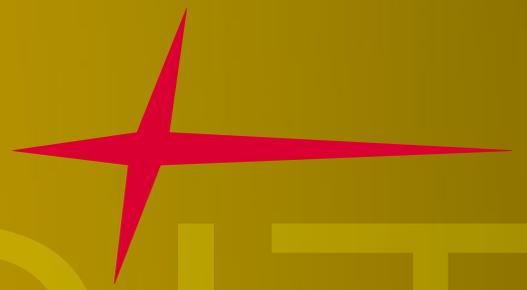


Fall 2023  
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Catholic Charities  
of the Archdiocese of Chicago



# SPIRIT



## **Vision 2030**

Reimagining  
Cardinal Mundelein's  
1917 vision for unity,  
charity, and service



“It is said of the Church that like truth, she is ever ancient, ever new. It is one of the signs of her eternal youth, that while charity is as old as Christianity, it has come in many forms according to the needs of the times.”

—**Cardinal George Mundelein** on April 10, 1917, speaking to the founding parish representatives of the Associated Catholic Charities of Chicago.

*On the front cover:*

*A resident of Ozanam Village, a Catholic Charities affordable senior living community, at a community event.*

Located in Chicago’s East Garfield Park neighborhood, Ozanam is one of 19 Catholic Charities residences for seniors in the Chicago area. It houses 121 residents, ages 62 to 97. Ensuring residents are safe, well-cared for, and able to maintain their independence are top priorities. For Service Coordinator Joyce Bailey, it is all about nourishing a thriving community, “Our goal is for our residents to age in place as long as they possibly can. We encourage families to be an active presence. That makes such a difference.”



**Spirit Magazine—September 2023**

*Spirit* magazine, a triennial publication of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, features stories and updates of our witness, designed to inspire our readers and offer a message of mercy and hope to a world in need.

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Help us improve lives and nourish spirits across Cook and Lake counties.



**Developing film, talent, and hope | After Supper Visions | Chicago**

More than 20 years ago, a community of dedicated volunteers, several of whom are professional photographers, began inviting guests of Catholic Charities Tuesday Night Suppers to learn to capture and share their unique perspectives on the world. The program was named After Supper Visions (ASV).

Mike Becker, a former guest of the Suppers, had never taken a photo in his life before joining ASV, but his talent was evident from the moment he made his first picture. "We gave him a camera...

his eye was incredible," recalls Father Wayne Watts, Catholic Charities Associate Administrator and program co-founder.

This September, Catholic Charities has joyfully welcomed the return of the ASV Annual Exhibition showcasing the work of many ASV photographers like Mike.

A featured ASV artist for many years, Mike has re-invested his earnings from selling his art through Catholic Charities to upgrade his photography equipment. His work also caught the attention of

leadership at the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab, where his photos are currently on view. Mike was a patient there after a fall at 17 left him quadriplegic.

"ASV is a supportive community. Everyone affirms each other as they strive for new levels of originality and expertise," says Jody O'Connor, a professional photographer who has been with the program since its inception. "Their creativity has no barriers. Through photography, they are finding happiness."

# Preparing today for tomorrow's needs

Dear Friends,

Recently our *Spirit* editor, Rose Sweeney, came across a compendium of speeches made by **Cardinal Mundelein** during his first two years in Chicago, among them his **April 1917 address announcing the formation of what has become Catholic Charities**. We both resonated with his foresight, particularly his reflection that while the practice of charity goes back centuries, it comes “in many forms according to the needs of the times.”

Chicago in 1917 was a very different place. Our country was only 50 years past the Civil War and had only just entered the “Great War.” Half the population was Catholic, split among many ethnic communities. The Archbishop and the Catholic business leaders were concerned about the fragmentation of resources around charity as the country headed off to war. “We must not neglect those at home. When the soldier goes to war, he must feel that those he leaves at home may not be left destitute...”

The Archbishop went on to say,

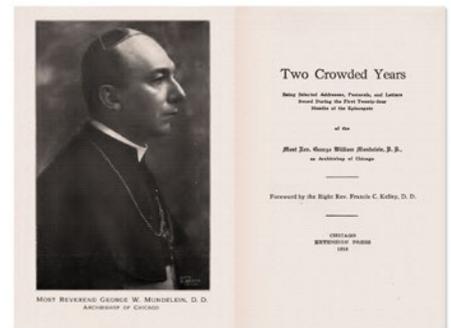
**“The great cry and need of our country today is preparedness. We too, as well as the country, need preparedness, and that is precisely what this movement, this great union of charitable endeavor for efficiency and greater results, will bring about. You are today preparing for the greater needs of tomorrow.”**

**That is a powerful thought, as true in 2023 as in 1917: today we must prepare for the greater needs of tomorrow.** And that is exactly what Vision 2030 is all about. As we emerge from the second great global pandemic, we must care for the needs of today, while preparing for the needs of tomorrow.

**We must ask the questions: Who are we? How do we serve today? And how are we called to serve tomorrow?** That is the journey I have had the privilege of walking with our Board, staff, and many partners over the last year. In the pages ahead, we share what we have learned.

With joy and gratitude for the honor of serving each day,

Sally Blount  
President and CEO



“At Catholic Charities, they don’t carry you, they walk alongside you to help you with your strengths.”

–Tiffany, Family Self Sufficiency Program Participant

Supporting single mothers in Lake County | Family Self Sufficiency Program | Round Lake

“You have to really want it,” says Tiffany about finding success in the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program, a Catholic Charities homelessness prevention initiative. The single mother of five explains that she’d heard about other parent support programs over the years, but was disillusioned about getting any real benefit from them. But then, she says, God told her it was time. When she learned about FSS, Tiffany and her daughters did not have stable housing or a steady income. She was ready for change.

