

*Serving all regardless of background, faith, or circumstance.*



*The staff and volunteers of Christ House strive to meet the material – and spiritual – needs of the residents.*

## “God chose Christ House for me”

**P**PETER COULDN'T SEEM TO GET his life on the right path. First his mother died of COVID, then his stepfather died. Peter was diabetic, and he began to drink to numb his pain. He lost his job.

Peter needed a place where he could rebuild himself. His caseworker recommended Catholic Charities Christ House. He's now a resident there, finding the spiritual, emotional, and educational support to help him get on track. “It's brought me back. I've been sober for 42 days now, looking for jobs, and I'm very happy to be here,” he says.

Catholic Charities Christ House is a transitional housing ministry that

supports men in need of shelter, workforce development, and life skills training. Through job coaching, the residents receive assistance with writing a resume and practicing for interviews.

Peter praises the staff and volunteers for guiding the residents in many different ways. “They take time out of their busy schedule to really make sure my life improves, both in a spiritual way and in an economic way. Without them, it would be very difficult. I'm very lucky that they give their time freely to us.”

Spiritual growth has also played an important role during Peter's time at Christ House. He credits the staff

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### GET SOCIAL

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“I think everyone deserves a fresh start or they need a second chance. Jesus is here for us and here to serve us and give us that second chance. At Christ House, if you knock, seek, and ask, you'll get it.”

– PETER,  
CHRIST HOUSE CLIENT

– he calls them “the guardians of Christ House” – for contributing to this important aspect of his life. Peter explained, “We have Tuesday meetings where we go through the Litany of Saint

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*“This couple, though weary and poor, will bring a new king to your door.”*

-Rita A. Simmonds

Dear Friends in Christ,

Each day at Catholic Charities we open our door, and in the guise of the homeless, the hungry, the unborn, the elderly, the anxious, and the lost, we welcome Jesus. We are profoundly grateful to God, and to each of you, for making this welcome possible.

In this issue of *The Mission*, you will encounter a resident of our men's transitional housing shelter attempting to change his life; a story of collaboration with parishes and the Knights of Columbus enabling people to enjoy a nutritious meal at Thanksgiving; and a story of a day of appreciation for patients and their families.

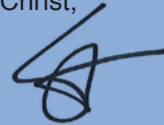
You will also find information regarding two of our most important fundraising efforts that will take place in the coming months: our annual parish Christmas collection, and our upcoming Catholic Charities Ball. Over the past years, and decades, thousands of people have

provided the funds necessary for us to carry out, and expand, our ministries.

This Christmas season let us all be reminded that it is most often *the weary and the poor* who will in fact *bring Christ to our door*.

On behalf of the dedicated employees and volunteers of Catholic Charities, and most especially all of the people entrusted to our care, Merry Christmas.

Gratefully yours in Christ,




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

*Continued from front cover*

**“God chose Christ House for me”**

Joseph and go over the readings. It's really helped me find my way back to God. Having that is important to me, becoming the man I should be.”

The volunteers at Catholic Charities have inspired Peter to give back. He says, “Living at Christ House, I see what they do here. I want to be active and help in my community, do some volunteer work. Of course, I want to have a good job and pay my bills and support my family and my friends. But I really see the charity aspect here. So, I want to start giving back.”

He adds, “I think everyone deserves a fresh start or they need a second chance. Jesus is here for us and here to serve us and give us that second chance. At Christ House, if you knock, seek, and ask, you'll get it.”

As Peter reflects on the journey that led him to Christ House, and his progress since then, he concludes, “I walked away from God, but God never walked away from me. So that's why I think God put me here. I really do. I think He chose Christ House for me.” †



*Peter tends the garden behind Christ House*



## 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.**



**Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events!**

**Dec. 31, 2024** Deadline for 2024 Charitable Contributions

**Feb. 7, 2025** Catholic Charities Ball

## "You Are Christmas"

What is the first image that comes to mind when you think of Christmas? Maybe it's a family gathering in front of a warm glowing fire sharing the season's spirit of love. Maybe it's a special place where you traveled.

