

## FRIEND,

This is an exciting time for our community. At times that can be hard to imagine. We witness and experience a great number of setbacks and struggles and hear about conflict and division, and it's important to pay attention to those things, because listening is the first thing we need to do in order to find out how to heal and help. Still, healing and helping is what we do together, and this spring, that

accompaniment will have a large and tangible footprint in the Cherry Hill neighborhood of South Baltimore. The people of this community have graciously welcomed us as collaborators in a restorative process for the Cherry Hill Town Center to create a space for gathering, entrepreneurship, marketplace, learning and banking – something the community has never had before. This is all because we had faith in each other and in the value of listening. As

you will see in this edition of Blessings, faith can take us farther together on our shared journey than we could ever go alone. Have no doubt: that is cause for excitement. Thank you, as always, for accompanying us.



*Bill*

William J. McCarthy, Jr.,  
Executive Director

SPRING 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.

## Family-first care that fosters bonds

**CATHY KINCAID WAS NOT EXPECTING TO BE RAISING A TODDLER WHEN SHE REACHED HER 50S**, but when she looks at her granddaughter, Maui Mae Denny, her eyes well up with love.

“I wouldn’t want her anywhere else,” she said. “She’s very special to me. She’s my only grandchild. We both have December birthdays. And I will protect her to the day I die.”

Maui came to live with Cathy and her husband in 2018 after both of her parents were incarcerated. Signs of trauma were evident, and she lashed out, with Cathy as the usual target. “I’m the spoiling nana, always saying, ‘It’s OK,’” Cathy said, describing her struggle to impose discipline.

She knew Maui needed therapy, and finally connected with Catholic Charities’ Villa Maria Behavioral Health Clinic in Anne Arundel County. There, Maui’s therapist suggested they also go through **parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT)**.

PCIT is designed to help young children with behavioral problems and their parents or caregivers by supporting healthy interactions and strong relationships. A therapist coaches the child and caregiver as they play together in weekly sessions, suggesting skills and tactics to use at home.

For many – including foster parents struggling to strengthen their bond with a child or biological parents working toward reunification with a child – PCIT can be a vital factor in helping families remain intact.

The Villa Maria therapist’s gentle prompts helped Cathy view her own habits differently – particularly her tendency of repeating instructions again and again, without consequences. The therapist also recognized that Maui likes to be in charge, and suggested Cathy offer choices: “You can pick up your toys, or you can have a time-out.”

The results translated into other arenas – including Maui’s pre-K classroom – and the pair graduated from PCIT in summer 2019. The results have been far more than Cathy expected. “I don’t want to pull my hair out anymore,” she joked. ■

*PCIT can be a vital factor in helping families remain intact.*



Maui Mae Denny (l)  
and her grandmother  
Cathy Kincaid

To learn more, visit [cc-md.org/vmcr-bhc](http://cc-md.org/vmcr-bhc)

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” — MATTHEW 18:20



**The 2019 Leadership Breakfast celebrated unrestricted leadership giving throughout the year.**

*Pearly Blue, a staff member at Our Daily Bread Employment Center who shared his moving personal story with donors, is pictured here (at right) with Archbishop William E. Lori (center) and Britt Mobley, program director of the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center.*

**Fulfilling hope**

The Leadership Breakfast is a volunteer-driven effort that helps to raise much needed, unrestricted support for the programs of Catholic Charities. Unrestricted funding is the lifeblood of our organization. For government-funded programs, it allows us to pay for expenses not otherwise covered

or to offset the matching funds necessary to receive certain grants. For other essential programs, it is the sole source of operating support.

