

Blessings



Catholic Charities
Southwestern Ohio
Serve | Engage | Empower

Newsletter of Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio – an Agency of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

A Silver Celebration: 25 Years of Su Casa



For a quarter-century, Su Casa Hispanic Center has ministered to a community that continues to grow in Greater Cincinnati.

Su Casa celebrated its 25th anniversary at its annual awards dinner on Sept. 16 at TQL Stadium. In addition to honoring community leaders and organizations that advocate for and serve Hispanic/Latino immigrants, the event highlighted Su Casa's evolution from a small program offering primarily social and education services into one of the area's largest providers of human services to the Hispanic/Latino community and other vulnerable international communities.

With over 425 tickets purchased, this year's event SOLD OUT. Between sponsorship, ticket sales, the silent auction, and the live appeal, the event raised nearly \$95,000 for Su Casa's client programs and services.

Today, with the help of Catholic Charities supporters, Su Casa impacts about 5,000 people each year through emergency assistance, case management, family reunification, health promotion, education services, the Trafficking Victims Assistance Program, the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program and more. Su Casa's family reunification program is the only one of its kind within 200 miles of Cincinnati.

"Over the years, we've become more specialized and have been able to impact a larger number of individuals and families," says Giovanna Alvarez, Su Casa Director. "As the community continues to grow, it benefits the local labor market. We need to invest in this community."

The region's Hispanic/Latino population has reached 4% and continues to increase. Traditionally, immigrants have come primarily from Mexico and Guatemala. Now, Cincinnati is welcoming more newcomers from Colombia, Nicaragua,



2022 Honorees

Isabel Mendez and Dan Calonge, *Latino Leadership Award*

Cristina Zenteno, *Volunteer of the Year*

Fr. Len Wenke, *Lifetime Achievement Award*

Sue Keefe, *Mother Cabrini Award*

Xavier University, *Outstanding Community Partner*

Cris Collinsworth ProScan Fund, *Outstanding Community Partner in Health*

Cuba and Venezuela, in addition to the traditional places of origin.

A changing community means changing needs. Giovanna says Su Casa will keep evolving and growing to meet those needs for the next 25 years and beyond.

"For a community to be successful, everybody has to take care of each other so we can move forward together," she says. "We all benefit from the well-being of this particular community."

Ready to Serve, Engage and Empower More!

LEADERSHIP

Most. Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr,
Archbishop of Cincinnati

Board of Directors

Debbie Kokoruda *Chair*

Jacqueline Rioja Velarde *Vice-Chair*

John Kronenberger *Treasurer*

Rebecca Johnson *Secretary*

Robin Astifan

Kelly Conner

Tara Dahal

Lucy Davila-Soto

Fr. Tom DiFolco

John Geraghty

Bill Goslee

Claver Pashi, PhD

Katherine Sheridan, MD

Lillie Sneed

Tricia Williams

Staff

Tony Stieritz, *Chief Executive Officer*

Patrick Reynolds-Berry, *Chief Operations Officer*

Ross Hallman, *Chief Financial Officer*

José Nine, *Quality & Innovation Director*

Stephanie Pittman, *Human Resources Director*

Daniel Sarell, *Mission Advancement Director*

David Taylor, *Marketing & Communications Director*



Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio is 106 years old this year. While the organization has grown in its best practices and professionalism over such history, it has always been an innovative service provider. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Catholic Charities makes it a point to respond to people in their times of vulnerability with effective services that no one else offers. Reading the signs of the times, the agency is persistently finding new ways to help those in need to accompany them from crisis to stability and from vulnerability to self-sufficiency.

Having just completed our 5-year strategic plan, we are at another moment in this history of having

discerned where the Holy Spirit is calling us next. Through multiple focus groups comprised of a wide range of supporters, community partners, clients, staff and volunteers, we heard loud and clear that the community likes what Catholic Charities does. In fact, they want to see more of it. And, they are eager to see how we might address other service gaps in the community.

In response, we are committing to expanding our service impact over the next 5 years, impacting the lives of at least a thousand more clients a year. This can mean **additional** mental health services, senior and caregiver support, empowerment for refugees and migrants, family education, and more. However we grow, we aim to increase our capacity to: 1) reduce the waitlists among our most popular and overwhelmed services; 2) broaden the reach of our best-in-class programs to more populations and geographic areas in our 11-county area; and 3) explore new innovative models of empowerment, so that more clients can be the agents of their own, brighter futures. As has dependably been the case for Catholic Charities over the last century, our growth is to be ambitious but sustainable.

