



THE MISSION

CATHOLIC CHARITIES • Diocese of Arlington

JUNE 2018

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

HELP STOP SUMMER HUNGER BEFORE IT STARTS

BY ELIZABETH A. ELLIOTT



A child whose family receives food from the St. Lucy Food Pantry at Christ House smiles as he holds up fresh vegetables grown in the on-site Community Garden (see page 7 to learn more about the garden).

WHILE MOST PEOPLE ARE THINKING ABOUT VACATION as the school year comes to a close, the summer months can be difficult for the food insecure.

According to the Virginia Department of Education, more than 182,000 children across Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington's (CCDA) service area participated in free and reduced-meal programs at school this year. For these kids who rely on school for regular breakfasts, lunches, or both, summer means they may go hungry.

This causes a strain on the stretched-thin budget of parents with the increased

food demand from children who would otherwise eat at school. In fact, only 15 percent of children who qualify during the year can access free summer meals (Source: No Kid Hungry).

That's why our **St. Lucy Food Project** launched the **CCDA Summer Lunch Drive** – so the community can respond before schools close and families find themselves in need of food again. You can be part of the solution by donating kid-friendly foods like breakfast cereals, snack packs, fruit cups, peanut butter and jelly, and shelf-stable milk (see full list on page 2) to the St. Lucy Food Project this summer. ♥

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Help make summer hunger free

Several churches (below) will focus their upcoming St. Lucy collections on child-friendly foods.

- The Basilica of St. Mary in Alexandria
- Church of the Nativity in Burke
- Good Shepherd Church in Alexandria
- Holy Spirit Church in Annandale
- Holy Trinity Church in Gainesville
- St. Bernadette Church in Springfield
- St. Catherine of Siena Church in Great Falls
- St. Joseph Church in Herndon
- St. Katharine Drexel Mission in Haymarket
- St. Mark Church in Vienna
- St. Stephen the Martyr Church in Middleburg
- St. Veronica Church in Chantilly

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends in Christ,

Summer is a relaxing time to count our blessings and we have so much to be grateful for at Catholic Charities. But there is a lot of great work to do for those in need in our large diocese; and we could not accomplish our mission of transforming lives without the teamwork of so many.

In the summer many schools close and that means two less meals a day for tens of thousands of children in our diocese. Our parishes stay open, however, and you'll learn about their partnership with CCDA's St. Lucy Food Program to make sure that young kids are fed during the summer. And St. Lucy is committed to providing healthy food to those in need, which means a lot of generous souls who help with our garden at Christ House and you'll see what great work the volunteers have done.

Adoption has been a blessing in our diocese for more than 70 years and you'll see it's still going strong helping birthmothers receive the support they need to make a "beautiful sacrifice" to enrich everyone's life. Our Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic is only six months old and it is already expanding and enhancing services thanks to the volunteers and donations of so many.

You'll read about our partnership with HomeAid of Northern Virginia and over 17 businesses (!) in the area who want help homeless families with children transform their lives while living in apartments they are proud to call home. And another partner, Able Moving & Storage, and how they, too, generously give us their hearts and their backs to ease the transitions of newcomers into our diocese.

Without better jobs, it's hard to transform and grow. We are so pleased with our partnership with Good Shepherd parish and the 22 companies who attended the joint job fair in the Mt. Vernon section of Alexandria to provide help and hope for better work and a better life.

As you can see, these voluntary partnerships bring hope, resources, and increase the faith of those we serve. What an honor it is to work with them in answering the gospel call to serve the needy. But we need your help too. Please consider volunteering at CCDA. With 20 programs and services we certainly have one that is right for you. Visit volunteer.ccda.net to see the opportunities and sign up. And what a difference it makes to those we serve and those who serve to bring the love of Christ to those in need.

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "ART BENNETT".

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

HOW YOU CAN HELP STOP SUMMER HUNGER



Help make summer hunger free

When donating food to the St. Lucy Food Program this summer, focus on items that are healthy, kid-friendly, and rich in nutrients such as:

- Breakfast cereals;
- Shelf-stable milk;
- Tuna snack kits;
- Single-serve pasta meals;
- Granola and cereal bars;
- Peanut butter and jelly;
- Applesauce (unsweetened); and
- Fruit cups and dried fruit snacks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on supporting the St. Lucy Food Project this summer, please contact Debra Beard at 703-479-2975 ext. 2 or dbeard@ccda.net.

PREGNANCY & ADOPTION SUPPORT

Supporting Birthmothers for a Lifetime



“Catholic Charities provides support for the lifetime. They aren’t going to rush you out. They will always have time for you.”