Our FSS program walks with single parents for up to five years. During that time, participants meet monthly with a case manager who helps each parent set goals and work to achieve them. In the process, they are connected to services like employment assistance and financial literacy education. For some, like Tiffany, there is an automatic savings component tied to benefits from her local housing authority. As her need for housing assistance decreases, the difference is invested in an interest-bearing escrow account, the sum of which is received upon graduation.

Tiffany has been a caretaker all her life, from stepping in to watch over her nine siblings, to providing home care for children with disabilities, which she says is her calling. But now, with the guidance of the team at FSS, she’s taking care of herself, recognizing she needs to be strong for her children. She says, “My brothers and sisters call me for help, and I tell them they need to do the work. This is the only way you can break the cycle of poverty that we grew up in.”



# Notes from the field

**Ami Novaryta**  
Chief Program Officer

Catholic Charities has been busy! In addition to accompanying and serving the thousands who come to our doors every day, our teams are launching new ways to expand our reach and impact. Below are some examples of this innovation in action:

## **No more wait lists for counseling and behavioral health services!**

Starting during the pandemic and continuing since, our behavioral health teams have been overwhelmed with requests for help, leading to long wait lists. While we know working with a licensed mental health professional provides innumerable benefits, waiting months to access this service does not. I am overjoyed to report that with increased investment in staff and systems, **we have expanded our capacity to eliminate wait lists for behavioral health services!**

## **Preparing meals for Seniors with special dietary needs**

Together with our dedicated volunteers, our teams thoughtfully and tenderly feed thousands of seniors each week. We are taking this service one step further by piloting meal plans designed for special dietary and health needs, as well as culturally sensitive menus for those of Latino origin.

## **New youth leadership program in Austin**

This fall, we are welcoming our first cohort of fifth graders to The Amani Leadership Program at the Peace Corner in Austin. From middle school through when they enter high school, our Amani student leaders will be working with mentors and licensed clinicians to develop life skills, bolster their academic success, and cultivate positive relationships. Together with our Peace Camp and Peace Matters programs, Amani is supported by the Hilton Foundation Catholic Sisters Initiative. We are partnering with Notre Dame's Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunity to track our impact over the next five years.

## **Welcoming Arshele Stevens to lead Children, Youth, and Families**

On a final note, I'm thrilled to share that this past April, Arshele Stevens joined Catholic Charities as Senior Vice President of our Children, Youth, and Families Impact Area.

With deep experience in education, non-profit management, and the financial sector, Senior Vice President Arshele Stevens has brought a wealth of knowledge to our team. Prior to joining us, she was the founding Chief Executive Officer of Girls, Inc. of

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"Fueled by compassion, lived experiences, and faith, I've spent the last two decades of my career advancing knowledge, access, and opportunity for all. I'm honored and excited to join Catholic Charities and continue this service."



**-Arshele Stevens**  
Senior Vice President  
Children, Youth, and Families

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Chicago and also served for several years as President of Kennedy-King College. In her new role, Arshele oversees all service and innovation around our long-term work in behavioral health, youth mentoring, immigrant and refugee resettlement, domestic violence, and parenting.

# VISION 2030

**Chart 1. Income inequality in U.S. ballooned over last 50 years.** By 2021, the top 20% of households earned median income 18x times that of bottom 20%—up from only 10x in 1970.

In 2021, 40% of U.S. households (82.5 million) earned a median income of less than \$42,000.

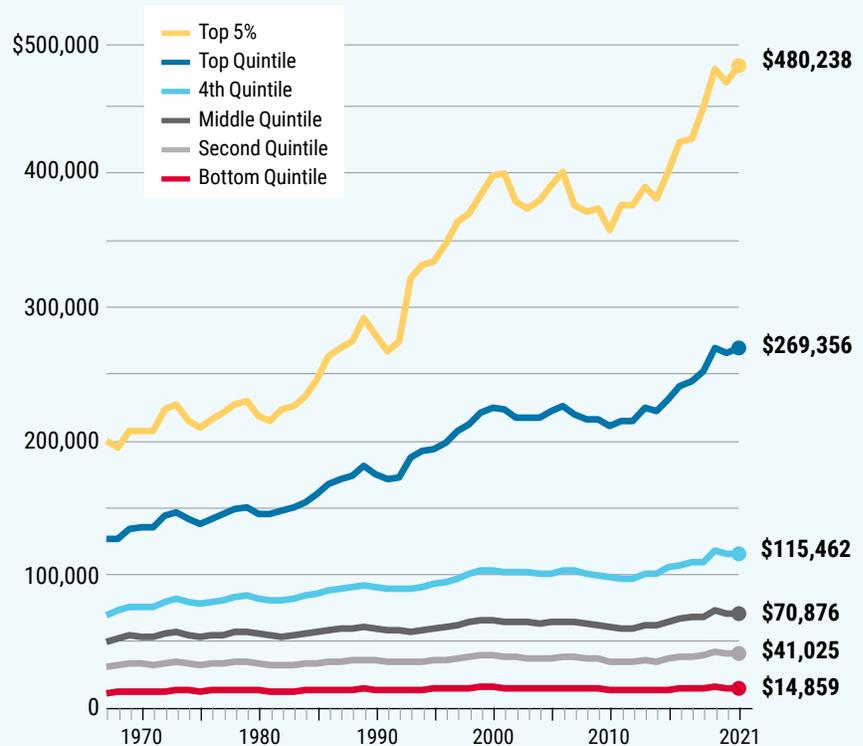
And 50% of households had no savings, often significant debt.