I hope you will pause and reflect on another image and location: a baby born to poor parents in a humble stable in Bethlehem and placed in a manger. Shepherds were the first to adore Him. Recall the scene that is beautifully divine and human. This scene, this moment in history, was truly God becoming human and living among us. Because of Christmas, we can radiate that same joy and love that Mary and Joseph felt and the peace that only Christ can bring.

Catholic Charities is blessed by people like you who live the Christmas spirit throughout the year as expressed by Pope Francis' reflection.

*Excerpt from "Christmas Greetings" by Pope Francis*

**Christmas is you**, when you decide to be born again each day and let God into your soul.

**The Christmas angels are you**, when you sing to the world a message of peace, justice and love.

**The Christmas star is you**, when you lead someone to meet the Lord.

**The Christmas gift is you**, when you are truly friend and brother [sister] of every human being.

*A very Merry Christmas for all those who are Christmas.*

Christmas Blessings,



*Magn. Bob Cilinski*

**MONSIGNOR ROBERT CILINSKI**  
*Episcopal Vicar for Charitable Works*





# CATHOLIC CHARITIES BALL

**FEBRUARY 7, 2025**

6:00 PM at The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner

“MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH JOY AND PEACE”

## JOIN US FOR THE 43RD CATHOLIC CHARITIES BALL!

This elegant annual winter tradition has been gathering members of the Catholic Charities community from throughout the diocese since 1982 for a festive evening to celebrate the good work of Catholic Charities and raise funds to serve the poor, protect the vulnerable and welcome the newcomer.

We hope that you will join us to gather and celebrate with over one thousand members of the Catholic Charities community.

Help us meet our goal of raising \$1.6 million.



[ccda.net/Ball](https://ccda.net/Ball)

To make a reservation or to donate,  
please visit [ccda.net/ball](https://ccda.net/ball), or scan the code

Serve the poor. Protect the vulnerable. Welcome the newcomer.



Holy Spirit Catholic School sponsored a "Ton of Love" food drive.

## Feeding hungry families during the holidays

**D**URING THE WINTER MONTHS Catholic Charities works hard not only to provide food for hungry individuals and families throughout the diocese, but also to make sure neighbors have the festive foods that help make a Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday meal.

This couldn't be done without the help of our parishes and other partners, including Knights of Columbus councils around the diocese.

In Arlington, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church asked the St. Lucy Food Project for help picking up and storing 200 turkeys which the parish had purchased and planned to distribute prior to Thanksgiving. Catholic Charities will return the turkeys on distribution day and help pass them out from the back of its refrigerated truck.

In Clifton, the Knights of Columbus Council from St. Andrew and St. Clare of Assisi churches launched their annual food drive to collect all the food needed for a traditional Thanksgiving feast: frozen turkeys, gravy, vegetables, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, fruit, stuffing, instant mashed potatoes, rolls, cookies, and juice. The Knights typically collect and pack more than 100 meals which St. Lucy sends to its three pantries or other pantries throughout the diocese.


And at Catholic Charities Alexandria Food Pantry on Eisenhower Avenue we held our first ever drive-thru



Students from John Paul the Great High School spent a day volunteering at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center.


distribution of almost 200 Thanksgiving dinners: turkey or halal chicken, and all the trimmings for a Thanksgiving feast.

In Front Royal, one generous friend donated almost 200 turkeys of various weights to our Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry to provide to those in need. St. Lucy will continue feeding hungry families for the holiday and beyond. †



How can you help?

To learn how you can host a drive or where you can drop off a food donation at our local pantries and warehouse, visit [ccda.net/give-help/donate-and-distribute-food/](https://ccda.net/give-help/donate-and-distribute-food/) or scan the QR code below.





President and CEO Stephen Carattini thanked the cooking crew.



Guests received free haircuts.

