

FRIEND,

Typically, autumn brings a sense of comforting routine and anticipation. It's safe to say nothing has been routine or comfortable about this year. Still, if we are fortunate enough to still have employment or retirement income, or other sources to live on, we are secure, and if we have a place to live and we are food-secure, we are fortunate, indeed.

This edition of Blessings comes to you while Catholic Charities is in a new season of its

own. Challenged by a budget weathering the impact of the pandemic and economy, we are still keeping our unwavering commitment to serve our neighbors in need. In this issue you will learn how those looking for work have found online guidance and support. You will see how many families have had to beat back eviction to keep their children in school. You will read about neighbors who have a new health care option where they need it most. And you will find that some of our most

honorable seniors now know a meal will come to their door.

As always, it is possible because of you. I hope you feel fortunate this season, as I do.

Peace,



William J. McCarthy, Jr.,
Executive Director



FALL 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.



Working for success – even in cyberspace

Four years ago, Darlene Dunn was working at Bank of America, but dreaming of a career that would allow her to be more of a servant, particularly to underprivileged individuals and those whose lives had taken difficult turns. Driven by her Christian faith and an interest in helping people live productive lives, she started looking for jobs at nonprofit organizations.

Her search led quickly to Our Daily Bread Employment Center, a place where Darlene had volunteered with her high school-aged daughter years earlier. At the time, they had served meals without thinking much about the center's employment programs. But those programs are where Darlene soon found her professional home, first as a job specialist and now as the job readiness trainer for Work4Success.

Until 2020, Work4Success was an intensive, two-week program through which clients would learn a set of key skills, from preparing a resume to using online job boards, that help them prepare for and apply to new jobs. Early this year, Darlene helped launch a streamlined curriculum at two Catholic Charities sites – Our Daily Bread Employment Center and St. Edward's Workforce Development Center – aimed at getting clients to work more quickly.

COVID-19 quickly upended these plans, making in-person classes and valuable volunteer support impossible. But the modules developed under the streamlined curriculum proved adaptable

to an online environment, and this summer, Darlene and others in Catholic Charities' workforce development programs began offering classes virtually. The program started with online classes on resume writing and job searching taught by specialized staff, and longtime volunteers returned to provide one-on-one coaching in virtual "breakout rooms."

"One of the best kept secrets here is this program. Most people identify Our Daily Bread with the food. So many people who come here say, 'I didn't even know about this!'"

Darlene Dunn



Online or in-person, the approach to Work4Success remains constant. As clients engage with the program, staff help identify barriers that might prevent them from landing a good job, and connect them to wraparound supports – whether that means finding a decent interview suit, or appropriate mental and behavioral health services.

When Darlene started at Our Daily Bread Employment Center, she quickly came to understand the magnitude of the challenges people face: "So many people who are struggling day to day. So many people with undiagnosed mental illnesses. So many people who were not sure where to turn or who to turn to."

Darlene, who was Our Daily Bread Employment Center's employee of the year in 2019, connects easily with clients, who often open up to her.

"We all make mistakes," she says. "Some of us travel different roads. ... I never want to make this about me – I want to know what I can do for you."

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/services/work4success/

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. — 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

The vital importance of unrestricted giving to Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities hosted its first Leadership Breakfast 40 years ago. A simple meal prepared and served by our staff, it lasted only one hour and raised \$50,000. Today, the Leadership Breakfast Campaign has grown into the largest source of unrestricted support for the agency's mission and work, fueling more than 80 programs that serve people of all faiths throughout Maryland.

This year's campaign will help Catholic Charities meet the everyday needs of those we are privileged to serve, while helping people overcome the economic fallout and health challenges presented by COVID-19.

Leadership Breakfast Campaign Chair J. Scott Wilfong, the retired chair, president and CEO of SunTrust Bank's Mid-Atlantic region and a longtime community volunteer, explained why he agreed to lead this year's campaign, which aims to raise an ambitious \$5 million in unrestricted support.

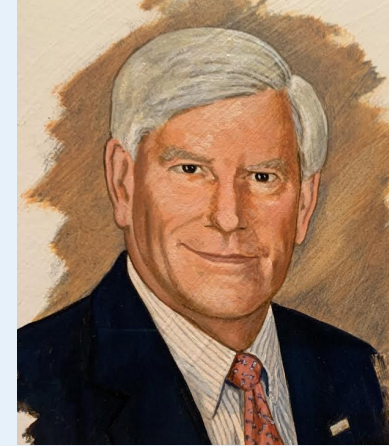
"COVID-19 has tested the resources of Catholic Charities as we strive to meet the needs of an

ever-increasing number of community members who face real challenges," he explained. "We are determined never to be in a position to turn away someone who is struggling – and that takes resources."

The unrestricted nature of Leadership Breakfast Campaign support is particularly essential in tumultuous times. Having the flexibility to use money where it is needed most allows Catholic Charities to respond with speed and agility to serve our fellow Marylanders as the pandemic and related recovery efforts continue.

