

Faithfully Serving through 21 Programs Across 21 Virginia Counties and 7 Cities!



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MRS Helps Children Get Ready For School

IN A VERY STRANGE YEAR FOR ALL OF us, the annual Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) backpack distribution for migrant and refugee children is a comforting back-to-school ritual. The MRS distribution of new backpacks and school supplies has taken place for more than a decade but this year, there will be a twist: it will be a safe-distance drive-through event, owing to COVID-19 pandemic guidelines, at MRS locations in Arlington, Fredericksburg and Manassas.

Sending children back to school has always placed an added financial burden for some families in our diocese. That's even more the case now with the ongoing economic and job instability brought on by the pandemic.

Two-hundred-fifty students received school supplies at the events, that took place on Sept. 2 and Sept 11.

"It is so much relief to know that someone is here to help us when we are struggling," one MRS parent said. "We are alone here, but MRS helps us a lot."

"It is so much relief to know that someone is here to help us when we are struggling..."

AN MRS PARENT

Generous parishioners and school families from throughout the diocese, including St. Mary of Sorrows Church, Fairfax, Church of the Nativity, Burke and St. Thomas More Cathedral School, Arlington, as well as friends, Girl Scouts, Rock Spring Congregational Church and

the LDS Church, supplied the donations. Each child received a backpack loaded with the basic supplies: pencils, pens, erasers, glue, scissors, crayons, colored pencils, markers, notebooks, composition books, 3-ring binders, loose leaf paper, and highlighters.

To receive a backpack distributed during the MRS event, students must be clients of MRS and must be enrolled in the Virginia Refugee Student Achievement Program (VRSAP) for students ages 5-18 who have been in the United States for less than five years.

MRS serves new clients arriving to the U.S. throughout the year, so school supplies are always needed. To donate a backpack or supplies, please contact Rebecca Boak, MRS Community Engagement Specialist, at 703-520-3228 or Rebecca.Boak@cdda.net. †

President's Message

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are all called to be loving and charitable in season and out of season. The pandemic cannot give a knockout blow against charity. The only question is, how to be charitable at this time? Our belief that charity is always necessary has forced us to be creative in how we make it happen.

We've had to switch to Zoom meetings when we normally would have a classroom full of people, or a person-to-person meeting. Our evening meal at Christ House is now takeout instead of sit down. We do contactless pick-up and drop-off of food, because food is essential.

And because of your tremendous generosity, we have been able to find the resources to safely help a record number of people this past ½ year of pandemic life: Over \$1 million given for rent and utility assistance; \$1.1 million worth of food to those without; nearly \$200,000 in medical assistance to the uninsured; over 100,000 people served and \$2.4 million dollars when Catholic Charities partnered with our parishes.

In this newsletter you will read all about Catholic Charities response to the pandemic challenges. You'll read about a mother and son volunteering their time to provide food to those in need; a story of how Hogar Legal was able to assist a mother find permanent safety in the U.S.; how we helped a mother whose family was homeless.

You'll also see opportunities to allow us to help more people through our upcoming events: Giving Tuesday, the parish Christmas Collection in mid-December, and our Annual Ball in February which will be virtual this year.

Thanks to you the pandemic has been a challenge we've been able to meet; but it's hardly over yet, and we ask you to consider supporting us so we can continue to provide for those in need.

We believe God is love and that He will bless us when we love others. Let's continue to work together to bring his love to those who might otherwise despair, and together we can bring hope to those who need a helping hand.



God Bless You,



ART BENNETT

*President and CEO
Catholic Charities of the
Diocese of Arlington*

*When Others are
Happy
Because of
You*

Dear Friends,

God brings people into our lives who understand that generosity is returned a hundredfold. Compassion, hospitality, justice, and generosity are the hallmark of Catholic Charities in our diocese. Your sacrificial giving to the poor is more than the check you write. It is a bond we share in serving our God. Pope Francis said, "Life is good when you are happy, but much better when others are happy because of you"

I want you to know that your Catholic Charities contribution brings happiness to thousands of women, men, and children. Your giving supports medical care for young mothers and uninsured families, shelter for the homeless, food for the hungry, rent and utilities assistance for the unemployed, counseling for those experiencing life's difficulties, and advocacy for the oppressed.

