Gladys was disappointed when she couldn’t return to her school as a Catholic Charities’ Foster Grandparent due to the pandemic. But, through online video chat, she was able to mentor a young man who arrived in Cincinnati as a refugee from Central Africa.

To all of our volunteers and supporters, thank you for your service to the most vulnerable families in our region. Please continue to pray, learn, volunteer and donate to support the urgent work of Catholic Charities.

**Serving Local Families, Empowering Local Lives in 2020**

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**FEEDING THE HUNGRY**

- 743,282 Meals served in 2020 by all Food for All programs
- 11,868 Families served
- + 46% Meals provided in rural mobile pantries

**STRENGTHENING THE FAMILIES**

- 814 Children received Early Childhood Mental Health consultations
- +356% Individuals received Health Assessments

**PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE**

- 2,975 mental health counseling sessions provided (+14% from last year)

**WELCOMING THE STRANGER**

- 311 People enrolled in online education courses
- 110 Children participated in summer enrichment and tutoring programs
- 2,156 Migrants & refugees received emergency assistance
- 477 Immigration legal services provided

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*Winter 2021*
“People he grew up with started betraying him,” said Victor Bugandwana, Department of Justice Full Accredited Representative in Catholic Charities’ Immigration Legal Services Program. “Samuel came here with a lot of scars.”

Samuel had no choice but to flee the DRC. After a grueling trek through 11 countries, he and his family entered the United States through the Eagle Pass, Texas, port of entry and expressed their intent to apply for asylum.

In September 2018, a migrant support agency in Texas, Casa Marianoela, contacted Sister Sandy Howe with the Sisters of Charity to see if they would be willing to house and assist in the family’s resettlement services to learn how to apply for asylum.

Today, Samuel and his wife are employed and they look forward to bringing Samuel’s three older children to the United States.

With ongoing support from the Sisters of Charity and Catholic Charities, thousands of miles from the land of his birth, Samuel finally has found a place where he truly belongs.

Are you interested in supporting asylum seekers like Samuel? Visit cccswoh.org/programs/refugee-mentorship to learn how you can help!

Recently, two Catholic Charities programs met in a deeply meaningful way when youth from the Refugee Resettlement Youth Mentoring Program were able to give back to their new community by volunteering with the Food for All program to serve their neighbors in Adams County.

“They jumped right in,” said April Hoak, Food for All Coordinator. “Such generosity with their spirit, with their love, with their wanting to be part of the community here. It’s such a beautiful thing. You see friendships form. You see people with their hearts open to each other.”

The partnership is part of the Youth Mentoring Program’s mission to help young refugees experience positive civic and social engagement in their new communities. It also introduced the newcomers, who live primarily in the city, to a rural portion of Greater Cincinnati.

“One of the ways for someone to become more civically engaged is to find volunteer opportunities,” explained Donald Foley, the Youth Mentoring Coordinator. “It’s a great opportunity for the youth to give back to the community that has embraced them through their transition to their new life in the United States.”

It also helps boost the young volunteers’ self-esteem and sense of purpose.

“It’s a great experience meeting new people, doing good things. Being a part of something special is good,” said Celestin, a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo and one of the youth participants.

Added Upshana, a youth mentee from Nepal: “I’m so happy because I do this work and I hope I will do it again. Today I feel so good, because other people helped me and I help them.”

The Refugee Youth Mentoring program connects young people, ages 15-24, with a volunteer adult mentor who supports their educational and vocational advancement. For the mentees, volunteering for Food for All was an opportunity to meet more people in the community, helping them build connections beyond their mentors.

“For the mentees, volunteering for Food for All was an opportunity to meet more people in the community, helping them build connections beyond their mentors.”

The introduction to American adults that the youth typically have little interaction with outside of the mentoring meetings has been a really great aspect,” says Donald. “And the adult Food for All volunteers were so excited to hear about the countries the youth had lived in and to hear about their cultures and how they continue to celebrate their cultures while living in the United States.”

If you are interested in learning more or becoming a mentor, contact Donald Foley at dfoley@ccswoh.org.
Catholic Charities created AccuracyNow Language Services in 2017 as a social enterprise to bridge the language gap in Cincinnati. Its mission is to help non-English speakers communicate with providers to access medical, legal, conference, education and social services. Offering services in 132 languages, AccuracyNow provides employment opportunities for many of the refugees we resettle. All profits go directly back into Catholic Charities programs.

When AccuracyNow experienced an increase in clients in 2019, Program Director Litz Main needed to expand her team. Florence McCray joined AccuracyNow from Catholic Charities’ Senior and Caregiver Support Services, and despite working only a few hours a week, she made her presence felt immediately. “With seeing how well Florence performed every task we assigned her and her eagerness to assist beyond our initial expectations, it made it easy for me to offer her a position as the administrative assistant,” Litz said.

Today, Florence is a vital part of the rapidly growing AccuracyNow program — and the entire team feels blessed to have her on board.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES: Tell us a bit about your background before you came to Catholic Charities.

FLORENCE: I had just had a life tragedy; I lost my daughter, and I had my grandson, who was 16. I needed to get some structure back into our life, so I was looking for a job. VANTAGE Aging placed me at Catholic Charities. I came here as a volunteer because I was getting paid by the Department of Labor. When I started, I was stuffing envelopes and doing general office-type things. But I needed something more to push myself, so I started asking, “What else have you got? Do you have anything else I can do?” Eventually, I worked my way into the fiber of what they were doing — I kind of just grew on them.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES: What do you like about working on the AccuracyNow team?

