

100TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

A L E G A C Y O F H O P E

THE **CLARION**
NEWS FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES



LETTER FROM CEO

A cup of tea, a warm conversation, and a desire to give of myself to others.

Those were the three ingredients I needed to realize the Lord was calling me to lead Catholic Charities as its new chief executive officer.

Both the tea and the conversation were provided to me by a refugee family from Afghanistan. I was invited to their new home to hear about their experiences of becoming re-settled here in northeast Indiana, with the help of our team at Catholic Charities.

Their oldest son spoke English and shared their story with me, including video footage of their dramatic departure from Kabul airport. They were doing well in their home country. His father was hard-working, his mother took care of the household, and he was gainfully employed in the healthcare industry, while his siblings were all in school. They never expected it to come to this, but as American troops left and the Taliban rolled in, they were no longer safe.

I asked him to ask his mother if she liked it here. He turned to his mom and asked her; he turned back to me and said, "she finally feels safe."

It became clear to me that, in this season of my life, I was being called to serve the Church in this way.

Over the past few months, seeing the direct impact we have with our neighbors has been tremendously moving for me. It is clear, that after 100 years of Catholic Charities in our region, the need still very much exists, and we are all called by the Gospel to respond.

Today, I want to invite you to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend. On Thursday, April 21, our 100th Anniversary Gala will take place with special guest Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

During this milestone event, we will be celebrating the lives changed, as well as raising support for the future of our mission. Our keynote speaker, Fr. Agustino Torres, CFR, will be speaking on the importance of serving those most in need, inspired by his homeless and youth ministry in the Bronx. You can register now for this important evening at www.ccfwsb.org/gala

With the help of supporters like you, we have gone from serving 200 cases a year, to almost 16,000 individuals in 2021. This would not be possible without you.

When Bishop Alerding established the Associated Catholic Charities in 1922, it was in response to the unique needs of our diocese. Our doors have remained open through the Great Depression, WWII, the Cuban Missile Crisis, The Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Recession and the COVID-19 Pandemic. In this special edition of *The Clarion*, we look back at these vital services that shape us as an agency today.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your past and future support.

Yours in Christ,



Dan Florin
CEO of Catholic Charities



REGIONAL UPDATES

REGION NORTH

The North Region office finished out 2021 with 13,997 RSVP volunteer hours. Busier than ever, VITA Tax volunteers are setting up appointments across the region to help low-income families file taxes for free. The office has "Shared the Warmth" by passing out 1,858 winter coats and accessories to individuals, schools, churches and non-profit organizations this winter. In the last half of 2021, 1,341 individuals were able to stock their kitchen and put food on the table after being served at the Community Center of Caring Food Pantry.

REGION WEST

We are happy to welcome new staff members: LaTisa Bennett, Crystal Dunnebacke and Lisa Hayes. Case management services were provided to 316 households through the Education Creates Hope & Opportunity Program for pregnant and parenting youth, Survivors of Human Trafficking, Resource & Referral Program and our Homeless Transition in partnership with Center for the Homeless. We have officially opened a refugee resettlement-sub office in the West Region. With the help of countless parish volunteers, we have welcomed 33 refugees from Afghanistan to our community since the beginning of January. We expect to receive up to an additional 50 individuals from other countries over the next year.

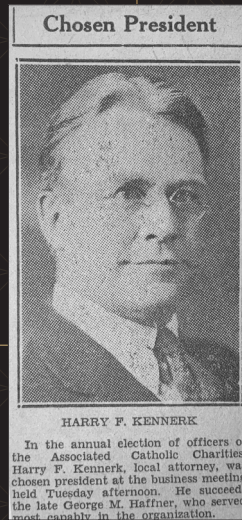
REGION EAST

Catholic Charities' East Region ventured into a new realm of services to provide hospitality to refugees once they arrive to this area. Catholic Charities opened the Cabrini Center which is a first stop for many refugees relocating to the Fort Wayne area. The East Region office continues to provide immigration services, including the City ID program for Fort Wayne residents. Over 1,500 IDs have been distributed since October. The East Region office continues to provide employment services to seniors through our SCSEP program and we have served 69 individuals in this program year and six have gained unsubsidized employment so far this program year. Since the inception of our partnership with the Rescue Mission, we have aided 81 individuals as they transition out of shelter life.