— SARAH, BIRTHMOTHER

SARAH WAS PREGNANT and the baby's father was out of the picture. Considering where she was in her life, she knew she would not be able to provide for her child in the way she wanted. With the help of her family, she decided to make an adoption plan and began working with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington (CCDA).

As with most birthmothers, Sarah experienced fluctuating emotions throughout her pregnancy related to her decision. **It was after the adoption was completed that Sarah began to struggle.**

“It hit me the minute the baby left the hospital. I had tremendous anxiety and I didn’t want to deal with it. I wasn’t motivated to talk about it and I just shut down. I didn’t want to get out of bed or take care of my other responsibilities. I just wanted to crawl in a hole” and make everything go away.

When Sarah did discuss her feelings with those closest to her, she knew they couldn’t understand what she was experiencing. They did their best to reassure her that everything would work out fine, but it felt hollow.

“The hard thing about adoption is you feel so alone and no one knows what you’re going through.”

Sarah battled with anxiety and conflicting feelings surrounding the adoption for several years before a phone call that changed her life. She reached out to CCDA with a question about the adoption and spoke with Meaghan Lane, MSW, Program Manager for **Pregnancy and Adoption Support** services. “I could tell she was struggling,” Meaghan said, “and I asked her if she wanted to come in and talk about it.”

“Meaghan was the first person to say to me that [not raising your birth child] is sad and it is okay to feel that way,” Sarah said.

“It was important for her to work through the grief and loss she was feeling,” said Meaghan. “It was also helpful to develop a sense of identity as a birthmother, understanding that her choice was so her child could have the best life was a **beautiful sacrifice.**”

After nearly six months of counseling, Sarah is at a point where she is able to pursue a fulfilling and active life, at peace with her decision to make an adoption plan. Since it is an open adoption, she finds hope and comfort in seeing her birth child grow up.

At CCDA, you will frequently hear “adoption is a life long journey” as it

Birthmother Sarah (left) and Meaghan Lane, MSW, Program Manager for Pregnancy and Adoption Support, put finishing touches on a “birthmother bouquet,” which is a collection of messages from birthmothers to comfort those just starting their adoption journey.

impacts those touched by it in different ways throughout their lives. That is why we provide ongoing birth parent support for a lifetime (see below).

“Adoption is one of the hardest things you will ever do and **one of the most beautiful things you will ever do.** I’m here to say [to other birthmothers] you can do it. You’re ok. You’re not alone.” ❤



CCDA provides post-adoption services that include counselors, support groups, and events throughout the year for anyone who has ever made an adoption plan. Our staff of adoption competent clinicians are available to support families and individuals through any adoption-related issues they may encounter. **We are a life-long resource** for adoptees and families who have been touched by adoption and are a partner on their journey so they experience the support and insights needed to be successful.

MOTHER OF MERCY FREE MEDICAL CLINIC

Services Expanded at Free Medical Clinic



Photo by Cal Cary/calcaryphoto.com

Volunteer nurse Teresa DeMarr explains treatment options to a patient's daughter (left) who is translating for her mother.

THE RESPONSE TO THE OPENING of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington's (CCDA) Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic in Manassas has been overwhelmingly positive in every regard. From the standing-room-only crowd for the blessing to the enthusiastic embrace by the local community. From the extraordinarily generous financial support provided to help fund its operations to the outpouring of volunteers eager to help treat clients, the clinic has surpassed the most successful scenarios envisioned for its first six months.

The number of poor and uninsured clients seeking basic medical care has been greater than anticipated, also. To address this significant demand, the clinic has nearly doubled the hours for patient appointments

while adding wrap-around services to meet their complex medical needs.

This includes on-site access to specialists such as cardiologists, orthopedists, chiropractors, physical therapists, and dietitians. A group of patients has formed an exercise group that meets weekly to improve health outcomes while strengthening their ties to the local community.

Further, the clinic has been invited by the Virginia Department of Health to participate in SYNC, a continuing education program designed to improve medical care locally. Because many of the patients seeking care have diabetes, the CCDA clinical team will focus on diabetes interventions for their SYNC Capstone Project. Early identification of

the onset of the disease is vital to treat and prevent multiple chronic conditions in this high-risk population. Doing so will lead to improved self-care and reduce diabetes-related complications.

The good news is that the patients who are receiving care at the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic are seeing significant improvements in their health in just a few visits. Volunteer Medical Director Dr. Scott Ross has remarked at how extraordinary this has been in his more than 20 years of experience.

"Typically when treating a patient for a chronic disease, a physician will write a prescription and improvement will be incremental at best," Dr. Ross shared. "You might try something else and they will get a little bit better. For patients we are seeing here at the clinic, their conditions are improving dramatically."

