

the Connection

Serving the Community during the COVID-19 Crisis



The COVID-19 pandemic presents unique challenges for Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet as the Agency remains dedicated to serving each individual who needs help during this difficult time. Additionally, as more people become unemployed, the needs of the community increase and more families need the services of Catholic Charities.

- Most programs/services have temporarily transitioned to meeting via phone instead of face-to-face. These services include **Aging and Disability Services, Counseling, Community Services Case Management, and Emergency Services and Homeless Prevention.**
- **Head Start** and **School Counseling** programs are temporarily closed to comply with the State of Illinois school closings. Head Start staff is in close contact with the families during the closures.
- Homeless shelter clients from **Daybreak Center** and the **Kathy Paulsen Hope House** have been temporarily moved to hotels (with ongoing case management services).
- Additional **Mobile Food Pantry** visits to the community have been scheduled to meet community needs. More food has been added to each truck and participants receive food in a "drive-thru" to allow everyone to remain safely in their vehicles.
- **Shepherd's Table** soup kitchen distributes food boxes to hungry members of the community twice per week (outside of the building). This service is offered in lieu of regular dining room service.
- **Volunteering** on-site is paused to limit the number of personal interactions between individuals.

Each change was thoughtfully made with the intention to protect the health of each client and member of Catholic Charities staff, while still meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

***Please note that as the pandemic continues, Catholic Charities may alter their programs/services in order to meet government orders and/or to best keep clients and staff safe and healthy. Please check catholiccharitiesjoliet.org for the most updated information.

"As we look ahead to a slow and arduous recovery from the pandemic, the risk is that an even worse virus may strike us: that of a selfish indifference that forgets those who are left behind."
 - @Pontifex (Pope Francis)

news bites



Undy Sunday
 Undy Sunday was a great success with 50 parishes and schools collecting underwear, socks, diapers, wipes, and other basic need items for clients of Catholic Charities! Save the date for Undy Sunday 2020, which will take place on October 18, 2020.

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Employee of the Year

Congratulations to our 2019 Employee of the Year: Kristine Czaplicki, Mental Health and Disabilities Intervention Specialist in the Early Childhood Services Division of the Agency!



Daybreak Strong

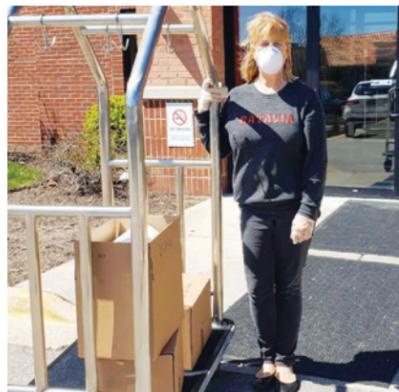
The CCW at St. Jude in Joliet set up a table to inform parishioners about Catholic Charities (primarily Daybreak Center) after each mass this weekend. Our staff also talked about Daybreak during mass. (Pictured left to right from the CCW is Jan Skeldon, Julie Starasinich, and Mary Pirc.) They raised over \$4,000 to help Daybreak Center! If your parish or school is interested in hosting a Daybreak Strong fundraiser, please contact Joy Newburn at jnewburn@cc-doj.org.

How you can help:

Monetary Donations are desperately needed to help ensure that the Agency can continue to provide programs and services to the increasing number of individuals and families who need help during the pandemic and beyond. If you are able, please consider donating your stimulus check. Donations can be made at catholiccharitiesjoliet.org or by sending a check in the enclosed envelope.



Ermal Molla, emergency services bilingual case manager, has been helping provide basic needs to clients from the Downers Grove office.



Joy Newburn, outreach support specialist, delivers boxes of food and gift cards to our Kathy Paulsen Hope House families who have been temporarily relocated to a hotel during the pandemic.



Claire Szopa, LCPC, one of our counselors, is providing therapy to clients on the phone and online during from her home office during the pandemic.