1922 | 1930's

1922

Recognizing an increased need, Bishop Herman Alerding established Associated Catholic Charities in 1922. With a mission to provide organized, concerted charitable efforts, the new agency opened its offices in the Standard Building in Fort Wayne.



1924

In 1924, Associated Catholic Charities became one of 19 original members of the Community Chest, which is now known as the United Way of Allen County.

1925

In 1925, Associated Catholic Charities adopted a constitution and bylaws, appointed laymen from each parish to its board of directors, and became affiliated with the National Conference of Catholic Charities, now Catholic Charities USA.

1927

By 1927, Associated Catholic Charities had become a state-licensed child-placing agency. Under the leadership of Miss Connors, home visiting was done by lay members of the board.

1930's

'30's, The Great Depression created a new mass of individuals in need of assistance. Father Edward Sweigert named Director of Associated Catholic Charities.

LIKE SISTERS

An Adoption Story Unlike Most

Danielle was 22 and unexpectedly pregnant. Learning she was carrying a baby, she realized quickly she was not ready to be a mom. "There was no time to digest the news," she says.

Rachel was facing fertility issues, including four miscarriages. Being a mom was something she wanted "more than anything."

They both found help — and each other — through Catholic Charities.

Danielle saw the positive impact adoption had on a young mother via the MTV show *16 and Pregnant*. "If it could work for them," she told herself, "I know it could work for me." Adoption became the only option she truly considered.

Rachel and her husband Patrick applied for a waitlist to become adoptive parents. After a year of patience and prayer, they got the call.

"I remember the call perfectly," says Patrick. They ended up scheduling a time to meet Danielle and the baby's father, Ryan, at the Catholic Charities office in Elkhart. The baby was due two weeks later.

In a dramatic turn of events, Rachel and Patrick got a call the day before, saying the meeting was going to be moved to Elkhart General Hospital instead. The baby was coming early.

"We went from being on a year-long waitlist, to getting a phone call to be interviewed, to

becoming parents in less than 24 hours," says Rachel. "We didn't even have time to call our families."

With a head full of fluffy hair, Rachel and Patrick started to get to know their new daughter. "The nurse came in and put a wristband on her little foot, and then she had another wristband that said 'mother' that she put on my hand. That's when it hit me," says Rachel. "I was a mom."

“WE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO CALL OUR FAMILIES.”

Danielle says she and Rachel have since become "like sisters." "We're a family — we basically adopted each other."

Danielle says that Catholic Charities "was so warm and welcoming when I first started the process."

"They truly played a pivotal role in creating our family," adds Rachel.

1940's | 1950's

1940's

- An office in South Bend opens to serve the needs of the western end of the Diocese – they have 4 sites and a branch office in Elkhart.
- Catholic Charities' services expand to meet the needs of the community during and after WWII.

1957

- In 1957, Msgr. John Reed is appointed director and under a reorganization plan, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc. was established. Two agencies functioned under this structure: Catholic Social Service in Fort Wayne and its counterpart in South Bend.
- In 1957, At the request of Msgr. Reed and under the leadership of Marie Kocks, 12 women joined together to become the Marions to provide volunteer service to Catholic Charities Fort Wayne.

40 50

THE HOPE OF A HOME

The weight was too heavy to bear for Tayawna, and in 2019, she found herself suicidal. With four children to care for, she was able to push through this crisis, but negative influences lingered.

After a string of bad luck, Tayawna felt like she was carrying all the weight on her own, and she gave up. It was the second time Tayawna found herself homeless, but this time was different.

