

Blessings



Catholic Charities
Southwestern Ohio
Serve | Engage | Empower

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

New Program Launches to Support Seniors with Compassion and Connection



Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio is proud to introduce Kindred Companions, a new parish-based initiative designed to support older adults through meaningful relationships and practical assistance.

Rooted in Catholic social teaching, Kindred Companions empowers volunteers to walk alongside seniors as they age in place — offering dignity, purpose, and connection. Volunteers are matched with older adults who need companionship and light support, such as help with everyday tasks or shared activities. Through regular visits, they help reduce isolation, promote independence, and build lasting bonds.

Kindred Companions is hosted by local parishes. There are no stipends or service hour requirements — just a shared commitment to care. Parishes help recruit volunteers and connect them with older adults in their communities.

“Loneliness is so pervasive among older adults that it’s now considered a health issue,” says Aaron Glauberman, Director of Senior & Caregiver Support

Services. “Programs like these offer companionship and help people remain independent in their homes longer.”

We’re also thrilled to share that our AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions programs in Hamilton County are back in action. These long-standing initiatives serve nearly 500 low-income seniors and at-risk school children each year through nearly 80,000 hours of volunteer service — and we’re actively welcoming volunteers to rejoin.

Over the summer, the fate of these cost effective and impactful services was in jeopardy due to an unexpected impoundment of national AmeriCorps funds by the White House. Now, after a great deal of advocacy, we are happy to share that this funding has been released to continue our work at least through June of next year.

AmeriCorps Foster Grandparents are low-income volunteers age 55 and older who mentor and tutor children with special needs in schools, early

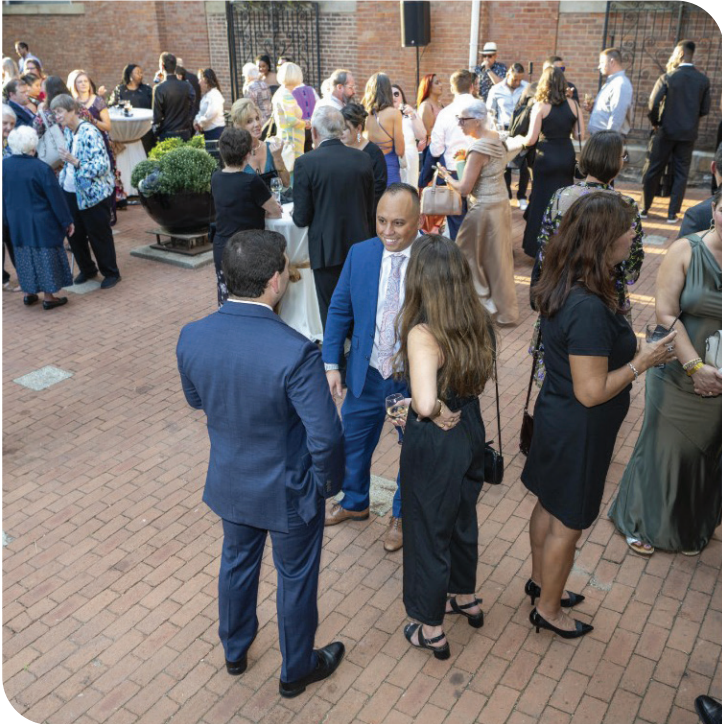
childhood centers, and other community settings. AmeriCorps Senior Companions, like our new Kindred Companions, provide non-medical assistance and emotional support to seniors to help them remain independent in their own homes. They offer companionship through regular visits, help with daily tasks like light chores and preparing meals, and provide transportation for essential errands and appointments.

These programs reflect our deep commitment to caring for older adults, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and students in need.

Want to Help?

If you’re interested in volunteering as a Senior Companion, Foster Grandparent, or Kindred Companion, please contact **Florence McCray, Program Assistant, at 513-672-3732 or fmccray@ccswoh.org.**

Honoring Courage and Resilience at the 2025 Su Casa Gala



In challenging times, Su Casa Hispanic Center clients keep moving forward. *¡Salir adelante!*

That was the message that came through loud and clear at the annual Su Casa gala on Sept. 19. A sellout crowd at the Bell Event Centre enjoyed a delicious dinner, generously participated in a live appeal, and heard powerful stories of Su Casa clients past and present.

