

Blessings



Catholic Charities
Southwestern Ohio
Serve | Enlighten | Empower

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

When Tragedy Strikes, Goodness Responds

I pray that God is keeping you and your loved ones healthy. For any of you struggling right now, physically or emotionally, I pray that the peace and consolation of Christ may be yours. Especially during this pandemic crisis, in turn I ask for your prayers for our staff and volunteers as they creatively and determinedly respond to the challenges before us.

Like almost every other American household with school-aged kids, my quarantining family is awkwardly guiding our children through their daily lessons at home. Just recently, my sixth-grade son was studying Sir Isaac Newton's Laws of Motion, and he showed me one of his recitations: "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." (Remember learning that one?) Believe it or not, I found myself reflecting on the crisis response we're managing at Catholic Charities. It struck me that this truth of the physical world my son is learning about is true concerning God's kingdom too.

When tragedy strikes, goodness responds with an equally forceful, opposing reaction. Together we are reacting to the despair brought by the pandemic with heartfelt deeds of hope.

When those in our communities are losing jobs, we are scrambling to get them re-employed, or, otherwise, surviving through unemployment assistance. When people can't put food on their tables, you are coming out to volunteer to deliver food at one of our Food for All sites. When people's anxieties are climbing from the pandemic, our mental health counselors are finding ways to increase the accessibility of our services. When



Together we are reacting to the despair brought by the pandemic with heartfelt deeds of hope.

immigrants and senior citizens can no longer come out to receive assistance from us, you are volunteering to deliver our care packages to their doorsteps. When the availability of our services to meet these increased needs looks uncertain, you are generously donating to ensure the works of mercy continue.

These actions of goodness are at the heart of Jesus' ministry, and it's what the Easter season teaches us. When the sick came to Jesus, his reaction was to heal them. When the sinful approached for mercy, he forgave them. When humanity blindly nailed him to the cross and death took him, the Father resurrected him and lighted our path to salvation.

This issue of *Blessings* should give you a small glimpse of the intrepid responses of goodness that staff, volunteers and all of you are unleashing through Catholic Charities. At all times, please know, we are implementing social distancing protocols to prioritize everyone's safety. It is my prayer that our common work will honor God's plan to ultimately respond to all darkness with overwhelming light.

Thank you for being a part of the Catholic Charities family responding together.

Lastly, I would like to invite all of you to join us every Monday at 11am on our Facebook page for a short, live stream, called "Praying in Solidarity." This weekly, structured prayer experience lifts up the intentions of our clients and supporters, asking God for hope and healing.

Blessings,

Tony Stieritz
CEO, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio

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Archbishop of Cincinnati

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AccuracyNow Language Services Still Serving Through the Pandemic

Even with social distancing and quarantine regulations in place, AccuracyNow Language Services, a division of Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio, continues to support our clients to provide interpretation for those with Limited English Proficiency in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Claudia Galeano, AccuracyNow's Consumer Relations & Scheduling Specialist, arranges interpretation for over-the-phone mental health therapy sessions. Greater Cincinnati schools are now using different applications, Google Hangouts, Skype and Zoom, to connect with students and families. These kind of changes present new challenges, but that hasn't stopped the interpretation team. AccuracyNow works with their interpreters to make sure they are adapting to these transitions and mastering the different platforms.

While everyone has anxieties about face-to-face interactions, some interpreters are eagerly stepping forward to support our brave healthcare workers and their patients on the hospital front lines. AccuracyNow has prioritized the safety and well-being of its contractors, ensuring they engage in self-care and adhere to COVID-19 regulations. Retention Specialist, Saria Martin, follows up after each face-to-face appointment to review that both clients and service providers observe safety protocols.

AccuracyNow Language Services is a social enterprise and was created in



LANGUAGE SERVICES

2017 to bridge the language gap in Cincinnati. Its mission is to provide non-English speakers the ability to communicate with providers to access medical, legal, conference, education, and social services. 100% of our profits go back to the programs Catholic Charities offers in the Greater Cincinnati community and it provides employment opportunities for many of the refugees we resettle here.

**To learn more about Catholic
Charities' AccuracyNow
Language Services program,
visit: accuracynow.com/**

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"For I was hungry, and you gave me food ..."

Matthew 25:35

On Wednesday, April 29, staff from different Catholic Charities' programs teamed up to deliver care packages of food to refugee and elderly neighbors, many of whom volunteer as senior companions or foster grandparents. Food was sorted and packed by the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion staff and delivered by 15 volunteers to 100 clients around Cincinnati while observing physical distancing.

The care packages included onions, apples, oranges, bread, zucchini, squash, bell peppers, and cucumbers from the Freestore Foodbank and dry goods from the Church of Latter Days Saints. Aaron Glauberman, Director of Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions, shared, "Our seniors have told us how wonderful it is to receive fresh produce when they are afraid to go to the store during this pandemic."