Cook and Lake counties have a population of 6 million—that means that roughly 3 million are a paycheck (or less) away from needing our help.

**Mean income received by each quintile and top 5%**

U.S. households: 1967 to 2021  
(in 2021 dollars)

Source: 2021 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau



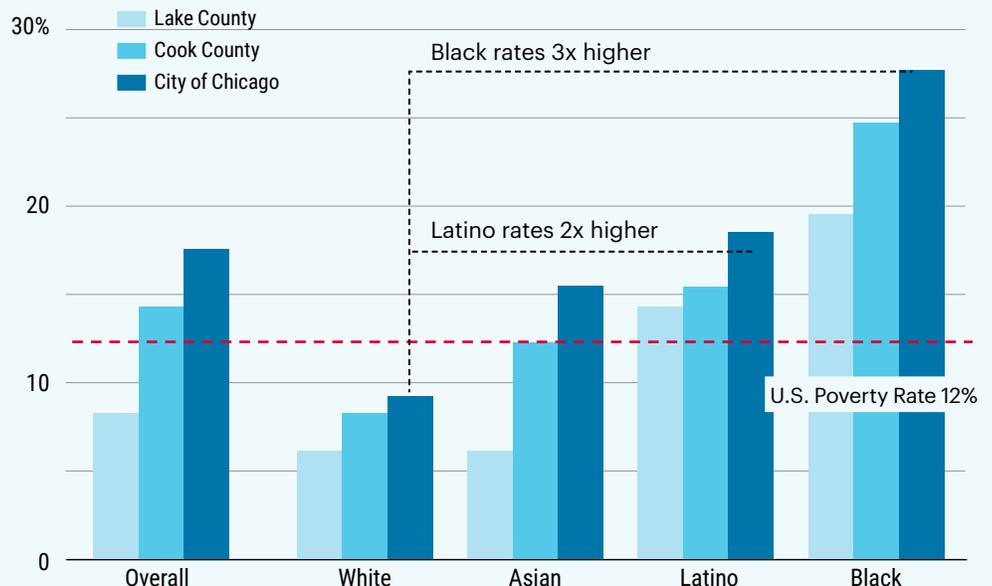
**Chart 2. Poverty in Chicago sits at 17%, compared to the national average of 12%, and is among the most segregated.** In 2021, 27% of Blacks and 18% of Latinos in Chicago lived in poverty, compared to only 9% of Whites.

This 3x difference in poverty rates by race holds across Cook and Lake counties—a trend that has not improved over time.

These enduring differences bring up important questions of social justice and equity.

**Percentage of population living at or below the poverty rate by race, 2021**

Source: 2021 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau



# Creating a roadmap to 2030

## Sally Blount

President and CEO

While the world and Chicago have changed dramatically since 1917, Cardinal Mundelein's founding goals for Catholic Charities still ring true. As he so aptly declared in 1917, charity "comes in many forms according to the needs of the times... The great cry and need of our country today is preparedness... and that is precisely what this movement, this great union of charitable endeavor for efficiency and greater results, will bring about."

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Vision 2030 is a seven-year roadmap for renewal and revitalization.

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**As we emerge from a global pandemic, we must equip ourselves to serve within a new set of challenging circumstances**—and, as Cardinal Mundelein reminds us, we must learn how to do that with ever more efficiency and impact.

The big social experiment of the post-World War II, 20th century American economy was only partially successful. While generating unprecedented wealth and innovation, it failed to reduce

income inequality. **In fact, income inequality in the U.S. is greater than it was 50 years ago** (see Chart 1, left). People living in the bottom 40 percent of households have seen little improvement in real, inflation-adjusted income, while the income for the top 20 percent has more than doubled. The median income of the bottom 20 percent used to be 1/10 of the top 20 percent; now it is only 1/18.

### Enduring inequity in Chicago

With a poverty rate of 17 percent compared to the national average of 12 percent, Chicago is not the poorest large city in our country, but it is the most economically segregated. **If you are Black in Chicago, you are three times more likely to live in poverty than if you are White. If you are Latino, you are twice as likely.**

At the same time, government budgets have become ever more unwieldy over the last 20 years. Funding for human services has suffered many cuts, save the temporary boost of pandemic spending. In less than 10 years, Catholic Charities has seen a significant restructuring of our government funding streams. Many of

the government contracts that used to reimburse us for the full cost of service delivery now only cover 60 to 90 percent of what it takes to deliver the services at a level that aligns with our values. As an organization that had become over 80 percent government funded, in recent years we have withdrawn from several government programs to stem our losses.

### Reflecting on our next decade of service

We are grateful for funding provided by John and Kathy Schreiber to specifically support this work. This afforded us the ability to hire extra arms and minds to help us while we continued to serve each day. We found our partners at Bridgespan, a national nonprofit consultancy, information-filled, responsive, provocative, and wise. They helped us to draw on the full breadth and depth of the experience and expertise that lies within our community and region.

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We are invigorated by the future. We invite you to join in our call to serve!

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# VISION 2030

**Chart 3. At \$200 million, Catholic Charities is one of fewer than 100 human service providers across the country operating at our scale.**

We've learned first-hand that there are limited economies of scale in providing human services—it is inherently a local enterprise, operating where people live.

Overall, in the U.S., private philanthropy provides a minority share of funding for human services (<20%).

To sustain operations, most human service providers are 50% or more government-funded through on-going contracts.



**Of the more than 52,000 human service providers in the U.S., fewer than 0.1% operate over \$100MM in scale.**  
Most (>95%) operate at a scale of less than \$10MM, usually lasting only a "generation."

