

Blessings



Catholic Charities
Southwestern Ohio
Serve | Engage | Empower

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

Families Gain the Power of Knowledge at Su Casa Health Fair



More than 750 people received life-changing health services and education at Su Casa Hispanic Center's spring health fair. This event wouldn't have been possible without Su Casa's community partners, volunteers — and caring friends like you!

The health fair, held April 30 at St. Julie Billiard Parish in Hamilton, offered vision and mammography screenings, CPR demonstrations, tuberculosis testing, medical consultations, as well as distributions of cleaning supplies and hygiene items.

Community partners like UC Health, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, ProScan Imaging, Prevent Blindness Ohio, and Proctor & Gamble generously provided the services and products that made the health fair so beneficial for all who attended.

"We are so grateful to our community partners and all our volunteers," says Sara Obando, Su Casa Health Promotions Supervisor. "Without them, this would not be possible."

Most of those who attended the health fair are immigrants seeking help for a variety of needs. The fair provided attendees with education so they can make informed choices about their health and their children's care.

"Knowledge is power, and our community needs a lot of education," Sara says. "We make a huge impact on people's lives."

The next health fair will take place September 10 at Holy Family Parish in Price Hill. Sara strives to organize events throughout Greater Cincinnati to encourage more participation and overcome barriers like transportation.

Though Su Casa focuses on serving the Hispanic/Latino community, the health fairs are open to anyone in need.

The health fair is accessible to the general public offering comprehensive health services at no cost, with some services available on sliding scale based on income.



Mark Your Calendar



What: Fall Health Fair

When: Sept. 10 | Noon

Where: Holy Family Church, Price Hill

Who: Open to the public

How much: Free

Sowing the Seeds of Service

LEADERSHIP

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Archbishop of Cincinnati

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Childhood is fertile ground for planting the seeds of a lifelong love of helping others. At a service day this spring, that passion began to blossom in students from All Saints Catholic School.

On April 5, All Saints' students gathered at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in North Fairmount to support our Refugee Resettlement Services and Su Casa Hispanic Center. St. Leo was chosen as the location because of the parish's vibrant community of refugees and other immigrants.

The students assembled welcome baskets full of household items for Catholic Charities to equip apartments when new refugee families arrive. While at the church, the students also heard from a college student who came to Cincinnati with her family several years ago as a refugee from the war in Syria.

In the afternoon, the entire school put together "cinch sacks" full of coloring pages, colored pencils, crayons, and small toys. These creative donations for client families serve to keep young children busy while the parents meet with refugee resettlement or Su Casa caseworkers.

"The kids are so responsive, and they really engage with what we're talking about," says Mary Anne Bressler, Parish and Community Engagement Coordinator. "They really connect with the idea of a family having to flee their home and leave everything behind. It really does spark their compassion."

Looking to the future, Mary Anne is planning more child-friendly service opportunities, such as creating affirmation cards to be used by Mental Health Services and prepping T-shirts to be turned into tote bags for the Food for All food pantry.

Even a seemingly small activity can cultivate a dedication to service that yields a harvest for years to come. Your support helps make these opportunities possible.

"Whatever little bit we can do, it can really make an impact on a young person," Mary Anne says. "They remember it. And then, hopefully, they'll remember Catholic Charities later. Perhaps they'll volunteer, consider working with us, or support us."

Plan a Service Day with Catholic Charities

Are you looking for a way for your students or youth group members to help out in the community? Contact Mary Anne Bressler at mbressler@ccswoh.org or 513-672-3714 to put together your own service day.

Catholic Charities Responds to Increasing Mental Health Needs



With suicide rates on the rise among young Americans, Catholic Charities' Mental Health Services (MHS) team has added programs to keep adolescents safe and healthy.

This summer, with the help of a grant from Hamilton County, MHS launched a coping skills group that empowers participants with the tools to navigate challenging, emotionally charged situations.