Catholic Charities is also growing in how the community engages with us. Through more intentional prayer, greater volunteerism and broader financial support, we are creating a space where people's faith comes alive. This is **YOUR** Catholic Charities. It's thanks to your passion to put God's love into action through your acts of solidarity that we help families thrive. As we now put our strategic plan into motion, I'm grateful for you positioning us to serve, engage and empower even more!

In gratitude,

Tony Stieritz, *Chief Executive Officer*

Giving Tuesday is November 29! Create Your Own Giving Circle

GIVING TUESDAY

The most life-giving and impactful acts of charity are those that build community — that strengthen the bonds of love and friendship by accomplishing significant good, together, for others.

Giving Tuesday, on November 29, presents the opportunity to "make an appointment" to touch the lives of local families and inspire others to work together toward social change. That makes it the perfect time to create your own Giving Circle.

What is a Giving Circle? It is a group of family and friends who unite to increase their impact in support of a cause that matters to all of them. When a group agrees to pool their resources, they can achieve more than each person could do individually.

Giving Circles pick an "ambassador" to lead their group's efforts. They can also choose a creative team name to add to the holiday cheer. When giving online, refer to your team's name or ambassador in the Special Instructions, or use the Tribute feature to make a gift "In Honor Of" your team or organizer. You can select any of Catholic Charities' specific programs to support, or you may offer your gift to the area of greatest need.

Through Catholic Charities, your Giving Circle can respond to a variety of important causes and issues, including refugee resettlement, hunger, rural poverty, mental health, care for seniors, support for immigrant families and services for at-risk children and their parents.

Catholic Charities has long invited friends like you to "Pray, Learn, Volunteer and Donate." Those are also actions you can invite your friends and family to take with you. However you choose to support our

mission, bringing together a community of caring, compassionate people will maximize the good your generosity will accomplish this holiday season.

To discuss your Giving Circle plan, call Dan Sarell, Director of Mission Advancement, at (513) 672-3710, or dsarell@ccswoh.org.

Don't Wait for Giving Tuesday — Give Now!

Some of us are last-minute shoppers, but you plan ahead! Participating in Giving Tuesday is as easy as visiting ccswoh.org/donate (Select #GivingTuesday in the drop-down menu). You don't need to wait until November 29. You can give any time to help Catholic Charities reach its \$50,000 goal, and we will recognize your generosity on that day. Thank you for your support and participation!

Su Casa Wellness Workshops Give Clients the Tools to Thrive

The Hispanic/Latino community is characterized by its resilience. But even the strongest person needs access to proper mental health care to work through difficult experiences.

Many of Su Casa's clients suffered trauma in their countries of origin or in the process of immigrating to the United States. "If you hear their stories ... it's very difficult," says Sara Obando, Su Casa Health Promotions Supervisor. "They suffer a lot of violence and injustice, and they have a lot of problems. And when they come here, they don't have a support system. They feel segregated and isolated."

Su Casa Hispanic Center was selected as the regional recipient of a grant from **The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services** and **The Ohio Latino Affairs Commission**, which supports this innovative response.

Unfortunately, there are not enough Bilingual Mental Health Providers in the region, and for the uninsured the waiting

time to access services can take up to a year! This need was the inspiration behind a new series of wellness workshops so clients can access tools, increase their resiliency, and create a support network of community members who speak the same language and share the same culture.

"Right now, mental health services are hard to access," says Mental Health Services Director Laura Hershberger, one of the presenters in the series, "so we're looking for other ways to support people."

Fifteen to 20 people, primarily women, attended each week. Class topics included using mindfulness and relaxation to manage anxiety and depression; promoting wellness through positive affirmations; the connection of mind, body and spirit; and overall wellness, including healthy sleep, eating, and exercise habits.

University of Cincinnati medical students also contributed to the success of the series by teaching two of the classes.



Latino Affairs
Commission

"If you're going to care for your family, for kids with disabilities, you have to take care of yourself first. We give our clients the tools to do that."

— Sara Obando, *Health Promotions Supervisor*

The unique program was well received by the participants. Their appreciation for it and the ongoing need for more mental health options in the community reinforce Catholic Charities' commitment to offering more such services.

Mary Sarah's Story: The Gift of Service

Mary Sarah Kirley loves to help. Living with developmental disabilities doesn't keep her from using her many gifts to serve the Lord and her community.

She assists with the Children's Liturgy of the Word at her parish, Bellarmine Chapel. She maintains local walking trails through her involvement with Marjorie Book Continuing Education, and she cares for animals at Brighter Day Farm.

Mary Sarah and her family also participate each year in the Hunger Walk to raise money for the Freestore Foodbank and member pantry programs. She creates a team of friends and loved ones to support her efforts.

This spring, Mary Sarah chose to direct their donations to Catholic Charities' Food For All program. Together, Mary Sarah's team of 43 donors raised \$3,136!

