



# The Mission

CATHOLIC CHARITIES • Diocese of Arlington

## “To have that support— it means the world to me”

Your support of Catholic Charities helped Emily choose life and adoption for her son, and now provides counseling and a community for Emily years later

**N**ine years ago, Emily (name changed to protect anonymity) was a nursing student at George Mason University when she found out she was pregnant.

Her boyfriend wanted her to have an abortion. Emily was scared and conflicted. She recalls that his demands for an abortion were tempting at first—a seemingly easy way out of a daunting and

terrifying situation.

“Everyone commits sins, but mine was blatant, and I couldn’t hide it,” she said. “I felt like I needed to correct this situation.”

Instead, she shared her pregnancy with her parents to remove the temptation of abortion. Together, they reached out to Catholic Charities’ Pregnancy and Adoption Support office.

“I didn’t want to go at first,” Emily said. “I thought I wanted to parent my child, but my parents could see that I wouldn’t be able to give him the life I wanted him to have.”

Her counselor comforted her and discussed both options of parenting her son or placing him with an adoptive family.

“Any time I had a question, I would always write down pros and cons to ...

*Continued on page 2*

## 5 Ways Adoption Supports Life

Kim Harrell, Program Director for Pregnancy and Adoption Support, shares five ways that adoption supports the Pro-Life movement in honor of the recent March for Life

**O**ver the past 20 years, I have journeyed alongside countless women and families who have had their lives touched by adoption. This is my experience...

**Here are the top 5 ways adoption supports the Pro-Life movement:**

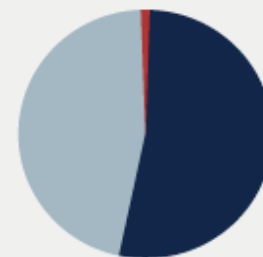
**1.** Adoption provides an alternative to abortion. For many women experiencing an unintended pregnancy, they need an alternative to abortion, *as well as* an alternative to parenting their child. Not all women who become pregnant are ready to be a parent.

**2.** Adoption supports the life of the woman experiencing an unintended pregnancy. While an unintended pregnancy may no longer be the crisis that it used to be, these women need support. Knowing they have solid options reduces stress and gives them hope. When they choose adoption for their child, they experience one of the most selfless acts a human being can demonstrate. This is a flawless example of showing respect, worth and dignity for human life.

**3.** Adoption enhances the life of an unborn child. Before a child breathes its first breath, there are people at work ensuring that a plan is being made for his or her life. The ...

*Continued on page 2*

### Results of unintended pregnancy, annual estimates



**1.4 million women choose to keep the child**

**1.2 million women choose abortion**

**14,000 women choose adoption**

Source: Guttmacher Institute, “National Reproductive Health Profile: Pregnancies, Births and Abortions,” available at <http://www.guttmacher.org/datacenter/profiles/US.jsp> (last accessed October 6, 2010).

On Thursday, January 22, Catholic Charities employees and volunteers joined 500,000 others on the National Mall to make a stand against abortion during the 41st annual March for Life.

“I do not hesitate to proclaim before you and before the world that all human life—from the moment of conception and through all subsequent stages—is sacred, because human life is created in the image and likeness of God. Nothing surpasses the greatness or dignity of a human person.”

- St. John Paul II at Mass on the National Mall, October 1979



“Adoption...”, continued from page 1



**Adoption promotes life as a precious gift made in God’s image and likeness.**

... conception of a child is never a mistake, and adoption is sometimes the avenue intended for a child.

4. Adoption allows older children to have a chance at a forever family. Many older children languish in foster care, hoping to become a part of a permanent family. These children have the right to a life filled with security and love. Adoption provides them with the future they have dreamed of.

5. Adoption is an avenue for prospective adoptive couples to grow their families. When a woman decides to make an adoption plan for her child, an adoptive family steps in to meet that need, and inherently becomes a supporter of the “Right to Life.”

