



# The Mission

CATHOLIC CHARITIES • Diocese of Arlington

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

## Providing Pro-Life Options for Pregnant Women

**P**regnant,” she thought. “I’m pregnant. How can I have a baby? I’m not married. I’m too young. This isn’t what I planned.”

In the Pregnancy and Adoption Support (PAS) program at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, many of the pregnant women we work with experience confusion, doubt, and even fear.

*“What will my family say? What about my friends? I’m not sure I can do this. I feel so alone.”*

PAS was created to provide hope in the face of fear; support in the face of isolation. This was true for Claire. *(name changed)*

*Claire (20) never expected to get pregnant. She had been taking classes at a local college, and was no longer in contact with the man she believed to be the child’s father. She never planned on having a child, and didn’t know where to turn for help. She called PAS, not sure what to ask, but knowing that she needed help.*

PAS looks to support all pregnant women in need, not just those interested in making an adoption plan. We take seriously the call to support women, children, and families in life-affirming decisions. So, at Catholic Charities, we discuss the pro-life options open to pregnant women, both making an adoption plan and choosing to parent.

*In working with PAS, Claire quickly realized that she did not want to have an abortion. And while she never expected to be unmarried and pregnant, she did feel called to parent. She received the support she needed throughout her pregnancy – assistance getting medical care and emotional support – as well as training to increase her parenting skills and her confidence to be a mother. She gave birth to a healthy baby girl, and with the ongoing support of the PAS team, she has made a successful, and joyful, transition into parenthood.*

Our skilled and compassionate case workers will approach pregnant women with love and truth. The love that comes from a full respect for them as being made in the image and likeness of God, and the truth that comes from the full understanding of dignity of life as taught by the Catholic



Church. With that approach, we confidently encounter pregnant women where they are – in their worry, in their confusion – and accompany them during their pregnancy and beyond to life-affirming decisions that bring peace, healing, and flourishing.

### Did You Know?

PAS offers the following support to birth moms:

- going to doctor appointments if requested
- access to Baby Closet providing essential supplies
- needs assessment and referrals as required
- work to identify and encourage a natural support system
- work with the birth father and extended family members if appropriate
- client for life: she can always come back to us for support services . . .

**For more information call 703-425-0100**

## ● PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,  
As Christmas draws near we celebrate Jesus coming into this world as a baby – vulnerable, humble, and unadorned. Here at Catholic Charities, Christ reminds us of his continued presence in our lives – through the vulnerable, the forgotten, and those on the periphery. Just as the shepherds sought and found the infant Christ, we are also called to seek out Christ in our community and encounter him through those we serve.

In this issue of *The Mission*, you will note the stories of heartbreak and sorrow that transform into examples of God's healing grace. We see the faces of those in our community who are seeking shelter at St. Margaret of Cortona, a chance for a new beginning for ex-offenders, and a hard-working immigrant seeking a better life for her family.

*I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). This verse reminds us that God calls us to help those in need. CCDAs*

2,700 volunteers answer that call and help us achieve the Church's mission of social justice. One such volunteer's story, Pequitte Schwerin, is highlighted in this issue. Thank you Pequitte and all of our volunteers, you are a blessing to CCDA!

In the spirit of giving rather than receiving, please consider a **year-end gift** to Catholic Charities. Use the enclosed reply envelope or visit [www.cdda.net](http://www.cdda.net) and click the "Donate Now" button on the right side of the page.

Thanks to your generous donations, we are able to provide transformational, compassionate care to thousands of men, women, and children in our communities. By supporting CCDA's 17 programs, you are making a positive impact in the community and sharing Christ's tangible love.

Lastly, Bishop Burbidge and I invite you to join us at the annual Catholic Charities Ball, *Faithful Servants-Grateful Hearts*, on February 2, 2018. It is our most important fundraiser and celebrates the transformative services of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington. Please invite your friends, family, fellow parishioners and co-workers, too!



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

**In 2017, your support of Catholic Charities has brought hope to those in greatest need.**



**With your support, imagine what we can do in 2018.**

## FEEDING THE HUNGRY, NOURISHING THE SOUL

### From a Humbled Working Mom - *What it means to see the face of Christ in others.*

By Anne Mathis

**H**ow many times a week do you go to the grocery store?

If you're a busy working mom like me with two constantly hungry teenagers, it's probably a minimum of three times with additional runs for what you forgot to get the other three trips!

Now imagine being reliant on the help of others to feed your children and only being able to use a food pantry for assistance once every two weeks.

Recently, I visited *Loaves and Fishes*, a busy Catholic Charities Food Pantry in Front Royal, Virginia. Every Thursday and Friday, people in need line up outside as early as 6:30 a.m. waiting to enter at 9 a.m. Once inside, they give Kristy, the cheery intake coordinator, their identification information and then sit patiently in a waiting area. When it's their turn, a good-natured and caring volunteer escorts them through the food pantry where they are able to pick up canned and baked goods, eggs, dairy products, frozen meats, and fresh vegetables and fruit donated from local farms and more. It's a limited selection of food choices – nothing compared to a regular grocery store of course – but in a time of need the food available is a godsend.