Thank you for your unrestricted gift, which offers flexibility and allows us to move quickly in times of great need. ■

*To learn more, visit [cc-md.org/leadership-breakfast](http://cc-md.org/leadership-breakfast).*

*At the December event, chairperson Mary Ann Scully encouraged the audience:*

**“It takes you, your own colleagues, and your ongoing generosity to keep the lights on in the 21st century. I ask that you commit – or recommit – yourselves and your businesses and teams to the work of strengthening community by ensuring that the hope is tangibly fulfilled.”**

**New JPMorgan Chase branch will allow Cherry Hill to bank close to home**

**WHEN JPMORGAN CHASE OPENS A BRANCH IN CHERRY HILL IN A FEW MONTHS**, it may not sound like a landmark event to many. After all, it will be the banking giant’s fourth branch in Baltimore.

But the opening will mark the first physical bank in the 75-year history of this South Baltimore neighborhood, which started as a planned community for African Americans – particularly World War II veterans and those who served the war effort. And it will be the first time local residents will be able to choose to bank their money conveniently close to home.

As Catholic Charities completes a \$4.5 million renovation of the Cherry Hill Town Center, the bank branch will support the agency’s work to bring true community – business and entrepreneurship opportunities, gathering spaces, and fresh food options – to the South Baltimore neighborhood.

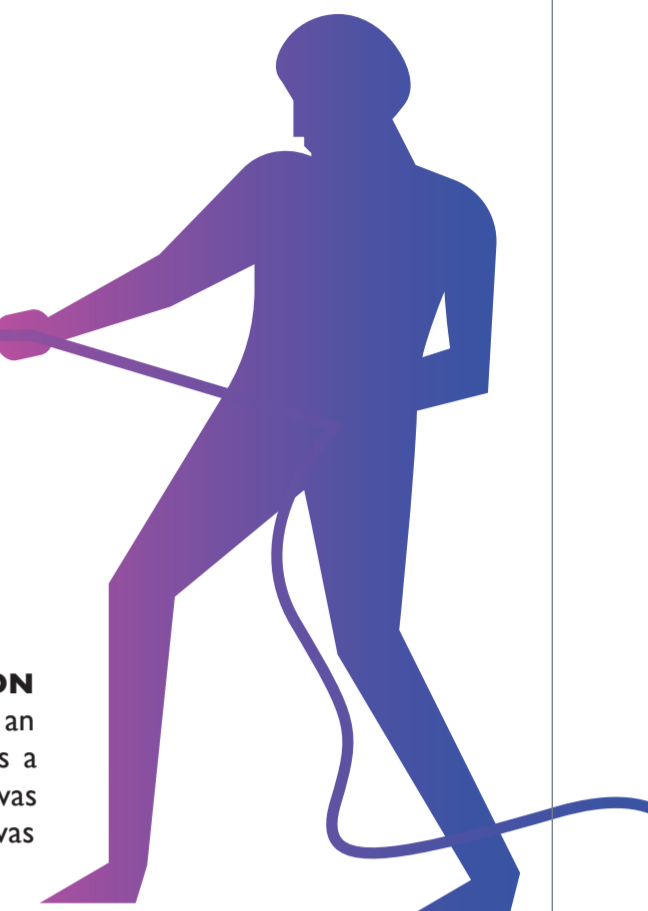
Bill McCarthy, executive director of Catholic Charities, talked about the importance of this decision.

“We are absolutely thrilled and excited that Chase has chosen Cherry Hill to open its newest branch and to provide banking services to a community that’s never had one before,” McCarthy said. ■

*To learn more about Catholic Charities’ plans for Cherry Hill Town Center, visit [cc-md.org/services/chtc](http://cc-md.org/services/chtc).*



*Untangling the patterns of*



**AS A CHILD GROWING UP ON LONG ISLAND**, Leslie Blunt had an in-ground pool. Her mother was a school teacher. Her father was a police officer. Her sister was an overachiever.

“People used to say I must have had a messed up childhood,” she said. “But I didn’t.”

Leslie was in her late-30s when she was diagnosed, while in a drug treatment program, with bipolar disorder and major depression. By then, drugs and alcohol had shaped large swaths of her life, and she’d survived car accidents, domestic violence, and other traumas.

Nearly two decades later, in 2018, Leslie was working in Baltimore when she learned her husband had overdosed and died.

