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Bishop Michael F. Burbidge distributes backpacks at Christ House in Alexandria

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Catholic Charities Distributes More Than 500 Backpacks This Year

ARTICLE AND PHOTO BY ELIZABETH A. ELLIOTT | CATHOLIC HERALD STAFF WRITER

FOR MANY FAMILIES, sending their children back to school means more expenses that might take away from the food budget or other necessities.

Catholic Charities' Christ House in Alexandria and Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) in Arlington, Fredericksburg and Manassas have distributed more than 500 backpacks and school supplies to students who need a little help getting ready for the school year.

CHRIST HOUSE

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge visited the fourth annual Christ House backpack

distribution Aug. 23. He opened the morning with a prayer for students and parents then presented each student with a new backpack. Students also received a \$20 gift certificate from Rack Room Shoes to purchase a new pair of shoes for school.

Eighty-four families were assisted, with 200 children receiving backpacks. More than 100 lunch boxes, stuffed with prayer cards, were also given to pre-K through fifth-graders.

The supplies were donated by Christ House volunteers, Ladies of Virginia

(Knights of Columbus' wives of the State of Virginia), Decipher Technology Studios, Catholic Daughters and Junior Daughters, and St. Vincent de Paul Society of the Basilica of St. Mary in Alexandria.

The families who received backpacks at the Christ House event are clients of our Emergency Assistance Program, St. Lucy Program, and friends of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES (MRS)

For more than 10 years, MRS has distributed backpacks annually, with St.

→ *continued on page 5*

President's Message

Dear Friends in Christ,

As summer ends and our busy fall schedules pick up, we are grateful for the opportunities to serve those most in need and for the partnership with the parishes in our diocese.

In The Mission you'll read about a great event at our Christ House where, thanks to the generosity of several partner ministries, and Bishop Burbidge handing out backpacks to needy students, we doubled the number of backpacks to 200 and distributed new-shoe gift cards to get students ready to succeed this school year. Our Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) also sponsored four backpack distributions to young refugee students. The backpacks were donated by The Church of the Nativity, Burke and St. Mary of Sorrows, Fairfax. This support allowed even more students to start their school year on the right foot. We all know how important succeeding in school is to break the cycle of poverty and these kids and parents were ready to go. Overall we helped 500 students.

You'll also see how our St. Lucy Food Project Fall Harvest allows us to distribute more nonperishable and perishable food. A special thank you to the 18 parishes who so far have committed to hosting food drives over the next three months. When this food is provided, we team with the Knights of Columbus to get the food to where it's needed: in our rural pantries from the Northern Neck to the Shenandoah Valley. What a tremendous difference food on the table means to those suffering in our diocese. And of course, the food is just the start of transformation: we can then help them with our other critical services like counseling, jobs, English-skills, legal support and help with utilities and rent.

And how exciting to see the corporate partnerships which allow their staff to sacrifice their personal time to assist with resume writing and job acquisition, or pantry shelf stocking and serving the Christ House Evening meal. Do you own or work for a company that wants to partner with Catholic Charities? Contact Debra Beard, our Volunteer Director at 703 841-3838 or Debra.Beard@ccda.net. Working together we can transform the lives of others.

Catholic Charities' mission is to make God's loving presence known to everyone in need. Please help us serve and show God's love to our vulnerable neighbors. Visit our website (www.ccda.net) to learn about several upcoming events and opportunities, like the Retreat for the Seriously Ill. Become one of our almost 4,000 volunteers serving the poor through our 20 programs, including Christians Are Networking (CAN) volunteers (story within), participate in this year's Giving Tuesday on December 3, or attend the Catholic Charities Ball on February 7, 2020. Working together we can continue to bring the love of Christ to transform the lives of the poor and vulnerable in our Diocese.



