

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



Ukrainian refugees (from left) Denys, Danylo, Mykyta, and Natalia Milshyn enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner at St. Bernadette School in Springfield Nov. 11. COURTESY

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Ukrainian, Afghan refugees welcomed for first Thanksgiving at parishes

BY KIMBERLEY HEATHERINGTON | A longer version of this story appeared in *The Arlington Catholic Herald*. Reprinted with permission.

AT THANKSGIVING — THE ROBUSTLY American tradition of a day dedicated to gratitude, complemented by bountiful meals and gathered relatives — it’s not difficult for immigrants and the needy to feel excluded. But in the Arlington diocese, numerous parishes are working to give more people a place at the holiday table.

Thanksgiving came a little early when St. Bernadette Church in Springfield, in partnership with diocesan Catholic Charities’ Migrant and Refugee Services, hosted a dinner for Ukrainian refugees Nov. 11. The savory

scents of the season wafted from the school cafeteria kitchen, where a flock of volunteers, led by Pastoral Associate Rick Caporali, busily prepared the newcomers’ feast.

The menu featured Thanksgiving favorites: turkey and gravy; ham; stuffing; mashed and sweet potatoes; stuffed cabbage; green bean casserole; corn; Brussels sprouts; rolls; butternut squash soup; and an assortment of homemade pies.

After prayer, nearly 40 guests enthusiastically sampled the often unfamiliar dishes.

“The Catholic Church, that was the first place I came for the help”

— ANASTASIIA STARODUB

“Stuffing is the best!” exclaimed Anastasiia Starodub, who left Kiev the day the conflict erupted. With a boyfriend in America, it was a sensible wartime destination. “The Catholic Church, that was the first place I came for the help,” she said. Catholic

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The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. -GAUDIUM ET SPES, 1

Dear Friends,

We are always blessed, and sometimes even astounded, to witness the “griefs and anxieties” being experienced by the people we serve, whether it be a mother and her two children living in a motel; or a dad struggling to provide for his family in a new and strange place; or someone needing the necessities of life.

We are equally blessed to be a part of the “joys and hopes” of the people in our care; the former refugee taking the oath of citizenship; the patient finally able to receive long sought care for diabetes; and the smile on the face of a homeless man receiving a meal, and a kind word.

In each instance we express our solidarity with those who are poor and vulnerable and newly arrived. It is our joy and privilege.

In this issue of our newsletter, you will encounter some of the people we have served: Ukrainian and Afghan

families celebrating their first Thanksgiving in our country; our neighbors struggling with the cost of food and transportation; and people who have benefited from the generosity and kindness of students at Bishop O’Connell High School.

Together with Bishop Burbidge, and our entire diocesan family, we rejoice in the opportunity to serve and care for our brothers and sisters in need, from all over the world, and from right next door. Your prayers, your generosity, and your willingness to volunteer, are precious gifts and proof that we are indeed “followers of Christ.”

Gratefully yours in Christ,



STEPHEN CARATTINI
President and CEO

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington

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Ukrainian, Afghan refugees welcomed for first Thanksgiving at parishes

Charities has been assisting her to “find a job; to adjust to (the) environment; to the people; to the culture.” The warmth of her welcome impressed Starodub. “Here you can find ... open hearts and good people.”

This wasn’t the first time Caporali’s culinary skills welcomed the migrant community; the inaugural MRS Thanksgiving



Melaniia (left) and Adelina Mechet work on Thanksgiving crafts at St. Bernadette School in Springfield Nov 11. COURTESY

banquet dates back almost a decade, when Burundian émigrés settled in the region. Caporali and Father Donald Rooney, both now at St. Bernadette, but then at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church in Fredericksburg, envisioned breaking bread as more than just simple sociability.

“We thought it would be helpful to bring everyone together and share a meal — kind of a way of introducing them to the American culture,” Caporali recalled. “Being displaced was pretty traumatic, but connecting them with others in the community was a way of building community with them.”

Such hospitality isn’t optional, Caporali said; rather, it’s a reflection of his Catholic faith. “This is what we’re called to do — to treat people like humans, not bound by ethnicity or culture,” he reflected. “And the easiest way to do that ... is a meal at the table.”

