

Serving all regardless of background, faith, or circumstance.



St. Margaret of Cortona residents participate in flower arranging workshop.

“Nothing is impossible for a woman who knows she is loved.”

One mother’s journey to sobriety and self-sufficiency

“ALEX,” A SINGLE MOM, WAS LIVING out of a hotel with her daughter. She had a job but was struggling with alcoholism, desperate to escape the negative cycle she was in, and provide a brighter future for her child. Alex had the desire to do better but she needed help to find a way out.

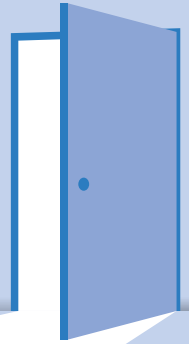
Then she found Catholic Charities St. Margaret of Cortona program. This transitional housing ministry provides shelter and support to single moms like Alex, and single pregnant women facing homelessness.

Alex made the courageous decision to move into St. Margaret’s, distancing herself and her daughter from negative influences.

Mothers who come to St. Margaret’s are given their own apartment, fully decorated and with gently-used furniture. Their children receive a new stuffed animal and toy. New appliances and housewares are also provided. When mothers graduate, they may take anything they need to begin their new life.

Residents are provided with resources to lead them on a path toward success and

Open the Door to Second Chances



By your generosity to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, you support **SECOND CHANCES** for

- women and children
- prisoners
- those seeking economic self-sufficiency

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“Each mother is on a hero’s journey.”

– “ALEX”, SINGLE-MOTHER

independence. Classes are offered in debt reduction, budgeting, savings, parenting, nutrition, cooking, even renters’ knowledge. A professional therapist is available, since the majority of women, including their children, come from trauma.

→ *Continued inside*

“...it is always possible to begin anew, because there is always a new life that God can awaken in us in spite of all our failures.”

-Pope Francis, Easter Vigil Homily, April 2021

Dear Friends,

Thank God for second chances! I can personally attest to a lifetime of second, and third and fourth chances that I have benefitted from and may not have deserved. In this issue of our newsletter, you will encounter stories of people who have, through your generosity, received an opportunity to *begin anew*.

Whether it be a mother and her children seeking a new beginning at our Saint Margaret of Cortona Transitional Housing ministry, or someone being released from prison, or young students just beginning their journey in a new school, we are extraordinarily blessed to be able to extend God's mercy to people throughout our diocese.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for Catholic Charities and most especially for the people we serve. Please be assured of our prayers for you and your families this summer, and always.

Gratefully yours in Christ,



STEPHEN CARATTINI

President and CEO

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington

Continued from front cover

“Nothing is impossible for a woman who knows she is loved.”

Residents are required to work at least 30 hours a week. This could be a combination of work and classes toward receiving a degree so they can earn above minimum wage. Mothers are also required to save a portion of their income.

Caseworker Fadumo Ahmed describes Alex as having “remarkable resilience,” adding, “She worked hard to rebuild her life, attending AA meetings, paying off debts, and saving each month.”

Two years later and with the help of Catholic Charities and our supporters, Alex has managed to build a new life for herself and her teenage daughter.

Alex is also pursuing her GED. The diploma she will soon receive is a testament to her commitment to personal and professional growth.

Alex' transformation is just one of the many which take place at St. Margaret's, which currently houses up to 12 families. “Our dream is to have a larger facility, so we can help even more families,” says Program Director Kristin Coleman.

Kristin adds, “Each mother is on a hero's journey. No family's journey is the same. But they do all desperately need to know one truth: that they are loved. They are loved by us, and they are loved by God the Father. Nothing is impossible for a woman who knows she is loved.” †



Colorful floral arrangements displayed by St. Margaret of Cortona residents.



Learn how to help Catholic Charities St. Margaret of Cortona at [ccda.net/need-help/housing/family-housing-\(st--margaret\)](https://ccda.net/need-help/housing/family-housing-(st--margaret))



Dorian Springs in front of a painting at Christ House. The artwork, by John Kramer, shows a former resident receiving help, and - after graduating from the program - giving someone else help. The image symbolized financial self-sufficiency and spiritual renewal.

