

Winter 2025

NEWSLETTER



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Executive Director David Bethuram encourages our connectedness.

SUCCESS STORIES

See stories of the impact from multiple Catholic Charities programs.

UPDATES

Learn about recent changes, including opportunities to serve.

Dear Friends,

In a time when so many forces threaten to divide us, I am deeply grateful for the gift of faith—especially the Catholic faith. It is a faith rooted in the Eucharist, reminding us at every Mass that we are one body. Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, understood this truth profoundly. She once said, “We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other.” Her words inspired countless “foot soldiers of mercy” to welcome others with open arms, recognizing Christ in every cold body, hungry mouth, and weary spirit they encountered.

This same mission lives on in our work at Catholic Charities every day. I am proud to share the stories captured in our winter newsletter. These stories bear witness to the unwavering dedication of our staff, who embody our mission daily. They also reflect the incredible support of you—our partners and advocates—who join us in caring for anyone in need, regardless of faith, gender, race, ethnicity, or, especially in today’s climate, citizenship. Together, you stand with us, invest in our mission, and walk and pray alongside us.

Even now, over 30 years after joining this remarkable organization, I am continually moved by the beauty I see each day. It shines in the stories of hope unfolding around us and in the generosity of our amazing volunteers and donors. Dorothy Day also reminded her supporters, “I beg you not to abandon each other... we are each one responsible, one for another.”

While the full impact of your contributions may never be measured in this life, please know that your partnership has brought life-changing hope to countless bodies and hearts. Together, we continue to answer the call to serve.

In awe and gratitude,



David J. Bethuram

Executive Director

Secretariat for Catholic Charities



A CARING PLACE

Adult Day Center and Fairview Preschool collaborate to bring generations together through art and music activities. This initiative fosters meaningful connections between older adults and young children, creating a space where creativity and companionship thrive.

The program includes joint activities like painting, crafting, and singing. Participants share laughter and experiences, enriching each other's lives in unique ways. The older adults offer encouragement, while the children bring energy and fresh perspectives, creating a reciprocal exchange that promotes understanding and joy.

The partnership nurtures artistic expression and builds a sense of community, reducing feelings of isolation in seniors and fostering empathy in children. This innovative approach demonstrates the power of intergenerational engagement in strengthening bonds across age groups, leaving lasting impressions on all involved.

SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Transportation is more than just getting from point A to point B for seniors undergoing outpatient medical procedures. It's about ensuring comfort, safety, and peace of mind. Our Outpatient Procedure Senior Companion Transportation service is here to help.

We assist with travel to procedures such as colonoscopies, cataracts, and endoscopies and will consider other procedures. Seniors actively participating in the AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program provide this outpatient companion transportation.

What We Provide:

- **Safe Transportation:** Our drivers are trained to ensure a smooth, safe ride to and from the medical facility.
- **Supportive Companionship:** A caring companion stays by your side, offering emotional support and helping you feel at ease before and after your procedure.
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Whether a morning appointment or an afternoon follow-up, we accommodate your schedule to make the process stress-free.
- **Post-Procedure Assistance:** If needed, our companions can assist with minor tasks, such as picking up prescriptions, helping you settle in at home, and informing loved ones that you are home.

We're committed to ensuring seniors feel supported, cared for, and safe throughout their outpatient journey. Our reliable companion transportation service lets you or your loved ones focus on recovery, knowing that every detail is handled carefully.

For more information, contact Courtney, Program Coordinator, Senior Companion Program, Cschmidt@archindy.org or 317-236-1555

COUNSELING PROGRAM

Our Counseling program is honored to receive a grant from the Kendrick Foundation for the 7th consecutive year!



This incredible support allows us to continue working in Morgan County integrated with IU Health Morgan to provide mental health and case management personnel to help more adults and children struggling to obtain diagnostic assessment, counseling, and referrals to community resources.

IMMIGRATION

Our Immigration program is working hard to serve the growing Haitian community. We do this by helping individuals apply for work authorization, temporary protected status, and asylum.

We interact with this community with the help of paralegal Joseph Timogene, intake coordinator Jacquie Wilhelm, and Cuban/Haitian entrants service coordinator Ben Horner. Our hard work has been instrumental in the services provided the Haitian community, one that has been marginalized and targeted.

In addition, Mbarka Belkassim recently became a Department of Justice accredited representative. This allows her to engage in

certain legal practices (filing applications with USCIS) and has been a tremendous asset to the team, but also to the immigrant community.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Why attend a caregiver support group? It can help improve your resource knowledge and quality of life. Caring for an aging family member or friend can take a minute of your time as you pick up a prescription, or it may be consuming your time as you schedule, coordinate, and provide transportation to medical appointments.

We can't predict exactly how we'll age or when we'll need help and that can leave caregivers wondering if there is help, where to find it, and how to live with the emotional and physical impacts.

Caregiver support groups are one way to find resources and other people who are experiencing similar questions and situations. There are caregiver support groups that are disease-specific and ones that are for general caregiving.

Groups share resources for community help, ideas for thinking about situations differently, and tips for making caregiving easier. Caregiver groups provide social care for caregivers who may be experiencing isolation and loneliness due to changing their lifestyles to accommodate caregiving tasks.