The “Right to Life” extends beyond the unborn. Adoption impacts the lives birth parents, children and adoptive families throughout their lifespans. At its very core, adoption promotes respect for the worth and dignity of every life it touches.

*This article was originally featured on Encourage & Teach, a blog for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington.*

“Support...”, continued from page 1

... parenting or placing,” she said. “It always made sense that placing was the right option. I didn’t want him to have a harder life than he deserved.”

A Catholic herself, Emily wanted her son to be raised by Catholic parents too. She met nine prospective couples and chose a family that had also adopted a daughter through Catholic Charities.

“I was able to help them complete their family,” she said. “Maybe they couldn’t have done that if it weren’t for me.”

For the first year, she continued weekly meetings with a counselor at Catholic Charities. Now she looks forward to the monthly Birth Mother support group. All women who have placed a child are welcome, whether it was recent or 25 years ago.

“The Catholic Charities office is a safe place to cry and know everything is in confidence,” she said. “To have that support, it means the world to me.”

Today, Emily is married and has four children, though she still experiences

bouts of anguish over her adoption. While her husband is sympathetic and supportive, she cherishes the connection between the other women in the support group.

“We feel like sisters,” she said. “If someone is upset, then we all understand it.”

She also counsels other women who are in the middle of an unplanned pregnancy or have just placed their child with an adoptive family.

“I love my story and I’m open about everything,” she said. “For these women to see other birth mothers who have survived the hardships and now are thriving—it’s a huge message in favor of adoption.”

**“For these women to see other birth mothers who have survived the hardships and now are thriving – it’s a huge message in favor of adoption.”**



**GET INVOLVED!**

If you have been touched by adoption and would like more information on post-adoptive counseling or our support groups, please call our Adoption and Pregnancy Support office at 703-425-0100.

We also have a new “Waiting Child Program” for families wanting to adopt children out of the foster care system. Please contact Kim Harrell at [KHarell@ccda.net](mailto:KHarell@ccda.net) for more information.

## ● PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Pope Francis says we are in a “throwaway culture” where people on the margins—in the womb, toward the end of life, the displaced, hungry, impoverished or isolated—are disposable.

In our diocese, these people are often invisible. Since Bishop Loverde calls Catholic Charities the ‘heart of the Church,’ we must be the alternative to the throwaway culture. Our Church must create a culture of loving encounters which treat people with dignity and provide hope.

That is what we are striving to do at Catholic Charities. This issue of The Mission documents how our programs are creating opportunities for genuine, transformative encounters.

Your support helps us to protect and lift up the unborn, the aged and the poor—three groups our Holy Father says are most at risk.

Our opening story about a birth

**“Things have a price and are valuable, but persons have dignity, they are worth more than things and they have no price.”**

**-Pope Francis**

mother and her adoption (pages 1-2) emphasizes our commitment to the unborn and to serving families before, during and after an adoption.

We are providing support for the elderly and those helping their loved ones as they face end-of-life issues (page 3). We are also providing legal support for eligible immigrant children who face life threatening dangers in their home countries and are easy prey when they arrive. This also protects their dignity.

Many volunteers and financial supporters are giving us the help and resources to enable these encounters to occur by volunteering and donating food to our St. Lucy Project (page 5) and the record setting support of the Catholic Charities Ball (page 6).

We are grateful and inspired by our dedicated and generous supporters!

I invite all of you to become involved with Catholic Charities. Together with our parishes we can create the path for the encounters that transform our own lives as well as those we have the privilege to serve

Let us be the radical alternative to the throwaway culture and manifest the culture of love and dignity as Christ asks us to do.

May God bless you this Lent,



**Art Bennett**

*President and CEO*

*Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington*



## ● SENIOR SERVICES

# From Conception to Natural Death

New Senior Services offerings emphasize pastoral and Pro-Life care for the aging population and support for the “sandwich generation” of caregivers

In order to support the whole person through natural death, Catholic Charities is increasing its care for the aging population in the Diocese of Arlington.