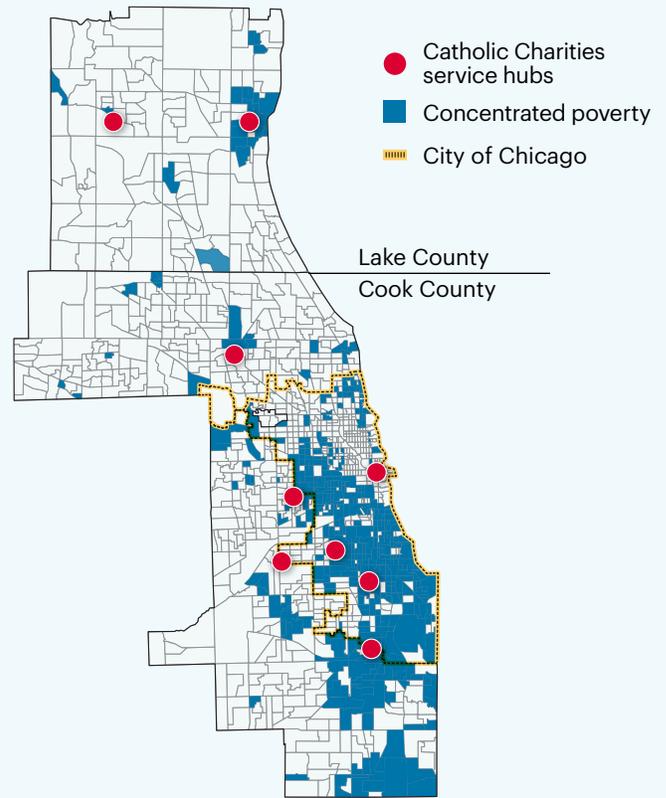
**Human service providers in U.S., by annual operating budget, 2021**  
Source: Guidestar, Bridgespan Internal Analysis, 2020

**Chart 4. Among our local peers, Catholic Charities has unparalleled scale and reach across Cook and Lake counties.**

Concentrated poverty occurs when **more than 30% of the population lives below the poverty threshold**. In 2021, this was \$12,880 for a single person and \$26,500 for a family of four.

**Catholic Charities delivers its services from nine service hubs and nearly 100 satellite locations.** We also partner with the Archdiocese of Chicago's 216 parishes; city, county, and state government agencies; and countless community-based organizations across the region.

Our research finds a high correlation between our service data and the poverty statistics depicted here—that means we are reaching key populations in need. **But there is always more that we can do, particularly within Chicago and Southern Cook County, where need is highest.**



**Areas of concentrated poverty in Lake and Cook counties by census tract (2021)**  
Source: Brookings, *The Re-Emergence of Concentrated Poverty: Metropolitan Trends in the 2000s*, American Community Survey 2021

# A four-part framework for our future

With an annual operating budget of \$200 million, Catholic Charities is among the largest human services providers in the country (see Chart 3, left) and a cornerstone institution within our region. Together with our peers Metropolitan Family Services, Heartland Alliance, Greater Chicago Food Depository, Jewish United Fund, and United Way, we form the foundation of our region’s safety net—collectively accounting for almost \$750 million in human services spending annually.

Vision 2030 is a renewal of our commitment to be a cornerstone institution for this century.

Coming out of the pandemic, we are leaning into our calling to lead the Church in charitable works as we evolve to meet the new challenges facing our region. Case in point: our multi-pronged response to this past year’s migrant influx (see the update on page 15).

Catholic Charities is unique in our region, given our scale, breadth of services, and ability to catalyze action at the local level with our parish partners.

**Setting priorities for how we will work and serve**

Deciding where to prioritize resources is critical to the long-term vitality of any organization. But when approaching this task as a century-old institution with a deep faith tradition, the process must be thoughtful, rigorous, and prayerful. Over the last 12 months, we’ve engaged hundreds of individuals—both internally, with Catholic Charities staff, board, and client constituencies, and externally, with peer providers, private and public funders, volunteers, and donors—to study how we can best meet the needs of the future.

**The roadmap brings together four important streams of work**

**Operating Principles.** Launched in Fall 2022, these principles guide how we approach strategic and operational decision-making.

**Team Model.** Launched this past Spring, this new team approach facilitates collaboration, accountability, and personal growth at work. All staff are now members of one of the 125 mission-driven teams that make up Catholic Charities.

**Core Values.** These embody what we value as a community, as we serve and care for each other each day.

**Strategic Pillars.** These three themes capture key learnings from our 12-month planning journey. They will guide and inform how we plant, prune, and grow our services and programs over the years ahead.

In the following pages, we detail the core values and strategic pillars that form the core of Vision 2030. They will guide us in the years ahead as we make decisions about how we will work, serve, and steward the people and resources entrusted to our care.



Scan to see our operating principles and team model or visit [catholiccharities.net](https://catholiccharities.net).



**The Catholic Church is critical to meeting face of need across our region**

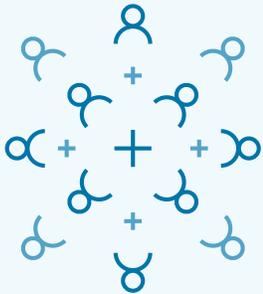
The Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of Chicago holds a unique and critical role in our region’s safety net. Consider not just the scale and impact of Catholic Charities work, but also the charitable work taking place at our parishes and in partnership with the many chapters of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Also consider the charitable works of our religious partners in the Orders and in our Catholic schools and universities, as well as at Misericordia Home, Maryville, and Mercy Home. Every day, the Church serves at a level far surpassing that of any other private institution in the Midwest—thousands daily and easily more than one million people annually.

