



History of the Gala

The annual St. Patrick's Grand Marshal Green Tie Gala, formerly called the St. Patrick's Grand Marshal Ball, has grown into *the* fund-raiser to help the homeless in the greater Oklahoma City metro area. The 2010 Green Tie Gala Committee, chaired by Carrol Thomas, includes representatives from various businesses, six different religions and five surrounding towns -- all committed to helping homeless women and their children.

The first St. Patrick's Grand Marshal Ball was held in 1998 under the leadership of Jane McDonnell to benefit local charitable groups while honoring the grand marshal of the Oklahoma City St. Patrick's Parade. By 2003, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City had become the yearly recipient of the proceeds.

In 2007, Catholic Charities committed to use the annual proceeds specifically to relieve the plight of the estimated 2,000 homeless people in Oklahoma City. In 2008, under the leadership of Chairwoman Toby Boothe, the event netted the first \$115,000 toward development of a day center for the homeless.

Last April, strengthened by proceeds of the 2009 Ball, Catholic Charities opened the Sanctuary Women's Development Center in the former Our Lady of Guadalupe church building at 2133 S.W. 11th Street in Oklahoma City. The Sanctuary assists homeless women who live in shelters and women who are at risk of becoming homeless. It provides a safe place for the women and their children, if they have any, to spend the day, refocus and access the services they need to become self-reliant. Services are provided regardless of race or religion. They include case management; computer lab; phones with personal voicemail; life skills development; job skills development; employment resources; linkage to mental health and other community resources; trauma group counseling; community garden; art activities; nutritious beverages and snacks; and limited financial assistance.

The Sanctuary's early success in finding community services, employment assistance and permanent housing for homeless women has earned widespread support among volunteer groups, businesses, service organizations and religious groups who are eager to help.

The 2010 Green Tie Gala, honoring Grand Marshal Tom McDaniel, will be held the evening of March 6 at the Skirvin Hilton Hotel in Oklahoma City. Sponsorships and individual tickets are on sale now. For more information, call Jane Moon at 405-526-2319 or visit www.catholiccharitiesok.org.