This is especially important, as it also supports the “sandwich generation” of people who are caring for both children and aging parents.

Senior Services Director Gracie Ortiz is now offering eldercare consultations at St. John the Beloved in McLean and throughout the diocese.

Consultations can address a variety of topics, including planning ahead for care, helping a loved one who has dementia, navigating the health care system, dealing with differences of opinions between siblings and grieving the death of a loved one.

Senior Services is also now hosting annual diocesan conferences and continues to run the St. Martin de Porres Senior Center.



**Sr. Clare Hunter presents information on Advanced Medical Directives at an annual conference discussing Best Practices in Senior Ministries. These are offered as a way for parishioners and senior ministry programs from across the diocese to collaborate together.**

## GET INVOLVED!

If you would like more information about our eldercare consultations or yearly conferences, please contact Gracie Ortiz at [GOrtiz@ccda.net](mailto:GOrtiz@ccda.net) or 703-751-4083.

# Caring for Unaccompanied Minors

By: Karen Barajas Powell, Catholic Charities Hogar Staff Attorney

**H**ow do you make a box?" The 7-year-old boy smiles as he waits in anticipation for the response.

This young boy is currently in Immigration Court Removal Proceedings, and I am his attorney.

After trying to explain the client-attorney confidentiality agreement to his understanding, I asked if he had any questions for me. That's when he asked about the box—reminding me of his innocence and youth, despite his circumstances.

He fled to the United States with his 9 and 12-year-old sisters—escaping an abusive living situation and gang violence in their native country of El Salvador.

At only 7 years old, he has already lived through so much. In addition to his trials at home, he's had three weeks of detainment and two hearings at immigration court here. Yet his resilience shines through.

A large majority of these unaccompanied minors come from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala—countries ravaged by gang violence that remain among the most dangerous in the world.

In a study entitled *Children On The Run*, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reported that "in the context of entrenched poverty, an escalating threat posed by drug trafficking, polarized political systems, weak law enforcement and social hardships such as poverty and unemployment, insecurity is on the rise in communities and in homes in the region [of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala]. The humanitarian impact of this situation includes the displacement of a record number of children who separate from their families and flee unaccompanied."

**"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me" -Matthew 25:35**

Boys who remain in these dangerous areas often have to decide between possibly dying at the hands of a gang they refuse to join, the hands of a rival gang, or the police if they do join a gang.

Girls choose between becoming the "property" of a gang member or being raped and possibly killed.

Therefore, this fear of gangs and violence, along with the poverty and abuse, are driving factors as these children flee to the United States. They are seeking



**The three siblings are now safely living with extended family in Alexandria and are applying for a special legal status to keep them in the U.S.**

compassion and relief; an opportunity to live a life of authentic dignity and inherent value.

Children are the most vulnerable of all. We must ensure they are given the protection and care they so desperately need and deserve.



## GET INVOLVED!

We need bilingual, pro-bono attorneys and bilingual translators to volunteer with this program. If interested, please contact us at 571-208-1572 or [volunteer.hogar@ccda.net](mailto:volunteer.hogar@ccda.net).

"Coffee and Conversation" is an hour-long session for Hogar students to practice speaking skills they are learning in English classes. Conversation is important to our students, and it fits in with our mission to help immigrants become more self-sufficient. The sessions mimic a real-life coffee shop – there's no structure, students just start with small talk and use what language they know and struggle through what they are still learning. It is a comfortable environment to practice their skills without making a mistake in front of the class.

For more information on Catholic Charities Hogar Immigrant Services, please contact Brooke Hammond-Perez at [BPerez@ccda.net](mailto:BPerez@ccda.net) or 571-208-1572, ext. 101.



Since the Coffee and Conversation sessions were introduced in January, 55 students and 20 volunteers have participated at our Manassas location.

