

## FRIEND,

Sometimes we owe it to one another to acknowledge pain, fear and sadness, and sit with that together for a while.

This has been a time with all of those feelings and more, across all our communities. I want to assure you that our response as an agency that values dignity, humility, collaboration and excellence has been focused on the health and well-being of our colleagues,

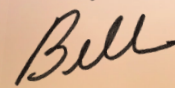
our volunteers, and those we serve. That spans the very real concerns around COVID-19 and the very deep wounds and undeniable responsibilities of race and justice.

In this issue, I hope you will be energized to see how service has been bolstered and our future reimaged, and how technology, grants and donations have played major roles. We as members of the Catholic Charities

family and our broader community have experienced so many feelings, but the greatest – the one that keeps all of us going – is hope.

Thanks for letting that be just the start.

Peace,



William J. McCarthy, Jr.,  
Executive Director



SUMMER 2020

# BLESSINGS

CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

Inspired by the Gospel mandates to LOVE, SERVE and TEACH, Catholic Charities provides care and services to IMPROVE the LIVES of Marylanders in need.



## A boost for tech's role in counseling

When COVID-19 forced Catholic Charities to end most of its in-person counseling services in mid-March, the team pivoted quickly and began reaching out from home, offering sessions to clients by phone or through video conferencing. But the change required a massive technological scramble.

IT staff helped therapists who worked on desktop computers set them up at home. Still, some aging devices were pushed past their limits as staff members shifted more of their work online. And other challenges – from shaky home wi-fi connections to questions about Zoom (a HIPAA-compliant video-conference platform) – complicated the effort to provide services at a time when many clients were experiencing mounting anxieties.

This spring, Catholic Charities received a vital grant to buy or replace laptops, docking stations, keyboards or monitors for staff who provide behavioral health services – particularly those serving youth in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll and Harford Counties. The France-Merrick Foundation provided the financial support through a broader initiative that brought together 16 local philanthropic organizations in an aligned effort to respond to needs resulting from COVID-19.

“It’s support so that we have the devices to be able to work at home,” said Karen Haughey, administrator of the agency’s behavioral health services.

As COVID-19 began to upend in-person treatments, it was not clear how long the crisis would last, and administrators hoped to resume in-person operations quickly. But Catholic Charities staff have since conducted more than 20,000 sessions focused on psychotherapy or therapeutic services, the vast majority by phone or Zoom.

The agency’s ability to adapt services in response to changing needs was due, in part, to significant investments in technology in recent years, said IT Operations Director Jane Terry. These included investments in network expansion, mobile devices, video conferencing, security enhancements, and cloud-based computing, all of which Terry said have provided the technological scalability to allow – in this case – clinicians to swiftly adjust to a virtual environment.

“A lot of times, you don’t see the return on investment, at least on paper. Networks are expensive and network connectivity is expensive,” said Terry. “We were able to support the patients, the students, the clients really without missing a beat.”

*The investment in new laptops and other technologies will support Catholic Charities’ effort to ensure all staff members have the right tools to do their jobs*



To learn more, visit [cc-md.org/behavioral-health](https://cc-md.org/behavioral-health)

# A recipe for caring



Most people would have at least flinched when offered 400 pounds of uncooked chicken. Jeanette Middleton Sudano took it as a sign of the Holy Spirit.

It was early April, and COVID-19 had shut down most of Maryland. The director of Giving Back, Linda’s Legacy – a volunteer operation that provides clothes and other necessities to people in need – was considering how to help with the growing challenges around her.

“And all the dots just started connecting,” she said.

She linked up with Kathy Kirby, a friend and fellow parishioner at St. John the Evangelist in Severna Park, who had read a Catholic Review article about the need for casserole donations at Our Daily Bread Employment Center. Together, they quickly launched an operation that delivered over 350 casseroles to the center’s hot-meal program within two weeks, along with more donations to other local needs.