“All of the stories that were told through the program were stories of resilience, of bouncing back and finding hope through grace and effort,” says Dan Sarell, Mission Advancement Director. “The people we serve inspire the work we do. Their spirit of perseverance drives us toward greater compassion and greater energy toward lifting up dignity and working for justice.”

Thanks to generous friends like you, Su Casa exceeded its fundraising goal for the event.

We are deeply grateful to our Presenting Sponsor, the Sisters of Charity, and our Diamond Sponsors, the Sisters of Precious Blood, for their unwavering support of

this year’s gala. Their generosity, along with that of our Gold Sponsors — Akers Packaging Service Group, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, The Gorilla Glue Co., Procter & Gamble, and Western & Southern Financial Group — will provide critical support for Su Casa’s vital programs in the new year ahead.

We also extend heartfelt thanks to our Silver Sponsors: Hon. Andrew and Beth Ciafardini, Fifth Third Bank, First Commonwealth Bank, Frost Brown Todd LLP, Interact for Health, PNC Bank, Sims-Lohman, Inc., Su Casa Advisory Council, Ursuline Sisters of Cincinnati, and Dr. Steve and Amy Whitlatch.

Sponsors and supporters at every level played a crucial role in pushing us over the goal line.

“There’s a great deal of solidarity with immigrant families, both within their own communities and across the business and philanthropic sectors,” Dan says. “Su Casa is widely recognized as the go-to organization for walking with the Hispanic immigrant community in Greater Cincinnati.”



Community Collaboration

During the Gala, Su Casa recognized Immigration Liaison Officer Anthony Johnson of the Cincinnati Police Department for his contributions to the Hispanic immigrant community.

“Officer Johnson is a positive expression of what it looks like when public safety officers and first responders accompany our neighbors,” says Dan Sarell, Mission Advancement Director.

Your Support Helps Refugees’ Dreams Take Flight



Noor* has never lacked ambition. Back in Afghanistan, she worked in law enforcement, working to reduce domestic violence against women. Today, as she rebuilds her life here in Cincinnati, she dreams of becoming a pilot.

With help from Catholic Charities and friends like you, she’s on the road to achieving her goals and creating a better future for her family.

“She’s got a ton of resilience, grit, and drive,” says Elizabeth Clapp, Immigration Legal Services (ILS) Director. “She’s come so far. I look forward to seeing where she goes and where her children go.”

Noor came to the United States in August 2021 after the Taliban regained control in Afghanistan. Her father had been killed by the group in 2016, and Noor was receiving death threats as a result of her job.

When she arrived in Cincinnati with her husband and two young children,

Catholic Charities was there, thanks to you. Refugee Resettlement Services (RRS) found the family a safe home, enrolled Noor and her husband in our employment program and English classes, and provided ongoing case management to help them settle in and shape their new lives.

ILS helped the family apply first for asylum and then for green cards, which were approved this fall.

From the beginning, Noor and her husband have done well. Noor started out working as a cleaner. She then moved on to Amazon, where she worked as a picker before getting certified to drive a forklift, which increased her pay. Now, she has her eyes on an even higher position — quite literally. She wants to fly an Amazon plane.

“In every conversation, it clearly comes through that she is a person with a strong work ethic, perseverance, and a desire to learn,” RRS Director Bobbie Vunak says.

Bobbie explains that Noor’s story helps illustrate the bigger picture of how immigrants strengthen their new communities and why programs like RRS are so important.

“People often come here with that concept of the American Dream and what it means to have the freedoms that we have and to be able to get an education and get jobs,” Bobbie says. “It’s a huge challenge, but they overcome it all, contribute to society, and enrich our communities.”

“At a time when people are ‘othered,’ it’s easy to look at bad outcomes, but there are so many good outcomes like Noor’s. The old ‘melting pot’ term — that’s still the value of our country.”

*Name changed for privacy

REFUGEE SERVICE OUTCOMES



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Archbishop of Cincinnati

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Mental Health Services Adds a Critical New Position — Thanks to You!



Your generosity helped our Mental Health Services team add a crucial new position that will shorten our waitlist and get potentially lifesaving care to people in urgent need.

In November, Meirielys Castaneda Ceballos took on the dual role of Diagnostic Assessment Specialist and Therapist. Her first priority is to meet with the approximately 150 people on our waitlist, many of whom are migrants and refugees. She will assess the severity of their needs and make recommendations so they can start getting treatment.