## Patient Appreciation Day

### *Catholic Charities gives patients a dose of love and special attention*

**F**OR THE SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR, Catholic Charities Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinics stretched beyond health care to offer TLC – tender, loving care – to about 800 patients or their family members on Sept. 21.

Patient Appreciation Day was held at Mother of Mercy’s Woodbridge clinic on a picture-perfect Saturday with more than 60 volunteers from Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church, All Saints Catholic Church, the Cursillo and Emmaus movements, as well as

family members of staff. They worked the grills and food tables, bounce house, face painting and raffle ticket stations, and gave haircuts and manicures.

Catholic Charities St. Lucy Food Project provided 100 bags of food for patients. Generous donors provided a wealth of prizes, including TVs, tablets, cooking and other kitchen items, jewelry, paintings, and more.

“Bishop Burbidge calls us to a ‘radical solidarity’ with the people entrusted to our care,” said Catholic Charities President and CEO Stephen Carattini. “Days like this where people are offered the opportunity to be celebrated, to be recognized, and to be appreciated are an important part of our ministry at Catholic Charities.”

“Many of our patients and their families cannot afford professional services like photography, haircuts, facials, and makeup,” said Clinic Director Alexandra Luevano. She said one couple, a husband and wife both dealing with complex medical issues, said how refreshing the day was for them.



A young guest enjoyed face painting and a treat.

“It really helps since we aren’t working right now due to recent surgery. We truly needed this,” one patient told Luevano.

“An event like this cannot happen without the support and hard work of so many staff and volunteers from local parishes and our community: parking attendants, hair stylists, manicurists, makeup artists, massage therapists, cooks and grill masters, and so many others, who gave of their time to make someone else feel appreciated and loved,” Carattini said. “It was beautiful to behold.” †

“An event like this cannot happen without the support and hard work of so many staff and volunteers... It was beautiful to behold.”

– STEPHEN CARATTINI,  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

# Thank you to all our volunteers!



**A special thanks to all of our volunteers who make our mission possible.**

*Top to bottom*

- The Knights of Columbus Council #459 at the Basilica of Saint Mary collected food and money for the Saint Lucy Food Project.
- A volunteer teacher at the Education and Workforce Development ministry.
- Executive leaders from Inova Fairfax Hospital helped the St. Lucy Food Project by knocking out 5 full bins of food donations and helping pack all the food on the shelves.
- Nativity Catholic School hosted a “Loads of Hope” collection to donate laundry detergent for those in need.
- Volunteers from George Mason University Campus Catholic Ministry worked at the food pantry.
- Students from Saint John Paul the Great High School helped to unload, sort, and pack food and hygiene donations.



## Call for Volunteers!

To learn more about our volunteer opportunities and ways you can get involved, please scan the QR code, visit [volunteer.cdda.net](http://volunteer.cdda.net), or email Debra Beard at [debra.beard@cdda.net](mailto:debra.beard@cdda.net).



SCAN ME

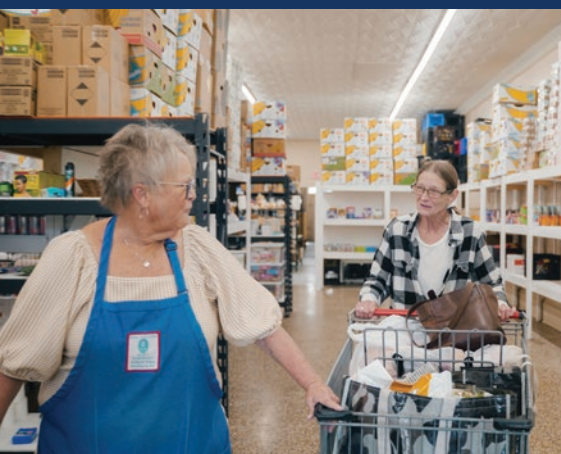
# Together in *Hope*



## 2024 Parish Christmas Collection

Make a gift today!

Donate online at [ccda.net/Christmas](https://ccda.net/Christmas)  
or scan the QR code



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

Join Our Online Community



[ccda.net](https://ccda.net)

Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.