“Six dollars killed him,” she said of the heroin, which had been laced with carfentanil, a drug also used as an elephant tranquilizer. He was one of more than 2,400 Marylanders who died by drug or alcohol overdose that year.

The loss pushed Leslie over the edge. Depression set in. She started using drugs again.

“It goes together – the drugs and the psych issues,” she explained. “You have to have something wrong with you to use pain to get pleasure.”

She lost her job and her home, and staff at My Sister’s Place Women’s Center often found her sleeping at their doorway, but could not convince her to accept help.

Nationally, more than 43 percent of adults with a substance-use disorder also experienced mental illness in the previous year – a mixture that can lead to homelessness. Catholic Charities found at least 38 percent of the clients it screened over one year were dealing with both addiction and mental health challenges. The organization has now expanded substance use disorder screening and treatment options across a broad range of programs.

For Leslie, something switched in July 2018. She started accepting services at My Sister’s Place, and eventually found a bed at Catholic Charities’ Weinberg Housing and Resource Center.

Leslie is a knitter – a habit that fills her time and helps her concentrate.

“I can’t sit still,” she said. “When you stop using drugs, you’ve got to have something to do with your time. There is so much time.”

Since she started accepting help, each stitch has led to another. As Leslie stopped using, she was able to get off the streets. When she got off the streets, she was able to access appropriate medical care. The next stitch is permanent housing. Leslie has filled out all the necessary paperwork. Now as she knits, she waits, hoping the stitches will fill out a new pattern. ■

*To learn more about My Sister’s Place Women’s Center, visit [cc-md.org/mspwc](http://cc-md.org/mspwc).*

**“It goes together – the drugs and the psych issues.”**

*Leslie Blunt*



More than 100 previous residents of the center found housing between April 2019 and the end of the calendar year.



**THE HOME RUN HOUSING PLAN IS IN FULL SWING** at the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center, nearly a year after Catholic Charities launched the highly focused program to proactively engage center residents in efforts to find permanent housing.

The goal of the plan is to ensure people find permanent homes within 120 days of becoming nightly residents at the center, which is owned by Baltimore City. This enables the center to serve more individuals experiencing homelessness in more productive ways over time, while also encouraging and fostering a culture in which homelessness is rare and brief.

Weinberg staff act as coaches to help move the residents from one “base” to another, marking their progress toward their ultimate goal — home.

More than 100 previous residents of the center found housing between April 2019 and the end of the calendar year.

Individuals who have found permanent housing may also receive continued support from the center — and other parts of Catholic Charities — as they work toward greater self-sufficiency. ■

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

## Slime and fries as channels of gratitude

*What do making slime, changing the oil in a car, getting a manicure, and eating McDonald’s fries have in common?*

They’re all activities that volunteer Kathy Murphy has organized to bond with her mentees at St. Vincent’s Villa, Catholic Charities’ residential treatment program for children with significant behavioral or emotional needs.

As a therapeutic mentor who has worked with six children at St. Vincent’s over nearly a decade, Kathy has found ways to respond to the interests of each child, fostering their passions as she serves as a consistent and loving role model in their lives.

“I get so much more out of it than I put into it,” she said. “It’s gratifying to see a kid discover something about themselves.”

MENTORING CHANGES LIVES



Kathy Murphy

Kathy grew up near St. Vincent’s and volunteered at the program when she was 14. Decades later, when the older of her two children went to college, she found herself with more time and contacted the facility to find ways to help again.

St. Vincent’s mentors learn about the child’s history and needs from his or her therapist, then commit to spending at least a couple of hours per week with the child, engaging in activities at the facility or planning off-site adventures.

It isn’t always easy. “There are times when I mentor when I think, ‘God, tell me what to say,’” said Kathy. But “I always enjoy service as a way to express gratitude for all God has given me.” ■

For more information about the therapeutic mentoring program, please contact Lauren Porter at [lporter@cc-md.org](mailto:lporter@cc-md.org).

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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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