

Faithfully Serving in 100 Locations Across 21 Virginia Counties and 7 Cities!



From left to right: Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, at the presentation of their 1,000th ultrasound machine to Catholic Charities with President & CEO Art Bennett, CFO Jeff Rostand, and Board Chairman Rick Kaplar.

Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic Doubles in Size and Adds Prenatal Care

FOR YEARS, two diametrically opposed organizations coexisted next to each another in a nondescript office park in Manassas: Amethyst Health Center for Women, an abortion clinic, and AAA Women for Choice, a pregnancy resource center.

After the Amethyst Health Center closed and the location was converted into Catholic Charities' Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic, AAA closed its doors, too, leaving its former offices vacant.

Initially operating for just four hours on one day per week, the clinic quickly doubled the time it was open for patient appointments. Soon, medical specialists such as orthopedists, cardiologists, physical therapists, and a dietician were conducting follow-up visits on the remaining four days a week. In just one year, it was obvious that the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic needed more space.

Despite this metamorphosis and the spectacular growth of the clinic, there

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The former sites were combined to form one medical center better able to serve the poor.

was a missing piece of the puzzle. To truly provide life-affirming services and meet the needs of pregnant clients, it was necessary to add prenatal care. To achieve this, however, required the provision of the necessary equipment to recruit a volunteer physician.

Since 2009, the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus has matched funds secured by local councils to purchase ultrasound machines for qualifying pregnancy centers. As if by providence, the Knights of Columbus Father Veger Council in Warrenton was raising funds

→ *continued on page 5*

President's Message

Dear Friends in Christ,

Lent is the time when we reflect to be more aware of God's saving presence in our lives. Every day at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, we meet people who are alone and suffering and they want to start anew. They need someone to remind them that God will help them carry their cross, so they can reach their goals and rejuvenate their lives. That's the role we all play in Catholic Charities and we so grateful for your partnership to make this happen.

In this issue of *The Mission*, you'll experience the invaluable gift of renewal in a variety of ways.

- **Renewal of life** through the gracious donation of an ultrasound machine by the Knights of Columbus for prenatal care at our Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic;
- **Renewal of spirit** through food and financial assistance offered to contractors who were affected by the government shutdown; and
- **Renewal of faith** in the notion that one person can be God's instrument to make a difference in the lives of thousands of people as we bid farewell to our long-time colleague, Sally O'Dwyer, who so capably led our outreach and volunteer efforts.

In the September 2018 issue of *The Mission*, we told you about the game-changing installation of commercial refrigeration and freezer units at the St. Lucy Food Project distribution warehouse so we can give fresh, healthy food to our patrons. Page 3 features a story on a fresh-produce food drive that was recently held at St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Annandale. The fruits and vegetables we give forms the foundation of a healthy diet for reviving children and families who rely upon our food.

You'll read that we are already expanding services at the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic. Now we can provide prenatal care, pregnancy support, classes for healthy living, dietician, chiropractic and physical therapy, counseling, and a pro-life partnership with Project Gabriel. And you'll meet some of our volunteers who sacrifice and freely give their time and talent to allow the clinic to transform so many who have no medical insurance.

Finally, you'll read about our annual celebration of the joy of charity and all of us working to be God's instruments to serve the vulnerable at the 2019 Catholic Charities Ball, which took place on Friday, February 22. We are so thankful for the tireless commitment of volunteers in our community who organize this amazing celebration, the fruits of which allow us to reach more people and transform more lives through Christ's love.

I ask that you read the stories and feel inspired to join us and share your time, treasure, or talent to extend God's love in the 21 counties and 7 cities we serve in our diocese.

God bless you this Holy Lenten Season,

ART BENNETT
President and CEO
Catholic Charities of the
Diocese of Arlington



What's up with Catholic Charities?

Watch and listen to hear the compelling stories behind our work

Catholic Charities' launch of its new website at www.cdda.net in November 2018 made it easier for visitors to follow our work serving the poor within the Diocese of Arlington.