Sincerely in Christ,

Art Bennett

ART BENNETT
President and CEO
Catholic Charities of the
Diocese of Arlington



Upcoming Events

SEPT
29

World Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees
Various locations

OCT
4-6

Retreat for the Seriously Ill
White Post, VA

OCT
17

Open House for Priests and Parish Staff
Alexandria and Manassas Catholic Charities locations

NOV
6

Building a Parish Response to the Opioid Epidemic
6:30-8:00 PM at St. Bernadette in Springfield, VA

NOV
14

Open House for Priests and Parish Staff
Alexandria and Manassas Catholic Charities locations

NOV
17

World Day of the Poor
Various parish and Catholic Charities locations

DEC
3

#GivingTuesday
Make your gift at ccda.net/donate

DEC
7-8

Parish Christmas Collection
Mark your calendar!

FEB
7

Catholic Charities 38th Annual Ball
Save the date!

Retreat for the Seriously Ill

The first weekend in October, individuals living with serious illnesses are invited to Catholic Charities fall retreat at the diocesan San Damiano Spiritual Life Center. The July 12 – 14 retreat was a wonderful experience for all those involved, including caretakers.

Bishop Michael Burbidge will celebrate the opening Mass at the **October 4 – 6** retreat. The theme for the retreat is taken from Joshua 1:9: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged. The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

The three days of prayer and silence are donor-funded and offered at no cost to retreatants. The retreat offers a unique opportunity for persons who face serious physical illness to come away for a weekend of spiritual renewal with Jesus Christ. The schedule includes prayer, talks by priest directors, celebration of the liturgy, and ample periods of rest. Health care professionals are present for the weekend to ensure retreat-goers medical needs are met.

Please tell a friend!



Learn more at ccda.net or call (703) 335-2779 and dial option "9." Volunteers needed include nurses, physicians, or others. To register as a volunteer or retreatant, please email retreat@ccda.net

ST. LUCY FOOD PROJECT

Fall Harvest

THE FALL HARVEST FOOD COLLECTION brings heightened awareness that the poor can be invisible and are in need of food. This tradition started with Christ House on Wheels (CHOW) back in 2007.

Fall Harvest runs from September through December and is The St. Lucy Food Project's busiest time of the year. We average 130,000 pounds during the season with about 20 parishes participating. We are so grateful for the support of schools donating during this time, particularly, Bishop O'Connell that donates over 20,000 pounds of soup. We welcome any parish or school that would like to participate, especially in early December when the donations drop significantly.

Because it is such a huge event, we also need many volunteers coming to the warehouse to unload the trucks, and sort and pack the food for delivery. This year we have increased opportunities to go to a farm to glean fresh produce which will be brought back to refrigeration in our Manassas Warehouse for distribution within 48 hours. If you would like to volunteer, please visit www.ccda.net and click on volunteer to sign up. We are in need of drivers, and warehouse helpers, not only on the weekends, but during the week as well. You can also call 703-479-2975, Ext. 100, and speak with Elizabeth Gibbons, our volunteer coordinator.

The St. Lucy Food Project appreciates everyone's effort to feed the nearly 200,000 Food Insecure in the Diocese (with 40% of them being children) during the Fall Harvest. We are able to supply so many pantries during the Holiday Season and into January. †

FOOD ITEMS NEEDED*

- 1 Peanut Butter & 2 Jelly
 - Cooking Oil
 - Pasta and Side Dishes
 - Pasta Sauce
 - Rice and Grains: 5lb. bags or less
 - Canned Meat and Fish
 - Canned Veggies and Fruit
 - Cereal and Oatmeal
 - Canned Pasta
 - Healthy Juice
 - Other non-perishable item you wish to donate
- *No glass items, please.*

CURRENT FOOD DRIVE SCHEDULE

September

- 8 St. Clare of Assisi, Clifton
- 15 Good Shepherd, Mt. Vernon; Precious Blood, Culpeper; Christ the Redeemer, Sterling
- 22 St. James, Falls Church; St. John the Apostle, Leesburg
- 29 Holy Trinity, Gainesville; St. Ann, Arlington

