



# The Mission

CATHOLIC CHARITIES • Diocese of Arlington

*Faithfully Serving in 100 Locations Across 21 Virginia Counties and 7 Cities!*

## 88,000 Kids in Our Area Are Hungry and At Risk

Help us provide calorie-dense, filling snack options for hungry children this summer!

Summer is almost here and the weather will be perfect for playing outside carefree! But not so carefree if your stomach is gnawing in hunger because you have missed breakfast and lunch. This will be the reality for more than 88,000 children in the 21 counties and seven cities served by Catholic Charities who live in food insecure households that are struggling to put food on the table.

As you know, there are great school meal programs providing food for these children during the school year. However, many of these children do not have access to those programs in the summer months.

Not enough good quality food impacts a child's nutrition and affects mental and physical health. Let's be mindful of which foods are most beneficial to hungry children. Children in food insecure households need calorie-rich, nutrient dense, and filling summer snack options. *If you would like to help us provide healthy snacks to children in need in our area, here's your grocery list:*



### Healthy Snacks for Our Kids!

- ✓ Tuna packs – full of protein!
- ✓ Applesauce (Unsweetened) and Fruit Cups
- ✓ Single serving packages of Dried Fruit and Fruit Leathers
- ✓ Individual cereal boxes
- ✓ Cheese & crackers packages
- ✓ Granola and Cereal Bars
- ✓ Pretzels, Goldfish, and Crackers
- ✓ 100% Fruit Juice boxes. Orange, grapefruit, and pineapple juices are more nutrient-dense and are healthier than apple, grape, and pear juices.

### Food Donation Centers and How to Get Involved!

Our St. Lucy Project locations in Alexandria, Front Royal, Leesburg and Manassas all need your help. You can also organize a grocery store food drive or parish food drive to assist children during the summer.

For more information, please contact Debra Beard at 703-479-2975 ext. 2 or [DBeard@ccda.net](mailto:DBeard@ccda.net).



## ● PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,  
In 2013, in his address during a visit at the homeless shelter, "Dono Di Maria," Pope Francis said *"To love God and neighbor is not something abstract, but profoundly concrete: it means seeing in every person the face of the Lord to be served, to serve Him concretely. And you are, dear brothers and sisters, the face of Jesus."*

In reading the brief stories shared in this issue of **The Mission**, the Holy Father's words come to life!

"Concrete" is the passion and service of young people like Constanza, who took it upon herself to reach out to us and make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable children living at St. Margaret of Cortona Transformational Housing complex in Woodbridge. While Adelina Jones, an Aquinas Regional School student, eagerly assisted members of the National Congress of Black Women to make Mother's Day a bright moment for moms residing there. "Concrete" is the enthusiasm of students from St. Stephens and St. Agnes schools who made Easter even more joyous for the children and families who depend on the food and emergency assistance provided at Christ House in Old Towne Alexandria.

"Concrete" is the continued dedication and commitment of parishes and their

parishioners across our geographic service areas helping us collect and distribute food for those in need. "Concrete" is the true vocation and resolve of our Catholic Charities staff like therapist Elissa Wiggins who used her skills and innate compassion to calm car accident victims moments after a crash.

As you will read in the following pages, there are more inspiring examples of how we *"serve Him concretely."* We are hard at work seeking to play the most positive role in "welcoming the stranger." Jeannette Ynfante, Staff Attorney for our Hogar Immigrant Services, offers a glimpse into how Charities is assisting our vulnerable immigrant community.

As apparent as the good works previously mentioned is the profound impact and contribution made by our more than 2,500 volunteers who help make our work possible. And, the generosity of our donors and that of parishioners across the Catholic Diocese of Arlington who are un-yielding financial stewards of our work is the great stabilizing foundation.

As you know, our work is never ending. As summer approaches, vulnerable children are at risk of going hungry because they do not have access to school lunch programs. Many in our immigrant communities remain fearful.

Alleviating the stress of homelessness and poverty will remain a top priority.

