December 9, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catholic Charities Deploys Staff to Assist with National Disaster Case Management

OWEGO, Tioga County, New York – Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque's Disaster Services Coordinator, Lori Widhalm, began a two-week deployment December 2, 2011 to assists residents in New York affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Lori is serving as a Disaster Case Manager in Tioga County and is primarily located in Owego, New York. Of the 1400 households in Owego, Tropical Storm Lee affected roughly 1200. Disaster Case Managers are working one-on-one with residents to help them assess their unmet needs, locate resources, and develop long term recovery plans.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque was invited to join the Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) Disaster Case Management program in responding to natural disasters throughout the United States. As CCUSA and other recovery organizations have helped families and parishes within the Archdiocese of Dubuque during times of disaster, our local Catholic Charities' participation in the program provides an opportunity to return the favor by assisting other states and communities with their recovery efforts.

CCUSA's Disaster Case Management contract is with the Administration for Children and Families as part of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. It calls for CCUSA to provide Disaster Case Management services throughout the United States and its territories when a federally declared disaster receives Individual Assistance and a request for Disaster Case Management.

The flooding of the Missouri river felt across the western portion of Iowa this year called to mind for many the affects floods and tornadoes have had on eastern Iowa in recent years. Recovery efforts from local, state, and federal organizations ensured resources in these areas were available and accessible. In order to continue to assist during disasters, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque built upon the recovery efforts that

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took place in 2008 by focusing their Disaster Services programming around educating families, parishes, and communities on preparedness measures and recovery resources. Connected to local organizations active in disasters, Catholic Charities' Disaster Services program is linked with the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council and the Linn Area Community Organizations Active in Disaster to continue preparedness efforts and to be available in times of recovery.

As Long Term Recovery Groups form in the affected areas of Tioga County, CCUSA is working to transition each Disaster Case Management team to local agencies. In Owego, Widhalm's team is helping begin this transition to the local Catholic Charities agency, working to keep continuity of services for residents in the community. Recalling the need for Disaster Case Management in Linn, Benton, Bremer, Blackhawk, Chickasaw, Buchanan and surrounding areas in 2008, where Widhalm also served as a Disaster Case Manager, she is thankful for the opportunity to give back and provide disaster services and experience for recovery in another part of the country.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque was founded in 1931 as a non-profit, social service organization. The organization serves 30 counties in Northeast Iowa and is part of a national social services network through Catholic Charities USA, working to reduce poverty, strengthen families, and empower communities, responding to persons in need of all faiths. For more information or ways to get involved visit www.charitiesdbq.com or call 800.772.2758.

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For additional information please call or email Zoë Houlihan at 800.772.2758 or DBQCCCOD@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us.