“God led me to Christ House. He made that call.”

DORIAN SPRINGS WANTS TO BE A testimony for others. “I want to give them some good words of encouragement: you can do it. God is with you. Don’t throw in the towel.”

Dorian had been working in the hospitality industry, but his hours were cut back. Trying to pay off his bills with credit cards, he accumulated more and more debt.

“You can do it. God is with you. Don’t throw in the towel.”

– DORIAN SPRINGS

He got so far behind in his rent, that he came home one day to find that management had locked him out of his apartment. He ended up losing all of his possessions.

Without a home, and with lots of stress and anxiety, Dorian says, “I didn’t know what direction to go.”

But then, “God led me to Christ House. He made that call.”

The transitional housing program at Catholic Charities Christ House accommodates up to 14 men. The mission statement is, *Economic self-sufficiency: spiritual renewal*. When a resident like Dorian lives at Christ House, he’s accompanied by staff and volunteers to help him meet those goals.

Longtime volunteer William Schuyler, also a Catholic Charities board member, notes that journey is often bumpy. In Dorian’s case, “he struggled to figure out what he wanted from his career and how to balance that with his other objectives.” But being coached and advised by the team helped him to figure out what was truly meaningful to him, and to see God’s presence in his life.

For Dorian’s action plan, he planned to get a job with better hours, create a budget to address his debt, and lower his anxiety level. Dorian was guided a case worker and by the CAN (Christians

Are Networking) team. They met weekly to help him with his resume, job coaching, and mock interviews. He was even able to get a suit from Christ House’s Clothing Closet.

Dorian’s spiritual life also improved. He was Christian but, “I wasn’t going anywhere in my faith.” He was inspired by the Sunday night Bible study lead by Deacon Mike O’Neill of Good Shepherd parish. Dorian got into the habit of reading scripture, and learned to have an interior life with God.

Eventually, Dorian got a job with better hours. After that, he moved on to an even better full-time job at a high-end hotel in Tysons Corner. He’s been there for about seven months, and has paid off a large amount of his debt. He’s such a hard worker, he had to be convinced to take some much-deserved time off!

Dorian met his goal of financial independence. He’s accumulated savings and has moved out on his own. He has learned how to process stress, and has developed a habit of prayer.

“Now I read the scriptures every night and go to bed in peace.” †



Learn more about the Catholic Charities Christ House

To learn more about Christ House’s initiatives, visit: [ccda.net/need-help/housing/men-s-housing-\(christ-house\)](https://ccda.net/need-help/housing/men-s-housing-(christ-house))

“People are really good at heart”

Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed that a farmer plants. It grows at night when he is sleeping, but he knows not how. It's the smallest seed, which grows to the largest of plants. That something so tiny could rise to something so large suggested divine activity.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he faced opposition. To follow Him would mean that you had to take up your cross. Some asked him if it was worth it. So he compared the Kingdom of God to the seed. The seed already has the power and force within it to be successful and bear much fruit. Our work is to keep planting.

Don't give up if you find that your own "mustard seed" has humble beginnings. We all need second chances. When we don't see immediate results, we don't give up on the good we are doing. Tell yourself that you're like the farmer. The seed does not germinate the same day it is planted. Give it time.

Jesus inspires us not to give up despite small progressions. Do your part. Keep doing good things. And when the time comes, you'll be surprised. Parents don't give up on their children; they might not get it the first time, second time, or third time, but eventually they get it and they blossom and grow.

The staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities encourage those whom we serve. The seeds are planted in us at our baptism, confirmation, and every time we receive the Eucharist. Our faith needs time to come to fruition. We don't give up on others or ourselves. We strive to be more like Christ each day.

At 14 years of age, Anne Frank wrote in her diary, "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart... I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right... In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out."

Thanks for being part of Catholic Charities and doing the planting. We rejoice in how God takes care of the growth.