As I watched people escorted through the pantry, I experienced a spectrum of emotions and feelings. First *anxiety* as I tried to “put myself in their shoes” and thought about not having full control over when I could go grocery shopping



and for what. Then *guilt* for the countless times I have thrown good food away simply because I didn't plan well and it was easier to do the “drive-through.” A wave of *gratitude* followed knowing that with the many blessings and graces God has given to me, I am able to provide for my family and grocery shop anytime and anywhere I want.

Anxiety, guilt, and gratitude could be common feelings that might come up for you, too, if you had the opportunity to observe the lines of people in great need at the most basic level – pervasive hunger. But something truly profound happened to me when I visited Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry. *I was transformed.*

In the proud and stoic faces of people who rely on food assistance, I understood what it means to see the face of Christ in others. In speaking to some of the clients that day I learned that they were there because of a variety of reasons. There was Jo-Jo, a mom who recently lost her job but was working her

way back to financial security and just needed a bit of extra help and didn't intend to use the pantry's services for long. Then Carolyn, a sweet and statuesque lady who could be anybody's loving grandmother. She was on disability, caring for her mentally-challenged granddaughter and assisting her out-of-work son and daughter-in-law whose newborn twins were fighting for their lives in a nearby hospital. I was truly overwhelmed and humbled. And, I pray, changed for the better.



In these people's life experiences and circumstances, I heard God's call to me on countless levels and I felt His love. Thank you Jo-Jo. Thank you Carolyn. Thank you Kristy. Thank you caring volunteers. Thank you to all those unnamed friends who give of their time, talents and treasures to support Catholic Charities programs like Loaves and Fishes. Thank you God.



Celebrating its 36th year, the *Catholic Charities Ball* raises critical program operating funds allowing us to serve more than 100,000 people in need annually, celebrates visionary supporters, and delivers a memorable and entertaining evening for close to 1,000 guests.

This year's Ball, *Faithful Servants, Grateful Hearts*, will be held on Friday February 2, 2018 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Tysons, VA.

For more information on corporate participation, please call Mr. Todd West at 703-224-1470 or to purchase a table or tickets, visit [www.cdda.net/ball](http://www.cdda.net/ball)



## ● PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT – ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA

### St. Margaret of Cortona Provides a Safe Place for Families to Rebuild

**W**hat would you do if you were a married mother in an abusive relationship? You might choose to flee with your children for everyone's safety. Then what? Where would you go and how would you rebuild your life? Catholic Charities' St. Margaret of Cortona Family Transformational Housing program was developed with this in mind.

St. Margaret's serves homeless families with the time and support they need to reestablish independence after they have exited an emergency shelter. Single parent households, led by women, are the typical families we serve with 47% reporting some exposure to domestic violence. From experience, the staff believes these numbers are on the low side, and physical abuse is frequently coupled with emotional and financial abuse, too.

Consider Carol (name changed) who endured verbal and emotional abuse throughout her marriage. Name calling and insults were common. Her husband gradually limited Carol's access to her family. He took her paychecks and set up bank accounts in his name only. She needed permission to spend money, even on daily needs, like food.

When Carol learned she was pregnant with her second daughter, she was secretly delighted though she was worried how her husband would react. Her fears were confirmed when he punched her in the abdomen to try to make her lose the baby. Carol fled to a domestic violence shelter.

She had nowhere to go when she left the shelter. Homeless and frightened, she entered St. Margaret of Cortona Family Transformational Housing program. Pregnant and desperate, she needed help with housing, counseling and even custody. The years of abuse took their toll, and Carol experienced significant anxiety about her future.



With the help of a pro-bono attorney secured by St. Margaret's, Carol successfully obtained full custody of both girls. St. Margaret's provided family therapy to help heal her relationship with her oldest daughter. Carol also received employment and life-skills support to help her gain financial stability and confidence as a single head of household.

Today, Carol lives in her own home with her children. She works, drives her own car, and has reconnected with her family. Her ex-husband has visitation, and she has to face him during the custody exchanges, but she is making it on her own.

**Your generous support provides a safe place for women like Carol to rebuild their lives when they have nowhere else to turn.** To learn more about how you can have a greater impact in this life-saving work or to refer someone to the program, please contact Cathy Hassinger at [chassinger@ccda.net](mailto:chassinger@ccda.net) or 703-841-2581.



### Your Year-End Gift *Does* Make a Difference

We are sure you are getting countless requests for donations from worthy nonprofits like ours. We pray your great generosity touches all of those you value including Catholic Charities. Your year-end gift does make a difference!