At the Center for the Homeless in South Bend, Tayawna worked with case managers who gave her resources to get back on her feet. But it wasn't until she met Catholic Charities' Community Services Supervisor, Lauren Jankowski, that she finally felt seen.

"Lauren helped me see that I had strength for the first time in my life," Tayawna says. "She looked at me with unjudging eyes and a heart that was truly listening."

In partnership with the Center for the Homeless, Catholic Charities provides case management for residents before they transition out of the shelter. The program aids clients with things as simple as setting goals and budgeting, to overcoming hurdles like obtaining their birth certificate and finding housing. Most importantly, case managers lend an ear to whatever is on the client's mind.

"Lauren had the expertise to unpack what was happening in my life," says Tayawna. "My whole outlook in life changed after Lauren helped me look at things more positively. We talked about what I was feeling, past footfalls and how these experiences have made me stronger."

Tyawna moved into her new home in February 2022. She continues to set goals with Lauren as she works to achieve her dream of opening a restaurant.

"Food is so comforting," says Tayawna. "My goal is to attend culinary school so I can open a

“MY WHOLE
OUTLOOK
IN LIFE
CHANGED”

restaurant and create a food pantry on wheels with the leftover food. I want to give hope to the next person who has been through similar struggles. Most importantly, I want them to know a stranger can care about them."

MORE THAN ENOUGH

In 1975, Catholic Charities was in need of local families to host refugees from Vietnam. Back then, local radio was a key tool for them to help get the word out.

Mary Lou was listening that day. Recently divorced, with three small children at home, she didn't hesitate. "I had a home with far more than I needed," she recalls. "And these folks needed a place to stay." A young family of four (plus a mother-in-law) moved

in just a few weeks later to a full meal waiting for them when they arrived. "I was trying to walk in their shoes," says Mary Lou. "They'd probably be very tired and hungry and would need a warm supper."

Supper that night was pork chops. One good cut for each of them, plus Mary Lou and her kids. The only thing that stood out was what happened when dinner was served. Not knowing any English, the young Vietnamese family instinctively took one pork

chop and divided it among the five of them.

"They ate every nibble. That's all they wanted." The young father in the family became a leader among the local refugee community and began helping to bring other families who were trapped in Vietnam into the US.

"Help a prophet, and reap the prophet's rewards," recalls Mary Lou from Matthew 10:41. "Though I didn't need any reward from it at all; it was the least I could do."

“THIS IS THE REASON WE’RE PUT HERE”

Decades later, Mary Lou keeps in touch with the family — who now reside in California. "When they left, I had two sets of nice dishes, so I gave them my nicer set. Who needs two sets of dishes?" Mary Lou said.

Years later, long after the family had moved out of Mary Lou's home, they returned the favor: a new set of good dishes. "I still use them to this day," she says. "Helping others is important," Mary Lou says. "This is the reason we're put here. There's no better way to spend your life."

1960's | 1970's

1960

In 1960, the Fort Wayne office moved to St. Paul's school on Fairfield for the next 30 years.

1961

In 1961, a special resettlement program was established in Fort Wayne to deal with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

1964

In 1964, with the bequest of Mrs. Geneva Davidson of \$500,000 to build a home for the aged and other collections, plans were developed for St. Anne Retirement Community in Fort Wayne.

1968

In 1968, Jerry Henry, MSW, becomes Director of Catholic Social Services.

1973

In 1973, the Auburn office opens under RSVP Program.

1975

In 1975, the refugee program begins by resettling Vietnamese families.

1976

In 1976, Villa of the Woods was opened for senior living.

THE SUPPORT TO SUCCEED

As a senior in high school, a pregnant Adriana Vazquez knew she needed help navigating the next nine months (and beyond) as a first-time mom. Her school introduced her to the Catholic Charities program called ECHO (Education Creates Hope and Opportunity). Working with pregnant teens and young adults, ECHO helps young parents graduate from high school, as well as get them set up for life as a parent.