Catholic Charities is blessed by you. Your gift is an important part of how we are able to serve in this time of pandemic. An increase in giving will strengthen all that we do and make life good ...and much better..."when others are happy because of you" We hold you in our prayers with the assurance that God will bless you and bring you much happiness for your goodness.

Love and blessings,



FATHER ROBERT CILINSKI

*Episcopal Vicar for
Charitable Works*

Catholic Charities, Parishes Team Up to Prevent Evictions, Thanks to \$100,000 Donation

THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES
Of COVID-19 hit the Diocese of Arlington hard – but so did the economic impact, with many parishioners and neighbors finding themselves without jobs or greatly reduced hours. The ongoing impact has meant many are struggling to pay rent and mortgages as well as basic utilities.

For parishes, this means more parishioners and neighbors who live nearby are visiting the parish office in search of assistance. The unexpected increase in demand has put an especially difficult strain on some parish budgets to provide food and financial grants.

This spring, Catholic Charities received a generous \$100,000 gift from a family associated with a foundation who wanted us to use it to provide emergency financial assistance, beginning with efforts to help people avoid eviction.

While the Commonwealth of Virginia had placed a moratorium on evictions in the early months of the pandemic, rent and late fees continue to accrue and will come due for those who were struggling to pay their bills.

Maintaining a strong partnership with pastors and the people they serve is a bedrock principle of Catholic Charities. We decided to make these funds available to parishes so that they could continue assisting individuals and families knocking on their doors for support. Additionally, Catholic Charities Emergency Assistance Program has continued to provide rent and utility assistance to individuals and families as well.

“Our partnership with our priests and parish staff throughout the diocese is the heart of our work,” said Art Bennett, Catholic Charities president and CEO. “This generous donation enabled us

to strengthen those relationships and assist parishes when their neighbors turn to a local parish for help.”

In mid-June, we invited parishes who had seen a significant jump in emergency assistance requests to apply for funds through this Emergency Assistance Program. Nineteen parishes applied for funds, and in July all 19 were awarded funds at varying amounts based on their needs.

Parishes established their own criteria for providing the rent and utility assistance to those suffering impact from the pandemic.

Separately from this grant, Catholic Charities has substantially increased direct financial assistance with almost \$250,000 given out to individuals or families since the pandemic started due to the generosity of thousands of donors. †

A Visit with Mothers and Their Children at St. Margaret of Cortona

In January, St. Margaret of Cortona Transitional Housing for Families expanded its offerings to include a maternity program for single expectant mothers. That’s in addition to the single mothers with children the program has served since it began in 2009.

Since then St. Margaret’s has welcomed three babies born to moms enrolled in the maternity program. Using the trauma informed care approach, St. Margaret’s offers a safe home for families who’ve been

through traumatic situations, including homelessness and domestic violence. The maternity program also partners with Catholic Charities Pregnancy and Adoption Program to provide moms-to-be options counseling and other services.

“We offer a lot more than housing,” said St. Margaret program director Veronica Roth.

Both the Transitional and Maternity programs are workforce development-focused designed to increase the



Kala Maybury, a resident of St. Margaret's, smiles with her three young children.

mothers’ prospects of long-term financial independence and sustained housing success.

Staff and volunteers offer a life skills and financial → *continued on page 8*

Finding Ways to Feed the Hungry



Food is loaded in to the St. Lucy truck following the no-contact drive thru food drive at Holy Spirit in Annandale.

WHEN COVID-19 REACHED Virginia back in March and Masses were suspended, Catholic Charities St. Lucy Food Project was forced to quickly adapt, re-think and re-organize our efforts to continue safely collecting and distributing food to those in need. The economic effects of the pandemic meant more families were hungry and needed our help. Our overall visits by individuals needing food spiked from 46,000 to 55,800 compared to the previous year. With parish Masses suspended and no Sunday food drives, St. Lucy was projecting a **140,000 lb. food shortfall.**

Our Manassas warehouse and food pantries in Alexandria, Leesburg and Front Royal readjusted operations without closing services to the vulnerable. We suspended the practice of clients selecting their food from our pantry shelves and began prepackaging their two-week food supply. Through God's grace and these efforts, we distributed a record 130,000 pounds of food in June: almost 3 times more than our previous record high month of 58,000 lbs.

By the end of April we had implemented our popular Friday No Contact Drive-Thru food drives the results have been impressive.