Diocesan Podcasts with Catholic Charities

Under the Communications tab at the top of the Catholic Charities website, visitors can now find podcasts with Catholic Charities program directors and volunteer leaders talking about programs that provide cars for the needy, essential household goods for people who live in the rural parts of the Diocese, and the logistics behind St. Lucy Food Project, to name just a few.

Catholic Charities Videos

Visitors who want to watch beautiful videos that debut annually at the Catholic Charities Ball or learn about Catholic Charities' response to topics such as immigration or Opioids Epidemic within the framework of Catholic Social Teaching, can find these videos on the website.

In the Catholic Herald

The Communications tab includes stories about Catholic Charities' programs that have appeared in the weekly diocesan newspaper, the Arlington Catholic Herald.

Providing Fresh Produce Throughout the Year



FOR THE NEARLY 200,000 FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE living in the Diocese of Arlington, **having access to healthy foods for their families is a daily struggle.** There are many places where they can go to receive donated food – including the more than 70 pantries in the St. Lucy Food Project network – however canned and processed foods are frequently the only option.

Beginning in August 2018, Catholic Charities was able to offer clients fresh fruits, vegetables, and frozen meats and fish on a large scale after the installation of commercial refrigerator

and freezer system. During growing time, local farms donated vegetables picked fresh from their fields.

But where do these vulnerable people go to get truly nutritious foods in the dead of winter?

Thanks to **St. Ambrose Catholic Church** in Annandale, the St. Lucy Food Project will continue to play that role.

After learning of the need from Catholic Charities staff, St. Ambrose Food Liaison Joe Gaziano and Religious Education Coordinator Laura Mead offered to host the first St. Lucy fresh-produce food drive. To help, they engaged the religious education students in this corporal work of mercy and the kids exceeded all expectations!

On February 3, 2019, the students brought the ubiquitous St. Lucy blue bags filled with fruits and vegetables and loaded them on the truck. **In the end, more than 1,000 pounds of produce was donated by 200 students.** This produce was delivered to pantries in Warren, Loudoun, Orange, Fairfax, and Prince William Counties, as well as Alexandria City. †

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Patricia Kuntz at patricia.kuntz@ccda.net to learn how your parish can host a produce food drive this winter or to help feed the needy any time of year.

Helping Furloughed Workers Make Ends Meet

Tiffany and Moe earn a pretty good living as federal contractors. Their monthly budget is a little tight, though they have stable careers and have been with their employers seven and eleven years, respectively.

Then came the partial government shutdown and both were furloughed. Making matters worse, they were deemed “essential personnel” by their government clients and were required to work without pay. Five weeks without pay led to insurmountable challenges for many of the affected families.

Tiffany and Moe’s (*names changed*) small financial cushion was gone before they knew what happened. Forced to make tough choices, they were not able to cover all their expenses and their electric bill was past due. In the middle of January . . . and the end to the shutdown was nowhere in sight.

That’s when they learned about Catholic Charities’ special relief fund to help furloughed contractors who were struggling to pay their bills. The agency’s Emergency Assistance

Program organized events at three locations within the Catholic Diocese of Arlington (Alexandria, Leesburg, and Fredericksburg) to make it more convenient for those in need of help.

Although the partial government shutdown is over, many federal workers and federal contractors continue to experience financial distress as they catch up on unpaid bills. We want to help you. The Emergency Assistance Program continues to be available to assist with rent and utilities.

Please visit our website at www.ccda.net for information about services.

Meet Barbara Vassallo, Lori McLean, and Mary Schmitz

Barbara Vassallo, Lori McLean, and Mary Schmitz are three of the nearly 200 medical professionals who give their time and talent at the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic.

➔ When did you get involved with Catholic Charities and why? What specifically drew you to the clinic?