For Adriana, that need was higher than most, as her own mother passed away just a year before. "That was a big challenge for me in being a teen mom," she says. "Seeing her go through her

That inspired her to spend the next four years studying to become a nurse, while raising two kids, working and suffering a miscarriage.

During that time, it was ECHO that Adriana turned to for support. "They gave me the moral



Adriana Vazquez

support I needed to get through it all," she says. "There was someone there to help me when I couldn't help myself."

Eight years later, Adriana looks back at how different her life turned out. Thinking she'd graduate high school and work at a restaurant, ECHO helped her see what more she could do, and fulfill her dreams.

"I know I want to help new mothers in postpartum care," she says. A role that was inspired by the support she gained from ECHO.

THERE WAS SOMEONE THERE TO HELP ME WHEN I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF

illness, I wanted to learn more about taking care of people and helping them live healthy lives."

1980's | 1990's

1989

- In 1989, Kathleen Donnellan is named Diocesan Director of Catholic Charities.

1990's

- First school counseling program is created.
- Expands the Children's Cottage daycare facility.

1990

- In 1990, the Fort Wayne office is moved to 315 E. Washington St. and restructures into five major service divisions.

1991

- In 1991, the Rainbows Program was created.

1993

- In 1993, Catholic Charities is chosen to be one of the few organizations for resettlement Bosnian.

1996

- In 1996, Project Rachel begins to aid those involved in an abortion.

1999

- In 1999, ECHO program begins to aid teen parents working towards their high school diploma.



2000's | 2010

2001

In 2001, a multi-million dollar renovation of Villa of the Woods retirement home begins.

In 2001, the Immigration program begins.

2003

In 2003, Debra Schmidt becomes Director of Catholic Charities.

In 2003, the South Bend food pantry opens.

In 2003, the Senior Community Service Employment Program begins.



A JOURNEY TO CITIZENSHIP

At every turn of Eduardo's journey to become a US citizen, there has been one consistent reality: Luz Ostrognai at Catholic Charities.

Before he first arrived in the US as a young child, his mother turned to Luz for help in reuniting with her son who was still in Mexico. "I need to get my son over here," she said to Luz at the time.

Those words from a nervous young mother started a two-decade journey for Eduardo, who with the help of Luz and Catholic Charities, would finally be able to grow up with his mother and step-father in Fort Wayne.

When Eduardo considered going to college, another hill in his journey arrived: he was unable

I didn't have Luz in my corner, the whole thing would be incredibly confusing," he says. With the help of Catholic Charities, receiving DACA status allowed Eduardo to attend Purdue Fort Wayne, where he earned a degree in art and design — and where he met his wife.



Luz Ostrognai

“MY FILE AT THIS POINT IS THE SIZE OF A THREE-INCH TEXTBOOK”

With marriage came the final hill to climb in his path to full citizenship. After working with Luz again — including all the paperwork, physicals, getting shots up to date and blood drawn — Eduardo looks back at where he's been and who's been with him along the way. "We always have a mini recap of my journey every time we meet," he says. "My file at this point is the size of a three-inch textbook -- big story of my life!"

to gain valuable scholarships to attend the universities he had been accepted to attend. As was true before, Eduardo turned to Luz. "If

A story that Luz was there to help him write. "Luz kept all my fear and anxiety at bay and she guided me to a better future," he says.

CLINICAL LIAISON

By Chris Nowak, Clinical Director

“WHAT IS THE BRAVEST THING YOU’VE EVER SAID?” ASKED THE BOY. “HELP,” SAID THE HORSE.

Charlie Mackery.

The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse

When asked to write this article, I spent several days thinking about the messages I wanted to convey to our readers. As divine providence would have it, this book was suggested to me. I spent time reading the author’s musings, and this quote eloquently describes the first step a person takes when calling Catholic Charities’ Counseling Office. The first call is the bravest action, and it is a step to be admired. Too often, we believe the messages we have been raised with, or the messages we hear in the world. “I have to do this on my own,” “I have

always handled my problems on my own,” “What will people think of me?” “What is wrong with me?”