Since the start of COVID-19, Catholic Charities has risen to local challenges in new ways. On a weekly basis, we served 10,000 meals, provided 2,500 tele-therapy and counseling sessions, made 3,500 check-in calls to our seniors, and responded to 150 SNAP benefit counseling calls on average. These services would not have been possible without the support of our donors.

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/donate/leadership-breakfast-campaign/



J. Scott Wilfong, this year's Leadership Breakfast Campaign chair, is the retired chairman, president and CEO of SunTrust Bank's Mid-Atlantic Region. A 43-year veteran of the banking industry, he previously served in a senior management position with First National Bank of Maryland (M&T), and began his career with the Equitable Trust Company. He serves as a board member of Catholic Charities, Living Classrooms Foundation, Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Forest Country Club.

The Cherry Hill Town Center

Far more than a construction project

IN EARLY MARCH, Catholic Charities and its partners gathered to celebrate a groundbreaking at the Cherry Hill Town Center – the kick-off to a multi-phase project that will renovate the building's facade, welcome the neighborhood's first bank, and introduce an open marketplace to support local entrepreneurs. Three weeks later, Maryland issued a stay-at-home order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing activity in many sectors to a screeching halt across the state.

But work at the Town Center has continued almost on pace, and when a "Coming Soon" sign appeared on the front of the new Chase Bank branch in the late summer, it was a sign of great progress.

"It's going to reinforce this center as the life pulse of Cherry Hill, and in some ways, even of Greater Cherry Hill," said Jason Sutton, senior property manager for the project.

The center houses a mix of services – the local branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, a WIC office (providing supplemental nutrition assistance for women, infants, and children), a Family Dollar store, a laundromat, a barber shop. Several tenants were forced to close operations temporarily

or for longer durations in response to COVID-19, but the location remains a hub for the community and will grow as the renovations continue.

At the root of the work: justice

The Cherry Hill neighborhood was originally designed and built for African American servicemen returning home from World War II. But the disinvestment and isolation that followed over the next several decades manifested in obvious ways – including the lack of basic community amenities, such as a bank or grocery store.

Rex Foster, Catholic Charities' director of community engagement, said the Town Center upgrades are more than a construction project.

"It's about social and economic justice," he said, describing vital partnerships with neighborhood groups that are helping to shape and drive the initiative. "That's really at the root of a lot of the work we're doing there."

As a next step in the project, Catholic Charities will help develop a large, currently vacant space into a community marketplace. The 5,000-square foot area will serve as



home to pop-up stalls that allow local entrepreneurs to launch small businesses. Working with partners at the Cherry Hill Urban Community Garden, Catholic Charities also hopes the space will host food-related programs – including cooking and nutrition classes, or the distribution of fresh produce – to support a neighborhood that has long sought more outlets to buy healthy foods.

"Our hope is that it provides a lot of opportunity," Foster said of the overall project. "Whether it's through jobs or ... skills-based training, or support for an entrepreneurial venture. These are the kinds of things we want to be able to host in the space, and that really came directly from the residents of Cherry Hill."

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/services/cherry-hill-town-center/



ENSURING BACK RENT DOESN'T STOP KIDS FROM STAYING IN SCHOOL

ERIN SESSIONS UNDERSTANDS THAT IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH FOR A FAMILY TO TIP INTO CRISIS, or for that crisis to unravel their lives. The case manager of Catholic Charities' Park Heights Family Stability program has seen it again and again – and has been able to step in to help at vital moments.

Based at Arlington Elementary School in Baltimore City's Park Heights neighborhood, the program is designed to help families through crises that could lead to homelessness or force a child to leave school abruptly. Services include covering rent on a short-term basis to bridge the emergency, and connecting parents to a wide range of supports – such as job placement programs, food distributions, or help with energy bills – depending on their circumstances.

One client was forced to stop working as a Family Dollar cashier in 2014 because of a brain injury and ongoing behavioral health concerns. Without a stable income and overwhelmed by medical bills, she reached out to the program, and was later able to find work as an attendant at a laundry facility. Though not her dream job, it has steadied her family's life, and her daughter is now in her last year of high school.

Another client struggled to pay for housing and raise her elementary school-aged son as she pursued an associate's degree. When the program helped with her rent, she paid off

her balance at school, and is now studying social work at Coppin State University.

Catholic Charities started the program in 2012, with support from the United Way of Central Maryland, and has since helped 165 families with a total of 308 school-aged children. In the six months after first connecting with the program, 98 percent of those families maintained their housing, and 92 percent of the children were able to stay in the same school.

Over the past year, Catholic Charities served 24 families – more than anticipated – through intense, personal case management and connections to a network of other programs and services. And needs are only increasing, particularly because Park Heights is one of the neighborhoods worst hit by COVID-19, aggravating already precarious financial situations for many families.

Terrell Divers, supervisor of the program, said it can be “eye opening” to understand how small the financial gaps can be that trigger crises. A car breaks down. School uniforms cost more than expected. Illness forces a family member miss work.

“It's a mishap,” she said. “A lot of times when you budget, it can be as short as just a few dollars.”