At St. Mary Church in Fredericksburg, the parish and Catholic Charities planned a Nov. 16 drive-thru food and

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coat distribution for the Afghan refugee community. They expected 150 Afghan families and another 100 disadvantaged families.

Finding turkeys that were halal, an Islamic dietary standard, proved challenging so they were swapped for chicken, with the cost split by St. Mary's and Catholic Charities. The parish Knights of Columbus council also provided turkeys, while parishioners and students at the parish's Holy Cross Academy contributed side dishes.

"We heard St. Mary's helps people," is a phrase often repeated to Elena Doyle, parish outreach director and executive assistant to the pastor, Father John Mosimann. "I love to hear that," she said.

The imperative of Matthew 25:35 ("for I was hungry ... ") inspires a response.

With grocery and especially turkey prices much higher than last year, Thanksgiving food collections are meeting urgent needs throughout the diocese.

Knights of Columbus councils at St. Andrew the Apostle Church (Clifton), St. Clare of Assisi Church (Clifton), and St. Jude Syro-Malabar Church (Chantilly) packed 235 Thanksgiving meal boxes — an estimated 6,000 pounds of food — for a Nov. 19 distribution through Western Fairfax Christian Ministries. Monetary donations partially benefited the St. Lucy Food Project.

The Thanksgiving Dinner Drive at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Vienna aims to support 360 families in seven different Fairfax County Public Schools, and families identified through St. Vincent de Paul. Organizers at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Arlington worked to distribute approximately 800 Thanksgiving dinners Nov. 21.

And Christ House in Alexandria, assisted by multiple parishes and groups, distributed nearly 150 turkeys, as well as meal kits, treats, and hats, mittens, and gloves. "You can see their smiles when they receive those food boxes," said La Sallette Sister Aniliza (Annie) P. Juan, volunteer coordinator. "We want all our clients to experience the spirit of Thanksgiving." †

? How can you help?

Learn how to help Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) at ccda.net/helpimmigrantsandrefugees.

CHRISTMAS tells you in your solitude:

Trust your surroundings,
they are not emptiness;
Let go and you will find;
Renounce and you will be rich.

KARL RAHNER

That first Christmas, Mary and Joseph had to trust and let go of their plans.

They had to accept challenges and overcome life experiences they did not expect, including a pregnancy and having to leave the security of their home. The amazing child that was entrusted to them became the greatest gift ever given.

A helpless infant came into the world, born in a stable in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. It was not emptiness. It was the incarnation!

In the midst of winter, we celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world. There are times when the world can be a dark and difficult place for the poor, refugees, pregnant women, the homeless, the sick, the elderly and imprisoned.

The support we give Catholic Charities transforms that experience into a place of hope, support, community, friendships, and new life, recognizing the gift of each person. In Catholic Charities those who we serve learn to trust their surroundings again. It is not emptiness.

A sacrificial gift to Catholic Charities brings light into our world this winter season. "Let go and you will find. Renounce and you will be rich."

Love and blessings,



Fr. Bob Cilinski
FATHER ROBERT CILINSKI
Episcopal Vicar for
Charitable Works

Rejoice

Catholic Charities Ball 2023

Since 1982, the Catholic Charities Ball has been a volunteer-led effort and annual winter tradition in the diocese – a beautiful evening dedicated to celebrating the work of Catholic Charities and raising the critical funds needed to serve the poor, protect the vulnerable and welcome the newcomer.

We hope that you will join us on Friday, February 10, 2023, to gather, rejoice, and celebrate. The great work of Catholic Charities is only possible thanks to the generosity of our donors and volunteers.



– Join Us on Friday, February 10, 2023 –

“Fifteen years ago, while pregnant with my first child, I began volunteering for the Catholic Charities Ball, and it came full circle this past year when that baby was old enough to volunteer with me again. It was so wonderful to have my daughter by my side for the 2022 Ball. I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside the amazing volunteers, who are supportive, caring, and have played a part in building a worthy tradition for my family. The Catholic Charities Ball, through its generous donors and fundraising efforts, allows Catholic Charities’ ministries to considerably serve our community, and I am blessed to be a part of it.”

