

Quality of Life

Each member has a definition of “Quality of Life.” Generally, the term relates to something that is valued as a positive addition to everyday life. This term is also a part of the **Circle of Love Program** that encompasses a number of social awareness issues. Please continue to support the programs that each local court has sponsored and studied over the years. Women have led the way and have educated themselves about social issues and social justice topics that affect families and neighborhoods, communities, and the world. Catholic Daughters of the Americas are “stewards” of all that surround us.

Quality of Life encompasses the following areas:

Family Life Issues:

- Domestic Abuse: spouse, the elderly and children
- Exploitation of women and children through human trafficking
- Supporting agencies and organizations with monetary, clothing, food, and time e.g. Habitat for Humanity, Tutwiler Clinic, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Foster Parents/Grandparents, Food Shelf, Caregivers, Homeless Shelters or Half-way houses.
- Local pre-schools, public and private schools are in need of volunteers. Visit with the administration as to needs and respond as Catholic Daughters.
- Loss of family income because of job loss or health emergency provides Catholic Daughters with an opportunity to supply food, clothing, day care support and supportive assistance with updating a resume and helping an individual seek new employment.
- Visit any family who has a member in the Armed Forces and offer assistance. “Adopt” a service man or woman by letter or email and a package of special treats from home thanking them for their dedication to our country.

Restoration of Family Values:

- Support Pro Life Organizations, activities and legislation for the unborn, the disabled and/or the elderly.
- Support Morality in Media with an annual membership sent to the National CDA office, participate in the fall annual WRAP (White Ribbons Against Pornography) Campaigns and the Turn Off TV Day or similar programs in the community.
- Teach a child prayers such as the Hail Mary, Our Father, the Rosary (Holy Cross Family Ministries), and share personal stories of spiritual journeys to strengthen a young person’s faith and values.

Family Health Issues:

- Volunteer time at a long-term care facility by visiting individuals who are often alone with no outside contact. Remember these individuals with small gifts, personal items, holiday cards or a homemade favorite treat. Bring young people to visit.
- Visit individuals who are confined to their homes. Offer to run errands, take them to Mass or a doctor's appointment, or to do light housework for them.
- Invite a speaker to a meeting to learn about Care-giving, Hospice, Parkinson's, AIDS, etc. to expand knowledge and to seek opportunities for involvement

Community Issues:

- Establish contact with local government officials and support organizations such as the Red Cross and The Salvation Army. Become trained and involved in emergency response at the time of natural or other disasters.
- Recognize the uniqueness of each community and its social issues. Rural life, Veteran's Homes and Hospitals, Group Homes, and Prisons offer numerous opportunities to reach out and offer support in the name of CDA.

Worldwide Issues:

- Communication technology has made the world smaller making CDA members instantly aware of and able to respond to disasters, political unrest and their effects on populations in distant parts of this earth.
- Support Project Handclasp, Adopt a Child, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, Covenant House, Habitat for Humanity International, Smile Train, Mother Teresa, and missionaries who dedicate their lives to assisting all over the world achieves CDA's mission.

Protection of our Earth:

- Protection of the earth by participating (or implementing) recycling programs in homes, parishes, and schools. Study all recent coverage on global warming, fresh water cultivation and conservation, and environmental issues.
- God commands His followers to be stewards of the earth. One resource of interfaith collaboration is the website, Congregations Caring for Creation, www.c3mn.net. Under the button, Green Building, Grounds and Operational Resources, is a list of 40 Simple Action Ideas.
- Contact local utility companies who may provide a complimentary (or at a nominal charge) energy audit of your home or church properties.

- Use of efficient light bulbs, caulking, equipment blankets for added insulation, switching to zoned heating and cooling, or the use of motion sensors for lights in rooms that are used infrequently will reduce energy usage.
- Recycling waste generated in buildings, schools and offices is one easy action. Provide labeled containers for aluminum cans, steel food cans, plastic bottles and papers. Share newspapers and magazines with group homes, nursing homes etc.
- Check state's regulations for recycling. Many times aluminum cans and plastic bottles have deposits that can be a fund raiser for the court.
- Greeting cards can be recycled. Cutting the design and greetings into new card stock can provide a great social time for CDA members. With a new envelope, sell the cards as another way to make money and practice recycling.
- Designate the program of one meeting annually to study the environment and the effects of global warming, fresh water usage, and pollution concerns. Invite the city or county environmental services director to a meeting to study the issues in the community and take proactive roles in protection of these valuable resources.

“Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.”
Ancient Indian Proverb

As Catholic Daughters of the Americas, we need to study and educate ourselves and model conservation of all natural resources assuring future generations of a similar quality of life.