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/services/the-family-stability-program/

With Ascension Saint Agnes, My Brother's Keeper launches new primary-care services

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER IS LAUNCHING AN ON-SITE PRIMARY CARE CLINIC in partnership with Saint Agnes Hospital, adding to the wide spectrum of services it offers as a one-stop shop for West Baltimore neighbors in need.

Launching the clinic required upgrading the health suite at the Catholic Charities program to add the equipment found in most primary care offices – items such as an exam table, a vital signs machine, some basic testing tools, and computers to access electronic health records. From this space, Saint Agnes clinicians will provide weekly primary-care services in three half-day sessions.

The on-site clinic will reduce the hurdles people face when trying to get to a doctor, and encourage clients to seek medical care before concerns become crises. But the partnership between My Brother's Keeper and Saint Agnes is even more fundamental, said Kevin Mason, director of the Catholic Charities program.

“The underlying subtext to it all is really both entities are in partnership to help people maintain a quality of life they can feel proud of as they determine and actualize their life trajectories, make

informed health decisions and reach for their hopes and dreams like everyone else with the dignity and respect that all people desire,” he explained. “That's what it's about for us.”

My Brother's Keeper traces its history to the mid-1980s when the organization began providing coffee, tea and clothing to neighbors in need. Today, it offers a full range of services, including meals, case management, behavioral health and psychiatry services, job training and support, job placement, a GED program, legal aid with expungements, and connections to other supports. The holistic nature of the program was one of the draws for Saint Agnes.

“The model is typically when you go to the doctor's office, they identify that you have social needs and refer you to services. We wanted to flip that upside down and go to a place where people have access to social supports, and bring medical and clinical [services] to that,” said Allison MacKenzie, director of community health at Saint Agnes Healthcare. “We look for the whole person – not just physical health, but emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. This is a perfect fit.”

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/services/my-brothers-keeper/



S The spirit of service for veterans in need

“I’M GRATEFUL FOR THE DELIVERIES. It’s nice to receive the meals and to know the staff hasn’t forgotten about us during this time,” said Earl Robb. The 89-year-old Marine Corps veteran was referencing the weekly meals he and eight other veterans are receiving from St. Ann Adult Day Services.

In August, the Catholic Charities program began some occasional home delivery of meals to veterans as a way to stay engaged and to make sure the veterans’ nutritional needs are being supported. Every meal is low in fat, cholesterol, sugar and salt to meet everyone’s dietary restrictions.

Director of St. Ann Adult Day Services Cherie Melton said, “Our veterans tend to be somewhat isolated, and we thought by delivering two meals per week, it would serve as an opportunity for our vets to have some face-to-face contact with a St. Ann driver.”

Deliveries adhere to pandemic precautions. Though the meals don’t cover an entire week, participants and their families appreciate what they receive.

“The meals allow me to take a break from worrying about what he is going to eat every day,” said Earl’s daughter, Lisa Robb. “There are times when I am working and don’t have time to stop to prepare him a meal, so this is awesome. It’s an added bonus that he actually enjoys the food every week.”

Weekly meals are not the only outreach team members from St. Ann Adult Day Services are conducting.

“Shortly after COVID-19 struck, we began sending activity packets to our veterans, which



St. Ann participants Earl Robb & Rosielee Valentine

“Our veterans tend to be somewhat isolated, and we thought by delivering two meals per week, it would serve as an opportunity for our vets to have some face-to-face contact.”

include scripture readings, word searches, crossword puzzles, unscramble-the-word and connect-the-dot activities,” said Melton. “Our team cares about our clients, calling them every day to check on their well-being. During these calls we are checking to see if they have enough food and fluids, medications, and essential supplies. These calls also help to combat some of the loneliness that our veterans may be feeling, especially for those who live alone in the community and may have very little if any family support and involvement.”

The center’s nurse calls the eight veterans twice a week to make sure they are taking their medications as prescribed and to determine if there are any health issues or concerns that need to be addressed—a precaution to avoid having the veterans admitted to hospitals and other health care facilities in the midst of COVID-19. If a veteran needs more assistance than what St. Ann staff can provide, the team contacts a social worker.

“Our veterans who attend the adult day program are an integral part of our St. Ann family and are appreciated for the sacrifices that they’ve made for our country,” Melton said. “We honor our veterans by beginning each day reciting the pledge of allegiance and singing ‘My Country, ‘Tis of Thee.’ Although we may not be great singers, I feel that the veterans and the other St. Ann participants enjoy singing the song.”

Minus a pandemic, recognition for veterans at St. Ann generally also includes a special Veterans’ Day celebration, which involves musical entertainment, a special luncheon, and notes of appreciation for their service.

To learn more, visit cc-md.org/services/st-ann-adult-day-services/

A movement to serve

Congratulations to our 2020 Honorees

Msgr. Arthur F. Valenzano
Joyful Servant Award:

Mary Anne O’Donnell

Catholic Charities’ former Chief Administrative Officer/Assistant Director

Distinguished Service Award:

Carolyn Gutermuth

Donor/volunteer | My Sister’s Place Women’s Center

Anne Lindsey Otenasek
Youth Service Award:

Vinay Khosla

Volunteer | Our Daily Bread Employment Center and St. Vincent’s Villa | senior, Dulaney Valley High School

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

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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