

# Catholic Charities

Summer News 2022



## Director's Letter

### Dear Friends,

The blessings that come from serving others are never lost on Catholic Charities Terre Haute. Our staff and volunteers are often impacted just as much as those participating in our programs. This edition of the summer newsletter shares several new and exciting changes happening throughout the agency. In a time when many in our community are struggling with increased food costs, gas prices and overall inflation, these positive moments make us very grateful to provide help to our neighbors when they need it most.

Ryves Preschool recently graduated the 2021 class, and a celebration was held to congratulate these four children. Our full-day preschool helps prepare children for kindergarten and is often available at no cost for families. This newsletter features a new endeavor - the adoption of a pet that is helping the class learn to care for others and to be responsible.

Across the street from Ryves, Bethany House serves as a refuge for those needing shelter and guidance as they get back on their feet. As the cost of living continues to rise for so many, we expect families will need extra help this year, especially around the holidays. The Christmas Store works year-round to gather new items from donations and community partners to fill its shelves. Read on to learn how you can help!

In closing, we share our congratulations and gratitude to Mr. James Edwards. After 40+ years as our program director at Ryves, Jim is retiring. Without a doubt, he was responsible for helping to build the program into what it is today. Inside you will find an article honoring Jim and introducing the new director and his vision for the program's future.

We are excited about these changes, and we look forward to seeing how lives will be touched through our partnership with supporters like you. Thank you for championing the mission of Catholic Charities — providing help, creating hope and serving all.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John C. Etling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**John C. Etling**  
Agency Director



## Christmas Store Preparation

It may be September, but it's never too early for the Christmas Store to prepare for the holiday season. During the annual Sock and Underwear Drive, community members donated new items and raised funds to restock these essential items. Each shopper at the Christmas Store receives new socks, underwear and hygiene products for each household member. Thanks to generous donors and community retail partnerships, all items are offered to shoppers at no cost.

Learn about the Christmas Store and its volunteer opportunities by attending an open house on September 22. Find details on the last page.

## Successful Summer Events

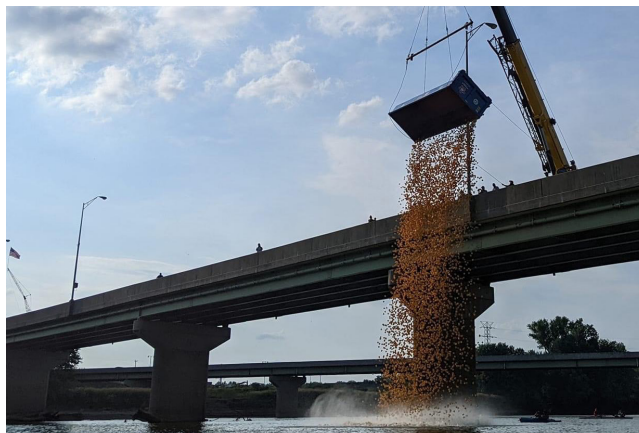
The Quick Quack Trail Run was a huge success! Over 100 racers battled the trails of Griffin Bike Park for the coveted rubber duck trophies. The new course offered fun and challenging obstacles for participants.



*Follow our Facebook page @CatholicCharitiesTerreHaute for information on next year's Quick Quack!*

The 5th Annual Wabash Valley Rubber Duck Regatta took place on July 4, and ducks once again raced towards the finish line on the mighty Wabash River. Close to 15,000 yellow rubber ducks were released into the river! We are grateful to all who help to make this the Agency's largest fundraising event. The regatta continues to be a fun community attraction and one that we look forward to growing year after year.

*Below: Close to 15,000 rubber ducks are released by Misco Crane on the US-40 Bridge  
Right: Past Council President, Dr. Janet Clark, carries the winning duck that she plucked from the Wabash*



## Pomp and Circumstance

On June 2, four Ryves Youth graduated from our all-day preschool!

Each graduate received a new backpack full of school supplies donated by the Clara Fairbanks Foundation to prepare them for kindergarten.