"Mary Sarah's heart for service, creativity and empowering others to share their gifts reflects the values and works of mercy that all of us share through Catholic Charities,"



says Daniel Sarell, Director of Mission Advancement. "We are so incredibly grateful to her."

To show her gratitude to her team members, Mary Sarah sent a handwritten note to each person who supported her cause.

"Since she is a non-reader/writer, her donors know this is a big deal," says her dad, Dennis. "Mary tells her mom what to write to each person. Her mom writes it out, and Mary copies it letter by letter."

Mary Sarah is a perfect example of how one person can make a big impact by



encouraging others to join them in doing something good for the world.

Get Involved!

Are you feeling inspired by Mary Sarah? Visit ccswoh.org to discover creative ways you can serve your community by praying, learning, volunteering and donating. Form at team! Giving Circles make giving fun and maximizes your impact.

Food for All's Community Impact

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio's Food for All program distributes healthy food at mobile food pantries, located in Clermont, Clinton, Highland, Brown, Adams and Hamilton counties, through a partnership with the Freestore Foodbank and a great deal of volunteer support. In a number of Catholic and public schools throughout the area, Food for All also provides hundreds of students from low-income households with packs of food, known as Power Packs, to ensure they have something to eat on weekends.



Friendly and respectful
People being so kind Quantity of food good food
baked goods Community and people
good people nice food People are friendly
Easy Free food
food is good **People** food
People are helpful Food variety
best pantry people very nice
friendly personalities Friendly people

We Are Not Alone, Thanks to Creative Connections



When Nick Komanecky's wife, Jo Ann, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease in 2019, Nick immediately went on a quest for information. He searched online. He bought books. He spoke with doctors and social workers.

But Nick didn't truly find what he was looking for until he and Jo Ann began attending the Creative Connections program of Catholic Charities' Caregiver Assistance Network.

Creative Connections, which takes place once a week in 10-week sessions, offers a support group for caregivers while their loved ones participate in music, movement and other uplifting activities.

"I began to understand the human aspect of this disease and how to cope with it as a caregiver for my wife," Nick says. "I began to get a 'feeling' for Alzheimer's there because the other caregivers openly shared their experiences, the problems they faced and how they coped."

In their group, caregivers like Nick talk about a wide variety of issues, from medication questions to bathing concerns. The participants know they are in a safe place where they will find understanding instead of judgment.

"When friends pull away and relatives never inquire about your wife's condition, empathy from other caregivers warms you and gets you through the week," Nick says.

For Jo Ann, the program reconnects her to music she's loved for decades and brings a smile to her face. Nick has loved that smile since he met Jo Ann in high school. In August, the couple celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary.

This program is made possible through our partnerships with the Council on Aging and the Giving Voice Foundation as well as by supporters like you!

JOIN US!

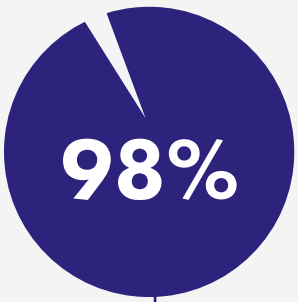
Creative Connections takes place from 10:30 a.m.-noon Mondays at St. Clare Convent or from 1:30-3 p.m. Wednesdays at Knox Presbyterian Church in Hyde Park.

To sign up, please contact Angie Homoele at ahomoele@ccswoh.org or (513) 672-3834.

"I'm nearly 71 and I swallowed a lot of pride yesterday and took advantage of the Food for All Mobile Pantry service for the first time in Wilmington, Ohio. On my small, fixed income I've been struggling for months. With the rampant inflation we're all suffering it's only been getting worse. With this service you provided, I won't be worried about food. Thank you very much!" –Food for All Customer



7,932
unique individuals
served so far this year
1/1/22 - 9/30/22



of Food for All food pantry clients are **VERY SATISFIED** or **SATISFIED** with their service



of Food for All food pantry clients feel treated with **RESPECT** and **DIGNITY**

Veterans Group Helps Welcome Refugees to Their New Homes



As dramatic scenes from Afghanistan flooded our screens in August 2021, veterans were among the first to reach out to Catholic Charities to offer their help in resettling refugees.

That led to a collaboration with Team Rubicon, an international nonprofit organization headed by veterans. Using skills they honed in the military, Team Rubicon specializes in mobilizing aid after natural disasters and in other emergencies.

Earlier this year, the group partnered with Refugee Resettlement Services to help newcomers to Greater Cincinnati settle into their new homes. Men and women alike came together to move furniture and housewares from the Catholic Charities warehouse to houses and apartments that refugee families would soon call home. They helped assemble furniture, set up

the living areas and create a welcoming atmosphere for our newest neighbors.