Love and blessings,



F. Robert Cilinski

FATHER ROBERT CILINSKI
Episcopal Vicar for Charitable Works



Daisy and Edwin Finney with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, President and CEO, Stephen Carattini

Honoring 40-year Volunteer for Catholic Charities Christ House

At the 50th anniversary celebration for Catholic Charities Christ House Daisy Finney, along with her husband Edward, were honored for their volunteering. Daisy has served the evening meal there for the past 40 years, and would take personal time off to volunteer.



Congrats, Students!

Catholic Charities recently presented achievement awards to refugee students served through our participation in students in the Virginia Refugee Student Achievement Project (VRSAP) program.



As part of the diocesan Golden Jubilee year, Bishop Burbidge said Mass in a local jail, joined by prison ministry volunteers.

Ministry helps inmates find faith inside

FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES, THE Catholic prison ministry at the Alexandria Adult Detention Center had been going strong. Every week, a Catholic priest and volunteers came to the jailhouse to celebrate Mass with about 40 inmates.

Then Covid hit and everything was shut down. For almost three years, no outside ministries were allowed inside the jail.

But the prison ministry got a second chance.

It took a lot of work but last year the jail allowed the Catholic ministry back inside for Confessions and Mass. Several volunteers, including a cantor and piano player show up each Wednesday. This spring Bishop Michael Burbidge celebrated Mass inside the jail.

Alexandria prison ministry coordinator Philippe Bruno was instrumental in reviving the ministry.

“They recognized the impact we were having on the inmates,” Bruno says of prison officials. “They like it and they come back. Many of these guys were

“**I tell them, you’re going to spend some time here. Let’s make the best use of your time while you’re here”**

– PHILIPPE BRUNO,
ALEXANDRIA PRISON
MINISTRY COORDINATOR

Catholic way, way back and lost their faith. Now they’re interested and they keep coming back.”

Bruno, a retired international trade attorney, has been volunteering for Catholic Charities for many years. “I wanted to give back and I wanted to do it one-on-one,” Bruno says. “I wanted to be in the trenches. I called Catholic Charities.”

The ministry, a longtime collaboration between Catholic Charities and local parishes, was started by Father Jack O’Hara. “We owe him a huge debt of gratitude,” Bruno says.

Outside of Mass there is not a lot of interaction with the inmates. It is a prison, after all. “But they observe us and our demeanor, the way we pray during mass. What the priest or deacon says in his homily has an impact on the inmates. We have an impact; I can tell you we’ve had conversions”.

Bruno remembers one man awaiting his jury trial for a serious crime – after which he would be sent to a state prison.

“He had no faith. Little by little, one day he came to me and said, ‘I’d like to become a Catholic.’ I said, “You need to go through a certain religious education.” He said, “That’s ok. I want to become baptized and become a Catholic.” He went on to state prison where he planned to complete the rite of Christian initiation.

Now inmates are asking him to talk about what they’re experiencing at Mass. So, in June, the Prison Ministry team began offering monthly Bible studies for men and for women.

“I tell them, you’re going to spend some time here. Let’s make the best use of your time while you’re here,” Bruno concluded. †



Interested in volunteering?

Catholic Charities works with parishes to recruit volunteers for prison ministries. Register on the Catholic Charities website to be referred to the prison ministry lead closest to the detention center you wish to serve.

Visit bit.ly/PMCCDA or scan here



It's Easy to Donate Online!

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Catholic Charities Future Needs

You can leave Catholic Charities, Diocese of Arlington, a gift in your Will or Trust with as little as one sentence.

For instructions, view our website ccda.net or contact John French at (703) 841-3819 or at john.french@arlingtondiocese.org.

Mark Your Calendar



Sept. 23-29, 2024	National Migration Week
Nov. 17, 2024	World Day of the Poor
Dec. 14-15, 2024	Parish Christmas Collection
Feb. 7, 2025	Catholic Charities Ball



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 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.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON
Join Us! Together, We're Transforming Lives.



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Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.