

Serving all regardless of background, faith, or circumstance.



April is
National
Volunteer
Month

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At Catholic Charities St. Margaret of Cortona Transitional Housing, single mothers are provided with a safe place for their families to live while they work towards a brighter future.

“WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?”

THE PLACE SALLY CALLS HOME looks like a typical suburban apartment building with toys scattered in the gated driveway and a school across the street. But what makes this particular place special is that it is the home of Catholic Charities Transitional Housing for Women and Children.

She calls it the most peaceful place she has ever been.

Sally—not her real name—and her two boys came to Catholic Charities transitional housing for women in 2023. She was referred to Catholic Charities by the woman’s shelter she went to after leaving her abusive husband.

“I had never heard of it, but now, these people are like family,” said the

mother of two boys, while sitting in her immaculate living room with pictures, and bread on the counter. “I feel very secure here.”

Catholic Charities St. Margaret of Cortona Transitional Housing opened in 2009. Bishop Paul Loverde wanted to do more to help single mothers, so the diocese bought an old, run-down apartment complex and transformed it into a loving community. The facility allows both pregnant women and single mothers find their footing and sets them on a successful path.

By the time you read this Sally will have taken her final exams to become an LPN, a licensed practical nurse.

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Why We Don’t Always Use Photos of Clients

Whenever possible, we like to show photos of actual clients, so that you can see the grateful faces of those you have helped.

However, that’s not always possible. A mother escaping abuse may need to keep her whereabouts secret to protect herself and her children. A parishioner receiving mental health counseling for depression might not want to share his or her experience publicly.

We are grateful for people like “Sally” who share their story. For each Sally you read about, there are countless others whose lives have been transformed because of you.

“His mother said to the servants,
‘Do whatever he tells you.’”

-John 2:5

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many years ago on a parish retreat, our spiritual guide shared that the most important advice we will ever receive is ‘listen to your mother.’ I reflect ruefully on how many times I failed to heed that advice and ended up in embarrassing and even harmful situations.

Mothers occupy a preeminent place in our lives, and in our faith, none more so than our Mother Mary. At the wedding feast in Cana, we find her acting in love and concern for the wedding hosts and guests, and for each of us. Like any mother, she wants what is best for you and me, and so she directs us to listen to her son, and then do whatever he tells us.

At Catholic Charities, we take this mandate to heart. Jesus tells us to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, care for the sick, and serve the poor. Among the most vulnerable we are blessed to serve are mothers and their children who have experienced homelessness, or who require medical care, or who might be seeking a

child to adopt. In each case we recognize the challenges and blessings of being a mother and seek to help them recognize and acknowledge that they are beloved by God.

Mothers and their children can live with us, for example, at our Saint Margaret of Cortona Transitional Housing Ministry for up to two years. We can offer them this precious time because so many of you have made the decision to support us with your prayers and financial gifts. We are grateful.

As we celebrate Mother’s Day, I humbly ask that you remember in prayer the moms who are entrusted to our care.

Gratefully yours in Christ,



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



In March, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) held their annual Hooley to benefit Catholic Charities Christ House.

Guests enjoyed Irish food, music, and dancing. Geraldine Byrne Nason, the Irish Ambassador to the United States, shared inspiring words and helped make the evening truly special.

Thank you to the AOH, the Basilica of Saint Mary, and Very Rev. Edward Hathaway, Rector, for their ministry of compassion and service to those in need.





All Saints Catholic High School

A BIG Thanks!

Thanks to the students from All Saints Catholic School, Bishop Ireton High School, and Queen of Apostles Catholic School for collecting food and preparing kits to help those in need!



Bishop Ireton High School



Queen of Apostles Catholic School

What a Wonderful World

In 1967, the Vietnam war was raging. The nation was divided. There was tension about unequal housing, discriminatory enforcement of laws, and a lack of human decency. Yet in the middle of the night Louis Armstrong stepped up to the mic to record a song about light and hope.

He sang “What a Wonderful World,” not because everything was wonderful, but precisely because it wasn’t. He performed one of the most peaceful songs ever recorded. He chose to sing a message of hope and light. When the world seemed dark and heavy, he wanted to remind us to see *trees of green, red roses too; skies of blue; to hear babies cry and watch them grow; to see friends shaking hands saying “I love you.”*

In the middle of the night, he stepped up to the mic to sing about hope. Not an idealistic kind of hope, but a hope that was necessary.