Volunteers and staff wear gloves and face masks while they deliver Mobile Food Pantry boxes to cars at St. Mary Immaculate Parish in Plainfield.



Northern Illinois Food Bank recently provided 46 boxes of fresh produce for our clients who are staying at hotels during the pandemic. (Pictured: Archana Liggins from the food bank and Christie Lucas from Catholic Charities.)



Staff from Daybreak Center pick up a lunch donation from Babe's Hotdogs in Joliet for clients staying at the hotel.



Teachers from the Butterflies classroom at Good Shepherd Head Start in Bolingbrook decorated their cars and drove by each student's home to say hello (from a safe distance). The children were so happy to see their teachers - many of them even dressed up and made signs for the visit!



Dear Friends



I hope this letter finds you well, physically and emotionally. These past months have been difficult for everyone to process as we live through a time unlike any we have previously experienced. I am so proud of our dedicated staff working on the front lines to serve our brothers and sisters most in need. As Catholic Charities continues to provide our programs and services during the pandemic (information in this issue), we have also recently added a new program! The Telephone Reassurance Program is particularly important while many individuals are feeling lonely and isolated.

The Telephone Reassurance Program (within our Aging and Disability Services Division) was recently added to help address and reduce social isolation among older adults. This program is a collaboration between Age Guide (the Area on Aging), the Illinois Department on Aging and community providers in our region. Participants in the Telephone Reassurance Program receive friendly phone calls at least twice each week from volunteers on a schedule agreed to upon by the participant and volunteer. The calls create a warm, friendly, continuing relationship between participants and volunteers while providing a wellbeing check. The program also can connect participants to community-based resources, like congregate meals, educational programs, health and wellness programs, transportation, and senior fairs.

The goal of the Telephone Reassurance Program is for participants to experience less loneliness and isolation and an increase in overall health and wellbeing. We are pleased to present the Telephone Reassurance Program during a time when we find that so many of our older neighbors are feeling isolated. Volunteers and participants are needed. To learn more, please contact Ed Howe at 815-933-7791.

God Bless You,



Glenn Van Cura
Executive Director



Ed Howe is the Program Coordinator the new Telephone Reassurance Program.

2020 Back-to-School Fairs

Each summer, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet coordinates Back to School Fairs to help students and their families from low-income households in DuPage, Kankakee, Iroquois, and Will Counties. Catholic Charities began the Back to School Fairs 30 years ago when after determining that many families are forced to make difficult choices between buying school supplies and paying for basic expenses, like food and rent.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Back to School Fairs will look quite different than in prior years. The past few months have been difficult for everyone, particularly those members of our community who live on poverty-level incomes. At Catholic Charities, we have witnessed a significant increase in the number of families who turn to us for help. As such, we are preparing to serve as many families as possible at our Back to School Fairs this summer.

To maintain safe social distancing procedures, each Back to School Fair will be conducted as a drive-through with participants staying in their vehicles to receive school supplies. It is more important than ever that we help students from low-income households feel confident and ready to begin the new school year. The pandemic has seriously impacted the financial, emotional, social, and educational lives of the families we serve. The cost of purchasing school supplies for a family in-need should not be added to the stress.

We depend on generous donations to help fund the Back to School Fairs in our community. Your gift will help provide the financial resources needed to make a difference in the lives of students from low-income households. Please help to ensure that each child who attends receives what he/she needs for a successful start to the school year. Donations can be made at catholiccharitiesjoliet.org or by sending a check in the enclosed envelope.

An Interview with Mary Novak



Mary Novak is celebrating 30 years working at Catholic Charities! Mary is a therapist at our Downers Grove office.

What inspired you to become a therapist?

I was inspired to become a therapist because of my work with families and children in the school system. It seemed that the emotional well-being of the child in a classroom was one of the main predictors of a young child's success so I tried to create a safe and loving environment and help the parents nurture their children at home.

What is the most satisfying part of your job?