Catholic Charities supporters like you stepped up in a big way when some of our most vulnerable neighbors needed you.

Mental Health Services Director Brian Włodarczyk says the new position couldn't have come at a better time. Most clients are Spanish-speaking immigrants — a community that is experiencing extreme anxiety and depression in the current political climate.

"Those conditions were already on the rise with our youngsters anyway, with the advent of the smartphone, but it's even more now," Brian says. "We're seeing a higher truancy rate among Latino youth, not wanting to leave their homes. There are more shut-ins. And there's more economic distress because people are afraid to leave their home and search for work."

Newcomers to the United States also experience a higher rate of post-traumatic stress. Many have fled horrific violence in their home countries only to suffer hunger, illness, and assault on their way to the U.S.

As the waitlist for care grew, so did Catholic Charities' sense of urgency.

"Our goal has been to reduce the time clients spend on the waitlist," Brian says. "We meet all our other metrics and outcomes. When people do get our services, they have high satisfaction rates, their symptoms decrease, and they successfully move through their goals."

Meirielys knows how effective Catholic Charities' programs are. Refugee Resettlement Services resettled her family when they came to the U.S. from Cuba in 2007. Since then, she has earned a psychology degree with a minor in neuroscience from Miami University and a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling from Xavier University.

"It's a full-circle type story," Brian says. "One of the driving factors for her to come on board was to give back."

On behalf of the Mental Health Services team and everyone at Catholic Charities, thank you for making it possible for us to grow so we can meet our neighbors' most critical needs.

Food for All Partnership with Matthew 25: Ministries Helps Serve Our Community



A new collaboration between Catholic Charities Food for All and Matthew 25: Ministries is helping to meet our community's growing needs amid cutbacks to government funding and vital safety-net programs.

More and more neighbors turn to Food for All pantries to help make ends meet each month. At the same time, Catholic Charities is feeling the effects of higher prices and less funding. The partnership with Matthew 25: Ministries, an international nonprofit based in Blue Ash, will help fill some of the gaps.

"We're trying to adjust and stretch each dollar as far as we can," says Craig Black, Catholic Charities Director of Quality and Performance. "Being able to collaborate with Matthew 25: Ministries allows us to provide additional food. The need is growing, and we're doing our best to figure out how to meet that need."

The collaboration began in October. Initially, Matthew 25: Ministries provided additional items only for the pantry



at St. Joseph Catholic Church in the West End due to the logistics of pickup and delivery. Craig is exploring how to potentially grow the relationship to serve the rural counties where Food for All operates its other pantries.

Craig is also looking into the feasibility of adding pet food to Food for All distributions to prevent pet owners from being forced to make impossible decisions when money is tight.

"We're always looking for more ways to help more people," Craig says. "As the need continues to grow we are actively

looking for new partnerships and funding sources to be able to provide healthy food to as many in need as possible."

Your support is vital to keeping up with the rising need for food and other grocery items. You can help by:

- Making a financial gift to Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio
- Volunteering to serve at one of our monthly food pantries (find information at ccswoh.org/volunteer)
- Picking up donated items and delivering them to Food for All pantries (must provide your own van or truck)

To learn more, please contact Food for All Coordinator April Hoak at 513-672-3720 or ahoak@ccswoh.org.

Language Access as Mission: Catholic Charities Share Social Enterprise Success

At this year's Catholic Charities USA Annual Gathering, held October 6–9 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio was proud to be represented by Julissa Jovel, Program Manager of AccuracyNow Language Services—our growing social enterprise dedicated to language access and equity.

Julissa co-led a Learning Lab presentation titled "Building a Successful Social Enterprise Language Program", alongside Alisa Pifine, Catholic Charities of Louisville; Erin Cahill, Catholic Charities of Boston; and Beatriz Nunez Hernandez, LAMP. Together, they shared insights on how Catholic Charities agencies across the country are responding to the rapidly growing immigrant population by creating sustainable, mission-driven language services.

The presentation highlighted the urgent need for language access in health care, education, and social services; the role of interpretation, translation, and transcription in breaking down barriers; and how social enterprise models can support workforce development and economic empowerment for bilingual individuals.

"Language services help people feel seen, heard, and understood—no matter where they're from or what they speak." — Julissa Jovel, AccuracyNow Language Services Program Manager
AccuracyNow Language Services



continues to grow as a vital resource in our region—providing professional language support while creating meaningful employment opportunities for bilingual community members in healthcare, education, social services, and manufacturing.