Use the enclosed reply envelope or go to [www.ccda.net](http://www.ccda.net) and click "Donate Now" on the right side of the page.

## ● PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT – PRISON MINISTRY

### From Addiction and Incarceration ...

The opioid addiction rate in Virginia is among the highest in the country. In 2015, more than 30,000 people in Virginia were incarcerated due in some way to drug addiction. Once the addiction takes over, many individuals turn to theft and other crimes to maintain the dependence on opioids. You might ask how does anyone get to such a low point in their lives? And what can we do to show our support and care?

Through the Catholic Charities *Welcome Home Re-Entry Program*, we're learning more about how people fall victim to this deadly addiction in the first place. For Joe (name changed), who never had any run-ins with the law, addiction from pain killers came after back surgery. He began to self-medicate further to numb what was happening in his life. At his lowest point, he was arrested for theft and put in jail. "God sometimes has to bring us to our knees before we realize what we've done with our life," he said.

While in jail, Joe was able to interact with CCDA's Prison Ministry volunteers. It was through these caring and faith-filled volunteers that Joe learned about the new Welcome Home Re-Entry Program.

On the first day of his release from jail, CCDA staff and volunteers assisted Joe with his initial rent at a sober-living Oxford House. In addition, a bicycle was provided as well as food and clothing – and that's just the beginning. The support provided through the *Welcome Home Re-Entry Program* is holistic providing ongoing mentoring and spiritual guidance. CCDA staff and volunteers are walking with Joe on his journey to reclaim his life and restore



his faith. He is currently completing his Confirmation at a local diocesan parish.

Sadly, many reoffend and return to prison within three years of their release. Why? Part of the problem is their lack of connection with their community and feeling alone. Establishing this critical connection is paramount to recovery. It is this "connection" that drives all of Catholic Charities' programs in many ways and especially with people who need a vote of confidence and a helping hand as they seek to move beyond their incarceration.

Through the *Welcome Home Re-entry Program*, Catholic Charities serves men and women returning to their communities after incarceration. We seek to reduce recidivism, educate the community and develop strong systems of support by building relationships and matching returning individuals with compassionate

### to Restored Dignity and Hope ...

volunteer mentors. If you think you have a heart for this type of volunteer mentoring or if you'd like to volunteer in other ways to support this program, please contact Sally O'Dwyer at 703-841-3838 or go to [ccda.net](http://ccda.net) to see what volunteer opportunities are available.



#### GET INVOLVED!

*Volunteers come to Catholic Charities to put the Gospel in action, to give back to the community, and simply reach out to their brothers and sisters in need. Did you know that more than 2,700 volunteers engage to work for Catholic Charities in some capacity each year? That means for every one staff member, we have 20 volunteers! We depend on our volunteers so that we can reach and serve as many people in need as possible. Our volunteers are essential to the mission of Catholic Charities, and we are profoundly grateful for each of our volunteers.*



## ● VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Retired with Purpose – Pequitte Schwerin

In 2006, after retiring from a 25-year career in the military, Pequitte Schwerin began a new chapter in her life volunteering for Catholic Charities – 11 years later she's still on fire about serving the most vulnerable among us!

Pequitte has positively impacted and even helped lay the foundations for many CCDAs programs. Her first year of volunteering was with **Hogar Immigrant Services** in Falls Church where she helped to edit and update a publication used for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Additionally, she taught an ESOL class to a diverse group of 15 students.

Her second volunteer role was formulating the program and processes for the then newly developed transformational housing program, **St. Margaret of Cortona**. Pequitte visited other similar agencies to study and adopt best practices. She helped guide St. Margaret of Cortona clients toward self-sufficiency by assisting in creating classes in parenting, budget and financial planning, and nutrition.

She also facilitated donation drives for furniture and household goods to outfit the newly refurbished apartments.

Pequitte's other volunteer activities include serving **St. Anthony Parish** as a community nurse, and three years at **Action in Community Through Service (ACTS)** working in domestic violence intervention with perpetrators.

For the last three years, Pequitte has contributed her time and talents to **Migration and Refugee Services (MRS)**, helping to welcome newcomers arriving in the Diocese through the U.S. Refugee Resettlement program. Her generous donation towards the purchase of a new minivan is helping provide vital support to newcomers as they start their new lives in the U.S. The new minivan helps MRS staff transport newcomers from the airport as well as a myriad of other important appointments such as health screenings, social security, social services, cultural orientation, ESOL classes, school registrations, pre-employment training, job fairs and job interviews. MRS can now go the extra



**Catholic Charities volunteer, Pequitte Schwerin and Art Bennett, CCDAs President and CEO, with the new MRS Program mini-van made possible by Pequitte's great financial generosity!**

mile toward welcoming the stranger in our diocese thanks to the generosity and selfless service of people like Pequitte.

