center. For information about Catholic Charities of Des Moines, its programs and services, please visit www.catholiccharitiesdm.org.