FLORENCE: We’re growing, we’re doing things we need to do. I like the idea that we’re raising this baby from day one. We’re looking forward to growing more and being competitive with the big interpreter services here in the city.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES: How did you first come to Catholic Charities?

FLORENCE: I had just had a life tragedy; I lost my daughter, and I had my grandson, who was 16. I needed to get some structure back into our life, so I was looking for a job. VANTAGE Aging placed me at Catholic Charities. I came here as a volunteer because I was getting paid by the Department of Labor.

FLORENCE: It’s been a personal growing experience, because it expands my mind-set. I’m not leaving the city, but the world is coming to me. There are so many different languages I didn’t even realize existed — dialects, pronunciations. I like talking with people, learning to listen and understand their cultures.

And working for Litz has been fantastic. I admire her very much. She takes personal interest in and care of each of us. She’s there for the team, and she’s always stressing this is a team effort. I want to be just like her when I grow up!

“With seeing how well Florence performed every task we assigned her and her eagerness to assist beyond our initial expectations, it made it easy for me to offer her a position as the administrative assistant,” Litz said.

To learn more about AccuracyNow Language Services, visit accuracynow.com.

At Catholic Charities, we treasure our seniors and the volunteers who enable us to care for them the way they deserve. Currently, we are seeking volunteers for our newest program, Heart of Mary Respite & Companion Services.

“Heart of Mary was developed to meet an urgent need in the community,” said Stephanie Slack, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator.

Program volunteers will provide in-home non-medical support for seniors, offering socialization and a caring presence for older adults while allowing caregivers well-deserved time for respite and self-care.

Currently, the program is making reassurance phone calls to seniors to check on them and let them know they are not alone. A phone call might seem like a small gesture, but it means the world to seniors like Monica, especially during these isolating pandemic days.

“I am thankful for my volunteer’s phone calls,” Monica shared. “She is a blessing. Her phone calls inspire me.”

Enrich your life as well as the lives of others by offering much-needed support to seniors!

Safe, flexible, remote, or in-person opportunities are available with varying levels of commitment. All volunteers will receive training and support. Join us in our mission to serve, enlighten, and empower.

For more information, please contact Stephanie Slack at 513-535-2291 or apply online at ccswoh.org/heart-of-mary-respite-and-companion-services/.

Join us every Monday at 11:00 AM for our Praying in Solidarity weekly prayer on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CatholicCharitiesSWOho. We welcome your prayer intentions by visiting our website at www.ccswoh.com, and they will be included with those gathered across the community.

Volunteer to help lead online prayer services . . .

If you enjoy leading prayer, lecturing in Church, public speaking, and have availability occasionally on Monday mornings from 10:30 - 11:30, we would love to speak with you about helping lead Praying in Solidarity services.

If you would like to learn more about volunteering for this ministry, contact Mary Anne Bressler at mbressler@ccswoh.org.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: Florence McCray, AccuracyNow Language Services Administrative Assistant

Praying in Solidarity

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Su Casa Creates Brighter Futures for Immigrant Families

If it’s securing a new mattress for a child with a disability, offering financial help for an expectant mother, or providing countless services in between, Su Casa Hispanic Center provides pathways for Hispanic/Latina/o families to better their lives.

In December, Su Casa converted its annual Christmas Adopt-A-Family Program to a drive-through model and distributed gifts, services or call 513-867-7063.

Corporate sponsors included Procter & Gamble, A Brighter Day Farm, and Fifth Third Bank.

Through Adopt-A-Family, several Fifth Third team members came together to purchase a new mattress and box spring for Kristian, a young boy with cerebral palsy.

“Thank you for all you have done for our child,” Kristian’s parents said. “He sleeps so much better now!”

Of course, special events aren’t the only way Su Casa serves the growing Spanish-speaking community. Team members like Bilingual Case Manager Yudith Escobar Lean are hard at work each day to meet the community’s needs, including providing emergency assistance for moms like Natalia.

Natalia was unable to work much of last year while her son battled sickle cell anemia. When her son passed away in December, Natalia not only was stricken with grief, but overwhelmed by bills and financial concerns.

Yudith helped Natalia manage her past-due utility bills and her son’s funeral expenses. She’s also supporting Natalia through her current pregnancy.

“Thank you, Su Casa, for helping me through these tough times,” Natalia said.

“I’m not sure what I would have done without your help.”

For more information about Su Casa, visit cssw.org/programs/su-casa-hispanic-center-services or call 513-761-1588.

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 Reviewar. Donate Your Vehicle.

Give Today

Blessings Winter 2021 | 7
Register today for the 2021 Su Casa Virtual Gala

Su Casa Hispanic Center, a program of Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio, serves local families and empowers local lives through emergency assistance, case management, family reunification, education, and health promotion services.

Join us for Su Casa’s Annual Awards Gala, livestreamed via Catholic Charities’ website on

Thursday, May 6 at 7:00 PM.

• Learn how Su Casa serves the Hispanic/Latino community
• Celebrate our community partners
• Bid on gift baskets
• Support our appeal
• And order up a margarita, chips and salsa kit prior to the event

The event is FREE to attend.

TO REGISTER, VISIT ccswoh.org/su-casa-virtual-gala/