RACHEL MURDOCK | 2023 BALL CO-CHAIR

“I am extremely grateful to have been invited to participate in the 2023 Catholic Charities Ball. This is an amazing opportunity to give back to an organization that provides so much to everyone in need. I am seeing first hand all the sacrifice and effort of those who contribute their time to Catholic Charities and the Ball. Through the generosity of so many, Catholic Charities is able to provide for the less fortunate in this community.”

CARMEN TRUJILLO | 2023 BALL CO-CHAIR



Please visit ccda.net/ball, or scan the code, to make a reservation or to donate to help us meet our goal of \$1.2 million.

EA distributes cards to help families with Thanksgiving feast



A happy mother picking up gift cards before going to work.

THANKSGIVING IS A BOUNTIFUL feast of plenty. But for vulnerable families in our diocese struggling to pay their rent, keep the lights on, and afford gas to get to work, the holiday presented additional stress.

Year-round Emergency Assistance ministry works to reduce the financial burden on struggling families. But the rising costs of food and gas, coupled with reduced work hours, made putting on a family thanksgiving meal particularly difficult.

In the week before Thanksgiving, EA invited clients to Christ House in Alexandria for a special distribution of grocery cards and gas cards to help lighten the load. Seventy-eight people, representing 21 families, received \$1,050 in grocery cards and \$525 in gas cards.

“Especially this year due to the high cost of food, gas and clothing, our clients are not able to buy anything

“Thank you for providing these cards. Food is so expensive now!” – A RECIPIENT

extra for their family,” said EA ministry director Sherri Longhill. “We hope these gift cards will bring a little joy into their lives.”

A similar distribution took place Thanksgiving week at Loudoun Regional Office in Sterling.

“Thank you for providing these cards,” one recipient said. “Food is so expensive now!”

“Thank you for thinking of my family,” another client told our caseworker. †

Teamwork makes *dream work*



Faramarz (left), an electrical engineer, recently arrived from Ukraine. He came with his wife (an IT professional) and three-year-old daughter. Both of them were among the people who had the opportunity for resume help and career guidance from Accenture staff (right).

Our thanks to Accenture and 1 Journey Festival for volunteering their time and providing some ace job mentoring. They joined our Migration and Refugee Services staff and helped our refugee clients, including three Ukrainian doctors, develop U.S. style resumes, LinkedIn profiles and career guidance that will enable them and their families to thrive!



To learn more about our volunteer opportunities and ways to get involved.

Please visit volunteer.ccca.net or email Debra Beard at debra.beard@ccca.net. We welcome inquiries from individuals and families, as well as from groups such as churches, companies, or fraternal organizations.



Senior student leaders from Bishop O'Connell High in Arlington load boxes of soup cans onto the truck. (Mary Frances Vorbach | COURTESY)

Soup-er start to the school year

BY JOHN AGTARAP, STUDENT CORRESPONDENT | A longer version of this story appeared in *The Arlington Catholic Herald*. Reprinted with permission.

AT THE START OF EVERY SCHOOL year since 1975, students from Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington come together in a two-week Catholic Charities soup drive campaign to fill the empty pantries of soup kitchens across the Arlington diocese.

For 10 days last month, O'Connell students, led by the student council team, provided more than 14,000 cans of hearty soup to five local food banks: the St. Lucy Food Project in Manassas, Christ House in Alexandria, Healthy Harvest in the Northern Neck, East End Mobile Park in Manassas, and Alive! Food Program in Alexandria.

"Thank you again for all your support with the planning and execution of the soup drive," said Lori Sitka, outreach specialist for diocesan Catholic Charities St. Lucy Food Project. "The student's generosity and love has

impacted many within our diocese over the years and we're grateful for your partnership."

To encourage the students' love of generosity and to inspire a little competition among the student homerooms, the student council leaders provide incentives. This year, the winning advisories (the homerooms with the most number of cans donated) received donut breakfasts. A senior advisory alone brought in just under 2,000 cans of soup, leading the way for the senior class whose contributions made up almost half of all the soup donations with nearly 7,000 cans.