“We are a nation made up of immigrants. I thought it would be fitting to help them start a successful life,” says Joey Barrow, Team Rubicon’s Logistics Manager for the state of Ohio. “Generations from now, their children are going to be telling their stories about how their families came here and started new lives.”

A graduate of Roger Bacon High School, Joey is a Navy veteran who was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. He served his country honorably; now, he’s proud to serve his community.

Joey has seen firsthand the challenges many people — especially girls — face in other countries. So, he was especially excited to be part of Refugee Resettlement Services’ mission.



“To see anybody, look them in the eye and say, ‘It’s going to be OK’ — it’s been a relief,” Joey says. “Hopefully they can start a good, happy, successful life here.”

Catholic Charities is exceptionally grateful to Joey, Team Rubicon and supporters like you for opening your hearts to the resilient refugees who enrich and bless our community!

Lend a Helping Hand

Catholic Charities welcomes volunteers to help set up housing for refugees, welcome families when they arrive, teach classes, mentor youth and young adults, pick up donations, and drive families to and from medical and other appointments. **Explore the opportunities at ccswoh.volunteerhub.com.**

Zoo Trip Gives Teen Mentees a Chance to Just Be Kids

Children and teens who come to the United States as refugees have to grow up fast.

They must adjust to a totally different culture, make new friends and start a new school. Many have endured trauma in their home countries. When they arrive here, young people often bear the responsibility for using their limited English to help their parents — who might not know the language at all — navigate a whole new world.

That’s why Ellen Owens, a volunteer with Catholic Charities’ Refugee Resettlement Services, wanted to give the program’s youth mentees a chance to enjoy a day of just being kids.

Ellen applied for a grant through Bellarmine Chapel to fund a trip for 11 mentees to the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden this summer. The grant paid for the mentees’ admission, as well as lunch and snacks for the teens, many of whom have resettled here from countries in Africa.

“They loved it!” Ellen says. “A few of them had seen animals in their natural environment and educated me on some of them. It was really good, because they got to practice their English. It was a social event. It built teams for the mentees and the mentors. They had a ball.”

The mentees, ages 15-18, attend Aiken High School. They meet with their mentors once a week at the school and discuss issues like goal-setting and planning for the future.



Many of the mentees have big responsibilities at home, Ellen says. But they were able to put those things aside at the zoo and just relax. They were excited to translate a sign written in Swahili in the gorilla exhibit — and they might have been even more excited to see Cincinnati’s top celebrity, Fiona the hippo.

“They were so appreciative of everything,” Ellen says.



Become a Youth Mentor

Help a young refugee make a new life in Cincinnati. To become a volunteer mentor, call (513) 672-3824. Volunteers must be 18 or older and commit to two hours a week for one year. No foreign language skills are necessary.

Is your car driving more stress than miles?

Donate it to Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio!

We provide **FREE** and convenient pick-up for almost any type of vehicle.

Call 855-500-RIDE (7433) or go to careasy.org/nonprofit/catholic-charities-southwestern-ohio/ to learn more.



Put It In The Rearview.
Donate Your Vehicle.

Give Today



SERVING & EMPOWERING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Are you looking to change lives? Are you interested in making an impact locally? Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio offers opportunities for individuals to volunteer and to make an immediate impact on the lives of those in need. We are currently looking for Spanish/English bilingual front desk representatives, furniture movers and individuals with vehicles capable of helping us with housing. These are just a few of the current needs.

By working with Catholic Charities, individuals can use their gifts to live out the Gospel in serving the poor, protecting the vulnerable and welcoming the stranger.

To learn more or to apply today, visit ccswoh.org/get-involved/volunteer.



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cincinnati, Ohio
Permit No. 5645

Serving Hamilton, Butler, Clermont,
Warren, Brown, Adams, Highland, Clinton,
Champaign, Logan & Clark Counties

Mid-Pointe Tower
7162 Reading Road, Suite 600
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237
513-241-7745

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall
obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

*If you choose not to receive further communications
from Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio,
please contact Spring Duncan at 513-672-3736
or sduncan@ccswoh.org to be removed from our
mailing list.*



Serving Local Families. Empowering Local Lives.



Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio serves and empowers local families in Greater Cincinnati. Through your generous contributions we are able to provide food assistance, senior and caregiver services, mental health counseling, family and parenting education, case management and assistance for immigrant families, legal assistance for individuals seeking naturalization, and much more.

Please prayerfully consider making your annual gift now.
Your support is essential in sustaining our works of mercy.

DONATE TODAY at ccswoh.org/donate.



AGENCY
PARTNER