Between April 24 and August 28, St. Lucy has partnered with 16 parishes. Some Fridays two parishes signed up, which kept our staff and volunteers jumping.

In addition to the drives, St. Lucy placed large blue bins outside of the Manassas Warehouse to allow for a contactless food drop off and initiated the Amazon wish list to help collect food year-round.

We partnered with Bishop Ireton's Varsity Cheerleading team to pilot this effort. Angela Hope-Eskew, the Varsity Cheerleading Coach wanted to find a way to support those with food insecurities safely.

Angela views this **Amazon Wish List** Food Drive as a service program for the cheer team to support the community. †

Interested in donating food?

- Contactless drop off bins can be found in front of our Manassas warehouse located at 8426-8428 Kao Circle, Manassas, VA 20110
- Go online and find our Amazon Wish List at: <https://www.cdda.net/SLPAmazonWishList>
- For the most current list of upcoming food drives, visit: <https://www.cdda.net/give-help/donate-and-distribute-food/>

Interested in partnering with us to host your own Amazon Wish List Food Drive?

Contact our Outreach Specialist, Lori Sikra, at lori.sikra@cdda.net or 703-479-2975 EXT 103.

We are incredibly grateful for our partnerships.

Many partnerships have also developed or strengthened over the past few months.

- SYSCO foods
- Keany Produce
- The Capital Area Food Bank
- The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank
- Cuisine Solutions (Sterling)
- The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints
- ACTS (Action In Community Through Service)
- The Knights of Columbus (especially E.D. White Council #2473 in Arlington, the St. Francis Council #11136 in Purcellville, and Mt. Vernon Columbus Club)
- Sheehy Automotive Stores

Catholic Charities Explores Racism With Bishop Burbidge at Live, Virtual Event

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN BY LESLIE MILLER, ARLINGTON CATHOLIC HERALD

ADDRESSING RACISM MEANS opening our hearts to an ongoing process of interior conversion as we “strive to see each other first as sons and daughters of God,” said Father Scott Woods, a Archdiocese of Washington priest who spoke at the Catholic Charities-sponsored conference with Bishop Michael Burbidge, “Responding to Racism: Understanding, Conversion, Action.”

“Racism has existed for a very long time and is a much larger issue than just here” in the United States, he said. “It’s not just a social illness, it’s a moral one ... at its core, racism is a failure to love our neighbor.”

Father Robert Cilinski, diocesan Episcopal Vicar of Charitable Works and pastor of the Church of the Nativity in Burke, where the late August event was held, welcomed 100 in-person attendees (the cap set for social distancing) and more than 1,100 who tuned in via livestream. He spoke of the diocese’s commitment to working toward change.

Bishop Burbidge noted that conversion means “a turning toward. I turn to you when I encounter you as a person, not a



Father Scott Woods addresses the audience

stereotype,” he said. “It is necessary to cooperate, because we fervently desire to build a more just and peaceful world.”

The event was co-sponsored by the diocesan Peace and Justice Commission and the Office of Multicultural Ministries.

Father Jamie R. Workman, diocesan vicar general, introduced Father Woods. A convert to Catholicism, he is now pastor of two Southern Maryland parishes, St. Peter Claver Church in St. Inigoes and St. Cecilia Church in St. Mary’s City, as

well as assistant vocations director, a high school chaplain and a spiritual director.

We need to “really learn the skill of listening,” Fr. Woods said. “We assume we know what others will tell us, but maybe we don’t understand them. We can work on opening our minds and hearts in a deeper way.” †

▶ Watch the video of “Responding to Racism: Understanding, Conversion, Action” on the Diocese of Arlington’s YouTube channel.

Save the Date

February 5, 2021
Catholic Charities Ball
Virtual Event



The pandemic has had an impact on everything everywhere except for the requirement to love our neighbor.

By the Grace of God and the support of thousands of donors, we have been able to continue to serve those most in need. The annual Ball provides significant support to help us meet those needs.

Because of the pandemic, the 2021 Ball will be a virtual event. This year the Ball will be a celebration of accomplishments and a look at the exciting challenges ahead. More information will be forthcoming in the next newsletter.

We are grateful for those who will continue to collaborate with us for this event.

A Long, Treacherous Path Leads a Mother and Son to Safety in the United States



A client works with an Hogar Immigrant Services, Legal representative at a 2019 workshop. Photo by Lisa Julia.