October

- 6 Holy Family, Dale City; St. Stephen the Martyr, Middleburg; St. Katherine Drexel, Haymarket
- 13 All Saints, Manassas
- 20 Good Shepherd; St. Catherine of Siena, Great Falls
- 27 St. Ambrose, Annandale; St. Louis, Alexandria

November

- 3 St. Luke, McLean
- 13 St. William of York, Stafford
- 17 Good Shepherd; St. Mary of Sorrows, Fairfax; St. Joseph, Herndon

Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services

Deloitte Impact Day

THIS SUMMER, DELOITTE, a worldwide accounting and professional services network, partnered with Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) to help refugee clients learn skills and tips for finding good jobs and achieving self-sufficiency. The partnership, now in its second year, was part of the company's 20-year celebration of "Impact Day," to show the company's year-round commitment to volunteering in local communities.

In early June Deloitte's 30 volunteers arrived to assist 40 clients in a daylong employment services workshop. **Several Deloitte volunteers explained their desire to help newcomers as they themselves were once refugees or children of immigrants and well familiar with the challenges newcomers face.** A Deloitte volunteer from Afghanistan said she and her family were resettled by Catholic Charities in Boston and she wanted to give back.

To get the day started MRS staff introduced Deloitte volunteers to our organization and programs and explained MRS' role in the resettlement process. That includes meeting clients at the airport, helping them find homes and assisting them in finding jobs and – within a short, clearly defined window of time – gain self-sufficiency.

Many of our clients hold special immigrant visas (or SIVs) because they assisted American troops or the U.S. government in Afghanistan. These clients have years of professional experience and advanced degrees from their home country.

Provided with this background, Deloitte volunteers created an "Interview 101" presentation and tip sheets for writing résumés, cover letters, and creating LinkedIn profiles to help these clients adjust to the U.S. workforce and look for jobs. Deloitte volunteers also prepared career pathway guides for engineers, IT professionals and accountants to help



those with professional degrees. The advice and guidance were invaluable for clients as each left the event better prepared to enter and advance in the workforce.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

on how your company or business can connect, please contact MRS Volunteer Manager, Emily Wood, emily.wood@ccda.net or 703-851-6388

Prospect Waterproofing, Co., Sterling, VA

MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES (MRS) also extends its gratitude to Prospect Waterproofing for providing opportunities for newly arrived clients. Several MRS clients have been offered full-time job opportunities with Prospect, including an engineer from Egypt placed in a position paying \$21/hr. with full benefits.

Obtaining their first job in the U.S. can be a challenge for many refugees. Prospect has made the referral process seamless and very efficient. This is key for achieving early self-sufficiency for refugee arrivals. President of Prospect, Jim Stamer, and his team hire newcomers to give them an opportunity. The Prospect team wants to give anyone a chance with the right attitude and a willingness to learn.

To date, Prospect has employed over 15 clients in a range of positions in the warehouse, service department, metal shop, and truck driving.

TO LEARN HOW your company can benefit from great MRS referrals, please contact Laurel Collins, Associate Director for Self-Sufficiency, laurel.collins@ccda.net 571-364-8007



Call for Volunteers!

To learn more about our volunteer opportunities, and ways you can get involved, please visit volunteer.ccda.net or email Debra Beard at debra.beard@ccda.net

Chipotle

CATHOLIC CHARITIES WAS THRILLED by the selection of their nominee, Chipotle, as the Business Partner Award winner at the 2019 VA Conference on Refugee Resettlement, *Weaving a network of support for Virginia Newcomers*.

Since one of our dynamite employment specialists placed the first refugee client at Chipotle in 2017, word spread about a refugee resettlement agency referring work authorized job-ready individuals. Over 80 clients have been hired – with one location employing 11 clients.