"They have many statistical reasons not to do well, but that is not the case. Maybe it is having medical care for the first time in a while, maybe patient motivation, maybe the support of the clinic staff, maybe prayer . . . I can't really explain it. I've never seen anything like it."

To some, this may sound like a miracle. At a place named in honor of the Blessed Mother, perhaps we should expect miracles here more often. ♥

Novant Health UVA Health System Prince William Medical Center is the leading health system partner and provider for the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Or to learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Alexandra Luevano at aluevano@ccda.net.

ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA FAMILY HOUSING

New Homes for Homeless Families



Before and after pictures of a renovated kitchen at St. Margaret of Cortona family residences. All units received the same upgraded flooring, cabinets, countertops, and fixtures.

DIGNITY. IT'S AT THE CORE OF ALL THE SERVICES that Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington (CCDA) provides because of our belief that human dignity is inherent in all of God's children. This is prominently on display at **St. Margaret of Cortona Family Transformational Housing**.

St. Margaret's serves homeless families as they reestablish independence after exiting an emergency shelter. Single parent households, led by women, are the typical families served at St. Margaret's with nearly half (47%) reporting some exposure to domestic violence.

A converted apartment building consisting of 12 apartment homes serves as a structured environment to **keep the family intact** while the clients strengthen the life skills required to secure their basic needs. These homes were recently renovated by **HomeAid Northern Virginia** and 17 of their partners who generously provide their services and materials significantly below market rates, or donate them altogether.

"Our clients are thrilled. It's hard to explain how excited they are by all of the overhauls these units got," said Veronica Roth, program director for St. Margaret's. "The

"Our clients are thrilled."

— VERONICA ROTH,
PROGRAM DIRECTOR
FOR ST. MARGARET'S

granite countertops and updated bathrooms are all so lovely — and such a luxury for people who haven't had luxury in their lives lately."

The renovations included updated and upgraded kitchen and bathroom cabinetry and countertops, drywall repair, and new flooring. Some units also received upgraded lighting, new refrigerators, and upgraded door locks for security.

"We keep calling it St. Margaret's Makeover! It's really brought this building

THANK YOU!

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington thanks HomeAid Northern Virginia, Project Builder Captain Toll Brothers, Staged Interiors for furnishing the units, and the following trade partners for giving families recovering from homelessness a safe, stable home!

- American Disposal Services
- Allied
- Atlas Plumbing, LLC
- B&K Distributors, Inc.
- Buhl Electric Company, Inc.
- Doug Construction, LLC
- Falcon Heating & Air Conditioning
- GE Appliances
- Kohler
- L & P Carpenter, LLC
- Mid South Building Supply, Inc.
- Poe Porcelain Repair
- Premier Services
- T.A.C. Ceramic Tile, Co.
- Titan Erosion Control

up to modern standards, and it will increase the longevity of the building's ability to serve families," Ms. Roth added.

The environment in which we live contributes significantly to our sense of self-worth and our value in society overall. Providing homes that are comfortable and a place that client families are proud to live plays an important role in their recovery and journey to independence. ❤

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you or your organization would like to learn more about partnering with Catholic Charities to serve those in need in our communities, contact Todd West at 703-224-1470 or twest@ccda.net.

PARTNER PROFILE - ABLE MOVING & STORAGE, INC.



Photos courtesy Able Moving & Storage, Inc.

Employees of Able Moving & Storage load furnishings onto a moving truck for delivery to a home for newly-arrived refugees.

A Portrait of Corporate Social Responsibility

BY BROOKE HAMMOND PÉREZ

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate social responsibility is a way to create a better world through business. And effective corporate-nonprofit partnerships offer benefits and solutions for both organizations. The partnership between Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington (CCDA) and **Able Moving & Storage, Inc.** is one example of these mutually beneficial relationships.

Able Moving & Storage recognized that its entry-level employees needed to strengthen their English-language skills to advance within the company. They contacted CCDA's **Hogar Immigrant Services** education program to learn more about their English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Recognizing a need for proficiency related to their job sector, Hogar staff designed an English curriculum with an emphasis on moving and storage industry-specific vocabulary and grammar.

Able Moving & Storage invests in their employees so they can grow professionally within the company. This has also helped fulfill Hogar's mission to provide much-needed English classes to more non-native speakers. The relationship has continued to grow from there.

CCDA's refugee resettlement program receives donated furniture and household goods to help families establish new lives, which are stored in a warehouse until they are needed. Able Moving & Storage donated and installed shelving to maximize use of the space, and provided training on proper lifting and packing procedures to staff and volunteers to help ensure workplace safety.