Lori: I was serving on the Retreat for the Seriously Ill, which had recently become a Catholic Charities program. A Charities employee spoke at lunch one day about the new clinic that was opening that December. I am a Nurse Practitioner and was retiring from the Health Department and I felt like this was God speaking to me to use my skills for another group of vulnerable people.

Mary: A year ago this March I happened to find out about the clinic's need for nurses during one of our parish's Health Ministry Meetings at Saint John Neumann in Reston. I laugh now because I know that God answered my prayers. For months I prayed for guidance in using my nursing skills. I felt like He answered and said, "OK! Stop asking me, go to the clinic."

The Clinic Director, Alexandra Luevano, has so much passion and enthusiasm for what she does you can't help but feel it too. She has so much love, appreciation, and persuasion power you just have to say "YES!" ***The patients are so appreciative of our time and help.***

"We see and treat some really sick people. If not for the clinic, I really don't know what they would do. It is a privilege to help!"

– MARY SCHMITZ

➔ What has been your favorite memory of your time volunteering so far? Can you share a "success story" about a patient you treated?

Barbara: One of my favorite stories is of a patient I saw before Christmas. We discussed the importance of making some lifestyle changes to improve her health, such as losing weight and increasing physical activity. This is certainly tough to do during the Christmas season! Since then, she has decreased the size of her meal portions and she walks about 45-60 minutes a day while her children play in the park.

Lori: Before volunteering at the clinic I spent many years working with the homeless, **so when we went out to a homeless encampment in Manassas to do blood pressures and invite these clients to come to the clinic**, it was like "old home week" for me! One of these gentlemen had multiple medical issues and an addiction to alcohol. He came to us several times and was always either intoxicated or just sobering up. He was in and out of the hospital. But I can see he is starting to transform. The last few times he has been in the clinic he has been clean, dressed appropriately, and sober!

Mary: My favorite memory so far was doing the Diabetic Capstone for our diabetic/ pre-diabetic patients. The team collaborations, working with the patients, educating the patients, and going to [Virginia Department of Health headquarters in] Richmond with the team to present our Capstone Project was an awesome and inspiring experience. We had several patients who lowered their weight and got off their diabetes medications. It is so wonderful to see these kinds of results in our patient population. It is not easy for people to make these kind of significant lifestyle changes! → *continued on page 5*



From top to bottom: Barbara Vassallo (Photo courtesy: Zoey Maraist), Lori McLean (Photo courtesy: Cal Cary), and Mary Schmitz



The most rewarding aspect is the ability to provide quality health care in an environment that conveys God's love...

– BARBARA VASSALLO

➔ What do you find most rewarding about your time with Catholic Charities?

Barbara: The most rewarding aspect is the ability to provide quality health care in an environment that conveys God's love and that shows deep respect for everyone who comes to the clinic.

Lori: Being able to express my faith openly with my patients; knowing that all the volunteers are there to do a job out of love, not because they are getting paid.

Mary: The reward I get every time I volunteer is knowing that the needs of others are being met in a caring and compassionate environment, without judgement.

➔ Is there any information you'd like to share with others who may be considering volunteering with Catholic Charities or at the clinic specifically?

Barbara: There is *always* (and I cannot emphasize that enough) a need for volunteer medical professionals – physicians with various medical specialties, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, physical therapists, and dietitians. In addition, non-medical volunteers are a wonderful and vital support to the medical professionals. People who can serve as receptionists, translators, patient intake assistants, administrative assistants, data entry personnel, physical activity counselors,

and anyone who has a special personal or financial desire to offer hope and healing to those in the community.

Lori: Even if you can spare only a few hours a month, come and see what we do, experience what we experience. You will get far more than you give, I promise!