Clients are welcomed and embraced by Chipotle and offered opportunities for growth and advancement. Several crew members have been promoted to supervisory positions less than one year from their date of hire.

Chipotle understands the transportation, language, and child care barriers often faced by refugee clients, and offers opportunities to clients with limited English and no



From left to right, Erick Fajardo, MRS employment Specialist; Laurel Collins, Associate Director for Self-Sufficiency; Silvia Amaya, Chipotle General Manager; Youssef Basily, Chipotle VA Team Lead; and Belayneh Loppisso, MRS Director.

work experience including flexible full and part-time schedules for clients to meet their family's needs.

Unlike most hourly wage jobs, Chipotle offers full benefits at the time of hire as well as up to \$5,250 in tuition for college classes and ESL. We recognize and thank VA Team Director, Youssef Basily and General Manager, Silvia Amaya at Chipotle for embracing diversity and inclusivity and for their commitment to helping clients succeed. We hope this partnership can grow and expand.

MRS is always seeking employers to partner with jobs in a wide variety of sectors. Some clients arrive with advanced degrees and years of experience while others may arrive with no work experience outside their home country, but they all must get jobs as quickly as possible after arrival.

Catholic Charities is eager to educate potential clients and partners about our free recruitment and placement services at MRS. All of our clients are fully vetted and screened prior to admittance to the U.S. and are permanently authorized to work. The clients receive individual job coaching from an employment specialist, and attend a two-day pre-employment workshop to prepare them to enter the U.S. workforce. To help with job retention, our multilingual employment specialists also provide follow up calls to monitor progress and are ready to help with the transition to work.

In addition, we also ensure that client's skills are assessed to ensure a good match between the employer's needs and the client's skill sets. Since October 1, 2018 we have placed over 400 clients into jobs! Catholic Charities is grateful for its strong partnerships and looks forward to expanding these opportunities to better serve our clients. †

Continued from page 1

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Mary of Sorrows Church in Fairfax and Church of the Nativity in Burke donating. Rebecca Boak, community engagement specialist said, "We also ask students to bring in their report cards from the previous school year so that we can identify students who may need additional assistance."

“Whenever we need any kind of help, Christ House is always here. It’s not just the backpacks but whenever we are in trouble. These people are like family, like angels.

– IMRAM GILL

To receive a backpack distributed during the MRS event, students must be clients of MRS and must be enrolled in the Virginia Refugee Student Achievement Program (VRSAP) for students ages 5-18 who have been in the United States for less than five years.

“Many of our students are from Afghanistan, having entered the United States on Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs),” said Boak. “SIV holders are granted permanent residence because they or their family members worked with the U.S. government in Afghanistan.”

Imram Gill brought his two daughters and son to pick up backpacks at Christ House. “Whenever we need any kind of help, Christ House is always here,” he said. “It’s not just the backpacks but whenever we are in trouble. These people are like family, like angels.” †