After reading this issue of **The Mission**, I encourage you to consider what "concrete" actions you can take or continue to take to help your brothers and sisters in need especially those living in close proximity to you. I welcome you to join our growing ranks of dedicated volunteers – even a few hours of your time is a big help to us. If you are able to make a financial donation today this is also a "concrete" way in which you can help Catholic Charities continue to transform lives!

May God bless you, and I wish you a safe and restful summer!



**Art Bennett**  
*President and CEO*  
*Catholic Charities of the*  
*Diocese of Arlington*

## Blossoms For Moms

The National Congress of Black Women has sponsored numerous special moments for the mothers residing at St. Margaret of Cortona Transformational Housing. During FY17, the members have supported St. Margaret's through volunteers and donations at Life Skills, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day and most recently Mother's Day.

Pictured are Ms. Kristin Young and Dr. Jean Simpson of the National Congress and helper Adelina Jones who attends Aquinas Regional School.

Each St. Margaret mother received a bouquet of flowers and an organza bag of English lavender soap. Ten families, including 23 children, currently reside at the Charities program for families experiencing homelessness.





## High Schooler's Passion Transforms the St. Margaret of Cortona Playroom!

Constanza Hasselmann, a West Springfield High School senior, took on the project of renovating the playroom at Catholic Charities' St. Margaret of Cortona Transformational Housing complex in Woodbridge. Initially, she came to donate school supplies for the children living there. But that donation evolved into so much more, just as she had experienced before.



During a National Geographic Student Expedition to teach English in Thailand, Miss Hasselmann's creativity was sparked by the "optional" packing suggestion of school supplies. She noticed all of the discarded, unused notebooks, pens and books at the end of the school year. Constanza noted, "If I could place them in the hands of a hopeful child elsewhere, perhaps we could overcome a bit of the inequity in education. We could reuse these products and give the recipients a greater opportunity to succeed."

That original suitcase filled with donated school supplies turned into "Project Aquarelle – Coloring the World with Education." In addition to bringing school supplies to Thailand, Brazil, Bali, Kenya, Mali and South Africa, Project Aquarelle supports the local community as well.

She heard about St. Margaret of Cortona Transformational Housing from



a family friend and decided to bring donated school supplies for the play therapy and school room there. When asked if she could give the whole room an upgrade, she courageously took on the challenge!

Alexander Nunez helped Constanza with the renovation, installing shelving, desks, and new bookshelves. He reflects, "It was a privilege to help Project Aquarelle in renovating [St. Margaret's] playroom and taking part of such an amazing effort to improve the educational environment of deserving children. Although it was challenging at times, seeing the playroom transform

into a bright, welcoming space was worth the hard work."

"Project Aquarelle is helping nurture the creativity that children inherently have," Constanza remarked. Indeed, the bright, colorful renovation and donated school supplies for St. Margaret's playroom are doing just that.

Learn more about the work and programs of St. Margaret of Cortona Transformational Housing Program by visiting our website at [ccda.net](http://ccda.net). Visit [projectaquarelle.org](http://projectaquarelle.org) to learn more about the good work Constanza Hasselmann is doing.



Constanza Hasselmann and Alexander Nunez proudly display the Project Aquarelle logo in the upgraded playroom.

## ● PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT – *Hogar Immigrant Services*

### Hogar Program Assists Vulnerable Immigrants

By Jeannette Ynfante, Staff Attorney, Hogar Immigrant Services

Pope Francis once said that “the Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place, or disposable.” This is a reminder that the Gospel calls us to welcome the stranger. It is with this in mind that Hogar Immigrant Services has responded to the increasing needs of the most vulnerable in the immigrant community during these times of change and uncertainty.

Hogar Immigrant Services is supporting the immediate and long-term needs of immigrant communities affected by the new immigration policy shift. Anyone who has entered the country, whether **escaping harm or seeking to be reunited with family members**, is potentially a priority for removal from the United States.

Hogar Immigrant Services has taken a number of steps to help the immigrant community throughout the diocese. These steps are based on principles and values that reflect Catholic teachings and that respond to



God’s call to serve the neediest among us and to recognize the face of Christ in every human being.

