

Blessings

A Newsletter of Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio



Catholic Charities
Southwestern Ohio

Serve | Engage | Empower

An Agency of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati



Catholic Charities USA's People of Hope Tour Comes to Cincinnati

Catholic Charities USA's People of Hope Museum made a stop in Cincinnati on July 16–17, transforming Freedom Way in front of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center into a space of storytelling, reflection, and hope. This nationwide traveling exhibit shares more than 40 video stories from Catholic Charities agencies across the country, each one highlighting the profound impact of neighbors helping neighbors in times of need.

Visitors stepped inside the immersive, mobile exhibit to experience videos of staff, volunteers, and families whose lives have been touched by Catholic Charities' mission. The museum invited guests to witness the courage, resilience, and compassion that shapes our work every day, whether it is welcoming newcomers or supporting families facing hardship.

One of the featured stories includes our very own Bob Miller, a dedicated Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio volunteer. His warmth, humility, and commitment to serving others shine through in his video narrative, offering visitors a glimpse into the heart of our local mission. Seeing a familiar face among the national stories made the experience even more meaningful for our Cincinnati community.

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio, alongside Archbishop Robert Casey, welcomed guests on Friday, July 17, for a special reception at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center celebrating the mobile exhibit and the public launch of Rising Together, our \$12 million campaign to expand services across every Catholic Charities program.



LEADERSHIP

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Archbishop of Cincinnati

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OUR MISSION

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio serves and empowers people through God's love in their times of vulnerability. We do so through a full range of local services that engage the community in building solidarity

OUR VISION

Empowered people, thriving families, and transformed communities encountering God's love everywhere through acts of solidarity.

Giving Parents the Power to Transform Their Families

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio strengthens families through two evidence-informed parenting programs designed to build confidence, connection, and healthier relationships at home. Our Parent Education Classes support parents of children up to age 12, offering six weeks of practical guidance on child development, communication, and effective discipline. Parents leave with tools that foster cooperation and strengthen bonds with their children. We also facilitate the Parent Project®, a 10-week program that teaches concrete, behavior-based strategies for addressing challenging behaviors in older children and teens.



Both the Parent Project® and our Parent Education Classes are offered virtually and remain open to any parent across our service area. Over the past fiscal year, participation in both programs has grown substantially. This remarkable growth underscores the significant need for accessible, empowering support for families in our community.

SENIOR & CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Caring for the Caregivers: *Meeting Rising Needs with Compassion*

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio's Caregiver Assistance Network (CAN) has supported families since 1996, offering vital resources to those caring for an aging, chronically ill, or disabled loved one. Through monthly Support Groups across five counties, weekly Creative Connections sessions for individuals living with dementia, and the six-week Powerful Tools for Caregivers course, CAN helps caregivers reduce stress, build confidence, and stay connected. Additional workshops and retreats and one-on-one peer mentoring offer even deeper support.

This year, the need and staff size for this program has grown. Already halfway through the year, CAN has served 281 people, a notable increase from last year. The program is also currently exploring expansion into Springfield, Ohio.



Serving
22%
more
families

Providing
60%
more hours
of service



Rising Together: Strengthening Our Mission for Years to Come



Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio is entering a new chapter of hope and common purpose to share the love of God and advance justice for our most vulnerable neighbors. This summer, we are publicly launching Rising Together, a \$12 million comprehensive campaign designed for growth and resilience. Thanks to the leadership and generosity of devoted supporters, we have already raised \$9 million - three quarters of our goal! Now, we invite the community to join us in building on this remarkable momentum. We ask for your "above and beyond" prayerful and sacrificial consideration to make great works of mercy possible and sustainable.

Rising Together is an investment in transforming our community with compassion through service and solidarity with those seeking a hand-up. Over the next five years, this campaign will expand our capacity to meet emerging needs, adapt to ever-changing conditions, and serve thousands more across our 11-county region. It will help more families thrive

by supporting their pursuit of self-sufficiency; strengthening referrals; eliminating wait lists; and expanding access to education, mental health, food stability, and senior care.

This campaign also deepens our commitment to welcoming and assisting migrants and refugees. It will allow Catholic Charities to continue providing long-term support and care for families rebuilding their lives. Together, we can help our communities withstand adversity and promote resilience.

If you are interested in supporting the Rising Together campaign, we would like to speak with you and answer your questions. Please contact Dan Sarell, Mission Advancement Director, at 513-672-3710 or dsarell@ccswoh.org. Gifts of all sizes can also be made securely on our website, www.ccswoh.org/donate.

Students Discover the Power of Welcome

St. Ursula Academy students recently completed their minimester with Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio, spending four visits learning how our agency accompanies migrants and refugees as they rebuild their lives in Cincinnati.

During their time with us, students heard a powerful Voices presentation from Mlasi, a refugee originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She shared her family's long journey, including years spent in a refugee camp in Kenya before finally finding safety and stability in Cincinnati. Mlasi spoke openly about the challenges of learning a new language, adapting to unfamiliar customs, and even discovering new foods. She shared with the students a vivid, human look at the courage and resilience behind her migration story.