Opioid Crisis Impact on Families and Parishes

ZOEY MARAIST | CATHOLIC HERALD STAFF WRITER

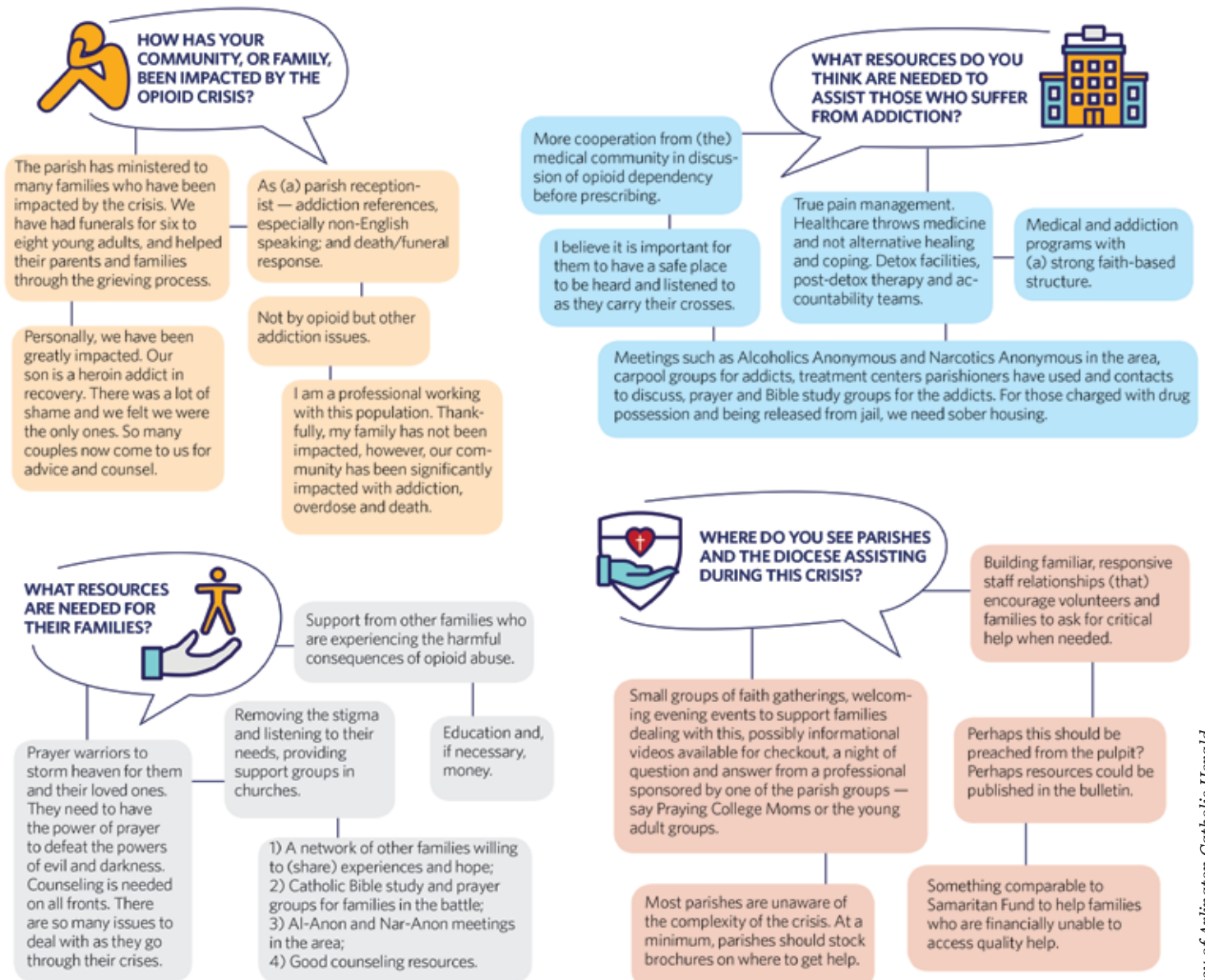
IN JULY, Catholic Charities sent a parish survey to learn how the opioid crisis has impacted people in the pews. Fifty-four people from different parishes responded. Some of the respondees also attended the quarterly opioid response meeting hosted by Catholic Charities at Good Shepherd Church in Alexandria Aug. 7. There they discussed what needs to be done to help people suffering from addiction and their families.

They also heard from Art Bennett, president and CEO of Catholic Charities. They learned more about Calix, a group for Catholic addicts and those who have been affected by the addiction of their loved ones. They listened to the testimony of Joshua Cagney, a recovering alcoholic who was incarcerated and now works for New Paradigm Recovery. Catholic Charities clinical counselor Lorzeno Resendez

explained how those ministering to people with addiction can maintain healthy boundaries in the midst of chaotic situations.