When I think of the work of Catholic Charities providing medical care, food, transitional housing, migrant and refugee services, mental health counseling, emergency assistance, and pregnancy and adoption support, I am reminded of the lyrics of this uplifting song and people who say, “I love you.”

When you make a sacrificial gift to Catholic Charities, it’s like getting up in the middle of the night, stepping up to the mic, and singing a message of hope. We say, “*What a Wonderful World*” precisely when it’s not. It’s a hope that is needed. Thank you!



Monsignor Robert Cilinski

MONSIGNOR ROBERT CILINSKI
Episcopal Vicar for
Charitable Works

Restoring Hope: A Journey of Dignity and New Beginnings



Christopher Toth and his fiancée select items at one of our store-like food pantries.

CHRISTOPHER TOTH'S LIFE TOOK an unexpected turn when he lost his job.

What followed was a difficult season marked by financial instability and the painful reality of homelessness. Like many people facing hardship, asking for help did not come easily.

"I felt like I would be looked down upon by my peers and staff," Christopher shared. "It was a little cumbersome for me to ask for help. I am the type of person who feels I can do it all on my own."

Despite his hesitation, Christopher reached out to Catholic Charities. What he encountered was compassion, not judgment.

Thanks to your support, Christopher received the food assistance he needed to make it through the month and

regain a sense of stability. Beyond meeting his immediate needs, the support he received helped relieve the constant stress and uncertainty that had weighed heavily on him.

Perhaps the most meaningful impact was the way he was treated throughout the process. Christopher was not seen simply as someone in need—he was welcomed with respect, recognizing his inherent dignity and potential.

That approach made all the difference.

Without the pressure of worrying about basic necessities like food, Christopher was able to begin focusing on rebuilding his future. For him, hope now looks like the ability to move forward without constant anxiety about daily survival.

"Hope for the future is not having to worry about food," he says.

"That relief from stress allows me to focus on getting back to the next level and giving back to the community."

Christopher's story reflects the deeper mission of Catholic Charities: not only to provide immediate assistance, but to restore confidence, dignity, and opportunity for those facing difficult circumstances.

Every day, your support helps Catholic Charities to assist neighbors like Christopher with compassion and professionalism, helping them move beyond crisis and toward stability and independence.

For many individuals and families facing hardship, the path forward can feel uncertain and overwhelming. Your support of Catholic Charities helps us to meet people with both practical assistance and compassion. †

Continued from front cover

"WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?"

"It's very hard. I'm always thinking of the future, especially for my kids. I have to take care of them," she said. "Nursing is very hard. I have an exam every week... sometimes in person, sometimes online. I am not used to online. There is even a school uniform."

The journey has not been easy. The first Christmas they were there, her son was in the hospital with pneumonia. Like so many moms, she is constantly on the move. She studies full-time, and works part-time at an assisted care facility nearby. She regularly drives from Woodbridge to Oxon Hill, Maryland where friends help her watch the boys so she can go to work.

Sally is humble and reserved. She asked that no pictures be taken of her, but credits Catholic Charities for her success. "They challenged me, 'What is your dream?'"

"I was doubtful and scared," she recalled. Her boys started a new school when they came to St. Margaret and that was "very stressful."

Through it all, the staff stayed by her side. They helped her find a nursing school, apply for financial aid, and even paid some of her tuition. Fadumo Ahmed, her case manager, walked hand-in-hand with her. It was a journey Fadumo was familiar with because she had many shared experiences. As a result, both women found healing.

Sally is friendly with the other residents. She enjoys attending regular "life skills" meetings, which cover education and instruction on the whole human person: mind, body and spirit. This includes cooking classes, self-defense and finance, but also a recent series on how to recover from being an adult child of an alcoholic.

During Advent a priest came to speak about being a beloved daughter of God.



“They always reminded me to see tomorrow. I had to be patient, and it was very hard, but now I see it.”

– SALLY, CLIENT AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

He taught the moms how to pray the rosary.

"Sally has never missed a meeting. She is always there and is a perfect fit. Very respectful," says one of the staff. "We are going to miss her [when she completes the program]."

With her professional path set, Sally is looking to move on from St. Margaret of Cortona in the coming months to her own place. She will be able to take

all of the furnishings provided at her apartment with her when she moves out. And as she looks for a place, they will work to make sure she finds the right fit.