## Our core values



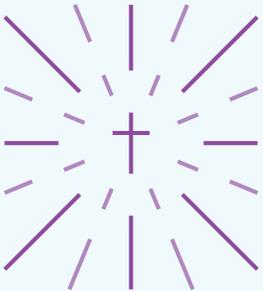
### **Courageous Compassion**

We welcome and serve all with open hearts, empathetic listening, and a commitment to radical hospitality. We boldly partner to take on the seemingly impossible in answering Jesus's call to practice mercy.



### **Solidarity**

We embrace our shared humanity. We celebrate and give voice to our differences, committed to growing in wisdom as we choose God's path of collaboration and inclusion.



### **Faith-filled Hope and Joy**

We accomplish only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. And yet, we are filled with joy as we live our faith—uplifting each other in times of darkness and celebrating together in times of light, leaning in with humility, humor, and hope.



### **Meaningful and Measurable Impact**

We meet human need with love—through brief encounters and bold initiatives—balancing immediate action with lasting change. We hold ourselves accountable to God and each other through thoughtful dialogue, data-informed analyses, and ongoing reflection.

# Our strategic pillars



**Pillar 1**

**Welcome all with open arms**

**With courageous compassion, we commit to open our hearts and minds to serve all with radical hospitality.**

- **Reduce barriers, increase action.** We will invest in technology, staff, training, and facilities that will make getting help simpler and faster—both virtually and locally. We commit to making it easier for people to find rest, a listening ear, and the assistance they most need.
- **Boldly collaborate and partner.** We will develop infrastructure, systems, and training to support dynamic and timely collaboration on behalf of those we serve—reaching out constantly and effectively across our organization and our sector.
- **Invite all to grow in faith and service.** We will engage parishes, volunteers, and donors who seek meaningful opportunities to truly live their faith as they accompany people in need.

**Pillar 2**

**Answer the call to heal, strengthen, and empower**

**With faith-filled hope and joy, we commit to the deep work of meaningful, long-term growth and well-being.**

- **Look beyond numbers to lasting impact.** While continuing to meet the immediate needs of thousands daily, we will deepen and focus our services for a core set of clients—addressing poverty, isolation, and disenfranchisement at the individual level.
- **Begin with low-income mothers and seniors,** many of whom are disproportionately single and people of color. We will design, launch, and amplify programs that promote meaningful, positive change for these populations person-by-person, heart-by-heart.
- **Harness the power of community.** Lasting change and healing are so much easier when we are in community. We will work with intention to surround those we accompany with supportive relationships.

**Pillar 3**

**Live our faith in the public square**

**Walking in solidarity with those we accompany and serve, we commit to building a stronger and more just future.**

- **Partner in crisis response.** We will invest in flexibility. We will equip our teams to be excellent and trusted partners in rapid response, ready to partner with our government leaders to stabilize, feed, and heal in times of crisis.
- **Create and share knowledge.** We will leverage our scale and reach to pursue cutting-edge partnerships with leading universities and research centers that will inform our practice, increase our impact, and advance our sector.
- **Give voice to those we serve.** We will use our relationships and standing to lift up the voices of the vulnerable and disenfranchised. We will speak out about inequality and injustice.



“We put God first. We are cut from the cloth of a spiritual mother—we carry that through our lives.”

—Nina McPherson, Resident of Catholic Charities’ Ozanam Village



Sisters, clockwise, from top left: Dorothy Jackson, Mary Bowden, Nina McPherson, Robbie Preston, and Jenelle Hendrix.

## Five sisters enrich their community with cooking, faith, and love

**A**s the crackling of spices and chicken sends a mouthwatering aroma across the common areas at the Ozanam Village senior residence, people can't help poking their heads into the kitchen to inquire when lunch might be ready. The Catholic Charities residence and its neighbor, Matthew Manor, are located in Chicago's East Garfield Park neighborhood and are home to 121 seniors.

Community. Sustenance. Some pretty elaborate kitchen choreography. This culinary collaboration is the work of five sisters who all live in the community and have spent six decades

preparing meals together. Eldest to youngest, sisters Robbie, Nina (pronounced Nine Ah), Mary, Janelle, and Dorothy grew up with eight additional siblings in High Berger, Alabama, not too far from Selma. Planting, preparing, and sharing food are among their most treasured memories.

"Mother could really cook, no measures, no recipes," recalls Mary with pride. "We don't measure either," adds Dorothy. "Our mother was famous for her black-eyed peas; potato salad with eggs, mayonnaise, and mustard... At Christmastime, she would begin preparing weeks ahead: ham, hens,

sweet potato pie, stuffing, coconut, and caramel pound cakes—all homemade."

During the 1950s, the sisters began moving to Chicago, one by one, beginning with Robbie and her husband. The others and their mother eventually followed. "Mother instilled in us that we must stay together, no matter what, in good times and bad," explains Janelle.

So, the fact that the sisters came to live in Ozanam Village and nearby Matthew Manor together is no surprise to them. It was just the natural progression of things. Dorothy says,



Janelle prepping ingredients and setting the festive mood at Ozanam Village's community kitchen.

“Mary and I moved [to Ozanam Village] on the same day in 2006,” and the other sisters soon followed, each in their own apartment in the Catholic Charities residences. “Bertha, the eldest, our rock, lived here too, before she passed,” adds Dorothy. “Can you imagine? There were six of us here!”

With a smile spreading across her face, Nina says, “I have enjoyed every moment of living here. I prayed that all my family would wind back up under one roof. It is amazing.” Her sisters nod in agreement.

The sisters gather for dinner about three times a week. They take turns hosting and cooking, but “we usually end up at my apartment,” declares

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“These women epitomize the spirit of community. They spread love... They welcome everyone.”