Health & Wellness:

- Examine personal and family life styles and history for heart disease, obesity, and diabetes to increase awareness and establish goals for health and wellness.
- Women, often the nurturers and caretakers for family and friends, when challenged with a health issue, frequently ignore their own body's signals!
- Coronary heart disease, which causes heart attack, is the leading cause of death for American women. Nearly twice as many women in the United States die of heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases as from all forms of cancer, including breast cancer.
- The American Heart Association (www.americanheart.org) identifies several factors that increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. The more risk factors a woman has, the greater risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Some of these risk factors can't be controlled but can be modified to lower the risk. These risks include
 - **Increasing age** — As women grow older, their risk of heart disease and stroke begins to rise and keeps rising with age.

- **Sex (Gender)** — Each year about 46,000 more women than men have strokes, and about 60 percent of total stroke deaths occur in women.
- **Heredity (family history)** — Both women and men are more likely to develop heart disease or stroke if their close blood relatives have had them. Race is also a factor. African-American women have a greater risk of heart disease and are more likely to die of a stroke.
- **Previous heart attack or stroke or TIA (transient ischemic attack, "mini-stroke")** Women who've had a heart attack are at higher risk of having a second heart attack or stroke. A TIA is a risk factor and predictor of stroke.

➤ Steps to reduce the risk of heart attack:

- **Don't smoke or use tobacco.** Many hospitals and clinics have support programs. Ask for help to quit smoking!
- **Get active.** Moderately vigorous physical activity can reduce risk of fatal heart attack. Walk more.
- **Eat a heart-healthy diet.** Eat more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Eliminate saturated and trans fats from cooking and eating.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Obesity is a condition in which excess fat has accumulated in the body usually considered to be more than 20% above the recommended weight for height and age. Women can help reduce obesity in their families. Weight loss may improve blood pressure, triglyceride and cholesterol levels, improve how the heart works and blood flows, and decrease inflammation throughout the body's joints. Reducing body weight by 10% can decrease blood pressure, lower blood cholesterol level, reduce risk for diabetes, and keep the heart healthy.
- **Get regular health screenings.** High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage the cardiovascular system. Seeing the doctor regularly helps identify these problem areas.
- **Get the whole family involved:**
 - ✓ Take the stairs instead of elevators.
 - ✓ Park a few blocks away from the destination or at the far end of the parking lot.
 - ✓ Walk the last few blocks to any appointment instead of riding the bus all the way.
 - ✓ Go for walks together.

▪ **Develop activities and programs within the local court:**

- ✓ Consider organizing a weight-loss program within the court.
- ✓ Do some stretching or walking exercises at the meetings.
- ✓ The local clinic or hospital marketing department is an excellent resource for current material and speakers on health & wellness topics.
- ✓ Dedicate the month of October to awareness of cancer and February to heart health.

Live longer and be healthy!

Personal Identity Theft:

Every six minutes in this country, someone's identity is stolen and billions of dollars are lost annually to those who illegally obtain and use personal data information. As mothers, grandmothers, aunts and friends, we should be aware that even children's identity can be stolen and exploited.

- Never carry a social security card or birth certificate. Never volunteer this information over the telephone.
- Never freely give pin numbers or computer passwords to anyone requesting this information.
- Clarify the reason with anyone requesting for personal information. Oftentimes, retailers and banks will ask for the last 4-digits of a social security number and/or mother's maiden name to identify the specific account or records. Hospitals and clinics use a birth date to access health records.
- Financial information should be stored in a safe, a safety deposit box. Shred unsolicited credit card and insurance information.
- Notify the local police, bank officials and credit card carriers anytime there is a suspicious, unauthorized usage of financial information. If necessary, work with an advocate, trusted friend, family member, or attorney to follow the trail of misuse.
- Request a copy of a current credit report. This can be done from any one of these three agencies:
 - Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
 - Experian: 1-800-397-3742
 - Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289

- Consider inviting a member of the city or county law enforcement agencies as a program for a court meeting. They can provide information about instances of local fraud and additional suggestions on protecting personal identity.

“Whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
Colossians 3:17

Additional Resources:

Our Earth & Environment:

State’s Department of Natural Resources

www.oceanconservancy.org

www.earth911.org

www.worldcentric.org/sustain/actions.htm

Health & Wellness:

www.mayoclinic.org

www.ourdiseaserisk.com Harvard Center for Cancer Prevention

<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/> National Diabetes Association

<http://win.ni9dk.gov/publications> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Check the local library for additional resources.