



Serving all regardless of background, faith, or circumstance.



Members and friends of VFW Post 8469 gathered at Catholic Charities St. Lucy Food Project warehouse in Manassas to pack boxes of food for distribution to vets, as well as to children at risk of hunger.

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Catholic Charities and Veterans: *Serving Those Who Served*

WITH THE PENTAGON AND A NUMBER OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS LOCATED within the Diocese of Arlington, it's no surprise that our diocese has a large population of veterans and active-duty personnel.

Unfortunately, many of the men and women who have served our country are among those neighbors who experience hunger or food insecurity.

Recently, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington partnered with Blue and Grey VFW Post 8469 in Fairfax Station to pack and distribute boxes of food to veterans in need.

The vets gathered in September at the Catholic Charities St. Lucy Food Project warehouse in Manassas to package donated food into individual boxes, each containing a three-day supply of meals.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge has expressed gratitude to active duty service members and veterans, as well as their spouses, for their sacrifices for our country. On his Walk Humbly podcast earlier this year, Bishop recognized members of the military community, saying, "What a great gift you are to our nation. We pray for you every day. We pray for your safety and protection, and so are grateful to God for the way you serve our great nation." †



A young friend helps box food for distribution to vets and children at risk of hunger.

“Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service.”

-Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Dear Friends,

The concept of service, of caring for our brothers and sisters in need, is foundational in our Catholic faith. For 47 years Catholic Charities has been charged with the responsibility to share God’s love and consolation with people who are suffering throughout our diocese.

In this issue of our newsletter, we gratefully acknowledge and celebrate all veterans, past and present, for their service, dedication, and their sacrifice. At Catholic Charities we are blessed to serve veterans who need our assistance. We are equally blessed to have veterans serving with us as employees and volunteers. Their leadership, their care and their compassion are beautiful examples of love in action.

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, let us be mindful of the men and women who safeguard our nation

around the world, holding them in prayer for their safety and well-being. Many of them will celebrate this holiday far from home and separated from loved ones. Please keep our veterans in prayer and if possible, consider making a gift to Catholic Charities so that we may continue to meet their needs.

Our ministry is made possible by the Holy Spirit and by your generosity. Thank you.

Yours in Christ,




STEPHEN CARATTINI
President and CEO
Catholic Charities of the
Diocese of Arlington



Saint Michael the Archangel, soldiers’ patron, stands guard in renovated Cathedral

Among the inspiring 23 new statues present inside the newly renovated Cathedral of St. Thomas More, the mother church of the Diocese of Arlington, is an exhilarating statue of Saint Michael the Archangel thrusting a sword into Satan.

Saint Michael is revered as the saint who fought, defeated, and cast into hell Satan, as written in the Book of Revelation. For this reason, he is embraced as the patron saint of soldiers and police, paramedics, the sick and dying.

One of three archangels named in Catholic tradition, along with Gabriel and Raphael, Saint Michael is known as the “Defender of Faith.” Within the Jewish tradition, he is considered a guardian of Israel. Michael is also known as our protector at death.

The statue of Saint Michael was donated by friends from the Diocese of Raleigh, where Bishop Michael Burbidge served before coming to Arlington.



Knights Ride for Mercy

In September, the Order of Malta Northern Virginia Region held its inaugural Mercy Ride cycling event to benefit Catholic Charities Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinics in Woodbridge and Manassas. The event took place at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church in Vienna.

In addition to 17 bikers that took part in the Virginia ride, multiple knights and dames of the Order of Malta living outside the Northern Virginia region collected donations by riding remotely.

These efforts reflect the lay religious order's commitment to serving "our lords, the sick and the poor" in the name of Jesus Christ.

Organizers hope the Mercy Ride will become an annual event with more regions of the Order participating in future years at an increasing scale.

Catholic Charities thanks the knights, dames, and their supporters for helping to serve the uninsured and underinsured in our diocese.

Bringing Peace to the Troubled, Feeding the Hungry, Welcoming the Stranger

Soldiers do not like war. They despise it. They do all they can to avoid war and the terrible harm it causes.

Firefighters do not like fires. They strive to prevent them and keep people safe.

Police don't like crime. They know of its violence and injustice. They work to lessen crime and protect us.

Soldiers, firefighters, and police do all they can to deter war, fires, and crime. It's the last thing they want. But when it happens, these men and women are there to help people in crisis and rescue them from harm and vulnerability. There is a fiery spirit of zeal burning in the hearts of soldiers and first responders who are always ready and willing to sacrifice whatever is necessary in order that life may be safeguarded and justice restored.

In St. Paul's second letter to Timothy (*2 Tim 2:3*) he uses the symbolism of *bearing our hardships as a soldier for Christ*. The military becomes an icon of what it means to lay down one's life for a friend. Through Catholic Charities we are all first responders and soldiers for Christ. This means bringing peace to the troubled, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger. It means being a witness of hope amidst desolation and despair. It means assisting victims of war and poverty – refugees, widows, orphans – and lifting up the poor.