Jill Mountain, a volunteer who delivered several of the care packages, shared: "My family and I have been blessed with good health and employment during this



pandemic. We felt we should be helping others in some way. We've volunteered with Catholic Charities in the past and recently received an email about this opportunity. We were excited to take part in a cause that helps those in need – especially now."

Catholic Charities would like to thank staff and volunteers for their time and dedication at this event as well as Painted Painting Art Studio for their parking lot space for distribution.

More care package deliveries are continuing to be organized. If you are interested in helping others locally, in the midst of physical distancing, visit our donation and volunteer pages for more information:

DONATE: ccswoh.org/donate/

VOLUNTEER: ccswoh.org/how-to-get-involved/volunteer/

Caregiver Assistance Network in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic



Since April 6, Catholic Charities' Caregiver Assistance Network has not been able to facilitate in-person support groups. As it is, being confined at home with those who rely entirely on one's care can be normally stressful. Now amidst the pandemic and with stress levels even higher, networks of support are needed more than ever.

Catholic Charities' volunteers have been following up with caregivers through phone calls to make sure all is going well for their loved ones. One volunteer recently spoke with a caregiver whose husband lives in a nursing home. The distraught caregiver expressed her frustration that she could not contact her husband. Through persistence, the volunteer was able to reach the caregiver's husband providing comfort and some emotional relief.

The Caregiver Assistance Network also offers virtual support meetings via Google Hangout. Attendance has been quite high and participants have welcomed the opportunity to support one another.

For more information regarding how Catholic Charities can help caregivers, please contact Angie Homoelle at 513-672-3834 or ahomoelle@ccswoh.org.

Food for All Drive-Thru Pantries: A Snapshot from St. Mary Church in Bethel

The COVID-19 pandemic changed all of our lives. Many people's jobs are lost or furloughed. More people need food assistance than we have seen in a very long time. Some households that were once supported by a good job and well-stocked kitchen are now wondering whether they can provide balanced healthy meals for their families.

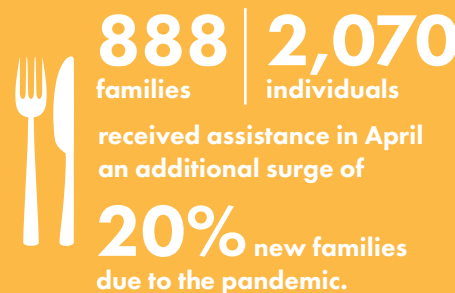
To safely increase our services during the pandemic, the Food for All program, which used to be a walk-thru food pantry, is now a drive-thru. On Friday, April 3, at 9:30 AM, cars lined up at St. Mary in Bethel for the pantry that usually begins at 11:00 AM. Mary Grace Ramsey, a student from Northwestern University and back from school, learned about volunteering at the Food for All drive-thru pantry from her mother. "I've been spending the past few weeks inside and feeling helpless. Watching the news and not feeling there is anything I can do to help. So this seemed like a good opportunity to help others by getting food out to people in need," she said.

The Ohio National Guard and Food for All volunteers unloaded all the food, assembled it into pre-packaged stations and loaded it directly into cars. In total, 133 families / 345 individuals received assistance – an additional surge of 20% new families due to the pandemic that day. "Since then, pantry use has only gone up," April Hoak, Food for All Coordinator, shared. "We expect these numbers to grow as more people lose their jobs. I invite you to donate your time and money... to serve our neighbors in need. Volunteers are putting food in people's cars that are coming through, and we just need to



stand in solidarity together. We need to be that expression of God's love and mercy. So thank you for all that you do to make our work possible."

Catholic Charities offers Food for All drive-thru food pantries five times each month. Churches and community centers in Clermont, Brown, Adams, Highland and Clinton Counties host the pantries and volunteers are welcome. If you are older or at high risk, we encourage you to stay home. If you are healthy and feel comfortable serving within physical distancing protocols, we welcome your help.



To apply or learn more, please contact April Hoak at 513-672-3720 or ahoak@ccswoh.org. You can also support our work by donating at ccswoh.org/donate/

IN HONOR: The following gifts were made to honor the following individuals:

Ted Bergh Fund for Local Families*

Dr. Marc and Barbara Alexander
Dave Bruno and Hon. Margy Conditt
Joel and Kathy Handorf
Debbie and Dennis Kokoruda

Laura Roesch
Jim and Trish Wahl
Tom and Brenda Wimberg

Joyce Kelly

William and Jane Glandorf
James and Anita Kathman
Donna Park

Megan Kuykendoll

Raymond Taylor

Sara and Lucas McGuire

Sylvia Pacheco McGuire and
Josh McGuire

**Gifts are still welcome to honor our recently retired CEO for his many years of tireless advocacy and service to the most vulnerable local families. Donate at ccswoh.org/donate, and indicate in special instructions, "Ted Bergh Fund for Local Families"*

Su Casa Delivering Care Packages in a Time of Need



Su Casa Hispanic Center, a program of Catholic Charities, adapted its services to still serve local families in Greater Cincinnati during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ambitious Su Casa staff and volunteers criss-crossed Greater Cincinnati over several days to personally deliver care packages to their most needy clients. Over 180 Su Casa clients received care packages to date.