We are so incredibly grateful to work with such devoted, giving volunteers like Barbara, Lori, and Mary. †

Continued from page 1

Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic Doubles in Size and Adds Prenatal Care

to acquire an ultrasound machine for the Warrenton Pregnancy Center. **The BVM Foundation joined the efforts to buy an ultrasound for Mother of Mercy that turned out to be the 1,000th machine acquired through this program.**



Photo Courtesy Cal Cary

On January 14, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge was joined by Supreme Knight Carl Anderson to unveil the ultrasound at the newly expanded clinic. After a Gospel reading and prayer service, **Bishop Burbidge blessed the machine, the new wing, and the crowd.** “We want to do everything we can to promote the gospel of life, but ultimately it’s entrusting our work and our intentions to the Lord. It’s ultimately his work and upon his grace that we must depend,” Bishop Burbidge said.

The space once occupied by AAA Women for Choice now houses rooms for prenatal care; offices for Catholic Charities’ pregnancy services; the diocesan Gabriel Project, which serves pregnant mothers in need; treatment rooms for physical therapy; a dedicated classroom to educate patients about healthy lifestyle choices; and a chapel. †

Excerpted from an article in The Arlington Catholic Herald written by Zoey Mariast.



Call for Volunteers!

To learn more about our volunteer opportunities, and ways you can get involved, please visit volunteer.ccca.net or call Margot Chavez at margot.chavez@ccca.net

Sally O'Dwyer Built Network of Volunteers for Catholic Charities

BY ELIZABETH A. ELLIOTT

FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS, Sally O'Dwyer has been the face of – and synonymous with – Catholic Charities for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, parishioners who serve as Parish Liaison Network representatives, her colleagues, and the vast network of 4,000 volunteers that she was instrumental in building. As of February 26, 2019, Sally left her position as Catholic Charities Vice President and Director of Volunteers to embark on her next adventure in Boulder, Colorado, relocating due to her husband's job.

When she saw a job posted for an ESOL coordinator position with Catholic Charities' Hogar Immigrant Services program, in 1999 something told her she had to have the job. Looking back, O'Dwyer didn't attribute her interest to her college education or any professional role. Rather it was working as a waitress at IHOP where she befriended the busboys and cooks that motivated her to pursue it.

"They had no future whatsoever, they didn't speak the language and were



Sally O'Dwyer (left) with Margot Chavez (right) pictured at The Catholic Charities USA Annual Gathering

disconnected," she said. "It didn't sit well with me." It led her to start taking Spanish classes and studying in Mexico.

"It was always such a deep pain to see those people struggling," she said. "So, when I saw this job I just knew it was for me."

Art Bennett, president and CEO of Arlington diocesan Catholic Charities, said he was skeptical of O'Dwyer's focus on volunteers when he first arrived, but she converted him.

"Some of the most incredible aspects of Catholic Charities bear this out — the Mother of Mercy Clinic, the volunteer leadership of the Catholic Charities Ball, our education programs, the nightly meal at Christ House, the volunteering board of directors, the Knights of Columbus'

participation and heavy-lifting for the St. Lucy Project. The list goes on," he said.