We volunteer and contribute to Catholic Charities for two reasons: First, we do not like poverty. It diminishes life. We share so there will be a more just distribution of goods that God has entrusted to us. Secondly, we love the poor. We see the face of Christ in our brothers and sisters.

Thank you for being first responders and bringing Jesus to the wounded and brokenhearted in this world. We are called to be light to the battle weary.

Be His light. Bring His hope and you will discover more joy and peace than the world can promise.

Love and blessings,



Monsignor Robert Cilinski

MONSIGNOR ROBERT CILINSKI
Episcopal Vicar for
Charitable Works

Approximately
5.2 million
U.S. veterans
qualify as having a
behavioral health condition.

Learn how you can help.
See page 6

Up to 72%
of veterans report experiencing
high levels of stress in trying to transition
from military to civilian life.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2020.

Catholic Charities helps veteran to start a family



With assistance from Catholic Charities Pregnancy and Adoption Services, a veteran and his wife were able to adopt two daughters.

WHEN ROB WAS SIX YEARS OLD, he saw *Star Wars*. It made an impression on him, and he knew he wanted to fly. He also had a desire to do something meaningful, something that would, in a sense, help the world. That led him to earn his commission through the Naval ROTC program at the University of Southern California. He went on to earn his wings from the Naval Flight Officer School in Pensacola, Florida. Eventually he received orders to the Navy staff at the Pentagon. He now works in cybersecurity.

Rob eventually met and married Miriam. They both wanted a family but knew that adoption would be the way they would have children. Miriam had previously pursued adoption with another agency but was unsuccessful. “We checked out other agencies and eventually settled on Catholic Charities,” says Rob. “We are Southern Baptist, and we were interested in adopting from an agency that was more aligned with our values, as well as being local.”

It took a long time, but they eventually adopted two sisters from the Boston area. The girls come from a family of six siblings that had been spread out and were not together as one family unit. They couldn’t adopt all six, but, Rob says, “It’s good to know that we at least have kept these two sisters together.”

The girls experienced some difficult times growing up but are now doing much better with Rob and Miriam. “They are just normal little girls. One is a ravenous reader and the other is a vivacious lover of music.”

Rob is thankful for the support of Catholic Charities staff through the process. “In the end, I believe our persistence and faith paid off,” he says. “As far as we’re concerned, we had many struggles yet God kept my hand on the tiller through the storm.” †



Learn more about Pregnancy and Adoption Services

Catholic Charities believes that adoption is a lifelong journey, one that impacts all members of the adoption triad (birth family, adoptive family, and adoptee). Therefore, we remain a lifelong resource for all of our clients.

Learn more at <https://www.ccca.net/need-help/pregnancy-and-adoption-services/>



A Heart for Service

Meet the Chairman of the Catholic Charities Board



Major General Kelly McKeague speaks to the Air Force Honor Guard after a POW/MIA ceremony.

KELLY MCKEAGUE WAS RAISED TO understand the call to service. His father was an enlisted soldier in the Army, a combat veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Because of that, “I understood the demands, opportunities, and lifestyle of military service,” he says.

He attended Georgia Tech on a ROTC scholarship and was commissioned into the Air Force. After a career as a civil engineering officer with several assignments at the Pentagon, he retired at the rank of major general.

He continues to serve in a Department of Defense mission that searches for, recovers, and identifies the remains of American service members missing from past wars. He sees it as a corporal work of mercy, affording families the opportunity to bury a loved one who has been missing for decades. On top of that, he is preparing to become a Permanent Deacon for the diocese.

While living in the area, he and his wife, Nancy, have volunteered at Catholic Charities Christ House. McKeague

“Jesus’ entreaty to all of us that *whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me* is our call to action.”

— KELLY MCKEAGUE

notes that volunteering and his faith are “absolutely tied together. Jesus’ entreaty to all of us is a call to action: *whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me*. Volunteering is both an embodiment of this charge and a meaningful opportunity to serve those among us who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.”

When McKeague returned to Northern Virginia after retirement, he was asked by Bishop Loverde to serve on the Board. Now in his second year as Board Chairman, he says that the experience “has only reinforced how impactful Catholic Charities continues to be.” A primary goal of his is to focus on how Charities’ revenues can best address the increasing demands on its services.

McKeague’s role with Catholic Charities is not limited to volunteering. “My wife and I have been long-time donors to Catholic Charities through the Parish Christmas Collection and Ball. Over the years, we’ve increased our donations because we have seen the transformative power of Catholic Charities in dutifully serving our less fortunate neighbors.” †



Top: McKeague speaks with Vietnamese workers assisting the recovery of U.S. remains. Bottom: Paying respects to a family whose missing loved one was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.



Call for Volunteers!

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



Facing a New Fight

Veterans make up a significant part of the population living within the 21 counties and seven cities of the diocese. Some 168,000 veterans live in Northern Virginia. When these former service members return home, some face a new fight: combating mental health struggles that remain, even long after active duty.