Deliveries include food from the Freestore Foodbank, face masks, diapers, baby wipes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, toilet paper, paper towels, deodorant, shampoo, and detergent. Su Casa is also educating its clients how to remain safe and follow public health orders with materials in Spanish about coronavirus prevention. The drop-offs even include fun activities for kids and information on completing the important 2020 Census.

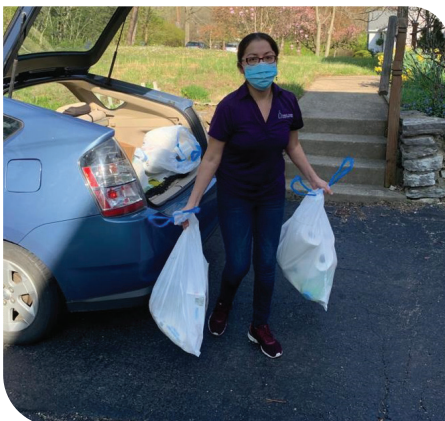
Over 180

Su Casa clients received care packages to date

"We want to say thank you very much," one client responded after receiving a care package. "Without your help, we weren't sure what we were going to do. Many of our neighbors do not have access to crisis relief. Su Casa is committed to ensure that no families are forgotten or left behind."

Additional care package deliveries are scheduled in the near future, but we need the community's support.

To donate to this emergency mission, visit: ccswoh.org/donate/



IN MEMORY:

Gifts to Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio have been made in loving memory of the following individuals:

Robert "Bob" Arvidson

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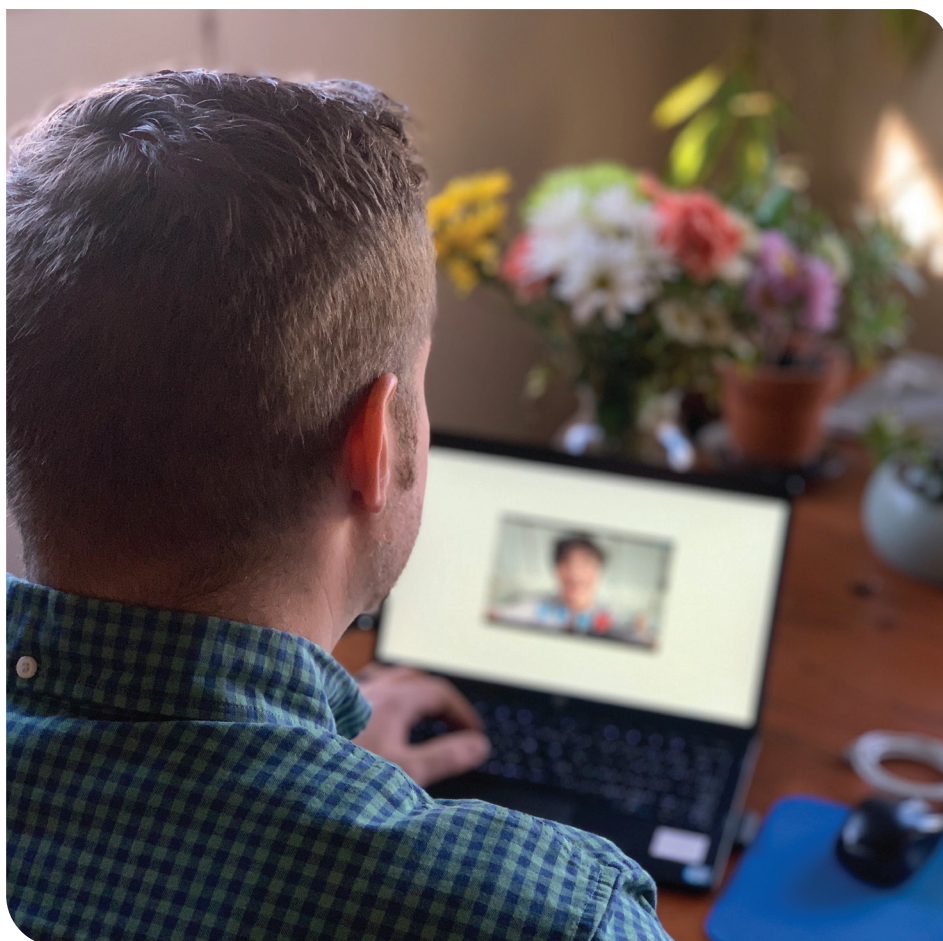
Greg and Barb Beck

Catholic Charities Addressing Mental Health Needs During the Pandemic

Families who face challenging parent-child relationships experience stress normally. It's now compounded by the stay-at-home order brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Catholic Charities' Mental Health Services (MHS) have adapted to still serve its clients during these trying times.

Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) consultations now take place remotely via telehealth to individual families dealing with an array of challenging childhood behaviors. Michelle Swartz, a Catholic Charities' ECMH consultant, provides a virtual social skills group for preschool children using the program's puppet, Dina the Dinosaur. Her first lesson focuses on children being away from their school and missing friends. Many children suffer from anxiety, so she emphasizes feelings and ways to cope during a stressful time.

Also, initial adult mental health appointments are offered in-person or via video conferencing, depending on the comfort and needs of the individual being seen. All measures take place to ensure the safety of staff and clients. **To learn more about Catholic Charities' MHS, visit: ccswoh.org/services/counseling/**



Virtual Parent Project® Classes

Catholic Charities offers the Parent Project® in its Hamilton office. The program focuses on empowering parents through 10 weeks of classroom instruction. The program is for parents of strong-willed children. It provides strategies to defuse arguments, improve school attendance and performance, and helps prevent substance abuse.

The first four-weeks of a ten-week Parent Project® cycle began before the COVID-19 pandemic took full effect in Ohio. To continue the program, Catholic Charities adapted the program online via FB Messenger. Clients shared that they felt it was a secure tool and recorded 100% participation. Patsy Bolden, Parent Project Coordinator, shared, "They are able to send me pics via phone of their worksheet when necessary in the same chat session. All participants and the facilitator agree it is very successful. It did take some collaborating with our IT Department and one of the principals of the Hamilton City Schools to make it happen. Now that we've had two sessions, it appears that we should be able to finish the unit with no issues."



To learn more about Catholic Charities' Parent Project® visit: ccswoh.org/services/families/parenting-education/

Refugee Resettlement Services Still Serving Through WhatsApp

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of Catholic Charities' Refugee Resettlement clients lost their jobs. The program is currently busy, working with clients to file for unemployment and find new job opportunities. It also continues to provide emergency assistance, case management, job development, youth mentoring, family reunification, reception, and placement services. These are being conducted as remotely as possible.

With newly arrived refugee families and "stay-at-home" orders in place, the Refugee Resettlement program has developed new ways to provide cultural orientation classes. Selam Ghebreyohannes, Housing and Resource Coordinator, is using WhatsApp, a cross-platform instant messaging application that allows smartphone users to exchange text, image, video and audio messages for free. The application is commonly used among our immigrant neighbors.

Selam shared, "Our refugee clients are familiar with WhatsApp. They use it to speak with family members overseas. It works because it can be used in three-way conversations between the client, interpreter, and me. It is very practical." Since refugees are provided with a smartphone upon arrival, this is one way for resettlement services to continue during the stay-at-home period.

Selam used WhatsApp with three newly arrived families, the most recent of whom arrived on March 18, the same day a suspension of new arrivals for refugee resettlement was implemented in the U.S. because of the pandemic. "Cultural orientation is an important component of our reception and placement services for newly arrived refugees," stated Selam. "It's how they learn about American life – our laws, customs, health care system, the Cincinnati community – and what they need to do in order to become self-sufficient as they adjust to a new home and a new life."

A total of 15 topics are covered during the classes, ranging from the role of Catholic Charities to the importance of learning



English to budgeting and personal finance. Refugees are taught how to use public transportation and how to recognize the roller coaster of emotions that people often experience when adjusting to a new culture.

While providing class over the telephone has some challenges, such as parents needing to care for children and class time now taking a little longer, Selam reported that overall feedback from the families has been positive. "They look forward to class time, they are eager to learn, and it helps them to feel connected to the community that they've only been able to get a glimpse of since arriving."

As a refugee resettlement agency, Catholic Charities provides cultural orientation to all refugee clients that it resettles age 18 and older. Clients are required to demonstrate that they have an understanding of each



cultural orientation topic shared. If they have challenges in understanding a topic, then the topic is repeated until a working knowledge can be demonstrated.

To learn more about Catholic Charities' Refugee Resettlement program, visit: ccswoh.org/services/refugees/



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"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall
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STILL Serving Local Families. STILL Changing Local Lives.

For more than 100 years, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio has served local families in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Our services are essential for residents of Greater Cincinnati and our commitment to serve the poor, protect the vulnerable and welcome the stranger has not wavered — especially in times of crisis.

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