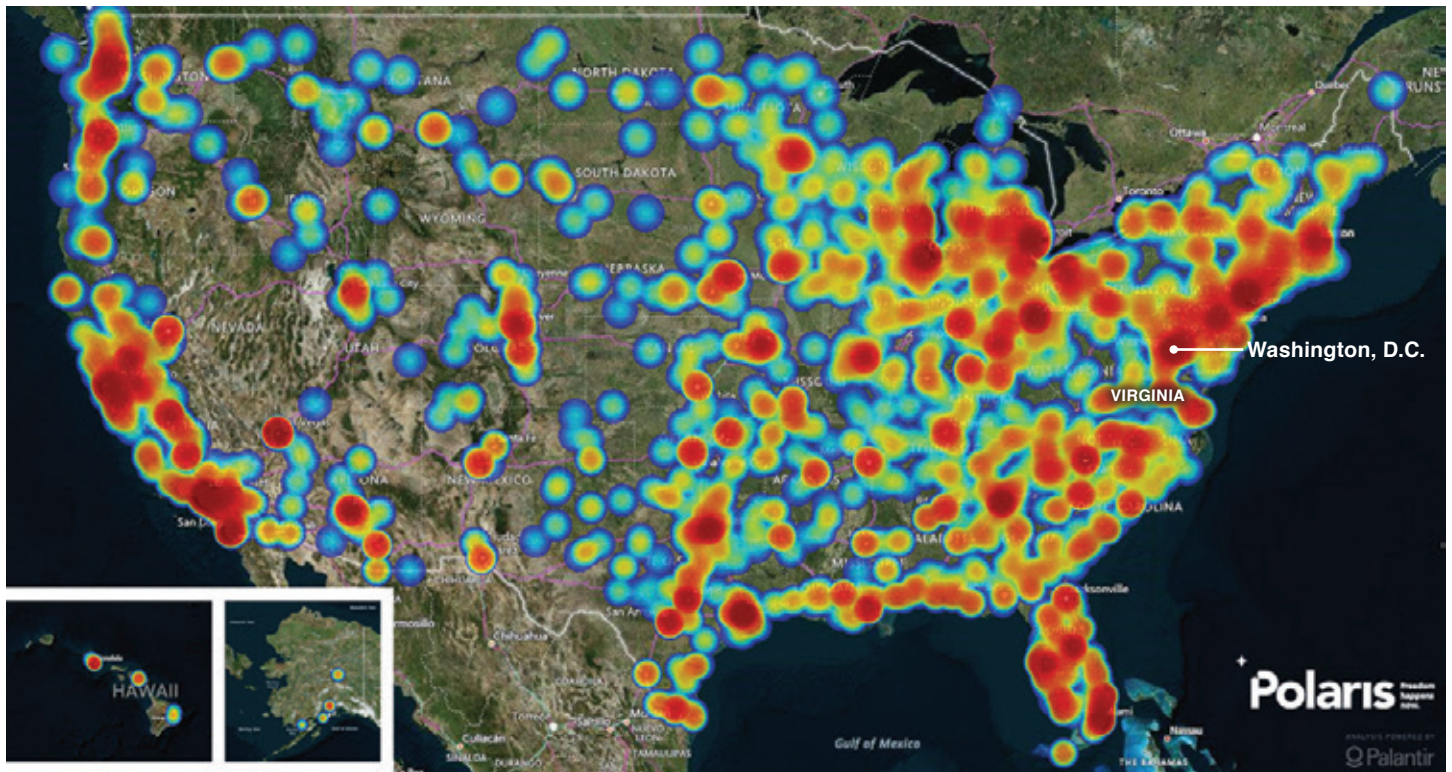
"I started to see the power of volunteerism because I was working with the immigrant community that didn't have any language skills," she said. "The volunteers flourished and felt like they were living their faith. The immigrants were happy and learning and improving. They also were learning there were people that cared about them."

That will be Sally's legacy from her time with Catholic Charities. That the poor and vulnerable in our communities across the diocese know that there are thousands of people who care about them and want to share Christ's love.

Thank you, Sally, for your distinguished service and passionate commitment to helping the least among us. †



Fighting Human Trafficking with Awareness and Prayer



A heat map showing locations of potential human trafficking cases in the U.S. Note the high level of activity around Washington, DC. Source: Polaris

A SEEMINGLY CASUAL AND SAFE encounter with a young man at the mall turned into a life-changing experience for Susan Young’s 15-year-old daughter who became a victim of human trafficking in Springfield six years ago. Her daughter was going to be sold to an out-of-state gang for \$2,000.

Young shared her story and the impact it had on her family during Catholic Charities’ Parish Liaison Network (PLN) meeting at St. Mark Church in Vienna Feb. 8 – the World Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking. Bishop Michael F. Burbidge released a statement that read, “There are millions of people around the globe who are the victims of sex or labor trafficking, and we know that sadly, these evils exist even within our own diocese.”

