

FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES:

Deborah A. Roe

Catholic Charities Diocese
of Baton Rouge (Retired)
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Deborah A. Roe's career with the Catholic Diocese began in the Office of Social Responsibility and concluded with her recent retirement after serving 15 years as the Executive Director of Catholic Charities. Under her leadership, Catholic Charities became the number one referred to private non-profit in the Baton Rouge area, serving a clientele that was at least 95% low income. Deborah has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Social Work from Louisiana State University.

In addition to the 14 programs and 100 employees she managed, Ms. Roe is credited with initiating the agency's involvement in emergency assistance, migration and refugee services, senior employment, and citizen advocates for persons with disabilities, prison ministry, foster grandparents, a community coalition designing proactive responses to welfare reform, and transitional housing for ex-offenders, intact homeless families, and pregnant women. Among many community programs she helped incubate, she was one of the founders of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and the Urban Ministry Coalition.

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, CCDBR became the leading disaster relief provider in the Diocese and one of three organizations to provide family recovery services statewide. Under Ms. Roe's leadership, the agency met without reservation unprecedented challenges as its staff

doubled in size and numbers served quadrupled.

Numerous post traumatic and family stabilization programs were developed. This work is expected to continue for at least the next three years.

Ms. Roe's leadership and advocacy on behalf of those in poverty and our call to compassion and justice has earned her great respect throughout the community. She was the first director elected by her colleagues to represent them on the Capital Area United Way Board of Directors. For several years, she co-chaired the Louisiana Catholic Conference Committee on Social Concerns. She also served on Mayor Bobby Simpson's task force organizing a Town Meeting on Racism and served on Mayor Kip Holden's Human Services Transition Team.

In 2006, Ms. Roe was awarded the John W. Barton Sr. Excellence in Non-profit Management Awards by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Continuing her work on behalf of the economically displaced, she serves as a Commissioner for Capital Area Transit Association and was elected as a Southeast Representative to the Catholic Charities USA Board of Trustees.