"Especially with adolescents, there can be impulsivity and big emotions," says Mental Health Services Director Laura Hershberger. "It's learning how, when you have those big emotions, to just sit with them, tolerate them, move through them and not respond immediately."

Group participants learn skills like mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation, and the ability to communicate assertively yet respectfully. Parents can join alongside their children, which helps break down mental health barriers within families.

In many cases, the reasons behind

anxiety and depression are very different for adults than they are for young people. Deliana Peralta Fuentes, Mental Health Therapist, says the group helps "parents understand they have one perspective and the child has another, and that doesn't make either one wrong."

"They're both on their own journey, but they also have a journey together," adds Miriam Huerta, also a Mental Health Therapist.

In addition to the coping skills groups, Catholic Charities serves young people through Princeton City Schools. The effects of prolonged school closings have added to the stresses children face due to social media and constant digital connection. Deliana says she's seeing more children struggle with transitioning to middle school or high school since the

COVID-19 pandemic began.

Because young people have less control over their environments, and less ability to change those environments, Catholic Charities focuses on coordinating with the people in their lives whenever possible.

The team is also devoted to providing individualized, culturally relevant care. For example, a teen who is an immigrant has different needs and concerns than a teen who was born in the U.S., and therapists know how to appropriately respond to each scenario.

With your support, Catholic Charities' Mental Health Services program walks alongside people of all ages and backgrounds to help them find new hope for the future.



Connect with Us

To find more information, or to refer yourself or someone else for Mental Health Services, please visit ccswoh.org/mental-health-services.

Volunteers Needed to Help Welcome Refugees to Their New Homes



Your support of Catholic Charities is deeply appreciated! And right now, you can play an especially critical role in helping Refugee Resettlement Services (RRS) receive a rapidly growing number of newcomers.

Between October 2022 and June 2023, Catholic Charities welcomed 150 refugees — over half of them in May and June alone! Refugees are coming from such places as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, and Haiti. The recent rise in the number of new arrivals is now the new normal.

Volunteers are urgently needed to help pick up donated furniture and transport it to the RRS warehouse or to refugee families' new homes.

According to Dan Sarell, Director of Mission Advancement, "We have very dedicated volunteers who pick up donations and help manage the warehouse inventory. However, we need more people with the time and trucks to pick up furniture. We get offered furniture all the time, and we need it! But, we also need more volunteers to help us pick everything up.

Even if a group volunteers just once, that would be a big help."

RRS is also in need of mentors to partner with refugees between the ages of 15 and 24.

Many refugee families are intergenerational. The younger family members often take on household leadership roles because they have more proficiency in English than their elders do.

"If you can concentrate energy on their education and job prospects, that's going to be more sustainable for the family long term," Dan says. "Putting the time and energy into intensely mentoring young adults is really important."

Mentors commit to spending an hour a week with their mentee for a year. They help young refugees acquire and improve their language skills, develop their résumés, fill out job and college applications, learn about their new community and engage in social activities, and gain other important life skills so they can begin building brighter futures for themselves.

Being a mentor requires patience and consistency. Progress can take time,

but it's always worth it — for both the mentees and the volunteers.

"The feedback I consistently hear from volunteers is that their time of serving in the refugee program is the best part of their week," Dan says. "It's a very rewarding experience."

How You Can Help

Refugee Resettlement Services needs volunteers to:

- Pick up and move furniture donations (must provide your own vehicle)
- Mentor young adults
- Work in specialized areas such as tax preparation
- Teach employment readiness classes, financial literacy classes, digital literacy, and cultural orientation classes

To learn more about volunteering and fill out a volunteer application, please visit ccswoh.org/get-involved/volunteer.

3-Way Collaboration Helps Food For All Respond to Hunger Crisis



Hunger is a growing problem in our community. Solving it will take all of us working together.

That's the spirit behind a partnership among Catholic Charities, Freestore Foodbank and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS).

This spring, as part of a longtime relationship, the LDS sent 795 cases of non-perishable food to Catholic Charities' Food For All program. The generous donation filled half a semi-truck!