Catholic Charities utilizes its PLN meetings to discuss what’s going on locally and that includes tackling hard-hitting issues such as Human Trafficking. These conversations can be difficult and challenging; however, they are a vehicle to bring awareness and understanding across our community and help find ways to prevent the crimes and assist the victims.

Bill Woolf, a former Fairfax County police officer, has devoted his life to combating this crime. He cited statistics from the FBI that show human trafficking as the fastest growing form of organized crime nationally. The key to prevention, he shared, is to learn and recognize the signs of trafficking.

This was reinforced by Kay Duffield, Executive Director Northern Virginia

Human Trafficking Initiative (NOVA-HTI), an organization that seeks to “create awareness to mobilize the local Church” in the fight against human trafficking. NOVA-HTI seeks to share “the love and victory of Jesus Christ” with all victims seeking their services and see prayer as “essential in [their] holistic healing”

Over 100 participants, with representatives from 35 parishes, attended this PLN meeting. Many took this message back to their communities and are hosting their own human trafficking awareness events, committees, and fund-raisers. Catholic Charities looks forward to continuing this conversation, spreading awareness, and doing what we can to reduce and eliminate this unimaginable crime. †

Excerpted from an article in The Arlington Catholic Herald written by Elizabeth A. Elliott.



Photos courtesy Jenifer Morris Photography



· GOD'S INSTRUMENTS ·
Renewing Lives • Restoring Hope

Photos: Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington, and Art Bennett, Catholic Charities President & CEO, are pictured with: (left) Bishop Emeritus, Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde, and recipients of the legacy award named in his honor, representing the diocesan Knights of Columbus Councils, Virginia State Deputy Ed Polich and Supreme Director Tommy Harger.; (middle) James J. Matthews Legacy Award recipients, Chris and John McLaughlin; (right) Honorary Chairs, Mary Noel and Bill Page, and Ball Co-Chairs, Anne Biedscheid and Kim Aubry.

ON FEBRUARY 22, 2019, nearly 1,000 guests celebrated the joy of charity and helped provide resources to fulfill the essential mission at the heart of the Church – **service to the poor and vulnerable** – at the 37th Catholic Charities Ball. The evening was organized by more than 75 dedicated volunteers and staff led by **Ball Chairs, Mrs. Kim Aubry and Ms. Anne Biedscheid.**

Mary Noel and Bill Page, highly-respected members of the Washington-area Catholic, business, and philanthropic communities, served as this year's

Honorary Chairs. Long-time supporters of Catholic Charities and attendees of the first Ball in 1982, the Pages remarked that ***“it’s an absolute privilege to be God’s instrument . . . He’s provided for us so that we can share His blessings with others.”***

The **Knights of Columbus Councils** across the diocese were honored with the **Bishop Paul S. Loverde Legacy Award**. This is in recognition for their many years of service in support of the St. Lucy Food Project and, more recently, their donation of an ultrasound machine

to the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic to support prenatal care.

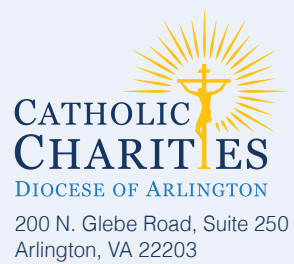
Photos courtesy Jenifer Morris Photography Estelle and Sean Ballington, Senior Client Service Partner with PwC, **chaired the Special Gifts Committee**, the dedicated cadre of volunteers who actively secure sponsorships and support for the event. Through their collective efforts and the generosity of all participants, \$1,100,000 was secured for the third year in a row in support of Catholic Charities programs and services.†

ABOUT CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON (CCDA)
Together, We’re Transforming Lives!

100 direct and affiliated service locations across 21 Virginia counties and 7 cities

Serves all regardless of background, faith, or circumstance

85 cents of every dollar spent goes to programs and services



Visit our blog and sign up to receive weekly or monthly updates at **www.arlingtoncatholiccharities.com**

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Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.