—**Margarita Rios**, Ozanam Village and Matthew Manor property manager

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Janelle laughing. “They call my place ‘the restaurant.’” Robbie teases, “Dorothy is the baby, and she doesn’t really cook, so she picks up the groceries.” On occasion, the sisters use the building’s community kitchen to prepare a meal to share with others.

Their devotion doesn’t end with meal preparation. They also share their green thumbs with fellow residents. “Before COVID, we had a beautiful

community vegetable garden,” explains Dorothy. “It was hard for us to maintain during the pandemic; now we’ve planted flowers.”

“Growing older can be hard. Not everyone is blessed with family. We are lucky to have each other,” says Robbie. Adds Mary, “We, along with other residents, try to be the welcoming committee—to spread our friendship and laughter with others.”

**Love this story and want to hear more from these inspiring women?** Scan the code or [visit our Voice of Charity podcast](#) to listen to our June 2023 conversation with them.



# Hearing God's call today



Starting in August 2022, more than 14,000 migrants have journeyed to Chicago from the southern border and officials expect this number to continue to rise.

In addition to supporting 25 parishes from across the Archdiocese as they accompany 58+ families, we are working closely with the City of Chicago and State of Illinois in their response to help

hundreds daily. Over the past year, we have provided direct service to 6,000 individuals. Highlights include:

- Connecting more than 4,500 adults and children, representing approximately 1,900 households, with safe housing.
- Helping more than 1,200 migrants reunite with family and friends in other U.S. cities.

- Serving thousands of meals to those living in shelters through our community meals and food pantries.

*Pictured above:* Marilu Gonzalez, Catholic Charities City Southwest Regional Director, meets with families who are being hosted by parishes through the Welcome the Stranger initiative, which is being managed by Catholic Charities on behalf of the Archdiocese of Chicago. These gatherings are opportunities for both hosts and sponsored families to share information and forge new relationships.



*Pictured:* 1) Guadalupe Sandoval and Maribel Sanchez, volunteers from St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds in the parish's school cafeteria. Initially started in response to the pandemic, the parish now hosts four Catholic Charities Evening Suppers each month. 2) While many pick up meals to eat as a family at home, there's a core group, including Patricia Farren, who dine together each week. 3) Many Cicero residents work in the service community. When businesses were shut down in March 2020, the line for the food pantry the following Monday reached around the block.

# St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds Parish in Cicero

Catholic Charities is blessed to partner with parishes across the Archdiocese. Our work with St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds in Cicero (formerly St. Frances of Rome in Cicero and St. Mary of Celle in Berwyn) is one of our treasured collaborations. “We are so grateful to St. Mary Frances,” says Mike Waters, our Regional Director for West Suburban Cook County, “because without them, we would not be able to meet the growing needs of the community.”

The parish’s Berwyn campus hosts a Catholic Charities Early Childhood Development Center, and the former convent at its Cicero campus houses our West Suburban Regional Office, which includes a food pantry, clothing room, offices for behavioral health services, as well as an Evening Supper program and connections to a host of other Catholic Charities services.

The parish also partners with Maryville to serve and house teen

moms and their babies, Aid for Women to provide pregnancy services, and Family Focus to offer programming for children and families. “Our parishioners are very happy and proud to have all of these services,” says Margaret McKinley, Operations Director. “We are always looking for ways to fulfill needs. Partnering with trusted organizations is a way for us to do that.”

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“So many families in this community are considered working poor... the rising cost of food, gas, rent, and utilities makes it very difficult to make ends meet on a weekly basis.”

—Mike Waters

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Throughout the pandemic, Mike and his team relied on St. Mary Frances. When Catholic Charities decided to open an Evening Supper location in Cicero, not only did the parish readily offer their school cafeteria, but

they also staffed it with volunteers and supported weekly drive-through meals. Other local parishes quickly joined.

As the impact of the pandemic subsided and people went back to work, the number coming to the Suppers leveled off to about 125 per week. However, in recent months that’s risen back up to 185. The location has also experienced an ongoing 50 percent increase in food pantry use compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Father Radoslaw Jaszczuk, C.Ss.R. (Father Radek) agrees that the partnership is beneficial, “When I became Pastor last year, I was happy to find a thriving community. Our partnership has inspired parishioners to serve. We’re grateful that Catholic Charities is part of our parish life. Their presence reminds us to live out the mission of St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds: to combine a life of prayer with service to those in need.”

# Key partners in service and charity

Our Catholic leaders and partners reflect on how they experience courageous compassion.



## Sister Pat Cummings

School Sister of Notre Dame  
Chicago

I am 92 years old. I have been a School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND) for 71 years. During that time, I was a teacher, principal, provincial, Associate Director of Vicar for Priests, and CEO of Corazón a Corazón, a SSND-sponsored ministry. Recently, a 102-year-old SSND who wanted to know what I did during those years asked, “But WHAT DID YOU DO?” A question that generated a lot of soul searching. Those titles might have some meaning on a resume, but in real life, not so much!

So, what did I do? I made friends with a couple of homeless men on Michigan Avenue. I offered a shoulder and a few hugs to a woman whose husband is in jail. I apologized to a seventh grader. On Sundays, I now bring Communion and treats to two of our sisters in a non-Catholic memory care facility and spend time with them. I reach out to those whose paths touched mine.

Courageous compassion. Is this it? I only know it gives me peace and joy. It also gives credence to the words “All the way to heaven is heaven....” when the way is walked with Courageous Compassion: a smile, a chat, a chocolate!