Caritas Sundays Invite Parishes to Connect to Catholic Charities More Deeply



The work Catholic Charities does is possible only with the help of friends like you. Your financial support is vital to our mission. Your prayers are also critical to our ability to serve and empower people through God’s love.

On Caritas Sundays, Parish & Community Engagement Coordinator Mary Anne Bressler has been visiting parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to build a greater sense of the spirituality of Catholic Charities. The goal is to spread the word about the work we do in the community while also engaging parishioners more deeply through prayer.

“I want people to know what we’re doing, why we’re doing it, and that their spiritual support is really important,” Mary Anne says.

Parishes participating in Caritas Sundays are invited to lift up Catholic Charities in their liturgies. That can mean promoting

our visit in their bulletins, praying for our mission in their petitions, offering Catholic Charities the chance to speak during announcements, or even mentioning our work in the homily.

So far, Caritas Sundays have taken place at St. Clement, St. Francis Seraph, St. Xavier, Bellarmine Chapel, St. Veronica, St. Andrew, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Good Shepherd.

Caritas Sundays remind local Catholics that, while it’s crucial to put our faith into action, we also need to make time to come together as a community, reflect, and pray.

At every Caritas Sunday, Mary Anne distributes prayer cards related to each of Catholic Charities’ service departments. The cards invite parishioners to pray not only for the success of our work, but also for the well-being of those we serve.

“We want to connect with parishes in broader ways than just going in and talking about volunteering and donating,” Mary Anne says. “When people start praying for and with us, they become more invested in what we do.”

Connect with Us!

If you’d like to host a Caritas Sunday at your parish, please contact Mary Anne Bressler at mbressler@ccswoh.org or 513-672-3714.

You can also join Catholic Charities in prayer by becoming part of our email prayer chain at ccswoh.org and celebrating Mass with us each quarter at our main office (7162 Reading Road, Suite 600).

Catholic Charities Earns CARF Accreditation: A Milestone in Service Excellence

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio is proud to announce that we have officially received accreditation from CARF® International—a globally recognized, independent nonprofit accreditor of health and human services.

This achievement reflects our unwavering commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centered care across all of our programs. CARF accreditation is more than a credential—it’s a powerful endorsement of our dedication to service excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio has been accredited for a period of three years for its Mental Health program and Administrative services. After having been accredited by another independent accreditor in previous years, this is the first accreditation that CARF International has awarded to our organization.

This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to an organization and shows our substantial conformance to CARF standards. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has gone through a rigorous peer-review process. It has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit its commitment to offering programs

and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) evaluates organizations against internationally recognized standards. The accreditation process involves a comprehensive review of our policies, procedures, and service delivery to ensure we are meeting the highest benchmarks in the field.

During the recent review, CARF International affirmed what so many clients already know:

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio fosters an inviting and inclusive culture.

One client described the experience this way:

“It’s not like a white-walled doctor’s office. It feels like a warm hug — and even when I don’t want to come, I do.”

For our clients, this means they can trust that Catholic Charities is not only

meeting—but exceeding—industry standards in care, compassion, and impact. For our staff and volunteers, it’s a moment of pride and a reaffirmation of the mission that drives us every day.

We are deeply grateful to our team, partners, and supporters who helped make this milestone possible. Together, we continue to build a stronger, more compassionate community—rooted in dignity, service, and empowerment.

CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services whose mission is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

Founded in 1966 as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and now known as CARF International, the accrediting body establishes consumer-focused standards to help organizations measure and improve the quality of their programs and services. For more information about the accreditation process, please visit the CARF website at www.carf.org.



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*"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.*



Rising Together to Impact Our Community



Discover Our Mission. Answer the Call.

Every gift to Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio brings joy to our community—joy that comes from lives renewed, families supported, and hope restored. Your support fuels essential services like food assistance, mental health counseling, senior and caregiver support, refugee and migrant services, family education programs and much more.

Every year, over 20,000 individual's lives are transformed from crisis to stability and self-sufficiency—thanks to donors like you. Our professional and highly-rated services are works of mercy, rooted in God's love and sustained by our community.

**These works of mercy are enabled by the generosity of donors like you!
Please consider making a gift today. DONATE TODAY.**