



# The Mission

CATHOLIC CHARITIES • Diocese of Arlington

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

## Children and Charity...

### Connecting the Dots Through *We Care Week*

**H**ow do we engage our children in understanding the application of our faith in a real-world setting? When children sign up for a school-wide charity drive, how do parents connect the dots for them between the act of buying food or donating and the families in need that eventually receive this aid?

St. John Paul the Great High School connected those dots for students during its *We Care Week* fundraiser for Catholic Charities.

Sr. Ann Dominic Mahowald, Chair of the Religion Department at St. John Paul the Great, organized an interactive *We Care Week* to promote student understanding of service and charity. Below the words “Light the Way to Bethlehem,” service cards on garland lined the path to the chapel in the school’s main hall. Each service card listed an activity that fell under one of the four Dominican Pillars: **Community, Service, Prayer, and Study.**

Different activities were given virtual dollar values – matched by donors – that corresponded to an activity’s level of effort. For example, under “Service,” one card read: *Tutor someone who needs help for 15-30 minutes and do not count it toward service hours. Just help because you can and know that sharing your gifts will give glory to God.* The corresponding value was \$1. Under “Community,” the \$5 card read: *Write a letter of encouragement or a thank-you letter to a specific branch of Catholic Charities.*

Students had tangible action items from which to understand how charity goes beyond simply donating money or material goods. “We want our students to know and understand what cause they are supporting; to know that Catholic Charities is involved in so many ways in their



**Jeffrey Ackiss, Sr. Ann Dominic, and Katie Yates in front of the service cards at St. John Paul the Great High School.**

Diocese,” said Amy Thomason, Director of Advancement at St. John Paul the Great High School.

When asked about serving others, senior Jeffrey Ackiss said, “It allows me to step outside of myself and give of myself to others.” Ackiss participated in several service card activities as a result of the school’s promotion of *We Care Week* this year.

Charity is an experience of the heart that echoes Christ’s Heart and His desire that we “give of ourselves to others” – that we step outside of our comfort zones and encounter others in service. St. John Paul the Great High School raised money for Catholic Charities, but the real impact was in the different avenues in which students were able to serve and encounter Christ.

## ● PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**D**ear Friends,  
A lot of change has occurred this year but God's call that we continue to serve the most vulnerable among us has not changed.

The theme of this **The Mission** emphasizes how crucial parish and school partnerships are for the transformation of those we serve. The parish is the lifeblood that sustains the Heart of the Church and provides all the essential resources to enliven the community.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington is grounded in the local community and reliant on the initiative of active volunteers, the generosity of donors, and the spiritual guidance of our religious brothers and sisters.

On page 1, learn from one of the many schools that is engaging our youth in service.

On pages 4 & 5, learn how our Prison Ministry has grown through a dedicated group of volunteers, and understand the stories that drive that initiative. Additionally on page 7, we see how parishes and schools are helping us feed the hungry.

Learn how to advocate for adoption as an option on page 3, and how we are enhancing the life of our senior citizens as well on page 6. Lastly, see how parish involvement has expanded our mental health reach throughout the diocese.

It is through the involvement of parishes, pastors, engaged individuals and businesses that Catholic Charities is able to transform so many lives and encounter Christ.



May God bless you,

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



**Art Bennett, President & CEO,**  
shares with St. John Paul the Great  
students the value of our Catholic  
Charities programs.

### *Did You Know?*

Conducted under the leadership of the Catholic Charities Ball Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Catholic Diocese of Arlington's Office of Schools, **We Care Week** is diocesan-wide and over 30 schools participated this year! Diocesan Catholic Schools students learned about ways to transform lives and raised \$32,000 to support CCDA programs.



## ● PREGNANCY AND ADOPTION SERVICES

### Advocating Adoption as an Option

Over 800,000 people participated in this year's March for Life. Many carried signs advocating for adoption, with messages such as "Adoption is an Option!" How can we be strong advocates every day?

First, understand the language surrounding adoption. Adoption is an emotional process for any party involved, and words not only convey facts, but evoke feelings as well. The goal is to convey empathy and compassion when speaking about adoption. Phrases like "real parent" and "unwanted pregnancy" should be replaced with the more accurate and respectful terms "birth parent" and "unintended pregnancy." "No child is unwanted. We believe every child of God is wanted," remarked Kim Harrell, Director of Pregnancy and Adoption Support. We can reflect the dignity of all life in the language we use when advocating for life.

Second, adoption is an empowering option for women. Creating an adoption plan allows the mother to make positive decisions for her child's life and well-being. Birth parents have a lot of control with their adoption process. They are able to choose the adoptive family for their child and in most cases meet the adoptive family before the child is born.