The most satisfying part of my job is the wonderful people I work with here at Catholic Charities and all of the clients I've met along the way. They have always inspired me to continue my work with adults and children who are facing life challenges and need a place to heal and be reminded of the great strengths they possess within themselves to continue on and embrace the future with confidence.

What is special about the counseling program at Catholic Charities?

The counseling program at Catholic Charities has offered me a wonderful opportunity to work with clients of all ages and to be able to help whole families as we are a group of therapists who collaborate to ensure an entire family system can be serviced with the least inconvenience to the family members. We often work a case where several family members can attend at the same time and each see a different therapist. Catholic Charities is also a place where those who are less fortunate can receive services without being turned away because they have Medicaid insurance.

What has inspired you to stay at Catholic Charities for 30 years?

I've stayed at Catholic Charities for all these years because I feel the work is so worthwhile and we have so many opportunities to grow, learn, and practice our craft. The clients look to the therapists to help them discover their inner strengths and we provide a place for them to begin the journey they are on to develop the skills they need to face the future with a positive attitude and belief in oneself.

What would you say to someone who is considering counseling, but nervous to set up an appointment?

I would tell someone considering counseling to "do it for yourself and no one else." Everyone deserves the chance to explore themselves and the opportunities they have to lead a peaceful and rewarding life. The client defines their own path and gets support for moving forward and taking the time to find the direction they need.

Mary continues to see clients and we are grateful for her decades of kind and compassionate service. Catholic Charities provides counseling services throughout the Diocese of Joliet with appointments available at several offices. To learn more, visit catholiccharitiesjoliet.org or call 815-723-0331.

Volunteer Spotlight: The Cake Lady

Each Thursday, the individuals who eat lunch at Shepherd's Table are treated to a delicious homemade cake for dessert, thanks to a volunteer who goes by the name of "the Cake Lady." It's a weekly tradition that clients look forward to. We are so grateful for this thoughtful volunteer effort which makes a big impression on those who are served at Shepherd's Table.

"I answer to Mom, Grandma, My Dear, Mrs. C., and Nancy. When at Daybreak Center, I am also the Cake Lady.

After teaching third and fourth grades at Elwood and Laraway school districts, I retired in 2008. A few years later I had a need to try and do something for others. So I volunteered at Daybreak Center/Shepherd's Table. At first, I sorted and shelved food, but that didn't last long. Gail Flatness, the kitchen coordinator, suggested we take home cake mixes, and bring back cakes for the clients. I decided to make my own Texas cakes and bring them once a week for the lunchtime meal at Shepherd's Table. This is exactly what I've done for the past five years.

My real name is Nancy Ciesla. I belong to Holy Family Parish in Shorewood. I have a wonderful husband, two children and three grandchildren. It has never been a burden for me to bake the cakes -- the Lord sees to that. I am grateful for the opportunity to help others by making them happy with the chocolate cakes. I will continue to bake as long as I am able."



Gail Flatness, Kitchen Coordinator at Daybreak Center (left) and The Cake Lady, Nancy Ciesla (right).

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet Accredited by the Standards for Excellence Institute®

We are proud to announce that Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet has been accredited by the Standards for Excellence Institute for successfully fulfilling the requirements of their Standards for Excellence® program. This accreditation illustrates our commitment to upholding the principles and practices of the Standards for Excellence®: an Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector, which includes six areas of nonprofit operations:

- I. Mission, Strategy and Evaluation
- II. Leadership: Board, Staff, and Volunteers
- III. Legal Compliance and Ethics
- IV. Finance and Operations
- V. Resource Development
- VI. Public Awareness, Engagement, and Advocacy.



Some of the areas reviewed as part of the evaluation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Board conduct
- Procedural review of disclosing and avoiding conflicts of interest
- Procedural review of preparing audited financial statements
- Procedural review of program evaluation
- Procedural review of organizational-donor accountability

Homer Glen Parishes Help Daybreak!