Hogar Immigrant Services has been providing Know Your Rights Presentations (“KYR Presentations”) in many churches throughout the diocese. During these KYR Presentations, Hogar attorneys, staff, and volunteers provide the immigrant community with information about their constitutional

rights in the United States. They learn that the fundamental constitutional protections of due process and equal protection embodied in the Constitution and Bill of Rights apply to every person, regardless of immigration status. More specifically, the immigrant community learns that everyone, including undocumented individuals, has basic rights that can be asserted when approached by law enforcement or immigration officials, such as the right to remain silent and the right to retain an attorney.

The need for these presentations is ever increasing and ever so important. To date, Hogar has conducted 8 KYR Presentations at Catholic churches throughout the diocese, with as many as 200 people in attendance at several of the events.

Hogar has also responded to the immediate need of the immigrant community by conducting a series of legal screening workshops in Manassas and in Alexandria to determine if participants are eligible for immigration relief. As a result of this series of legal screening workshops, Hogar screened 176 participants. Of those





176 participants, 156 individuals were **eligible for some form of immigration relief under the law**. That's 88 percent! These 156 individuals were unaware of their potential eligibility for some form of relief until they were able to consult with an immigration attorney during those workshops. These numbers are crucial in demonstrating the impact of having legal counsel. Even just a 60-90 minute consultation with one of Charities' attorneys can be life-changing. Many of these individuals were unaware that they qualified for certain forms of relief that would allow them to remain legally in the United States, if pursued. Some of the forms of relief identified include, but are not limited to, withholding of removal, asylum, U-visa, and special immigrant juvenile status.

This shows that access to legal representation has profound impacts on the lives of immigrants and their families.

Additionally, and despite limited resources, Hogar and other legal aid providers are mobilizing to provide free consultations on Saturdays to reach a wider net of non-citizens who are living in the United States. As a part of this effort, Hogar attorneys, alongside **Ayuda, Legal Aid Justice Center**, and volunteer immigration attorneys, joined forces to conduct two consultation clinics in April and May. In these clinics, individuals speak to attorneys who evaluate their cases, explain their rights, and determine their eligibility for various forms of relief.

The gospel's call of welcoming and helping the stranger is louder each day,

and Hogar's services and recent activities prove that a difference can be made by those who respond to the gospel's call. It is humankind that can and should spread the church's culture of acceptance and solidarity, where no human being – documented or undocumented – feels out of place or disposable in our community.

With that in mind, if you or anyone you know would like to become involved in our efforts to keep the immigrant community informed, you may contact us at [volunteerhogar@ccda.net](mailto:volunteerhogar@ccda.net) or by calling 571-208-1572.

## ● VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Volunteers are the Lifblood of Catholic Charities


**V**olunteers legitimize the work we do – the demonstration of community support through volunteerism for our programs has expanded and evolved to new heights!

We depend on strong community involvement and participation, and our volunteers exemplify this. The data shows this as well. We now have over 2,500 volunteers helping throughout our programs. That means that there are 20 volunteers per paid staff! Additionally, we have over 40,000 hours of logged volunteer time. Volunteer time is priceless, but if we quantify that amount it surpasses \$1,000,000 of donated time!

We have volunteers in almost every parish in the diocese. This demonstration of support is incredible and crucial to the mission of CCDA “to convene the Catholic community to fulfill the Church’s mission of social justice.”

Thank you to all of you who give your time, energy, and resources to Catholic Charities, because we could not serve without you!

Get Involved! Sign up today to become a Catholic Charities volunteer! Visit [www.ccda.net](http://www.ccda.net) and click the volunteer button on the right side of the page. We have opportunities to fit all schedules and interests across the diocese.

 **GET INVOLVED!**

*We need you to join Catholic Charities in making a difference in the lives of the poor! There are a variety of ways to give back – with the St. Lucy Project and with all of our programs. Your gifts of time, talent and treasure are priceless. To volunteer with Catholic Charities, please sign up on our volunteer page or contact Sally O’Dwyer at (703) 841-3838 or [SOwyer@ccda.net](mailto:SOwyer@ccda.net). To make a financial donation, please make a gift online.*



**Migration and Refugee Services Volunteers**

## ● PARISH PARTNERSHIPS

### 55,386 Pounds of Food Collected – Thanks!!

**M**arch was a very busy month for the Manassas Warehouse of The St. Lucy Project! We conducted food drives and collected **55,386 pounds of food!** Our heartfelt gratitude to the parishes that conducted food drives in March – St. Joseph (Herndon), St. Bernadette, Holy Spirit, St. Ambrose, St. Jude, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Katharine Drexel, St. Rita, and St. Michael.