THIS YEAR, WITH THE HELP OF HOGAR Immigrant Services – Legal, Zoila Godoy (name changed to protect her identity) finally received the news that she had been waiting for over three years to hear... an Immigration Judge approved her application for asylum, permitting her and her son to stay in the United States.

Zoila's long path to safety has been treacherous. In 2016, after suffering violence in her hometown in El Salvador, she moved with her son, Gabriel, to another community within her country, hoping to find a safer life. Almost immediately, she was targeted and attacked by a gang who threatened they would find her if she tried to escape. Though she fought back and managed to escape, Zoila realized that she had to leave her country to survive.

Once in the United States, the immigration attorneys at Hogar agreed to represent Zoila and her son in their asylum cases. Though it was painful to relive her past experiences, Zoila was able to offer evidence to support her asylum application. A Bilingual Health Clinician from Catholic Charities' Family Services program also met with Zoila to evaluate and substantiate the impact of the trauma she endured in El Salvador.

Due to extensive backlogs in the immigration court system, Zoila's final hearing in January 2020 was the first of Hogar's asylum cases to make it to trial since Hogar expanded its services to include removal defense for individuals in deportation proceedings three years ago. During the weeks leading up to the hearing, Hogar staff, including lead Staff Attorney Taylor Hall, spent hours preparing

Zoila for the hearing and conducted a moot trial in the office so that Zoila would be well prepared for the big day.

Zoila said, "Preparing for the hearing was very stressful. I was so nervous that I couldn't sleep the night before. But on the day of the hearing, I felt more confident because of all our preparation."

At the end of the hearing, the Immigration Judge told Zoila that he was granting asylum for her and Gabriel. "I was so thrilled by the good news that I wanted to run up and give the judge a big hug," said Zoila.

"I was so thrilled by the good news that I wanted to run up and give the judge a big hug," – ZOILA GODOY

Now that Zoila is an asylee, she qualifies to receive services from Catholic Charities' Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) program. Thanks to MRS assistance, Zoila signed up for health insurance and driving school, eventually obtaining her driver's license. She received help to secure a job working at a restaurant and is already training to become a manager. She plans to take online English classes through Catholic Charities' Education and Workforce Development program this year. In addition, Zoila also qualifies to file petitions to legally bring her two other minor children to the U.S. from El Salvador, which Hogar filed on her behalf.

"Sometimes I forget that my immigration process is over. It feels like a dream. I thank God that so many doors are open to me now. God is good and forever God is good." †

On October 2, USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) is set to dramatically increase the filing fees required to apply for many types of immigration benefits. This increase will put an additional strain on our immigrant neighbors who have already been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. We are committed to serving those in greatest need, but to do this we need your help. **You can make a gift to Hogar Legal by visiting: ccda.net/donate/HogarLegal**





1. Tell me about your background. How did it inspire you to get involved with the St. Lucy Food Project warehouse?

Nanette: My husband Robert and I are originally from Detroit. We are both retired law enforcement. I have always enjoyed helping others and serving my community.

In 2015, the summer before my son, Justin, entered eighth grade, he was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society and he was looking to complete service hours. We learned of the St. Lucy Food Project through a good friend and we both began volunteering. We have really enjoyed volunteering at the warehouse and have continued to do so long after his service hours were completed.

Justin: This spring I graduated from Westfield High School in Chantilly. During my senior year, I obtained my Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification. I currently volunteer with Sterling Rescue, in Loudoun County, as an EMT. I will attend George Mason University and study finance this fall while also pursuing my paramedic certification.

2. What do you do in your role(s)?

Nanette: I fold and staple flyers onto the blue bags after they come back from parish food drives. I sort food and box food in the warehouse. When we were receiving food from Sunday food drives, before COVID, I was meeting the truck on Sunday evening to help the volunteers get the food into the warehouse.

Justin: I work in the warehouse and support Brandon Patterson, the Warehouse Manager. I unload and weigh deliveries. I pull orders and load them on pallets to be ready for delivery. I shelve the 40lb boxes that are packed by the volunteers. During COVID, we have been helping at the parish drive thru food drives also.

3. What do you find most rewarding about your time volunteering?

Nanette: I enjoy volunteering with the St. Lucy Food Project because of its mission. Food is a basic need that no one should go without.