Congratulations to our 2022 Wabash Valley Rubber Duck Regatta winners,  
**DAVID AND BECKY DOTI!**

# Ryves Youth Center Says Goodbye to Longtime Director



*Above: Jim Edwards and wife, Diana, celebrate his retirement at a celebration held on May 25th*

*Right: Jim Pinkstaff, new Program Director of Ryves Youth Center*



Recently, Ryves Youth Center has been going through some changes. After 40+ years as our Program Director, Mr. James Edwards is retiring. Jim was responsible for helping build the program into what it is today — a safe haven for children in our community to nourish their minds, bodies and souls. Jim was an advocate for bringing the KidsCafe© and Backpack© Program to Ryves, understanding young minds can't thrive with empty bellies. Those of us who have worked alongside Jim have had a front-row seat to learn how to demonstrate unconditional love even during extreme situations. Jim improved the lives of children in our community every day, and we will be forever grateful to him. On behalf of all of us at Catholic Charities Terre Haute, we wish Jim the best in the future!

Replacing Jim Edwards is Mr. Jim Pinkstaff. No stranger to the Youth Center, Jim has been the Ryves Educational Coordinator for the last 13 years. Jim's experience working with the children and their families at Ryves along with his vision for the future of the program made him the right person to fill this incredibly important role.

*"These are some very big shoes to fill, and I'm very excited. I've been working at the Youth Center for 13 years, so I think it's a natural progression," shares Jim. "I would like the Center to not only be a resource for the children but also the families. Increased interaction with them is my top priority right now."*

We are excited to watch the programs at Ryves Youth Center continue to thrive and grow.

## Meet Kenny

To help foster responsibility and care for others, the children at Ryves Preschool received the opportunity to have a class pet — meet Kenny the guinea pig!

Before deciding on an animal, a pet shop was set up in the dramatic play area of the classroom. For over a month, the children played and interacted with the various stuffed animals learning what it means to be responsible for another living thing. Students learned about pet care as well as facts about each animal.

The children are now solely responsible for feeding, cleaning up after and caring for three-year-old Kenny. We are very proud of the students and the progress they have made with this new responsibility. They are patient and kind with their new friend and it is a joy to see.





## A Full-Circle Journey

Recently divorced and left with nothing, Edgar was not willing to let life's challenges prevent him from being a good father to his three children. After bouncing from shelter to shelter, he received a phone call from Bethany House, and it proved to be an answer to his prayers: "They gave me a place to get my start. They cared for my kids and gave them a safe place to live and grow."

While meeting requirements like drug screenings, parenting classes and therapy, Bethany House staff taught Edgar basic life skills like how to maintain a budget, the importance of nutrition and how to provide stability for his children.

"They provide you with a plan for success. . . If you're willing to put in the work, they won't let you fail. I mean, they showed me how to raise my daughter, she was only an infant and I didn't know where to start," he adds.

With time, Edgar opened and maintained a savings account, purchased a vehicle and moved out of Bethany House and into an apartment where he and his children still reside.

The bond between his family and the staff continues: "We talk all the time. They watch for my kids every day as they walk from to and from school and to Ryves Youth Center in the afternoon. If they don't see all three kids, I get a phone call!" says Edgar. Edgar is now an active volunteer at Bethany House and Ryves and enjoys using his unique perspective to mentor others.



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## Upcoming Events

### CHEERS FOR CHARITY

For the second year, Cheers for Charity will create custom food pairings using local wines and bourbons. Save Saturday, November 19 for this exquisite event, and follow our Facebook page for details!

*Sponsorships for the event are currently available. Please contact Jessica Murphy at 812-232-1447 or [jmurphy@ccthin.org](mailto:jmurphy@ccthin.org).*

### CHRISTMAS STORE OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, September 22

4pm – 7pm

Christmas Store (1440 Locust Street)

*Interested in becoming a Christmas Store volunteer? Shadow and learn about the important role they play and visit from 10 am to noon!*



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