Through Facebook posts, neighborhood outreach, donations, and connections throughout the community, they tapped into their networks, ultimately engaging hundreds of volunteers.

“We’re just kind of marveling at what the Holy Spirit is offering,” said Kathy.

Because the St. John the Evangelist School was closed by the pandemic, Rev. Erik Arnold invited the pair to use the school’s kitchen and large refrigerators to store supplies. They took in donations – including the uncooked chicken from the Franciscan Center – bought other ingredients wholesale, and began assembling recipe kits in casserole pans for volunteers to cook and return.

“They pick up the casseroles, go home, hopefully pray on them as they’re making them, and bring them back,” Kathy explained. “Time and again I’m hearing, ‘I’m so glad you’re allowing us to help.’”

The logistics of the operation were complicated, and made more so by the pandemic. The women used masks, gloves, and appropriate distance when assembling the casserole kits.

Online sign-up sheets helped limit the number of people picking up or dropping off food at any time. Volunteers placed empty pans and recipes on their porches to reach those unaffiliated with the parish or those who couldn’t pick up a pre-assembled kit.

The recipes presented their own challenges – “what exactly does 10 to 12 pieces of chicken mean?” Kathy asked – and they learned to improvise when unexpectedly offered 25 pounds of rice or 50 pounds of carrots.

The St. John the Evangelist parish has long donated casseroles to Our Daily Bread Employment Center. But the results of this effort were far more than either of them expected. Kathy mentioned the number of young families who got involved for the first time, a moving development since older parishioners, who have traditionally spearheaded casserole collections, may have been particularly vulnerable during the pandemic.

“God gives us ... different gifts and talents. ... He calls us at different times, too. It is beautiful the way we can bring other people together,” Jeanette said. “I don’t cook in my house; my husband cooks. It’s kind of ironic that I do all this with food.”



Gratefully accepting casseroles dropped off for donation



A trunkload of casseroles packed up and ready to go

To learn more, visit [cc-md.org/covid19-donate](https://cc-md.org/covid19-donate)



## Stopping the summer slide from a distance

**SINCE CATHOLIC CHARITIES BEGAN ITS HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS,** parents have repeatedly stressed their need and appreciation for the programs. That's why it was clear that the summer programs needed to happen, even at a distance.

"The program encourages the kids to learn during the summer and keeps them in a routine," one parent said.

"I was able to work full time while my child had a place to continue to learn new things," said another.

In 16 Head Start and Early Head Start programs, located Baltimore City and Harford and Carroll Counties, about 300 children ages infant through 5 receive remote summer programming. There's a special focus on those who are planning transitions to the Maryland public school kindergartens and those with special needs. The pandemic requires things to run differently this year, with remote fun and learning activities and even more parent involvement.

The virtual curriculum will continue to promote school and learning readiness by enhancing children's social and cognitive development. It works through educational, health, nutritional, social and other programming offered not only to the kids, but also to their families. Head Start engages parents in their children's learning and helps parents work toward their own educational, literacy and employment goals.

"The challenges of the COVID-19 crisis haven't changed our commitment to our work with children and families," said Administrator Liza Frye.

The program has led in efforts to improve students' cognitive abilities. Studies have indicated that Head Start children score higher than comparable non-Head Start children in preschool achievement tests that measure these abilities.

To learn more, visit [cc-md.org/headstart](https://cc-md.org/headstart)

**WHEN CAROLYN CAROZZA MOVED INTO ST. ELIZABETH REHABILITATION AND NURSING CENTER** more than two years ago, it was her fourth stint in rehabilitation – this one brought on by a fall – and she wanted to go home. She missed her apartment and her own things, said her daughter Darby McKaine, even after they brought in her comforter and hung familiar artwork on the walls.

But her tone began to change as she got to know members of the staff – the man from maintenance who helped hang pictures, the woman who cleaned the room, the nurses who cared for her every day, the chef who came to understand her menu preferences.