St. John Neumann's Religious Education program also made over 100 lunch packs to give to hungry children this summer. It was a great way to kick off our Summer Hungry Children Campaign!

Additionally, we welcomed many new families into the warehouse for this Lenten food drive season. Students served for confirmation hours, and school service hours. On March 12, the Squire Roses from Holy Spirit School provided the heavy lifting, and



**St. Jude parishioners unloading food to St. Faustina's Pantry in Fredericksburg.**

much needed food stocking in the warehouse. We also had the privilege to meet the American Heritage Girls representing St. Rita's Parish, as well as the Sea Scouts, some of whom have ties to St. Katherine Drexel Mission. The unloading of our food donations would not be possible without the willing

participation from these families and youth groups!

Over 25,000 pounds of food was distributed from our warehouse to our partner pantries to feed approximately 630 families! Thank you for helping us feed the food insecure this Lenten season!

## Easter Baskets for Christ House Clients

**C**hrist House Food Pantry was busy this Lenten and Easter Season! Students from St. Stephens and St. Agnes School worked in the Christ House garden, planted herbs and flowers, made Easter snack bags, helped unload food donations from St. James School, and helped pack toiletry bags for clients.

Additionally, volunteers donated and created lovely Easter baskets for our food pantry clients. These baskets were distributed throughout the Easter season. "The Easter baskets contained an Easter prayer to make our clients (family, individuals, children, elders) be aware and feel the spirit of Easter — that Christ has Risen and is alive in us," reflects Sr. Annie, Volunteer Coordinator at Christ House.



**Students packing Easter bags with donated goods they brought in.**





## Be Prepared to Be the Good Samaritan in Helping Someone in Crisis

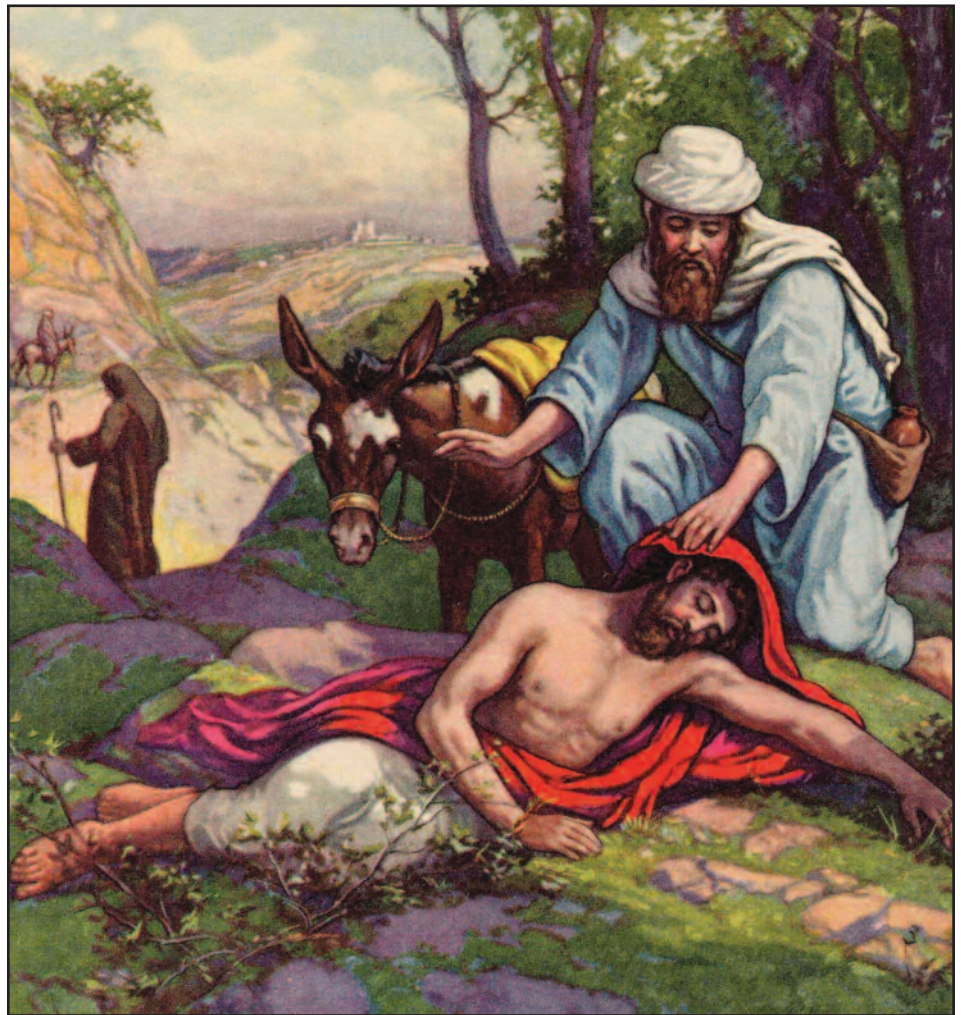
**A** Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington psychologist used her expertise to be present to those in a moment of crisis ... you can too.