# Volunteers Stock Shelves to Feed the Poor

Groups from across the diocese live out their faith through service



## HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP; GAINESVILLE

- Monthly service day
- “It’s so important for our teens to learn to put their faith into action,” said Tim Judge, Holy Trinity’s Coordinator of Youth Ministry. “While we were sorting the food, I could share the Gospel with them. I emphasized how much God loves us and how in return we should love others and how that is lived out through service.”



## PRAYING COLLEGE MOMS; PARISHES ACROSS THE DIOCESE

- Donation of more than \$500 in grocery gift cards
- “Our group does a gift card drive for Catholic Charities at Christmas,” said Laurel Howanitz, one of the group’s founders. “We wanted to emphasize *moms helping moms*. When we toured the facility, we could see how we were helping moms and everyone else needing food in our diocese. I feel blessed that we found The St. Lucy Project!”



St. Luke Pastor Fr. Dave Martin asked his staff, particularly the Youth Ministry and Religious Education programs, to hold a food drive to offset the “lull” in donations in winter months.



## PARISHES AND SCHOOLS

- **St. Luke Parish, McLean:** donated and sorted 6,000 lbs. of food in February
- **St. Mark Parish, Vienna:** donated 4,000 lbs. from their January food drive
- **St. Rita Parish, Alexandria:** donated 1,000 lbs. on February 23
- **St. Veronica School, Chantilly:** donated 2,000 lbs. of soup with their “Ton of Love” soup drive



## GET INVOLVED!

With your support and that of our volunteers, we were able to give 729,000 lbs. of food to the hungry in our diocese in 2014.

Can you help feed the poor this year by hosting a food drive, volunteering or making a financial donation? Contact Sherri Longhill, Program Director for The St. Lucy Project, at [SLonghill@ccda.net](mailto:SLonghill@ccda.net).

**THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES BALL**

**O**n the evening of February 13th, about 775 guests joined Catholic Charities in celebrating its life-giving services at the 2015 "Growing In His Love" Annual Catholic Charities Ball. Bishop Paul S. Loverde presided over the evening, which raised more than **\$925,000** for Catholic Charities' programs and services. The evening debuted a new end-of-evening "Bid for Catholic Charities." Also new this year was the Bishop Paul S. Loverde Award which honored Rev. Mark Mealey, OSFS for his dedication to Catholic Charities. Jeb and Barbara Bankert were also honored with the James J. Matthews Legacy Award.

All images below courtesy of Jenifer Morris Photography [JeniferMorrisPhotography.com](http://JeniferMorrisPhotography.com)



2015 Special Gifts Chair Alan Holmer with 2015 Ball Chairs, Louise Kugler and Olga Portell, and Bishop Loverde and Art Bennett



Rev. Mark Mealey, OSFS, received the first Bishop Paul S. Loverde Award for his dedication to Catholic Charities



Jeb and Barbara Bankert were the recipients of the 2015 Matthews Award



The table of Mr. and Mrs. Giuseppe Cecchi enjoys dinner in the Grand Ballroom at the Ritz-Carlton in Tysons Corner



Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Saville enjoy socializing and networking at the reception before the Ball



Mary Kay Lanzillotta and her husband Lee Becker with Bishop Loverde



Bishop Loverde greets John and Cindy Lee as they enter the reception before the Ball



Shawn McLaughlin helped lead the Live Auction and Bid for Catholic Charities; these special components raised an additional \$160,000



Dr. and Mrs. John Kugler of Fredericksburg pause for a photo with their guests

Save the date for the  
**2016 Catholic Charities Ball**  
 Friday, February 5, 2016

For more information about the 2016 Ball, including information on sponsorship or Catholic Charities partnership opportunities, please email [CCBall2016@gmail.com](mailto:CCBall2016@gmail.com).

## Making A Difference

We ask volunteers and donors why they choose to support Catholic Charities: Board Member Alan Holmer shares about his volunteerism and the impact it has on his faith

### How did you get involved in Catholic Charities?

I spent 30 years living comfortably with my family in McLean, oblivious to the hidden poverty in our diocese – the couples living in tents in the woods right off Route 50, or the homeless men living at Christ House in Alexandria, all who desperately need a helping hand.

