

The Mission

Serving the Community since 1947

Volunteers Help Collect and Distribute Goods



Photo by Jeanne Spaeth

Oakcrest School students help Joe Cella (left) and Tom Bransfield, Christ House case manager, load food donated by the Oakcrest student body.

Demand is up, and supply is down,” reports Catholic Charities’ volunteer Joe Cella about food supplies in the Christ House food pantry, and if his words echo classic economics phrasing it is because he is a retired Securities and Exchange Commission supervisory analyst.

Joe, one of the agency’s many volunteers, retired in March 2007 and says, “I was looking to do some volunteer work and was impressed by my niece’s work in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.” A graduate of Gonzaga High School and Boston College, Joe said, “I

searched out the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC), which recruits individuals aged 50 and older.”

The IVC placed Joe at Christ House, and he reports, “Christ House has been a great experience for me.” He has become the primary driver of the Christ House on Wheels van and has made deliveries to help the needy in outlying areas of the diocese such as Madison, Spotsylvania, Westmoreland, and Page counties.

In addition to nonperishable food, Joe sometimes delivers small household items and clothing. The drop-offs are made at parishes or community food banks, which then distribute the food and items to low-income families and individuals in their area.

Joe says, “Everyone who

receives goods from the van, identifiable by its ‘Christ House on Wheels’ sign, is very appreciative.”

Sally O’Dwyer, Catholic Charities’ associate director for community services, adds, “And we are so appreciative of Joe and his dedication. Although his schedule calls for 16 volunteer hours per week, he often puts in more time. We love his organizational skills and reliability.”

Christ House’s food pantry is replenished through monetary contributions and food drives organized by groups such as the Boy Scouts and schools such as Bishop Ireton, Oakcrest, and Bishop O’Connell, which has held an annual food drive for Christ House for the past 30 years.

Some schools, like Our Lady of Good Counsel, have fund-raising activities and donate the proceeds to Christ House, which also serves as a homeless shelter.

For volunteer opportunities at Catholic Charities, call 703-841-3838.



Photo by Jeanne Spaeth

Joe Cella is one of many dedicated volunteers helping Catholic Charities fulfill its mission.

Organize a Food Drive

Help feed the hungry by collecting nonperishable food for the Christ House pantry in Alexandria. Call 703-841-3838 for guidelines.

Photo by Jeanne Speeth



Stephen Luteran

FROM THE DESK OF Stephen Luteran

Change the life of one person, and you change the world!

That's what our volunteers do. I am always amazed and grateful for their service. We truly could not reach out to the number of people needing our help each year if it weren't for volunteers.

We count on volunteers to help us achieve our mission. In

fact, it is the volunteers who give of their time that inspire me to continue in this ministry of service.

I may not know the names of every volunteer who supports Catholic Charities each year, but the one thing I do know is that they are here because of their deep commitment to helping out a neighbor in need.

If we highlighted every thing our volunteers do, this newsletter would read more like a novel.

As it is, we have included in this issue some of the sto-

ries of volunteers helping with feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and visiting the imprisoned. There are many more stories we hope to share with you in future issues.

In whichever way you are helping us, through volunteer hours or donations, know that you are close to our hearts and in our prayers.

Stephen Luteran, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.
Executive Director
Catholic Charities
of the Diocese of Arlington

Students Help Babies

Fifth graders at Angelus Academy in Springfield recently donated baskets of baby items to Catholic Charities' Children's Services. The students raised money through lemonade sales, allowance donations, and other means to purchase car safety seats, blankets, clothing, toys, formula, and diapers.

Children's Services' program director Linda Cullen said, "We thank the students and their teacher, Mrs. Clark, for their generosity. We will give these items to the mothers we serve—mothers in need as they struggle to prepare for the birth of their babies or to care for their newly arrived infants."



CCDA file photo

Angelus Academy students display baby items they donated to Catholic Charities' Children's Services.

Car Ministry Is Invaluable

Hamid and his parents now have a car, thanks to Catholic Charities' used car ministry program.

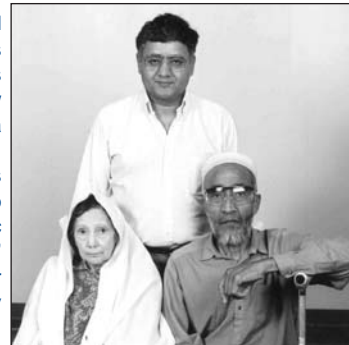


Photo by Laura Sikes, courtesy of CCUSA

Just ask Hamid if the used car he recently received from Catholic Charities had made a difference in his life. "This car lets me get to the job I was offered when I first arrived here, the job that right now is the sole income for my aging parents and me," he says.

Leaving the violence of their war-torn home in Afghanistan, Hamid and his parents are attempting to find normalcy and self-sufficiency in their lives. Low on funds but high on perseverance, Hamid says that the agency's used car ministry has given them "an invaluable gift," a reliable means of transportation for employment, food shopping, and medical appointments.

Used cars in good working condition may be donated by calling Harry Burke at 703-841-2531.

St. Martin's Senior Speaks Out on Capitol Hill

When the U.S. Senate Finance Committee held a bi-partisan press conference about a proposed economic stimulus package, a participant at Catholic Charities' St. Martin de Porres Senior Center volunteered to speak on behalf of seniors and to ask for inclusion of low-income seniors in the proposed package.

"I am here to remind Congress not to forget me and not to forget about 20 million other senior citizens. We too need a rebate check," said 85-year-old Pearl McCray at the February 5 event on Capitol Hill, organized by Senators Max Baucus (D-Montana) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa).