During a rainy drive to work, Elissa Wiggins saw a vehicle that had rolled off of I-95 into a ditch after running off the road. It was a bad wreck and a young man was helping pull a young woman out of the car. Immediately, Elissa pulled over to make sure they were OK. They were both upset and reeling from the shock of the crash. Always prepared, Elissa opened her SUV's hatch and had the two young adults sit beneath it for shelter and warm up as she had all the necessities – blankets, water, and chocolate.

Elissa stayed with them and provided some mental health first aid while waiting for the EMTs and police to arrive. It is important for people who have gone through a trauma to tell their story, often several times over. Therefore, it is helpful to provide a listening ear and ask open-ended questions to keep them talking. For example, she asked questions like “Tell me a little about what happened” or “How are you feeling?” She also asked them questions about their lives – “What are you studying?” or “What are some of your interests?” – because it helped to draw their attention away from the wreck and focus on aspects of their lives.

“This is a great example of being able to respond to the needs of the community as Christ responded to all those in need that he met, unreservedly and without hesitation,” remarked Dr. Michael Horne, Director of Clinical Services.

In her own words, Elissa reflects on the experience, “I was grateful for my training in clinical psychology and my experience in working with clients at Catholic Charities as this prepared me to



be in a position to know how to speak with the young adults in the accident to keep them calm.”

**Maybe the next time you come across people in need, you, too, could provide a compassionate ear and reassurance to a crisis situation.**



**Here are some emergency supplies you can keep in your car.**

### *Did You Know?*

85% of people would help someone if they thought they were the only one there. Next time you are that one person who can help, be prepared!



● **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT** – *Adoption Program Celebrates 70 Years of Service*

## Runners Support Our Courageous Birthmothers in the Brave 5K



Nearly 200 people participated in the Pregnancy and Adoption Support's Brave 5K race to support women who have placed children for adoption. This was a chance to acknowledge these women for having the courage to make such a difficult decision. The race took place on May 7 at the Inn at Vint Hill, Warrenton, Virginia.



**Kim Harrell (center), Director, and Charities' Pregnancy and Adoption Services staff Sarah, Jaimie, Katherine and Jeaneth celebrate the program's 70 years' of exceptional service.**



### About Catholic Charities, Diocese of Arlington (CCDA) *Together, We're Transforming Lives!*

- 100 direct and affiliated service locations across 21 Virginia counties and 7 cities
- Serves all regardless of faith, background, or circumstance
- 88 cents of every dollar spent goes to programs and services

Visit our blog and sign up to receive weekly or monthly updates at [www.arlingtoncatholiccharities.com](http://www.arlingtoncatholiccharities.com)

Follow us on...  @CCDArlington, Like us on  Catholic Charities, Diocese of Arlington

Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.