Justin: I have been lucky enough to never had to worry about where my next meal was going to come from, and I do not think

anyone else should have to either. I feel good about volunteering at the warehouse because I feel like it is the very least that I can do to help people that are food insecure.

4. What challenges have you faced personally and while volunteering since COVID began? Why did you decide to continue to volunteer during such a scary and difficult time?

Nanette: We are completely blessed in that we have not faced challenges due to COVID like others have. However, I realized that the economic situation that was happening due to the pandemic was going to bring increased requests for food assistance. Unfortunately, Sunday mass was also stopped, which is the main source of food supply for the St. Lucy Food Project. I thought if St. Lucy Food Project is able to get the food, they are going to need help to process it. I am under 65, I am healthy, and I wanted to help.

Justin: I am fortunate that the only challenge I faced due to COVID was having my senior year end before I wanted it to. I have been out of school since mid-March. I am used to being very active between school, sports and other commitments. I am happy to have somewhere to go that is worthwhile. I am also aware that some of the St. Lucy Food Project volunteers are over 65 and could not volunteer. I am young and I could help. If I can work on the front line as an EMT during COVID, I can certainly come to the warehouse and help Brandon.

5. What has been your favorite memory of your time volunteering so far?

Nanette: My favorite memory is when Justin was in the eighth grade and I was teaching his CCD class. It was confirmation year, and our class adopted the St. Lucy Food Project as our service project. The kids planned a parish food drive. They collected food on Sundays before CCD classes; usually with a theme. On "Souper" Bowl Sunday, they asked for soup donations. On Valentine's Day, they did Kisses for Cans; giving kids Hershey kisses in exchange for food donations. They spoke at mass about food insecurity and the importance of the food drive. They handed out blue bags at mass and on the following Sunday, they collected the bags, put them in the truck, went to the warehouse and unloaded the donations. The kids had been volunteering at the warehouse throughout the year, so they were able to get the full picture of the operation.

Justin: I have enjoyed helping with the parish drive through food drives during COVID. I know that, especially right now, there is a great need for food, and I am happy that the St. Lucy Food Project was able to pivot their operation to safely get food to those that most need it. †

A Visit with Mothers and Their Children at St. Margaret of Cortona

literacy and budgeting classes, employment training, and intensive case management to residents. The program also provides psychological counseling, including art therapy, and children's services to support the long-term personal resilience and financial independence of each family.

Kala Maybury moved into the family transitional program at St. Margaret's last fall after being referred by a domestic violence shelter in Winchester. She transferred to the maternity program when it opened. She gave birth to her third child, a daughter, in February. She also has a 5-year-old daughter and an almost-three-year-old son.

With the help of her St. Margaret's case manager and therapist, she's working through her past, which includes an abusive marriage, and working toward a

secure future for her and her children. A certified nursing assistant, who, like all the residents at St. Margaret's who lost their jobs earlier in the pandemic, she's now been called back to work. (Other residents are back to work as well.) With the help of the budgeting program, Maybury has been able to pay off \$3,000 in debt.

"In order for me to provide for my kids, I had to work through a lot," she said. "I leaned heavily on my faith. God would never lead us down a path that was detrimental."

St. Margaret's housing, which has 12 apartments, currently has nine mothers and 22 children who will live there for about two years. Ninety-four adults and 214 children have lived at St. Margaret's since it began.



Bishop Burbidge visits with Kala at St. Margaret's.

"This is so uplifting for me to see the work that's being done, to hear the difference you're making in people's lives," Bishop Burbidge told St. Margaret's staff on a recent visit to tour the Woodbridge apartment building and meet with residents, including Maybury. "This is a sacred place. Thanks for being effective instruments of God's love."



Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events!

11/15	World Day of the Poor
12/1	Giving Tuesday
12/12-12/13	Parish Christmas Collection

Catholic Charities Future Needs

It's easy to name Catholic Charities as a beneficiary of a retirement plan, brokerage account or life insurance policy. For instructions view our website ccda.net or contact Gretchen Koch at (703) 841-3819 or gretchen.koch@arlingtondiocese.org

ABOUT CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Together, We're Transforming Lives!

Serving our neighbors in need, regardless of faith

Covering 21 Virginia counties and 7 cities through 21 programs

Spending 85 cents of every dollar directly on programs that assist vulnerable men, women and families



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Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.