Serving Local Families, Empowering Local Lives in 2021
From pandemic at home to upheaval abroad, Catholic Charities responded locally to families in need. Together, we fed the hungry, strengthened families, protected the vulnerable, and welcomed new neighbors. To all of our volunteers and supporters, thank you! Please continue to pray, learn, volunteer and donate to support the vital work of Catholic Charities.

25,649 People served in 2021

Family-Centered. Locally-Focused.

739,153 total meals served by Food for All in 2021

1051 early childhood mental health consultations provided, Up 29% from last year

203 caregiver support group participants served, Up 64% from last year

2367 mental health counseling sessions served

225 immigration legal case services

Families with No Where Else to Turn Find Welcome at Last

85 refugees and humanitarian evacuees were welcomed

Over 2100 individuals received Su Casa emergency assistance

296 people enrolled in Su Casa education services

90,000 hours of community service

Community Empowerment and Engagement through Service
Subscribe to Blessings Today

Essential to Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio’s and Su Casa Hispanic Center’s mission is continuously inviting more neighbors to join us. Participation can be through prayer, becoming more aware of issues, getting involved as a volunteer, and yes, donating funds that fuel our works of mercy. Your participation is needed, and it can start by subscribing today to Blessings.

Blessings newsletter is our public address system for sharing the impact that Catholic Charities and Su Casa have on the lives of local families. Through these personal stories, readers can explore how our professionals, volunteers, and supporters work tirelessly to lift up families from dire circumstances and equip them with the tools for a more hope-filled future. Published three times a year, Blessings challenges all of us to stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable and advance justice and dignity in southwestern Ohio.

Subscribing to Blessings is free. Tear off the subscription coupon in this issue and send it in with the enclosed envelope, or subscribe online at www.ccswoh.org/subscribe. “Blessings? Share your copy with a friend and invite them to subscribe today!”

A pilot program between Catholic Charities’ Caregiver Assistance Network (CAN) and the Giving Voice Foundation is providing a much-needed source of connection and support for people with dementia and their caregivers.

Creative Connections, which takes place once a week for 10 weeks, offers a support group for caregivers while their loved ones socialize and participate in art, music, movement and other uplifting activities.

“It’s been such a joy, such a spot of light during the pandemic,” says Angie Homelle, CAN Coordinator. “It provides a safe place for everyone.”

Creative Connections, which launched last summer, is the first program offered by CAN specifically for families dealing with dementia. Caregivers can enjoy 90 minutes of respite and camaraderie, secure in the knowledge that their loved ones are safely engaged nearby.

“Everyone participates at whatever level they can. If they don’t remember, it doesn’t matter,” Angie says. “There are no mistakes. No one tells anyone they’re doing something wrong.”

This year, the Cincinnati Opera has come onboard to offer a music program during the three-week break between the main sessions. The Opera also will facilitate the music portion of this fall’s Music and Movement program. Collaborations with the Contemporary Arts Center and the Cincinnati Museum Center are being explored, as well.

The goal is to grow Creative Connections so more caregivers and their loved ones can participate.

“I can’t explain how rewarding it is to accompany people experiencing a connection — a happy, familiar click,” says volunteer Laura West. “The spark ignited by Creative Connections is such a joy to witness.”

For People with Dementia and Their Caregivers,
Creative Connections Spark Joy

Subscribe to Blessings Today

Name
Phone
Address
Email
City State Zip

Mail completed for to: Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio
Mid-Pointe Tower
7162 Reading Road, Suite 600
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237

The next Creative Connections program begins April 4.
Sessions for caregivers and participants will take place from 10:30 a.m. - noon every Monday for 10 weeks at St. Clare Convent in Wyoming.
To sign up, please contact Angie Homelle at ahomoelle@ccswoh.org or 513-672-3834.

WANT TO HELP?
We are seeking volunteers interested in working with people with dementia. We also need individuals who have experience with creative outlets — such as music, dance/movement, art writing and storytelling — to help provide programming for 10-week sessions and the three-week breaks between sessions. Please contact Angie Homelle at ahomoelle@ccswoh.org or 513-672-3834.
Imagine changing your family’s entire life in just 10 weeks.
That’s exactly what happened for Jason and his parents when they participated in Catholic Charities’ Parent Project. Made possible through your support, this program organizes concurrent classes for both parents and their children, so that both can learn to better relate and work together as a family.

Jason, 12, had been acting out. He’d even gotten violent with his father. His parents are divorced and couldn’t stand to be in the same room together. Though they were court-ordered to attend the classes, Jason tried to manipulate his mom into quitting just after one session. That’s when Patty Bolden, Catholic Charities’ Parent Project Coordinator, stepped in. She met with the family and encouraged them to keep going.

“By the fifth week, the parents were telling the class how Jason couldn’t wait to get there,” Patty says. “Coming to class was his favorite night of the week.” The Parent Project Senior class empowers parents to adopt and grow their parenting skills. They learn how to discipline strong-willed children with love.

“Every parent that comes through there says, ‘Oh my gosh, this changed my life,’” Patty says. “When they hold their ground with their kids, they see immediate results.”

Kids ages 11-17, like Jason, have a separate class just for them. Why try.

“The whole essence of the class is in the name: ‘Why should I even try?’” Patty explains. “We teach young people that your life is on YOU. We want to get them to a healthier place to make better choices.”

Today, Jason and his parents are thriving. His mom and dad learned to communicate with each other so they can effectively co-parent. They also made changes to their children’s visitation schedule with their dad.

