



# The Diocese of Knoxville

*Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee*

PRESS RELEASE AND MEDIA ADVISORY

Dec. 20, 2012

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## St. Mary's Legacy Foundation awards \$625,000 in grants

**KNOXVILLE**—Just over a year into its existence, the St. Mary's Legacy Foundation of East Tennessee is already making a dramatic impact.

The foundation was formed in November of 2011 to continue to provide support for the ministry begun by the Sisters of Mercy with the opening of St. Mary's Hospital in 1930. It was initially made possible by funds provided through the sale of Mercy Health Partners to Health Management Associates.

In keeping with the mission of the Sisters of Mercy, the St. Mary's Legacy Foundation of East Tennessee provides direct support for charity, health care and education through Catholic organizations serving those in need in East Tennessee.

While funded through Catholic organizations, the grants ultimately serve people of all faiths. "As part of our Christian identity, our faith calls us to attend to the needs of our entire community regardless of religious affiliation. The majority of these dollars will actually serve non-Catholics," said Bishop Richard Stika.

Following an extensive grant review process and Board of Directors recommendation, foundation members met in late November and awarded more than \$625,000 in grants in support of a dozen initiatives. The grants were broken down into areas supporting education, charity and health-care initiatives. Among the agencies receiving grant awards were the Knoxville Area Ladies of Charity, Catholic Charities of East Tennessee, the Catholic Education Trust Fund, and the Alexian Brothers Senior Neighbors (Chattanooga). Grants were also awarded to several more rural communities in Mountain City, Newport, and Rutledge to initiate and expand community charity outreach through food pantries and other social services.

Among the most noteworthy awards was a grant to initiate the Diocese of Knoxville Office of Health Services, headed by Sister Mariana Koonce, RSM, a family-practice physician. The office, now beginning to take shape, seeks to extend the work of the Sisters of Mercy by continuing the ministry of healing to the needy throughout East Tennessee.

Sister Mariana notes "as a Sister of Mercy and a physician, I am profoundly grateful to the St. Mary's Legacy Foundation for this grant to continue works of mercy directed toward health care for the poor of East Tennessee. This grant will truly allow the legacy of St. Mary's hospital to shape future health care initiatives in many underserved communities across the region."

While grants will continue to be awarded to Catholic institutions, the services those agencies provide are not limited to serving only Catholics. In fact, as in the case of nearly all the grant recipients including Catholic Charities, Ladies of Charity, the Office of Health Services and various food pantry initiatives, the vast majority of clients served are not Catholic.