Pearl explained that, like many of her friends at St. Martin's, her only income is

Pearl McCray is introduced by Sen. Baucus as Sen. Grassley looks on at the Feb. 5 press conference called by the U.S. Senate Finance Committee.



Photo by Dipo O. Ogunrinde, courtesy of AARP

from Social Security and SSI, amounting to \$659 a month. "That has to pay for all my expenses, such as food and medicine. There are things I need but I can't afford.... I also worry if I have enough money to pay my bills—they keep going up. Sometimes I think that one day I won't be able to pay my electric bill," she said.

Pearl was happy to hear that a rebate for seniors was

included in the final legislation approved by Congress February 7 and subsequently signed into law by the president.

On March 28, St. Martin's hosted a free tax workshop, organized by Catholic Charities USA, to help seniors prepare 2007 tax returns in order to get the rebate. Call St. Martin's at 703-751-2766 for information.

Catholic Charities Classic

Play golf at Catholic Charities' 16th annual golf tournament on June 30 at the International Country Club, 13200 Lee Jackson Highway, in Fairfax.
Call 703-841-3835 for details, or go to www.cdda.net

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News In Brief

- Catholic Charities thanks the Fannie Mae Foundation for a \$26,790 check from the 2007 Help the Homeless Walkathon, an event supporting agencies working to end homelessness.
- ExxonMobil kindly contributed \$14,728.28 to Catholic Charities through the company's 2007 Employee's Favorite Charity Campaign. Its Community Summer Jobs Program is also contributing a \$2500 stipend to fund a student intern at Catholic Charities this coming summer.
- Catholic Charities was pleased to receive a \$5,000 grant from Shepherd's Gate, the grant program of Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, to cover medical prescriptions for the poor during Fiscal Year 2008.

- Burlington Coat Factory kindly donated 200 winter coats to Catholic Charities in January for distribution to the needy throughout the diocese.
- Thanks goes to Loudoun Cares, a nonprofit organization in Loudoun County, for awarding Hogar Hispano \$2,500 in January to help pay the heating bills of needy clients in Loudoun County.



Photo by Jeanne Spaeth

Christ House case manager Tom Bransfield receives blankets generously donated in March by the Pro-Life Group and the Men's Club of Holy Spirit Parish in Annandale.

Prison Ministry Volunteers Offer Hope and Kindness

Sr. Connie Parcasio has high praise for the volunteers who assist her in Catholic Charities' prison ministry program.

Marian Jones, who has been visiting inmates for more than 17 years, assists at the Fairfax Adult Detention Center with prayer groups and, when a priest is present, with preparations for Mass. At other times, she meets individually with women inmates to talk, read Scripture, and pray.

She says that inmates who are troubled by feelings of guilt and hopelessness will often ask, "Can God forgive me? How can he help me change my life?"

In response to such questions, Marian speaks of God's mercy and then tries to help the inmate figure out, "Where am I now in

my life, and where do I want to go from here?"

Within the past year, Marian was pleased to be able to instruct Elena (not her real name) in the tenets of the Catholic faith. Elena, who had been baptized a Catholic, had never really practiced her faith and told the Catholic chaplain of her wish to receive Holy Communion and confirmation. The chaplain asked Marian to meet weekly with Elena to review the Catechism, answer questions, and pray.

Marian says, "It was a joyous event in February when Elena, shortly after her release, was able to receive her first communion." Her



Prison ministry volunteer Marian Jones (center) meets with her fellow volunteers Dave Perko and Maria Celina Carillo.

CCDA file photo

confirmation followed a few weeks later in March.

In Marian's view, "Our prisons are the vineyards that Jesus speaks of. They are filled with men and women waiting to hear God's message of hope and salvation."

Anyone interested in helping may call Sr. Connie at 703-841-3832.

Volunteer ESL Teachers Welcome the Stranger



Bill and Carol Maxwell volunteer to teach.

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes offered by Catholic Charities' Hogar Hispano/Immigrant Services rely heavily on volunteers who conduct classes at 13 sites throughout the diocese. ESL program coordinator Amy White says, "Volunteers are the backbone of our program. Without them, we would not be able to reach as many students as we do. Volunteers wear many different hats—instructor, cheerleader, and often ambassador of American culture."

Volunteers receive training on teaching procedures and strategies at "Boot Camp"

before they are assigned to a classroom. Then, each following year, they continue to hone their teaching skills by attending workshops.

Bill Maxwell volunteered to teach at the suggestion of his wife Carol, who was serving as an ESL teacher at Hogar Hispano. He says, "The teaching is exceedingly rewarding" and "the students are smart and motivated—they know it is important to learn English and make sacrifices to do so."

Bill says he tells his students that "there are two aspects to learning English, the economic aspect and the family/social aspect." He tries to explain that English not only helps in the workplace but also aids family communication. If his students learn English, they can talk to their grandchildren, who most likely will speak only English.

"I have students from the Middle East, Japan, Central America, and South America,"

says Bill. "I tell them, 'Learn English so that you can tell your grandchildren your stories and your family history.'"

"One of my biggest regrets," says Bill, "is that my Polish grandfather never told me his stories." Bill says his grandfather, who sometimes cared for him, never learned English. "I loved my grandfather, and to this day I smell his pipe," says Bill, but "we could never really talk to each other because I did not understand Polish and he did not speak English."

Bill says, "I respect and admire my students very much. Many have difficult work schedules or hold two jobs. Many have come, like our grandparents, to a strange land to make a better life for themselves and their families. They want to be good citizens."

Anyone interested in volunteering to teach ESL may call Shelia Sullivan at 703-534-9805, ext. 238, or send an e-mail to ssullivan@ccda.net.