Finally last fall, Alicia’s cancellation of removal was granted and she was released. Catholic Charities is now helping her secure her green card to become a legal U.S. resident. She can apply for citizenship in five years. For now, Alicia has her old job back and is focusing on getting to know her daughter, who’s now a toddler.

“As time passes, Alicia is more energetic, more positive and hopeful,” Elizabeth says. “Seeing this case finally reach the proper outcome was really rewarding.”

**About ILS**

Immigration Legal Services provides pro bono and low-cost legal services for most types of immigration cases, including removal cases, green cards, citizenship and DACA renewals. Learn more and contact ILS at ccswoh.org/programs/immigration-legal-services/

Empowering Parents to Transform Their Families’ Futures

**Introducing Young People to Catholic Charities**

Mary Anne is eager to find more ways for Catholic Charities and Catholic schools to work together. It’s a win-win-win, she says. “Many young people are becoming aware there are hungry families in Southwest Ohio. Others are now discovering there are refugees coming here to solve their very lives, with virtually nothing to their name.”

Mary Anne explains. “People not that far away from them are really struggling, and we are called to help them.”

Mary Anne is eager to find more ways for Catholic Charities and Catholic schools to work together. “You can make an impact on a child and they’ll remember you later. Kids really take stuff to heart.”
—Mary Anne Blessler, Parish & Community Engagement Coordinator
Soup’s On! New Partnership Adds to Food for All’s Nutritious Offerings

The Food for All program can now officially say it offers everything from soup to nuts to nourish our neighbors who live in food deserts.

In September, Food for All began a partnership with La Soupe, a local nonprofit that rescues perishable food from grocers and wholesalers and transforms it into fresh and frozen soups and other nutritious dishes. La Soupe donated 200 quarts of soup and 50 family-sized casseroles for each of two food pantry distributions last year.

The soups and meals are made fresh in the La Soupe kitchen and then frozen. They contain far less salt and sugar and fewer preservatives than store-bought frozen dinners or the shelf-stable products often associated with food pantries.

“It’s really cool that we’re able to give people homemade soup in addition to what food pantries can generally offer,” says Mary Anne Bressler, Parish and Community Engagement Coordinator. “There’s something really special about the supply chain that produces this food.” Most of the recipes — including lentil soup, chili and chowder — are vegetable-based, hearty and filling. “And the soup is fantastic!” Mary Anne adds.

For La Soupe, which is based in inner-city Walnut Hills, partnering with Food for All helps the organization expand its reach into rural places like Clermont and Clinton Counties.

“La Soupe and Catholic Charities share the same goal of feeding people and meeting their integral needs first,” says Katy Nardolillo, La Soupe Partner Relations Manager. “A group like Catholic Charities is wonderful for La Soupe to have a relationship with, because we can combine our networks and really reach out to as many people as possible.”

WANT TO HELP?
Food for All needs volunteers with vans, minivans or trucks who can pick up food from La Soupe once a month and transport it to one of our pantry distributions. If you can help, please contact Food for All Coordinator April Hoak at ahoak@ccswoh.org.

Volunteer Spotlight: Santiago Gutiérrez-Buchting

Growing up in Nicaragua, Santiago Gutiérrez-Buchting saw too many families living in poverty, with no opportunities to get the help they needed to create new lives for themselves.

So when he learned how Su Casa Hispanic Center empowers families in Cincinnati, he knew he wanted to deepen his involvement with the annual Adopt-A-Family program.

“Seeing what I’ve seen in the past, I know how a little help can make a huge impact on people’s lives,” Santiago says. “I feel really touched by the results Su Casa achieves with these families.”

Santiago leads Procter & Gamble’s involvement with Adopt-A-Family through the company’s Hispanic Leadership Team. For the past two Christmas seasons, he’s coordinated the P&G group’s donations and organized a day-long gift-distribution event. In light of COVID-19, that has also meant pivoting the celebration from an elaborate indoor party to a drive-through model.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Santiago has ensured that the distribution event still includes Cincinnati Circus acrobats performing in the Su Casa parking lot, a visit from Santa Claus and plenty of opportunities to safely connect on a personal level with the families.

Adopt-A-Family means as much to the team from P&G as it does to the participating families, Santiago says. His group of about 100 colleagues adopted 354 children this past Christmas.

“I want to say thank you to Su Casa and Catholic Charities for trusting us to pull this off every year,” Santiago says. “If you help 100 people, and one person helps somebody else, you create a chain reaction. That’s what keeps me going.”

In addition, the Adopt-a-Family program has been very fortunate to receive sponsorship, support and participation not only from P&G, but also from other business partners such as 5/3’s Bank Latino BRG (Business Resource Group), co-chaired by Nikki Bialka; 5/3 Executive Sponsor Paul Martini, who leads WAM (Wealth and Asset Management Team); Immaculate Heart of Mary; Sims-Lohman Fine Kitchens; and individual donors.

Global Crisis. LOCAL HOPE.

A livestreamed update on refugee resettlement, family reunification and migrants’ contributions to a stronger community.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, March 10 at 7:00 PM.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Sr. Donna Markham, President & CEO of Catholic Charities USA

Register today on our website at https://www.ccswoh.org/migration-awareness-outreach-2022/ or scan this QR code.
“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matthew 5:7)

Empowering New Neighbors For Success

Catholic Charities welcomes new neighbors and accompanies them on their path to a new life. As the official refugee resettlement agency for Southwest Ohio, Catholic Charities has resettled over 12,000 refugees since 1980. We provide job readiness and placement, cultural orientation, English as a second language, case management, youth mentoring, mental health counseling, legal assistance, interpretation services, and more. All of it coming together to promote success for our families and a stronger community for everyone. DONATE TODAY at ccswoh.org/donate.