Counseling is a process that provides safety, confidentiality, dignity, and restoration of hope. As a therapist for almost forty years, I have come to realize that we are all interdependent; we all need someone to truly “hear us;” to truly be present to us. Most of us have friends, or family or colleagues that help us navigate the daily difficulties of life. But there are times in our lives when life becomes overwhelming; either because of grief, loss, trauma, abuse, marital strife, work/life balance stresses, etc. A therapist can provide safety where sharing can be done without fear of judgment or reprisal. A therapist is trained to be objective while being empathic, and to have a genuine interest in supporting the healing journey. Therapists walk alongside a person; not in front

as to pull and not behind as to push. Oftentimes, people who are in counseling will say: “I have never told anyone this” or “I was afraid to tell you, but this is what has happened to me” or “Thank you for hearing me.” For the therapist, it is a place of privilege and sacredness to walk with another; to venture with another into their most closely guarded places and experiences.

The Counseling Department has a wide and deep reach within our diocese. Last fiscal year, we served 468 persons in our diocese across eight programs, three Catholic grade schools and one Catholic High School. Our programs include mental health counseling (including services to victims of human trafficking), addiction counseling, school counseling, Real Service caregiver support, EAP services to diocesan employees, Clinical Liaison services, and assessment for immigration



and the Marriage Tribunal. This fiscal year, we have already served 343 clients and have added four additional Catholic grade schools. These services are all provided by a small and dedicated staff of 5.5 therapists.

Counseling services are being requested in more ways as the stresses of daily life, of a never-ending pandemic and of families struggling to balance old and new demands. Our services are below the market rate with a flexible sliding fee scale, accepting many insurances and Medicaid. I am honored to serve in several roles at Catholic Charities. I am the Director of Clinical Services, Clinical Liaison, and therapist. We are approaching a time where the need for services will outpace the staffing capacities. Supporting the counseling program will allow the department to continue to expand services across our diocese. Let us together continue to be present to those we walk with.

2014

- The mentoring program begins.
- In 2014, Gloria Whitcraft becomes CEO of Catholic Charities.

2015

- In 2015, Catholic Charities adds Mobile unit to provide services in outer counties.

2017

- In 2017, the first clinical liaison is hired to help parishioners connect to counselors.
- In 2017, Hope to Healing begins to raise funds for the clinical program.

2020

- In 2020, hosts a record-breaking quilt sale to raise money for RSVP program.
- In 2020, Catholic Charities stays open during the COVID-19 pandemic and launches an online financial assistance form.

2021

- In 2021, an outpatient addiction treatment program in South Bend opens.
- In 2021, Catholic Charities begins resettling Afghan refugees after American military pulls out of Afghanistan.
- In 2021, The City ID Program launches in Fort Wayne after Mayor Tom Henry’s Mayoral Proclamation.
- In 2021, Catholic Charities is one of three social service agencies to contract with the City of Fort Wayne and St. Joseph County to aid those seeking emergency rental assistance due to COVID-19.

2022

- In 2022, the Cabrini Center opens to house Afghan Refugees.
- In 2022, Dan Florin becomes CEO of Catholic Charities.



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Ways you can celebrate 100 years of the Church serving all those in need:

\$5,000

Helps a refugee family with basic needs for three months

\$2,500

Gives a student a mental health outlet for a semester

\$1,000

Helps an immigrant become a new American

\$500

Helps a mother choose adoption

\$100

Provides diapers for a teen parent still in high school

\$50

Puts food on the table for a week

GIVE A LEGACY OF HOPE FOR \$84 A MONTH:

All those who give over \$1,000 between January and December 2022 be recognized on our Century Club plaque. Learn more: www.ccfwsb.org/century-club.

JOIN US FOR A MILESTONE EVENT

Help us celebrate our 100 years of accomplishments by attending our 100th Anniversary Gala on April 21: www.ccfwsb.org/gala.

Can't make it but still want to contribute a gift in honor of this milestone? Visit www.ccfwsb.org/donate.