"I've always known and it's been a pretty special journey," said Fr. Breshnahan, chaplain at Bishop Ireton High School, on his own adoption and birth mother. "I've always known her and she's always been a big part of my life and gratefully there was never any tension. I think you always hear people who are afraid, but that was never really the case with us."

In addition to advocating for adoption, you can support your local crisis pregnancy centers and pregnant



Women hold up signs advocating for adoption at the 2017 March for Life. Source: Getty Images

mothers in crisis through the Diocesan-wide Gabriel Project. Also provide prayerful support for the many birth parents, adoptive parents, and adopted children in our Diocese. Remember, Catholic Charities is there every step of the way.

"God is here and you see that in everything that we do. In our placements, everyone feels like a little miracle," Kim Harrell reminds us.



### GET INVOLVED!

Want to learn more about Pregnancy and Adoption support? Check out [www.centerforadoptionsservices.org](http://www.centerforadoptionsservices.org). Interested in supporting pregnant mothers through the Gabriel Project? Contact [GabrielProject@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:GabrielProject@arlingtondiocese.org).

Adoptive parents embrace their new baby, one of 28 placed by CCDA in 2016.

## ● PARISH PARTNERSHIPS – *Prison Ministry*

### Parishioners at St. John the Apostle Help Ex-Offenders Make a New Start

A former prison inmate was dropped off at a Metro station in Northern Virginia upon his release. He had no money for a Metro card. He also did not have a place to stay. Once he found a local shelter, he had to walk miles to get to the probation office, Social Security office, and places where he could apply for work.

Transportation, shelter, food: These are the immediate needs faced by many ex-offenders in our Diocese upon release from prison. Most county jails will release them back to family members or friends and create re-entry “home plans.” But what if you do not have that support network?

Some former inmates are now able to turn to those who have been providing mentorship and spiritual guidance along the way. **Catholic Charities Prison Ministry** volunteers working out of St. John the Apostle Parish in Leesburg saw the challenges men and women faced upon release. They created the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) with the unofficial tagline *“a couple of Catholics and a jalopy!”*

Since 2015, TAP has assisted 39 individuals released from the Loudoun County Adult Detention Center. The pace of assisting released inmates has increased over time as the word has spread. Inmates interview with Deacon Larry Hammel and are accepted into the program based on their level of need.

At the very least, TAP ensures that someone is there to meet the ex-offender at the gate upon his or her release, share a meal and prayer, and get them to their place of relocation or to a bus or train to take them there. TAP can also provide a more extensive re-entry plan that arranges for reunification with family, and supports trips



**TAP volunteers meet monthly to discuss how best to help recently released prisoners.**

to post-release appointments at the probation office and clinic. TAP also introduces them to a support agent at a local Church, and assures that the ex-offender will have food, clothing and shelter. TAP strives to place ex-offenders into an environment supportive of a successful re-entry into the community.

“I believe St. Theresa of Calcutta said, ‘I see Jesus in every human being.’ This ministry has helped me to begin to understand what that means,” said Don Dei, a prison ministry volunteer involved with TAP.

#### **How can you help?**

Time and treasure. The prison ministry program continues to need new volunteers—particularly those who have time to help with the re-entry of inmates selected for TAP assistance. TAP has been blessed to have St. John the Apostle Parish (and its parishioners) generously provide the material needs of TAP clients, ranging from clothing and gift cards, to monetary support for shelter and transportation. Without the support of St. John parish ministries, Catholic Charities, other charitable organizations and local government agencies, TAP would be unable to do the work that they do.

Want to donate or get more information on Prison Ministry and TAP? Contact Sally O’Dwyer at [sodwyer@ccda.net](mailto:sodwyer@ccda.net).



**St. Ann 6th and 7th grade Religious Education Students help pack “Welcome Back” backpacks for ex-offenders being assisted by TAP.**

#### **Did You Know?**

A Vera Institute study found that 50 out of 66 inmates re-entered the community alone.



## ● PRISON MINISTRY

### Providing Spiritual Friendship – By Bill Hall, Prison Ministry Volunteer

Early in advent I got a Christmas card from Tim, who is serving two life sentences in the Virginia state prison system. I always see Tim when I visit the state prison. As we enter and make our way to the gymnasium, we go down a long, narrow, gray hallway through several metal doors with big bars that clang into place behind us. Tim will come out of a side room and greet us with a big smile. “Thanks for coming to see me. May God bless you.”

Tim’s card told me how knowing Christ and performing his ministry of writing to youth at risk led him closer to Christ and gave him joy in knowing that he was helping save teenagers from trouble with the law by showing them his Savior Jesus. He wished me the same joy in my prison ministry.

A few days before Christmas, I got a card from Mika. Mika teaches Catholic religious education at one of our state prisons. He thanked me for taking the time on my last visit to talk to one of his young confirmation students. Then he described the celebration of the confirmation Mass for the men who were recently confirmed. This is Mika’s 32nd year of incarceration.