In 2006, I met Sally O'Dwyer who currently serves as Director of Volunteers for Catholic Charities. She is an excellent recruiter and had me hooked.

### What exactly do you do in your volunteer roles?

I've helped out at Christ House in a bunch of different ways like mentoring the men and teaching a Ready to Rent class so they are prepared to be tenants when they leave. Like all Catholic Charities programs, we want Christ House to be truly transformative... not just a period of respite with a bed and free meals.

Recently, I have had the opportunity to also serve in leadership roles—as the Finance Chair on the Board of Directors and as the Special Gifts Chair for the 2015 Catholic Charities Ball.

### Why do you choose to donate your time and resources to Catholic Charities?

The more I learned about the breadth and depth of Catholic Charities' programs, the more I could see

how much is already being done for the poor in our diocese, but also how much more could be done with more resources. Catholic Charities is an extremely efficient organization with

88 cents of every dollar going to serving the poor.

*“Frequently, I find that volunteering has broadened my heart, sometimes it breaks my heart, and has deepened my Roman Catholic faith.”*

### What do you find most rewarding about being involved with Catholic Charities?

Frequently, I have found that volunteering has broadened my heart, sometimes it breaks my heart, and has deepened my Roman Catholic faith.

I find the experience tremendously fulfilling.



Above, Holmer at the 2015 Catholic Charities Ball. Below, he shares with the men at Christ House.



## GET INVOLVED!

Do you want to join Catholic Charities in making a difference in the lives of the poor? Do you feel called to break outside your comfort zone to have a true encounter with those in need around us? We need you! If you are interested in supporting Catholic Charities with the gift of your time and talent, please contact Sally O'Dwyer at [SOdwyer@ccda.net](mailto:SOdwyer@ccda.net) or 703-841-3838. You may also fill out the volunteer form on our website, [www.ccda.net](http://www.ccda.net).

If you are interested in supporting Catholic Charities with a financial donation, please visit [www.ccda.net](http://www.ccda.net) or contact James Michels, Vice President for Development, at [JMichels@ccda.net](mailto:JMichels@ccda.net) or 703-841-3841.

# Businesses Impact the Lives of Thousands

## Will you join Catholic Charities today?

**A**t Catholic Charities, we see business partnerships transform the face of charity in the Diocese of Arlington. It is businesses such as Comcast, Deloitte, BB&T Bank, NVR Homes, Sheehy Auto Stores and countless others that have joined us in meeting the needs of the poor in order to create better communities for all.

As a result, businesses have been recognized for their indelible impact on our work, having improved Catholic Charities' key programs with know-how, enthusiasm, and a shared sense of mission to serve the poor by engaging the community to transform the lives of people in need. We are proud to be working with businesses who care deeply about helping others by supporting and sustaining our life-changing services.

Below are dynamic examples of how you can partner with us in a manner supportive of your business' philanthropic vision:

<h3>Invest</h3>	<h3>Events</h3>	<h3>Volunteer</h3>
<p><b>Become a corporate partner</b></p>	<p><b>Organize a cause-related marketing event</b></p>	<p><b>Join in food drives and deliveries to feed the poor</b></p>
<p><b>Establish a matching gifts program</b></p>	<p><b>Host a fundraising or awareness event</b></p>	<p><b>Spruce up one of our program facilities with painting, cleaning or gardening</b></p>
<p><b>Conduct an annual charitable workplace giving campaign</b></p>	<p><b>Hold drives for clothing, furniture or food</b></p>	<p><b>Help with Special Projects or Events</b></p>

Our success is dependent on your help. To discuss partnership opportunities specific to your organization's needs, please contact James Michels, Vice President for Development, at [JMichels@ccda.net](mailto:JMichels@ccda.net) or 703-841-3841.

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