Catholic Charities offers two general caregiver groups in Indianapolis that are open to the community. Last year, in addition to having open discussions, community professionals from the Alzheimer's Association, Ascension

Living St Vincent PACE, Indiana Legal Services, and Power Over Dementia shared insights. A retired psychiatric nurse educator talked about feelings, a Catholic Charities therapist lead a meditation, and a World Boxing Heavyweight Champion helped caregivers put on boxing gloves and throw some punches.

Sharing time and learning with other people who are caregiving can increase knowledge of resources as well as improve coping skills and psychological well-being—all of which can lead to an improved quality of life for caregivers.

To find a caregiver group in your area, contact your Area Agency on Aging. For information about the Catholic Charities groups, contact Monica Woodsworth, mwoodsworth@archiny.org, 317-261-3378.

CRISIS OFFICE

The Crisis Office is witnessing a continued rise in demand for essential services as living expenses continue to climb. Many families turning to the office for assistance are doing so for the first time and often do not qualify for government support.

To meet this growing need, the Crisis Office provides critical help, offering food, clothing, and hygiene items to those in need. These essential services provide a lifeline for families navigating unexpected financial hardships and struggling to make ends meet.

Through the compassion and generosity of donors and volunteers, the Crisis Office continues to bring hope and stability to individuals and families during challenging times.



REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

The Refugee Resettlement program had the honor of hosting the annual Refugee Summit in mid-November 2024. The event brought together our valued community partners to strengthen collaboration and celebrate the resilience of refugee families. The Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra opened the summit with a beautiful performance, setting an inspiring tone for the day.

Together, we discussed shared goals, community needs, and ways to enhance support for refugees rebuilding their lives in Indianapolis. We extend our deepest gratitude to all who joined us in this meaningful gathering to build a stronger, more welcoming community.

HOLY FAMILY SHELTER

Marcy* is a single mom with 4 children under the age of 8. They found themselves homeless after their landlord used intimidation to threaten them with eviction. The family moved between staying with relatives, friends, and in their van until they arrived at Holy Family Shelter (HFS).

Marcy and her children moved in with the odds stacked against them. Marcy has significant physical health issues, and she and all 4 of her children struggle with various mental and behavioral health diagnoses. This family was also trying to recover from a traumatizing domestic violence relationship.

However, Marcy did not let this stop her. She worked hard with her case manager to make the most of her time at the shelter and to build a better life for herself and her children. While at HFS, Marcy and all 4 of her children engaged in mental health counseling and kept up with their physical health appointments. Marcy engaged with Beacon of Hope for domestic violence services, Firefly for parenting resources, and Southeast Community Center for additional housing and employment services. She also engaged with Indiana Legal Services to begin the process of expunging a case from her record.

Marcy was able to obtain part-time employment that also let her focus on the health of her family. She began to take classes to become a certified tax preparer. She was also able to get a CCDF voucher and get all her children enrolled in school and daycare. Marcy, through her diligent efforts, along

with her HFS case manager working tirelessly alongside her, was able to obtain a Section 8 voucher. She and her family moved into a lovely apartment where they are all thriving. They continue to remain engaged in services with HFS and various other community providers. **Name changed for privacy*

ST. ELIZABETH | COLEMAN

This past November, St. Elizabeth|Coleman hosted its annual Birth Mother Luncheon, a heartfelt gathering dedicated to honoring the brave women who have placed a child for adoption through our agency over the years.

Held in a spirit of reflection and celebration, the event brought together birth mothers from different walks of life to share their stories, find comfort in community, and acknowledge the profound love and courage that define their journeys.



The luncheon, a cherished tradition, featured a delicious meal, thoughtful entertainment, and inspiring speakers who highlighted the strength and resilience of birth mothers. It also provided an intimate space for open sharing, allowing attendees to connect and support one another.

St. Elizabeth | Coleman is honored to continue this annual tradition and looks forward to future gatherings that uplift and celebrate the remarkable women who choose adoption out of love and courage. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this special day—your presence made it truly unforgettable.

23-24 ANNUAL REPORT

In case you missed it, be sure to read the Catholic Charities Indianapolis 2023-2024 Annual Report to see the impact we had on those struggling in our community.



Scan the QR code or visit helpcreatehope.org to read the full report.



70,246

Served by Crisis Relief and Shelter Services



820

Assisted with pregnancy and adoption services



4,675

Served by Refugee and Immigration Services

84%

of those served live below the poverty line



19,881

Received information and referrals to other support programs



898

Assisted through Senior Services



7,155

Served through Family Counseling and Social Work Services



3,808

Served by the Christmas Store

www.HelpCreateHope.org



Catholic Charities Indianapolis



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Community Partner



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

VOLUNTEERING

RSVP

Did you know that 28% of Indiana residents make a formal commitment to volunteering each year? And 52% make the time to informally help people in their communities. Whether formally connecting to an organization or informally checking on neighbors and providing help as needed, volunteering creates stronger communities.

For organizations, volunteers bring extra hands, brain power and enthusiasm which allows their programs to flourish and grow, serving more people in need. For volunteers, physical and mental health benefits include lower mortality rates, lower rates of depression and anxiety, and increased life satisfaction and feelings of social connection. With intention, we can increase the impact of volunteering and keep strengthening our communities and ourselves.

Catholic Charities Indianapolis has many volunteer opportunities, including two specifically for people 55 and older: AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) and AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program. Monica Woodsworth, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Director, invites anyone to reach out for a conversation about volunteering, mwoodsworth@archindy.org, 317-261-3378