**Join Pequitte. Consider donating or volunteering with CCDAs as we Encounter Christ, and Transform Lives. OR donate your car to our Cars for Families program.**

#### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

- Help homeless men at Christ House find jobs
- Sort and organize donations to our Thrift Store
- Lead activities for children living at St. Margaret of Cortona Family Transformational Housing
- Serve breakfast to the elderly or lead activities at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center
- Give backpacks full of needed items to ex-offenders through our Prison Ministry program
- Teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for Hogar Immigrant Services or Migration and Refugee Services
- Pack or unload food donations at our St. Lucy Warehouse; assist clients as they pick up food at our St. Lucy Pantries
- Help is especially needed on weekends — volunteering is a great group project
- Help is needed at the Christ House Food Pantry
- Engage corporations in community partnerships
- Help as an office receptionist — in Arlington, Christ House, and other regional offices
- Join the Catholic Charities Ball Committee
- And many, many more!

**To learn more, please visit [ccda.net](http://ccda.net) or call Sally O'Dwyer at 703-841-3838**



## ● WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Hard Working Immigrants – Empowered and Stabilized with New Training and Certification Classes at Hogar

Among the many barriers newcomers face when arriving in America are learning a new language and having the necessary skills to secure employment. This is where Catholic Charities' workforce development courses can make a difference.

On a recent Friday morning at the Hogar Immigrant Services office in Manassas, laughter spills out of one of the classrooms. Students are here for the childcare class, where they will learn about child development and improve their English-language skills. There is an emphasis on words and phrases needed to communicate with parents and coworkers about the well-being of children in their care. Today, they are being certified for Pediatric CPR and First Aid. Among them is Milagros.

Milagros was born and raised in Lima, Peru. Her husband, who is also Peruvian, had lived and worked in the United States for a long time. On one of his trips to Peru to visit friends and family, they met and fell in love, eventually marrying. Once their second child was born, and having lived a continent apart, they decided to unite their family.

After moving to the United States, Milagros' children adapted well and learned English quickly. But Milagros was becoming frustrated – unable to communicate with neighbors and doctors or help her children with their schoolwork. Although she had begun studying English in Peru, she hadn't



been able to finish. She knew she needed to take English classes and registered at Hogar.

In the last few semesters here at Hogar, Milagros has progressed quickly, advancing through three levels of English. "Nothing can stop me now!" she says with a smile on her face. As she pursues becoming a licensed childcare provider, and as her family establishes

themselves in the United States, Catholic Charities is here to assist and support Milagros every step of the way. "I know God is always helping me," she says.

Your generous support makes possible services like those offered at Hogar that transform lives and provide hope for our clients during their time of need.



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

Every day, CCDA 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 CCDA during this CFC campaign season.

Changes to the CFC this year include:

- Pledging volunteer hours to help CCDA serve 100,000 clients each year; and
- Allowing 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!**

## Thrift Store Remodel with NEW Hours

Clients served by our Emergency Financial Assistance Program receive vouchers to shop for clothing and other essential needs at Christ House Thrift Store in Old Town Alexandria. Recently, the Thrift Store has undergone renovations to reflect the human dignity of everyone who walks through the door.

### Donations

We welcome your donations of clothing, accessories, handbags and shoes (all seasons), antiques, collectibles, jewelry, artwork, household items, and small pieces of furniture such as accent tables and wood chairs.

### Where do the proceeds go?

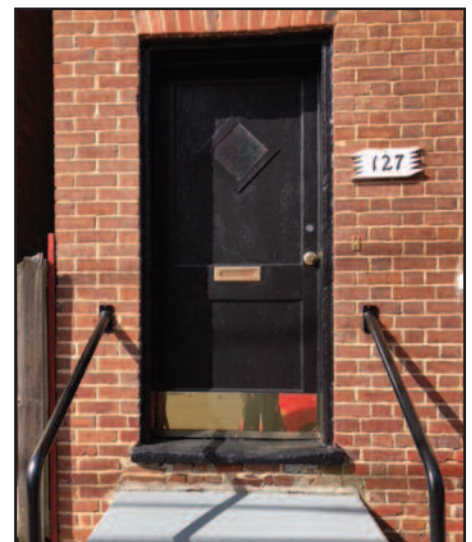
The proceeds from the store support the Emergency Financial Assistance program which helps families in crisis avoid eviction or loss of utilities.

### Address and Hours of Operation

The Christ House thrift shop is open six days a week:

- Monday 10:00am – 3:00pm
- Tuesday through Saturday 10:00am – 4:00pm.
- Sunday – closed

The store is located at  
125 S. West Street  
Alexandria, VA.



Top right: Volunteer Jim repaired and painted one of the front doors.

Bottom left: A display case donated by a neighborhood jeweler contains items for sale.



## 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
- 86 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.