Food For All Coordinator April Hoak reached out to Freestore Foodbank about using some of their warehouse space. They graciously agreed to help by storing the food and shipping items needed for each Food for All pantry.

The donation and Freestore Foodbank's exceptional collaboration come at a critical time for our community. Housing and grocery costs remain high, and so does demand at pantry distributions. Food for All is still serving more people than before the pandemic. Lately, more families, including large extended families living together, are coming for the first time.

"It's great that other agencies can come together to tackle hunger," April says.

"People from all different backgrounds understand that everybody should have food."

The LDS donation helps ensure people in need can access not just food, but high-quality, nutritious products. It also improves choice for Food For All recipients.

The gift is not the only way the LDS church supports Food For All. Several local members also volunteer at the

pantry distributions, which take place in Adams, Brown, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, and Highland counties.

The interdenominational teamwork shows that "we can work closely together around an issue that's important for all of us," April says.

When it comes to ending hunger and food insecurity in our community, everyone has a role to play.



Find a Pantry Distribution

If you or someone you know needs assistance with groceries, here is the Food For All pantry schedule:

- | | |
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| ■ St. Mary Catholic Church, Bethel, Clermont County, second Friday of the month | ■ Greater Life Assembly, Hillsboro, Highland County, fourth Thursday of the month |
| ■ St. Columbkille Catholic Church, Wilmington, Clinton County, second Thursday of every odd month | ■ RULH/Ripley High School, Ripley, Brown County, third Wednesday of the month |
| ■ Blanchester Church of Christ, Blanchester, Clinton County, second Thursday of every even month | ■ Fairgrounds Administration Building, West Union, Adams County, fourth Tuesday of the month |
| | ■ St. Joseph Catholic Church, West End Cincinnati, Hamilton County, second Tuesday of the month |

AccuracyNow Empowers Springfield's Haitian Creole Community



In recent years, a large number of Haitian Creole speaking residents have moved into Springfield, Ohio. As this community grows, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio bridges the gap between the area's newcomers and the local people and organizations that want to welcome and serve them.

To date, Accuracynow Language Services, a social enterprise of Catholic Charities, has trained 14 native Haitian Creole speakers as professional

interpreters. They are now working in area schools, hospitals, government agencies, and non-profits. At the onset, however, many of these providers had never used an interpreter before. They didn't know what to expect or how to work effectively with both the interpreter and the client.

That's where Accuracynow's *Working with Interpreters Best Practices* training comes into play. Litz Main, Language Services Director, recently presented the training to the Haitian Coalition, a multi-organizational group of about 40 members.

"Catholic Charities is very invested in the success of the Haitian Creole community as it continues to grow," Litz says. "We want to make sure they feel welcome in Springfield. Having the language-interpretation piece in place is a key part of their transition from one country to the other."

The training addresses common scenarios and misunderstandings. The best practices Litz teaches include speaking normally, using the right tone of voice when working with an interpreter, directly addressing the client or patient, viewing the interpreter as a voice for both parties, and more.

Litz says the Springfield community is eager to receive more Haitian Creole immigrants in the future and help its new neighbors thrive.

Your generous support of Catholic Charities helps break down the language barrier and empower immigrants to be successful in their new lives. Thank you for your kindness!



Learn More

For more information about Accuracynow Language Services, please call 513-672-3949 or email info@accuracynow.com.

A Happy Ending Almost a Decade in the Making



For nearly nine years, Estefania* felt like her life was in limbo. With your support, Elizabeth Clapp, Immigration Legal Services Director (ILS), stuck with her through unexpected delays and hurdles until Estefania received her green card this spring.

"Now she can have a sense of stability that she didn't have for so long," says Elizabeth, ILS Director.

Estefania had arrived in the United States from Guatemala in 2014, as a 16-year-old unaccompanied minor. She was striving to escape the extreme poverty

she faced at home. Elizabeth took on the case pro bono.

"She's the client I've had the longest," Elizabeth says. "This attorney-client relationship is older than my youngest child."