Many veterans report elevated levels of anxiety, depression, or difficulties in relationships. Others experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which includes symptoms like heightened emotions, nightmares, hypervigilance, and flashbacks. Additional challenges veterans may experience are addiction, homelessness, and a higher risk of suicide.

Unfortunately, due to stigmas against mental health struggles and the difficulty of finding a counselor familiar with veterans' needs, few former service men or women receive appropriate mental health support.

What can be done to support our veterans? First, we should recognize their sacrifice and thank them.

Secondly, we can help them get the mental health counseling they need. Learn more below. †



Learn more about Mental Health Counseling for Veterans

Catholic Charities offers counseling services to veterans in need. If you or a loved one is a veteran looking for mental health support, reach out to our Family Services ministry which offers in-person and virtual counseling, and can provide resources to meet your needs. **Receive assessment services by calling our intake line at (540) 388-3960.**

Mental health tips to help veterans manage stressors



- 1 Stay connected** – Social connections are a strong resource for mental health. Veteran support groups, church communities, or adult sports leagues can be wonderful places to build relationships and support.
- 2 Explore hobbies** – Having or developing a hobby is a fantastic way to reduce stress and connect with others. If you have an interest such as reading, woodworking, dancing, or something else, it can be a terrific way to find balance and direction.
- 3 Treat yourself** – Recognizing your own self-worth will increase your confidence and help manage stress. Treat yourself to a movie out, grab a bite at your favorite restaurant, or have that extra scoop of ice cream at the end of the day. Just remember, all good things in moderation!
- 4 Go for a walk** – Being out in the fresh air and hearing the sounds of nature promotes a sense of peace, and grounds you in the present moment. Allow yourself to enjoy the beauty around you.
- 5 Seek professional help** – If you're having challenges adjusting to civilian life, it can be helpful to talk to someone – especially a fellow veteran who is trained in mental health care.

Meet Major George Kufuor

Major George Kufuor enlisted in the United States Army following 9/11. He is a member of the vibrant Ghana Catholic Community (GCC), which worships at St. Mary of Sorrows. GCC demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to serving the poor by its support of diocesan Catholic Charities. Kufuor volunteers with GCC to prepare and serve the evening meal at Catholic Charities Christ House in Alexandria. Once, he even flew back from Germany – at his own expense – to volunteer. Below is his story, in his own words.



A Mother's Inspiration

My journey began in Ghana, a land rich with culture and traditions, but it was the move to the United States that truly shaped my path. Leaving behind the familiar warmth of my homeland, I arrived in a new world with endless opportunities and challenges.

My mother, Mary (alias Obaa Yaa), a pillar of strength and wisdom, played a crucial role in guiding me through this transition. Her unwavering faith and commitment to my education set the foundation for my growth. She taught me what it means to be generous by showing kindness, humility, and a sense of responsibility towards others.

She showed me the importance of participation in our faith community. Through being an altar server and choir member, I learned the value of service, devotion, and the joy of giving back. Her persistent encouragement to assist those in need, even when faced with our own challenges, has been a beacon of inspiration.

Her lessons continue to drive me forward, motivating me to embrace my role as a servant leader and to make a positive impact on the lives of those around me, including my wife and two children.

The Joy of Service

As the Bible says, to whom much is given, much will be demanded. I joined the Army as a way of giving back to America the many blessings I have received, and to protect the opportunities and the many blessings for others.

I learned about Christ House through the Ghana Catholic Community. The dedication and joy they displayed made me want to join them. As one wonderful man used to say, "What is faith without action?" Volunteering gives me the opportunity to practice my faith, which teaches me about feeding the hungry and giving a drink to the thirsty.

Volunteering gives me great joy. It helps me perform God's work here on earth. Therefore, regardless of the distance



Members of GCC evening meal volunteers celebrating 15 years of service at Catholic Charities Christ House.

and cost, I try to be there whenever it's the Community's turn to prepare the evening meal. Volunteering is a reminder that every act of kindness, no matter how small, has the power to make a significant difference in someone's life.

It does not take much to do good and help the less fortunate. You can be a good neighbor by offering your time to serve those in need. It can be a simple act of kindness, like driving around and handing out water to those working in extreme heat. Volunteering is more than hours or money spent. It's the love and hope we share with others that inspires them to do likewise. †



Call for Volunteers!

To learn more about Catholic Charities volunteer opportunities and ways you can get involved, please scan the QR code, visit volunteer.ccca.net, or email Debra Beard at debra.beard@ccca.net.



SCAN ME



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 a 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 a 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.

It's Easy to Donate Online!

To make a gift online, visit ccda.net/donate or scan here →



Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events!

Nov. 11, 2024	Veterans Day
Dec. 3, 2024	Giving Tuesday
Dec. 7-8, 2024	Parish Christmas Collection
Feb. 7, 2025	Catholic Charities Ball

CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

*Join Us—Together,
We're Transforming Lives!*



Join Our Online Community



ccda.net



200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22203

Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.