"It was amazing to see the coming together of our student body," said Jack Sague, SCA president.

"Even more amazing, was watching the soup totals grow into the thousands

on the very last day of the soup drive," said Mia Young, vice president. "It was a historic win by the senior class in an effort to feed so many."

The Catholic Charities soup drive concluded with a living rosary on McMurtrie Field. Students, faculty and administrators gathered to form the beads of the rosary as O'Connell chaplain, Father Peter M. McShurley, led the student body in prayer.

"Seeing all the students gathered in prayer symbolizes the good O'Connell students can do and are capable of as thoughtful members of our school and community," said Thomas Glynn, student council moderator. Shelby Downer, SCA class treasurer, and Olivia Mann, SCA secretary, agreed, "It was so great to see everyone working together and supporting each other for such a great event." †

Thank you to all our volunteers!

In every newsletter, we like to introduce you to one or two volunteers. But we'll never get to them all! So we'd think to say a big thank you to all those who give so selflessly of their time to help serve the poor, protect the vulnerable, and welcome the newcomer in the Diocese of Arlington.



Clockwise from top left: Christine and Richard Payne delivered pies to Sr. Annie at Christ House; The Foos family volunteered at the St. Lucy Food Project warehouse; For his Eagle Scout Project, Matthew Sayers repurposed laptops for clients; Chef Sergio Mueller has been volunteering to cook the Christ House Thanksgiving dinner for the last 27 years along with his wife Deb (not pictured). He was joined by President and CEO Stephen Carattini and other volunteers to serve around 110 meals.



To learn more about ways to get involved, visit volunteer.ccca.net or email Debra Beard at debra.beard@ccca.net.

Catholic Charities never stops serving the poor

On the Church's annual World Day of the Poor Bishop Michael Burbidge urged parishioners to "walk in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are poor and lift their needs in prayer, especially at Mass." He also encouraged them to embrace opportunities to share time and treasure, through their own initiatives, or through parish ministries or Catholic Charities "which seek to serve and accompany the poor in our diocese every day of the year."

Last year, Catholic Charities provided \$7.2 million in assistance for food, rent, utility, medical and refugee assistance throughout the diocese. It provided \$2.6 million in food to families throughout the 21 counties and seven cities through its St. Lucy Food Project, which collects food from parishes and community groups and distributes it to Catholic Charities and community pantries.

It continues to provide safe housing and workforce development to homeless men at Christ House and to homeless mothers who live with their children at St. Margaret of Cortona.

Pregnancy and adoption services are offered to mothers in unexpected or crisis pregnancies or families seeking to adopt; free medical care is available to adults with no or little health insurance at the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinics in Manassas and Woodbridge; mental health counseling is available on a sliding scale to individuals, couples and families at Catholic Charities offices and some parishes throughout the diocese; education and training is offered to newcomers and others, and vulnerable seniors at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center are welcomed and accompanied.

With God's grace and your ongoing prayers, volunteer time and support, we will never stop serving those in need.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUNDS ENABLED



2,121 NEIGHBORS

TO AVOID EVICTION OR UTILITY CUTOFFS OR HELPED WITH CRITICAL CAR REPAIRS.

"Sometimes asking is hard because some of us have just been shut down so many times. There are organizations like Catholic Charities, that will just help you without judgment, which is the best thing – and offer you prayer all at the same time."

– SERENA WILLIS, Single Mother from Alexandria

12,311 FREE MEALS



WERE SERVED TO HOMELESS AND HUNGRY INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AT CHRIST HOUSE.

1,244

RESETTLED MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, AND ASSISTED AN ADDITIONAL



2,000

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES*.

THE ST. LUCY FOOD PROJECT FULFILLED

49,394 REQUESTS

FOR ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTING OVER

1.7 MILLION



Workplace Giving

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington's CFC number is #24770

The CFC also allows:

- You to pledge volunteer hours to help Catholic Charities serve clients each year; and
- Federal retirees to make a recurring donation by deduction from their annuity.

Please remember to check "YES" to share your pledge information so we can keep you updated on the impact of your gift.

Thank you for your generous support of our work.



200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22203

Join Our Online Community



ccda.net

Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.