"Now, when we bring her out for a family get-together or birthday party, she says, 'OK, I'm ready to get home,'" said McKaine. "We've offered for her to come and live with one of us, but she likes her routine. The reason my mother's doing so well is that she gets such great care there."

The quality of care is driven by the commitment of the staff, said Edwina Bell, director of nursing at St. Elizabeth. It is a characteristic that distinguishes the Catholic Charities-run nursing home, which neighbors Saint Agnes Hospital in Southwest Baltimore.

when  
**Love**



is part of the  
**Treatment plan**



"Everybody wants to be here," she said. "When you watch people work, you can tell they have attachments to a lot of the residents. They know them. They know what time they want to go bed. They know what they like to eat. We all get very attached."

Administrator Zachary Richards said this attachment has also helped the facility rally around elder residents, even during a global pandemic.

As COVID-19 spread, St. Elizabeth had to cut group activities and interactions, suspend visits from family, friends and volunteers, and close some on-site amenities – all dramatic changes for residents, their families, and staff. But Richards said his team stepped up in new ways. When the facility's hair salon closed, for example, one staff member ordered supplies and began painting residents' nails, while two geriatric nursing assistants began cutting and styling residents' hair.

"They're bringing that sense of personal connection," he explained.

To learn more, visit [cc-md.org/st-elizabeth](https://cc-md.org/st-elizabeth)

# Working online works for job seekers, too

Work4Success rolled out an updated approach to its trainings at the start of this year after recognizing job seekers needed more flexible learning options. Less than three months later, the program encountered another challenge: COVID-19.

The economy cratered, significantly changing the job landscape, and a statewide quarantine prevented organizers from recruiting participants in person, or inviting them to places like Our Daily Bread Employment Center or St. Edward's Workforce Development Center for workshops. In response, Catholic Charities this spring offered the program's first online training, opening the session to clients across agency programs.

According to St. Edward's Workforce Development Center Program Manager Kevin Creamer, more than a dozen clients attended the virtual workshop. Creamer worked with staff from 11 Catholic Charities programs to ensure the content and approach met the needs of job seekers they were encountering.

"When we put the workshop together, we drew from the existing curriculum, but we really needed to build it from the ground up because we had never delivered it in this way," he



said. "A time like this calls on us to act proactively ... perceiving the needs and acting on them quickly."

Pamela Bond, a resident of Catholic Charities' Hosanna House, had never participated in a virtual workshop. She said she was nervous at the beginning. But she started taking notes as trainers talked about writing a resume, which she knows she needs when applying for the retail jobs that interest her.

"It was very helpful because I want to get back to work," she said. "With this virus going on, it gives me an incentive to move on with my life."

To learn more, visit [cc-md.org/work4success](https://cc-md.org/work4success)

In May, **Catholic Charities Chief Medical Officer Ron Means, MD**, offered agency colleagues a reflection on social unrest and how it affects the way we care for patients and clients. An excerpt follows; the full reflection is available at <https://tinyurl.com/ydbfb97u>

**"As we use our trauma-based interventions in treating those we are seeking to help during these difficult times, being aware of themes of victimization, powerlessness, despair, and rage is essential. We cannot be afraid to ask about the pain of racism while also examining our responses to make sure we are not imposing our views upon others. We should attempt to suspend our assumptions and judgments in order to truly hear and understand. Most importantly, as always, we have to meet people where they are and realize that everyone is not impacted the same way, at the same time."**

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## Because of you...

here's what we have been able to do each week since the COVID-19 crisis began

**10,000+** meals served

**2,500** teletherapy and counseling sessions

**3,500** calls to check in on our seniors

**150** SNAP benefit counseling calls



Senior Communities staff deliver donated meals

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

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Catholic Charities is the largest multi-service charitable organization in Maryland. Serving all, we provide innovative programming to accompany people on life's journey including assistance to those living in poverty, individuals with developmental disabilities, immigrants, older adults, families and children in crisis.

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