Students also met with leadership from our Refugee Resettlement Services, Su Casa Hispanic Center, Immigration Legal Services, and Mental Health Services. Through these conversations, they learned what it truly means to be a migrant or refugee and gained a deeper understanding of how Catholic



Charities provides essential services that help families rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

During their minimester, the students also rolled up their sleeves to support several hands-on projects for our migrant and refugee programs. They transformed donated t-shirts into reusable tote bags, sorted supplies for our upcoming World Refugee Day celebration, and assembled sets of affirmation cards to be shared with families. Each activity reflected their spirit of welcome and contributed to creating a joyful, dignified experience for the newcomers we serve.

INTERESTED in hosting a Voices presentation? Contact Dan Sarell, Mission Advancement Director, at dsarell@ccswoh.org.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE & HUNGER RELIEF



Katie



Hollie

Called to Serve: *Volunteers Who Make Food for All Possible*

At Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio, our Food for All pantries thrive because of volunteers whose compassion brings dignity and welcome to every neighbor we serve. In Highland County, two of those volunteers, Katie Dettwiller and Hollie Kittner, have become familiar, joyful faces at our pantry hosted by Greater Life Assembly Church. Last year, this pantry served more than 150 families every month, a testament to both the need in the community and the dedication of those who show up to help.

Katie began volunteering in August 2024, after finding more time in her schedule and wanting to give back to her community. What she loves most is getting to know fellow volunteers and the neighbors who come for food assistance. She strives to make every person feel at ease, offering kindness and conversation that remind guests they are valued. One afternoon, as the pantry wrapped up and rain began to fall, Katie drove a participant home who had walked to the site. This simple act of care reflects her generous spirit. She also

deeply admires the dedication of April Hoak, Catholic Charities' Food for All Coordinator, sharing, "April gets to the pantries early and is the last to leave. These pantries couldn't happen without her."

Hollie joined the Highland County pantry team earlier this year, stepping into service after her children finished college. A humbling moment early on shaped her commitment. At 8:00 on a bitterly cold morning, she watched a man arrive on a bicycle and wait three hours for the pantry to begin. That quiet act of perseverance revealed the depth of need in her community and affirmed her calling to serve. Hollie is also deeply moved by the prayer circle April leads before each pantry, which is for her a moment of unity that grounds her service in gratitude and purpose.

Together, Katie and Hollie embody the heart of Food for All: neighbors serving neighbors with dignity, hope, and love.

INTERESTED in volunteering at one of our food pantries? Contact Tonicia Green, Volunteer Coordinator, at tgreen@ccswoh.org.



Celebrating Strength, Culture, and Community at World Refugee Day

On Saturday, June 13, the P&G MLB Reds Youth Academy came alive with music, color, and community as Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio joined RefugeeConnect, the Immigrant & Refugee Law Center, the International Center of Greater Cincinnati, and Kentucky Refugee Ministries to host Cincinnati's annual World Refugee Day celebration. More than 180 former refugees and over 70 volunteers gathered for an afternoon that honored resilience, shared culture, and the joy of rebuilding life in a new home. We were also honored to welcome Cincinnati City Council Member Albi and Hamilton County Commissioner Driehaus whose presence underscored a regional commitment to embracing and uplifting our newest neighbors.

One of the most meaningful parts of the day was the Resource Fair, where refugee families connected with essential services, community partners, and friendly faces ready to help them navigate life in Cincinnati.

Children lit up with joy during a surprise visit from Mr. Redlegs, whose high-fives, photos, and playful energy brought laughter to the afternoon. Music filled the space, shared meals brought people together, and celebrations of culture and community created an atmosphere where every newcomer felt welcomed, supported, and truly at home.

We would like to thank our **Presenting Sponsors:** Interact for Health, Mercy Health, and the United Way of Greater Cincinnati, as well as our **Silver Sponsors:** Celanese and Jancoa for their support in making this event happen this year!

For more than four decades, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio has walked alongside refugees as they begin again. Even as federal policy pauses new refugee arrivals, our commitment remains unwavering. Through case management, workforce development, immigration legal services, and mental health support, we continue to accompany those who have recently arrived.



World Refugee Day is celebrated globally to honor people forced to flee war, persecution, or violence. In Cincinnati, it is also a celebration of the extraordinary ways that refugees strengthen our neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. As we reflect on this year's gathering, we renew our promise to uplift, advocate for, and stand with our newest neighbors.



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



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Feeding Families. Strengthening Communities.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES SOUTHWESTERN OHIO's Food for All program served more than 342,000 meals last year across ten pantry sites in our rural and urban communities and schools.

This vital work continues to grow in the archdiocese, thanks to your support and hundreds of volunteers. Together, we're ensuring families across Southwestern Ohio have reliable access to nutritious food.

To learn more about our programs and services, visit ccswoh.org.



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