The first step was relatively straightforward. Elizabeth helped Estefania's aunt get custody of her niece. Next, the petition for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) was approved. That's when the challenges began.

The courts failed to send Estefania's file to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. She essentially wound up in a "black hole," Elizabeth says — one that would create a two-and-a-half-year delay.

Adding to the frustration, Estefania

received her work permit, but her Social Security card never arrived. Then, the pandemic closed the Social Security office.

"It made it difficult for her to pursue higher education or have a steady job, because she kept running into hurdles and roadblocks," Elizabeth says. "And she was watching other young adults she knew, including her brother, get their green cards and move on. She was just stuck."

Through it all, Elizabeth stayed by Estefania's side. She asked questions, sorted through the details, advocated for her client, and helped her stay positive.

No immigration case is ever simple. Yet, no matter how complex a case becomes, Catholic Charities' ILS team is determined to help everyone they can to navigate their legal path to a new and better life in Southwest Ohio.

**Name changed for privacy.*

About Immigration Legal Services (ILS)

ILS is one way Catholic Charities welcomes the stranger. Services provided include adjustment of status, deportation defense, family-based visa petitions, naturalization, humanitarian relief, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) petitions, and deferred action.

Promoting Resiliency of Our Youngest Neighbors

Mental health is a growing concern for people of all ages. Catholic Charities' Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) consultation program aims to help some of the youngest among us so they can learn to manage stress and form healthy relationships.

Pam Mortensen, Family Development Services Director, says children who are unable to self-regulate or calm themselves struggle to make friends and create connections. ECMH empowers children to become aware of their feelings, develop empathy for others, and feel more secure.

Her colleague, Michelle Swartz, recently worked with a toddler named Olivia*. She was having such severe meltdowns at school. She was making herself

physically ill. After speaking with the little girl's parents, Michelle learned Olivia had experienced trauma from severe medical procedures as an infant.

Michelle used a technique called "Baby Doll Circle Time" to help Olivia begin building attachments to her teacher and her classmates. That connection empowered the child to feel safer and helped end those painful meltdowns. Family photos, a visual schedule, and picture books also gave Olivia a stronger sense of security when she was away from home.

"Olivia is doing great in her classroom and appears to be a typical toddler on most days," Michelle reports.

For young children like Olivia, pandemic

quarantines severely set back their social development. They're more anxious than older children. They're also having a hard time separating from their parents. ECMH plays a critical role in helping children and families move forward.

**Name changed for privacy.*

Need Some Support?

Catholic Charities' Early Childhood Mental Health program trains and provides consulting to Butler County families and other providers of care for children up to 6 years of age. For more information, please call (513) 867-7063.

Submit Your 2023 Caregiver Mass Nominations Today!

This year's Caregiver Mass is scheduled for November 19, 11:00 AM, at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains. Most Reverend Dennis Schnurr, Archbishop of Cincinnati, will preside at the Mass this year. Caregiver Masses honor all those who work or volunteer as a caregiver - from nurses and physicians, to dietary staff and lab workers, from those who care for a sick or elderly friend or relative, to those who volunteer at healthcare facilities, retirement communities or parishes. These Masses aren't just for Catholics. People from all faiths are welcome.

You can nominate an individual for this year's Mass and Reception here: <https://forms.office.com/r/J5Vt18tc2z>.

All nominations are due by 9/22/23.





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

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¡Fiesta Latinoamericana! Su Casa Hispanic Center of Cincinnati 26th Anniversary Awards Dinner & Silent Auction

Friday, October 13 * 6:00 - 11:00 pm * Music Hall Ballroom

Su Casa supports a wide-range of services benefiting the vulnerable
Hispanic/Latino immigrant community in Greater Cincinnati.

- 6 pm** Reception with Latin American appetizers and drinks
from around the world and silent auction
- 7 pm** Dinner with entertainment and awards presentation
- 9 pm** After party with DJ and dancing

RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY
at ccswoh.org/su-casa-26-awards-dinner/