I was starting to learn that **true joy** comes from knowing Christ and living in His kingdom, but I had one more visit to make and lesson to learn. About a year ago, we started a new prison ministry at one of our local jails. Charlie was the only regular attendee at the services. Sometimes one or two others might show up with him. I had not been to a service at that jail for over a month. When I went at Epiphany, ten men were sitting around the table waiting to read scripture and talk about Christ. Charlie said he was waiting for me to return so that he could introduce me to the friends he’d brought with him. Sitting in that sterile room around a stark white table in molded plastic



chairs, Christ showed me that true joy can only be found by following Him.

*Prison Ministry in the Diocese of Arlington is a pastoral care ministry whereby the Christian Community shares in the healing ministry of Christ. It is a ministry of presence and witness. Prison Ministry is facilitated through a network of parish-based volunteers from throughout the diocese who offer spiritual and emotional assistance to the imprisoned, including those who are being released, and to their victims and families.*



#### GET INVOLVED!

Bill Hall, pictured below, is the Catholic Charities Coordinator of Prison Ministry. He can provide details regarding locations, times, opportunities, and the application process for volunteering inside the jails and prisons. Please contact him at [whall@ccda.net](mailto:whall@ccda.net) or call him at (703) 841-3832.



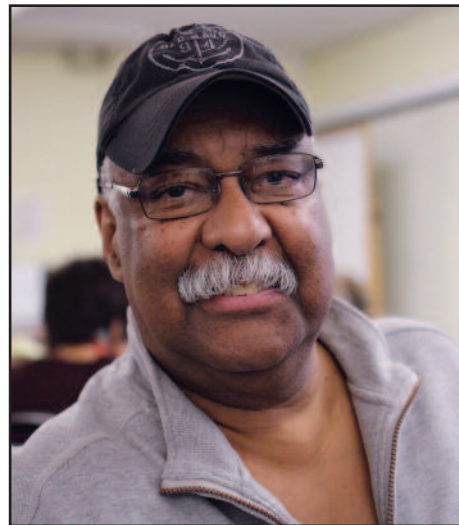
● **PARISH PARTNERSHIPS – Senior Services**

**Finding Camaraderie, New Friendships, and Interesting Activities**

Frank is a history-loving, world-traveling, compassionate participant at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center. “It is important to not be reclusive,” he reflected. “When you’re not working and you are living alone, you need to socialize and not lose those human skills.”

He mentioned how he finds camaraderie, new friendships, and interesting activities when he comes to St. Martin’s. “And they ask nothing in return. Just that we act with decency toward one another.”

Fighting loneliness and isolation are common struggles for seniors and retirees. Whether family members are working or not involved, it can be easy to just stay at home. Alone. Coming to St. Martin’s is “life-saving, or at least life-extending.” Frank remarked. He then pointed across the table to another gentleman. “He’s 95, about to turn 96, and he gets up to dance the merengue with me!” Frank gestured



**Frank shares about how Catholic Charities has brought him energy and life.**

to the over 50 participants there that particular day. “This place brings energy and life back into you. We are not withering away here!”

Humans are social beings. We need interaction and support to reinforce our dignity as human beings and purpose in this world. St. Martin de Porres Senior Center continues to provide that dignity to participants each and every day.

Contact Ann Coyne at [acoyn@ccda.net](mailto:acoyn@ccda.net) for more information on the St. Martin de Porres Senior Center.



**GET INVOLVED!**

*Be present to listen to their stories, lead activities, and serve meals to the participants at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center. Learn more:*

[www.ccda.net/programs\\_elderly.php](http://www.ccda.net/programs_elderly.php)

● **PARISH PARTNERSHIPS – Family Services**

**Pastors Privatize Mental Health Needs of Their Parishes**



Parishes throughout our Diocese have opened their doors to Catholic Charities therapists to provide counseling for parishioners and clients in the local area. Thanks to the generous support of these pastors and parishes, Catholic Charities Family Services has been able to expand to 14 parish-based locations around the Diocese.

“These varied locations enable us to better serve the poor of mind, body, and spirit, by travelling to where the mental health needs are greatest,” says psychologist Michael Horne, Director of Family Services. “We are making a major contribution to the culture of life by increasing accessibility to high-quality, affordable mental health care that is grounded in the teachings of the

Catholic Church on the dignity and nature of the human person.”

“We are so pleased to have Doctor Bond with us one day each week. We have long seen a need for Catholic counseling services here in Ashburn and are happy to share some of our space each week to make this ‘partnership’ a reality. The parishioners who have benefited from the service are most pleased as well,” says Fr. Guest, pastor at St. Theresa Catholic Church.