"They always reminded me to see tomorrow. I had to be patient, and it was very hard," said Sally, with a bright smile on her face that shows a quiet sense of pride and accomplishment, "But now I see it." †

United in Faith and Love



CATHOLIC CHARITIES BALL



The 44th Annual Catholic Charities Ball was held on February 6 at the Ritz-Carlton in Tysons Corner and raised a record breaking \$1.83 million to serve our neighbors.

This beautiful and inspiring evening gathered a sold-out crowd of over 1,000 guests and volunteers to celebrate the great works of Catholic Charities, to honor two incredibly generous donors and volunteers of the Catholic Charities community, and to raise the funds necessary to continue to do God's work.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge expressed profound gratitude to all in attendance, reflecting on the heart of the evening's theme, United in Faith and Love. He reminded guests that "Every day, people come to Catholic Charities seeking help—and often, hope. In each encounter, Catholic Charities responds not only with services, but with dignity, compassion, and love. This is what it means to be united in faith and love: to see Christ in those who suffer, and to serve Him by serving them."

Stephen Carattini, President and CEO of Catholic Charities, also offered heartfelt thanks, emphasizing that the "miracles" witnessed each day are made possible by the unwavering dedication of employees, the generosity of volunteers, and the faithful support of donors whose prayers and contributions sustain the mission.



Scan to view photos from the Ball



Scan to view our video of help and hope



SAVE THE DATE TO JOIN US NEXT YEAR ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2027.

April is National Volunteer Month:

Be the Light. Be the Hope. Be the Difference.



National Volunteer Month is here, and there has never been a more meaningful time to step forward in faith and service. Across the Diocese of Arlington, Catholic Charities invites you to be part of something life-changing, not only for those we serve, but for you. Every day, families seek food, seniors look for companionship, migrants need guidance, and neighbors facing hardship search for hope. Through ministries that feed the hungry, welcome the newcomer, and care for the vulnerable, and our many parish-based outreach programs, volunteers become the hands and heart of Christ in action.

Volunteer Month is a joyful reminder that service is not just something we do, it is who we are. When we give our time, we restore dignity, build community, and proclaim hope.

**This month, take the step.
Say yes. Invite a friend.**

Thank you to our volunteers!

Catholic Charities volunteers are a physical expression of our Catholic Faith. They provide almost \$5M worth of labor every year!

How to Get Involved

Volunteer Month is a wonderful opportunity to live your faith through service. Across the Diocese of Arlington, Catholic Charities offers meaningful ways to support neighbors in need while strengthening our community.

Whether you can give a few hours, a day, or volunteer regularly, your time and talents make a lasting difference.

→ Ways You Can Help

Food Assistance:

Sort, pack, and distribute groceries through the St. Lucy Food Project.

Meal Service:

Help prepare and serve the Christ House evening meal.

Legal Support:

Assist newcomers and families through Immigrant Legal Services.

Education and Workforce Development:

Teach classes in Citizenship, ESOL, and other subjects.



→ Ready to Get Started?

Visit our website at volunteer.cdda.net to explore current volunteer opportunities and sign up, or contact Debra Beard at Debra.Beard@cdda.net.



WAYS *to* LOWER NEXT YEAR'S TAXES...

...OR PUT THIS YEAR'S REFUND TO GOOD USE!



MAIL

Send a check payable to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, to:

CCDA
PO Box 1900
Merrifield, VA 22116-1900



ONLINE

Visit ccda.net/donate or scan this QR code.

To make a recurring gift, when asked how often you'd like your gift to occur, select *Monthly*.



PLANNED GIVING

A gift in your Will or Trust is one way you can leave your legacy of faith and service for future generations. Find out how at arlingtondiocese.planmylegacy.org

For specific questions, contact Samantha Donohue at samantha.donohue@arlingtondiocese.org



GIFTS OF STOCK

Visit ccda.net/donatestock to download the stock donation form with instructions.



RETIREMENT GIVING

Make a Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) from your IRA account. Provide this information to your broker: our Tax ID # is 54-0515706 and our address listed to the left.



EMPLOYER MATCH

To see if your employer will match your gift, visit ccda.net/match and use our online lookup. You may also check with your company's Human Resources department.



WORKPLACE GIVING

Check with your employer's Human Resources department to see you can donate through a workplace giving program.

Questions about donating?

Email development@arlingtondiocese.org or call (703) 778-8600.



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