## Father Luis Valerio Romero

Pastor, Jesus, Shepherd of Souls  
Parish, Calumet City

Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish was formed with the unification of three parishes in Calumet City: St. Victor, St. Andrew the Apostle, and Our Lady of Knock. During my time serving this new faith community, I have witnessed how the act of showing love and compassion to each other and those in need has helped bring together three parishes into one dynamic community.

Members offer their time and service through many outreach programs. We host the Calumet City Resource Center twice a week, offering clothing and food to families seeking help. Our women’s group collects and distributes diapers, toys, and financial assistance to mothers. We have a 30-year tradition of weekly community meals on Sundays, which parishioners prepare and serve.

I am very proud of and grateful for the generous hearts at Jesus, Shepherd of Souls. Every Sunday, we hold a second collection for families who need help with rent and paying bills. People give. Coming out of the pandemic, we launched a new parish festival. This August, we expanded to three days. We call it Shepherd’s Fest to recognize and celebrate the care we give to each other.



## Father Mike Nacius

Pastor, Church of Saint Mary  
Lake Forest

The followers of Jesus who make up the St. Mary’s community are formed in faith in their celebration of the Eucharist. They come together to be nourished in Word and Sacrament. And, guided by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit, they provide witness to the “life of the world,” offering compassion to the stranger in their midst.

This past Lent, a parishioner came to me with a proposition: “Father Mike, I’d like to support our sharing parishes’ Gun Buyback program. If I make an anonymous \$5,000 donation, will St. Mary’s match it?” And this August, another parishioner approached me, “Father Mike, I’ve been reading about how Catholic Charities is helping to resettle migrants. I will match anonymously \$10,000 in donations by St. Mary’s parishioners to support this.”

I’m proud to share that our parishioners exceeded the match donation to get guns off the streets. And, while I am writing before the final donations are tallied, I am very confident that our parishioners will match the \$10,000 donation to support our brothers and sisters in Christ as they search for a safe place to live and raise their families.

# Recent and upcoming events

## Art of Caring

**Saturday, April 29, 2023**

Exmoor County Club  
Highland Park



Together with the Catholic Charities Women's Board, Lake County Services, we were proud to honor **Buffly Rock** with the Irene Leahy McMahon Award. Our gratitude to all who made the event a success, especially honorary event chairs **Ronald and Barbara Kerner**; chairs **Natalie Reinkemeyer, Jane Hinton-Kedo, and Joanie Reynolds**; as well as **Nadine Shepard** for her service as Women's Board Chair.

## Blossoms of Hope Brunch

**Sunday, April 30, 2023**

Drury Lane  
Oak Brook Terrace



More than 500 survivors, champions, and friends of Catholic Charities Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) program came together for the return of this beloved gathering. Special thanks to **Paula Grapes** and the host committee for their leadership.

## Charities Golf Classic

**Monday, July 17, 2023**

Knollwood Club, Lake Forest  
Shoreacres, Lake Bluff



The weather at Knollwood Club and Shoreacres was perfect for the golfers who joined to raise money for Catholic Charities programs in Lake County. We extend special thanks to event chairs **John Cortesi, Matt Davis, Tim Finnegan, and Fred Marks**, and to all who golfed, sponsored, and raised their paddle!

## House of the Good Shepherd An Afternoon in Paris

**Sunday, November 5, 2023-12 pm**

Four Seasons Chicago



HOUSE OF  
THE GOOD  
SHEPHERD

Join event chair **Laura Anderson** and the House of Good Shepherd's Women's Board for an Afternoon in Paris, this year's annual gathering to raise awareness and essential funding for our domestic violence residence and programming on Chicago's North Side.



Scan code or [visit our events page](#) to learn more, purchase tickets, or view photos from previous events.

## The Spirit of Saint Nicholas Ball

Saturday, December 1, 2023

6:30 PM-Midnight

CHICAGO HILTON

Save the date for Chicago's most popular  
black-tie gala of the Christmas season!

Join 2023 event chairs Cece and Tom Ricketts and the Catholic Charities community for a festive evening of dinner and dancing in support of our programs for our neighbors in need.

## Ways to give

**Donate online, phone, or by mail.** Make a secure donation online by visiting our website at [catholiccharities.net/give](https://catholiccharities.net/give) or by calling (312) 655 7525. Checks made out to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago can be sent to P.O. Box 7154; Carol Stream, IL 60197-7154.

**Make a planned gift.** The Legacy of Hope Society honors people who include Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago in a will or trust or make another type of planned gift to help ensure our programs flourish for years to come.

Contact **Nancy Haws**, Director of Major Gifts at [nhaws@catholiccharities.net](mailto:nhaws@catholiccharities.net).

**Saint Katharine Drexel Society.** The Drexel Society recognizes individuals and families who have contributed \$10,000 or more during the past fiscal year. The society convenes our most generous and loyal donors through special events and communications.

Contact **Melissa Mares Stambor**, Vice President, Institutional Advancement at [mmares@catholiccharities.net](mailto:mmares@catholiccharities.net).

**Make a corporate gift or sponsor an event.** Catholic Charities offers sponsorship opportunities for fundraising events throughout the year.

Contact **Donor Relations** at (312) 948 6864 or [donor.relations@catholiccharities.net](mailto:donor.relations@catholiccharities.net).

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## Ways to serve

**Local Regional Mission Boards.** Our Regional Mission Boards are local networks of individuals passionate about charitable works and meeting the needs of their communities. They work in partnership with our staff across the Archdiocese of Chicago, connecting and vitalizing Catholics within and across parishes.

Email [partners@catholiccharities.net](mailto:partners@catholiccharities.net) to be connected with your local Regional Board leader.