Here are a few of the Catholic Charities survey responses. †

TO GET YOUR PARISH INVOLVED
 contact Art Bennett at 703-841-3830 or arthur.bennett@ccda.net



Courtesy of Arlington Catholic Herald

CAN Do: Christians Are Networking Volunteers Help Christ House Residents Find More than Just Jobs

1. Tell me about your collective backgrounds. How does it transfer to your roles as volunteers for Christians are Networking (CAN)?

We CAN volunteers come from a range of professional backgrounds and from several parishes across the Diocese. All of us work in professional roles stretching from Human Resources, the Armed Services, Consulting and Advocacy. It is the breadth of our background that enables us to work as a team to provide a range of helpful activities to the men at Christ House and support each other as we seek to help.

2. When did you get involved with Catholic Charities and why?

Most of us have been volunteering for Catholic Charities for more than a decade. We came for a variety of reasons, but all with the same objective. **The answer to any problem we face lies in the Body of Christ—those of us who are Christians and members of the Church. We might not have known how we would be called to serve others, but there is no question that God’s work is being done at Christ House. It is knowing we can add something to what is being accomplished there that drew each of us in.**

3. What do you do in your role(s)? What interested you in this specific program?

All of us seek to accomplish two key objectives as we volunteer at Christ House. First, to help the men living there on their journey to their vocation and to help them find the path to accomplish that. Second, we hope to enable each of them to connect to a social network that will sustain them after they leave. All the residents at Christ House have faced real challenges that would overwhelm any human being. Reminding people that they have a vocation and that they are worthy of love is what our role is. And it is the most important answer to their problems.

4. What do you find most rewarding?

We regularly say to each other how amazing it is that we learn as much from those we seek to help as any of them could



benefit from us. Because Christ House creates such a safe and supportive environment, the men are very open to us. We, therefore, all get to see what it is like to walk in another person’s shoes. We are all asked to do this through our faith, but it is rare to be given the ability to do it as thoroughly as we can at Christ House.

5. What has been your favorite memory of your time volunteering so far? Can you share a short “success story” about a client you have interacted with?

We are fortunate to have many success stories: A young man just out of jail with no prospects and no job underwent a training program we found for him and is now an apprentice in a role that can support him throughout his life. An immigrant, who didn’t understand how to succeed in the U.S., worked with the CAN coaches to learn about good work habits, and thus got a promotion when his boss told him that he was the most dependable employee in the company. A man who hadn’t held down a job in some time and was separated from his children, used what we taught him to get a job and then obtained two promotions and found an apartment where his kids could spend the weekends with him. Obviously, the real work was performed by the men, but, as coaches, helping them through the steps was very rewarding for us.

6. Is there any information you’d like to share with others who may be considering volunteering with Catholic Charities or at Christ House specifically?

First, we need you. The six of us have accomplished a lot, but we need a few more. Second, you already have what we need. We are always surprised what problems we are asked to help address and nearly every time it turns out one of us has some unrecognized ability that is exactly what the men need. It is rare indeed you get to see God reveal Himself, but in this work, it seems we get very close. †

SAVE *the* DATE

#GIVING TUESDAY

DECEMBER 3, 2019

Make your gift at ccda.net/donate



Workplace Giving

Every day, Catholic Charities brings transformational services, delivered with compassion, to meet the needs of every person who seeks our help, regardless of background, belief, or circumstance.

You can be part of this transformation by making a pledge to Catholic Charities during this CFC campaign season.

**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 tens of thousands of 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!**

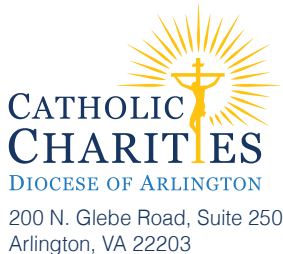
ABOUT CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Together, We're Transforming Lives!

20 programs across 21 Virginia counties and 7 cities

Serves all regardless of background, faith, or circumstance

85 cents of every dollar spent goes to programs and services



Visit our blog and sign up to receive weekly or monthly updates at
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Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.