For Immediate Release

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**United Way of the Midlands Awards $100,000 to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Des Moines**

**Grant to Fund Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program**

(Council Bluffs, IA) Catholic Charities is pleased to announce it was recently awarded a $100,000.00 grant from United Way of the Midlands. Thanks to the generosity of the United Way donors, funds will be used to serve domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Specifically funds will be allocated to staff salaries and benefits for shelter, housing, DV and SA staff.

With the help of this grant, Catholic Charities can provide more support and advocacy services in order to end domestic violence and sexual assault through education, counseling and community involvement. Violence thrives on shame, secrecy and silence and our belief is that violence can be eliminated if we all commit to change.

The work of Catholic Charities Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program is multi-faceted. A recent client was referred to the program from a partnering agency in Omaha. The woman, legally in the country, only spoke Spanish. Catholic Charities was able to provide her translation services as she navigated the legal system. She received legal advocacy for gaining protective orders from an abusive relationship and help to gain custody of her daughter. Housing advocates coordinated a housing search for her and looked for other services that would empower her to a safe, sustainable future.

“The support from United Way and their supporters enables positive change in our client’s lives. Our agency is appreciative of this generous support,” said Shelly Starbuck, Interim Executive Director of Catholic Charities.

**About United Way of the Midlands:**

Thanks to donors, volunteers and community partners, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is not only focused on addressing our community’s human needs today; it is focused on what can be and what should be. It is building on today’s strong partnerships to create even more comprehensive human service efforts tomorrow, so our community can solve some of the root causes of poverty. UWM is community-based, community-focused. Thanks to those who share their strength, UWM is COMMUNITY STRONG. Please visit UnitedWayMidlands.org for more information.

**About Catholic Charities Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Program**

Catholic Charities Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Program (formerly know as Phoenix House) provides domestic violence and sexual abuse services to anyone faced with these issues through a 24-hour emergency shelter and crisis phone line, court advocacy, educational groups and through outreach to under-served populations in nine counties surrounding Council Bluffs in southwest Iowa. The shelter provides safe, confidential living for up to eight families at a time. For more information visit <http://www.catholiccharitiesdm.org> or call (712) 256-2059.

**About Catholic Charities, Diocese of Des Moines**

Founded in 1924, Catholic Charities, Des Moines Diocese, is dedicated to offering help and hope to those in need throughout central and southwest Iowa. Catholic Charities, a United Way agency, provides individual and family counseling, food pantry, refugee resettlement services, domestic violence and sexual assault shelter and services, family emergency shelter, and more. Facilities include Catholic Charities Emergency Family Shelter, Catholic Charities Outreach Center, and Catholic Charities Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Program in Council Bluffs, IA. For information about Catholic Charities of Des Moines, its programs, and services, please visit [www.catholiccharitiesdm.org](file:///%5C%5Cdaniel%5CDept%5CCharities%5CCommunications_Events_Fundraising%5CCC%20OUTREACH%20CENTER%5Cwww.catholiccharitiesdm.org).

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