The map illustrates the parishes in our Diocese that have a therapist available at least one day a week. Those in blue are proposed parish sites.

For more information on the Family Services Counseling program, contact Dr. Michael Horne at [mhorne@ccda.net](mailto:mhorne@ccda.net).



● **ST. LUCY PROJECT**

**Honor Roll of Parishes!**



**Bishop O'Connell students help deliver food from their annual canned soup drive (left).**

**St. Katherine Drexel parishioners collecting St. Lucy Project blue bags of food (below).**



**T**hese parishes have given in a variety of ways, including parish-wide food drives, school food drives, and youth and young adult service projects. Thank you to all parishes who continue to support the St. Lucy Project in feeding the hungry!



**GET INVOLVED!**

*Sign up today to become a Catholic Charities volunteer!*

*Visit [www.cdda.net](http://www.cdda.net) and click the volunteer button on the right side of the page. You can:*

- *Help homeless men at Christ House find jobs*
- *Lead activities for children living at St. Margaret of Cortona Family Transformational Housing*
- *Serve breakfast to the elderly or lead activities at the St. Martin de Porres Senior Center*
- *Teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for Hogar Immigrant Services or Migration and Refugee Services*
- *Guide the unemployed or underemployed as they find meaningful jobs through Christians Are Networking*
- *Support us as an office receptionist*

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| † All Saints                   | † St. John the Apostle   |
| † Blessed Sacrament            | † St. John the Baptist   |
| † Cathedral of St. Thomas More | † St. John Neumann       |
| † Church of the Nativity       | † St. Joseph, Alexandria |
| † Good Shepherd                | † St. Joseph, Herndon    |
| † Holy Family                  | † St. Jude               |
| † Holy Spirit                  | † St. Katharine Drexel   |
| † Holy Trinity                 | † St. Leo the Great      |
| † Our Lady of Hope             | † St. Louis              |
| † Our Lady of Lourdes          | † St. Luke               |
| † Our Lady, Queen of Peace     | † St. Mark               |
| † St. Ambrose                  | † St. Mary               |
| † St. Ann                      | † St. Mary of Sorrows    |
| † St. Bernadette               | † St. Rita               |
| † St. Catherine of Siena       | † St. Theresa            |
| † St. Elizabeth Ann Seton      | † St. Veronica           |
| † St. Francis de Sales         | † St. William of York    |
| † St. James                    |                          |

**Get your parish involved!** Contact Patricia Kuntz, Outreach Specialist, at [pkuntz@cdda.net](mailto:pkuntz@cdda.net).



# 35th Catholic Charities Ball

February 24, 2017: The 35th *Catholic Charities Ball - Together, Uplifting Families*, provided a sparkling evening of elegant fare, entertainment and esprit de corps while providing close to \$1,000,000 in critical program funding. The Ball was organized by more than 75 dedicated volunteers and staff.

Serving as **Ball Advisory Chairs** were **Mrs. Louise Kugler** and **Mrs. Olga Portell**. Virginia real estate development magnate, **Mr. Giuseppe Cecchi**, President and CEO of **The IDI Group Companies**, and his wife **Mercedes** served as **Honorary Chairs**. Long-time supporters of Catholic Charities and diocesan Catholic School Education, the Cecchis are generous and prolific philanthropists. *"I have earned more than I need to live happily," he says. "I have to share it."*

**Special Gifts Chairs** were **Mr. Vincent A. Sheehy, IV**, President and CEO of **Sheehy Auto Stores** and his wife **Mimi**. Like the Cecchis, multiple generations of the Sheehy family have provided leadership in supporting Catholic Charities and other worthy regional nonprofits. Vince and Mimi served as beacons in guiding like-minded leaders and their families to join them in impacting the common good by supporting the work of Catholic Charities across its 21-county service area.



Mercedes and Giuseppe Cecchi, the first Honorary Chairs of the Catholic Charities Ball, are welcomed by Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington.

Photo courtesy of Jenifer Morris Photography



Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington, and Art Bennett, CCD A President & CEO, present Ann and Joseph Guiffre with the James J. Matthews Legacy Award.

Photo courtesy of Jenifer Morris Photography



Rev. Edward C. Hathaway, Pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church in Alexandria, is joined by parishioners Paul Stevens, Elena Otero-Bigg, and Mary Petrino as the parish is honored with the Bishop Paul Stephen Loverde Legacy Award.

Photo courtesy of Jenifer Morris Photography



Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington, with guests at the Inaugural Young Adult Reception.

Photo courtesy of Natalie J. Plumb

CCDA Ball Advisory Committee member Julie Theobald with VP and Director of Volunteers Sally O'Dwyer and CCD A Board member Robert Smith.

Photo courtesy of Natalie J. Plumb



## 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

We are a Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) workplace giving organizational participant with # 24770.