**Faith in Action Team.** Catholic Charities offers volunteer opportunities for individuals or groups at varying levels of commitment and duration. These include serving at

a community supper, stocking shelves at a food pantry, teaching English to refugees, mentoring young adults, or delivering meals to our homebound seniors.

Visit [ccofchicagovolunteer.com](https://ccofchicagovolunteer.com) to see all opportunities, which are updated weekly.

**Junior Board.** Join other young professionals in service within a faith-based setting, connect to the broader Catholic community, and renew interest in personal and spiritual growth.

Contact [juniorboard@catholiccharities.net](mailto:juniorboard@catholiccharities.net) to learn more.



## Answering the Call to Serve

### Father Charles Rubey | Founder, Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS)

"I was on my knees praying for social justice, but I was also praying to get out of there alive," recounts Father Rubey about his experience marching with Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1966. That same evening, when he shared where he had been with his pastor, he was advised not to tell anyone.

At the time, the freshly ordained Father Rubey was serving at Little Flower parish in Auburn Gresham—busy morning to night, delivering communion, celebrating mass, teaching at the high school. Six years later, working on Chicago's Skid Row, Father Rubey saw how his mentor, Father Ignatius McDermott, ministered to those suffering from alcoholism with acceptance

and love—recognizing their affliction was a disease, not a choice.

Then in 1979, Father Rubey found his life's work. He began meeting with families who had lost children to suicide. At the time, the Church considered the act a sin. He saw how that label, as well as ongoing questions and pain, were affecting family members left behind. By then, he had an advanced degree in social work and was managing counseling programs at Catholic Charities. With the needs of survivors as its north star, the Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) was born.

Over the last 30 years, LOSS has come to be recognized nationally as an exemplary program. The program offers general

support and specialized services for spouses, Spanish-speakers, and children. "We welcome all," Father Rubey says. "And we are honest. We explain that they are never going to heal completely from their loss, but we can help them feel joy again."

While the Church formally amended the catechism around suicide in 1992, Father Rubey says the stigma persists. "There is still so much shame. We would never treat a family who lost a loved one to cancer in this way." Father Rubey is often asked by families to bless the place where their loved one ended their life. "These are holy places," he explains. "They are where someone in deep suffering was engulfed by God."



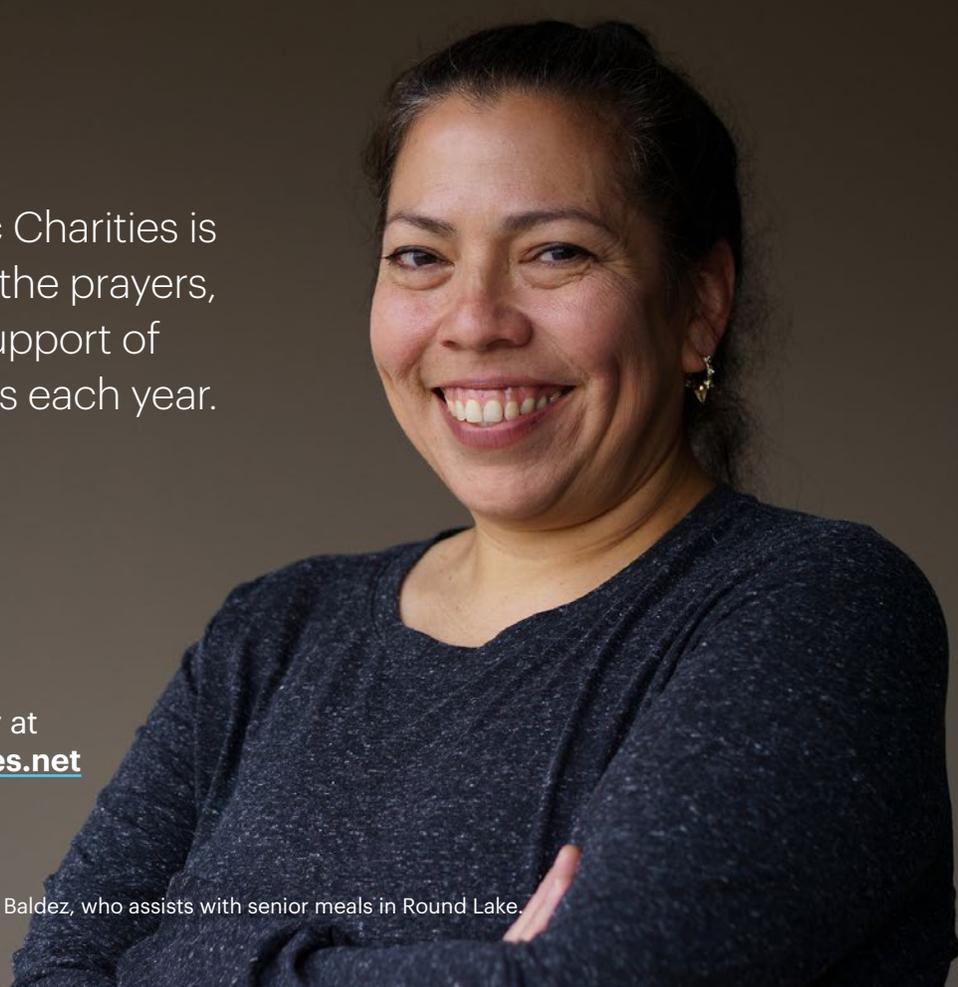
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The mission of Catholic Charities is brought to life through the prayers, service, and financial support of thousands of individuals each year.

**Join us in our witness  
of hope and mercy!**



Donate securely at  
[catholiccharities.net](https://catholiccharities.net)



*Pictured: Catholic Charities volunteer Diana Baldez, who assists with senior meals in Round Lake.*