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 in order 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.

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.

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

Volunteers and staff wear gloves and face masks while they deliver Mobile Food Pantry boxes to those in need.

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.

Casha Justice, Director of School Services, is providing therapy to clients on the phone and online during from her home office during the pandemic.

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 Christine Lucas from Catholic Charities.)

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.

American Red Cross Purple Heart recipients John Hickey and Bettye Mathias present the Agency with a check.

Teachers from the Butterflies classroom at Good Shepherd Head Start in Bolingbrook decorated their cars and drove by each student’s home to say hi (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!

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

Volunteers from the Daybreak classroom at Good Shepherd Head Start in Bolingbrook delivered their cars and drove by each student’s home to say hi (from a safe distance).

**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.

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.

Our Mission
We are a faith-based organization providing service to people in need and calling others of good will to do the same.
To maintain safe social distancing procedures, each Back to School Fair will be.

Catholic Charities, we have witnessed a significant increase in the number of families particularly those members of our community who live on poverty-level incomes. At years ago when after determining that many families are forced to make difficult choices Iroquois, and Will Counties. Catholic Charities began the Back to School Fairs 30 years ago. We added to the stress. We serve. The cost of purchasing school supplies for a family in-need should not be seriously impacted the financial, emotional, social, and educational lives of the families we serve. 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.

The goal of the Telephone Reassurance Program is to provide 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 2020 Back-to-School Fairs enclosed envelope. Donations can be made at catholiccharitiesjoliet.org or by sending a check in the child who attends receives what he/she needs for a successful start to the school year.

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 they need for a successful start to the school year.

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 Latrobe 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 to 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 in the kitchen. My real name is Nancy Ciesla. I belong to Holy Family Parish in Shorewood. Each Thursday, I fry the chocolate cakes. I will continue to bake as long as I am able.”

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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

Event Sponsors
Thank you to the generous sponsors of our recent events!

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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.

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!
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!