St. Bernard and Our Mother of Good Counsel Parishes in Homer Glen recently held food drives at both parishes to benefit Daybreak Center. The effort resulted in donations that filled four cars, two vans, and included \$660 in gift cards, and \$10,460 in cash donations!



Angel Appeal: Matching Your Donations! (up to \$50,000)

The world has changed dramatically over the past few months. Catholic Charities has responded quickly to impact of COVID-19 on our clients and community. The Agency implemented changes to programs in order to ensure the safety and health of clients and staff. While we are pleased to report that these transitions have been smooth and that our clients' needs are being met, the Agency's expenses have escalated to an all new high.

We have been blessed with an angel who will match your donations – up to \$50,000. Will you join our angel to help Catholic Charities serve our most vulnerable neighbors?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our needs are particularly urgent and we predict that they will only continue to grow. Thank you for partnering with Catholic Charities to help during this challenging time. We pray that you and your family remain safe and find peace.

The resources provided by Catholic Charities are vital to the wellbeing of our clients and to the entire community.

Thank you for being the angel that we've prayed for. There are several quick and easy ways to donate to our Angel Appeal:

- Visit catholiccharitiesjoliet.org.
- Send a check in the envelope enclosed in this newsletter. Please be sure to write "Angel Appeal" for the memo on your check.
- Call 815-724-1140.

Thank you and God bless you for your generosity and compassion.

Event Sponsors

Thank you to the generous sponsors of our recent events!



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We pray for an angel to help us to care for...

... those deprived of their basic human needs.
... those who are forgotten or cast away.
... those who are lonely or afraid.
Amen.



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ckloiber@cc-doj.org

Locations

WILL COUNTY

16555 Weber Rd.
Crest Hill, IL 60403
Phone: 815-723-3405
Fax: 815-723-3452
Head Start: 815-723-3053

GRUNDY & KENDALL COUNTIES

519 W. Illinois Street
Morris, IL 60450
Phone: 815-774-4663 x3104
Fax: 815-941-2563

DUPAGE COUNTY

3130 Finley Road, Suite 520
Downers Grove, IL 60515
Phone: 630-495-8008
Fax: 630-495-9854
**Kathy Paulsen Hope House
Hotline: 800-941-8681**

KANKAKEE, FORD & IROQUOIS COUNTIES

249 S. Schuyler Ave., Suite 300
Kankakee, IL 60901
Phone: 815-933-7791
Fax: 815-933-4601



**catholic
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Diocese of Joliet

16555 Weber Rd.
Crest Hill, IL 60403



For giving opportunities
and more information
about our programs,
visit our website:
Catholiccharitiesjoliet.org



Top 10 Most-Wanted Donations During the Pandemic

We are currently low on all of the following items and would be very grateful for donations of:

1. Ready-to-eat meals that only use a microwave to prepare. Our homeless clients in hotels only have a mini fridge and microwave.
2. Diapers (sizes 4, 5, 6) and baby wipes
3. Tampons and ultra-thin pads
4. Gift cards to Jewel or Target
5. Clorox wipes
6. Ziplock baggies (all sizes)
7. Laundry detergent pods
8. Individually packaged snacks/treats
9. Individual drinks (milk, Gatorade, juice)
10. Fresh fruit (apples and oranges)

FOOD DONATIONS can be dropped off at Daybreak Center: **611 E. Cass Street in Joliet**

GIFT CARD DONATIONS can be sent to (or dropped in the mail slot at):
3130 Finley Road, Suite 520 in Downers Grove

Our donation needs are ever-changing. Please check catholiccharitiesjoliet.org for a list that is updated daily!

Playing for Miracles Awards



**CORPORATE
CHAMPION AWARD**
Crane Composites



**ESTEEMED
PARTNER AWARD**
Wheaton Franciscan Sisters



Catholic Charities
Diocese of Joliet
2019



HEART OF CHARITY AWARD
Dan and Jackie Hall