At the same time, CCDA is exploring additional custom-designed classes it can offer Able Moving & Storage employees,

such as industry-specific Spanish classes for their managers. The increased visibility through **this partnership has also led to more business opportunities** for Able Moving & Storage truly making this a win-win relationship.

Through our many corporate partnerships, CCDA is able to help more individuals move up the ladder to get better jobs and contribute more to their communities across the diocese. ♥

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Do you own a business and want to learn more about ways to partner with CCDA? Or is your employer interested in hosting an employee service day with one of CCDA's 20 programs? Please contact Todd West, Director of Development Programs at 703-415-6110 or twest@ccda.net for more information.

CHRIST HOUSE COMMUNITY GARDEN

“Sow Your Fields and Harvest the Crops”

- EXODUS 23:10

THREE’S NOTHING QUITE LIKE ENJOYING A SALAD with fresh greens from the local farmer’s market. Or the burst of flavor when eating a ripe tomato off the vine from your own backyard garden. Tomatoes that grow next to the herbs you grab three nights a week as you cook dinner.

The homeless and hungry men and families Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington (CCDA) serves at Christ House in Old Town Alexandria will enjoy these pleasures this summer, too.

For the sixth year, the Christ House Community Garden will provide fresh produce to clients of the on-site St. Lucy Food Program Pantry. An assortment of herbs will also be available to those who prepare the nightly meals for use in their recipes. None of this would be possible without the hard work of CCDA’s dedicated volunteers over three weekends in April.

First, ten members of the **Bishop Ireton Father’s Club** were joined by three students and provided all the supplies and labor to build new raised garden beds, making them more efficient in the process. The old beds were squares, and the middle was difficult to reach for planting, weeding, and picking the vegetables. The new beds are long, narrow rectangles that are easily accessible from both sides. The following weekend, students from the **George Washington University MHA program** completed the final preparations for planting including additional weeding of the garden.

Lastly, on April 28, a group of 27 volunteers from the multiple programs at Christ House – food pantry, evening meal, thrift shop, and emergency financial assistance – put the finishing touches on the project. They provided all the seedlings,



tools, and energy required to fill the beds with an assortment of vegetables and herbs. Because it is an organic garden that doesn’t use fertilizer or pesticides, the volunteers planted many marigold plants to naturally repel a variety of pests that harm vegetables.

Before enjoying a picnic lunch and fellowship, the volunteers joined **Father John De Celles, Pastor of St. Raymond of Peñafort Catholic Church in Springfield**, in prayer as he blessed the garden and gardeners in God’s name. ❤



(Top) Members of the Bishop Ireton Father’s Club build new raised garden beds for the Christ House Community Garden; (Bottom) Volunteers prepare the garden beds by turning the soil so that an assortment of vegetables and herbs can be planted.



Community Job Fair Hosts Local Businesses, Families

BY MARGOT CHAVEZ

Attendees of the first annual CCDA Community Job Fair at Good Shepherd Catholic Church speak with prospective employers about potential opportunities.

MORE THAN 100 JOB-SEEKERS attended Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington's (CCDA) first annual **Community Job and Resource Fair co-hosted with Good Shepherd Catholic Church** on April 28, 2018. More than 22 companies participatead, including **Hilton, BB&T, United Bank, and Able Moving & Storage**, and were joined by 10 local service providers that were there as additional resources for participants.

For people living in the Mount Vernon section of Alexandria, opportunity is not as readily available as it is in other parts of the CCDA service area.

"Having meaningful, productive work helps support a family economically, but work is more than a way to make a living. It is a form of participating in our society and world."

— SUSAN GRUNDER, DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL MINISTRY AT GOOD SHEPHERD

Overall unemployment in Fairfax County is 2.4 percent while it is more than double that locally at 6.5 percent. Further, there are large numbers of working poor in the area with 15.7 percent of people living in poverty working full time and 20.8 percent employed part time.

This Community Job Fair provided an opportunity for those in poverty to meet employers one-on-one with the hopes of finding work that could help provide for their families.

On-site volunteers worked with attendees on their resumes and provided interview tips while several employers interviewed

candidates during the event. An Immigration Attorney from CCDA Hogar Legal Services gave free consultations to families on citizenship- and immigration-related issues. Lastly, professional clothing from the CCDA thrift store was available free to attendees so they could dress for success in future interviews.

Our thanks to Fr. Tom Ferguson and the parishioners at Good Shepherd for hosting this event. ❤

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To participate in a future job fair or to volunteer in other ways with Catholic Charities, please contact Sally O'Dwyer at sodwyer@ccda.net.

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
- 86 cents of every dollar spent goes to programs and services



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
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Visit our blog and sign up to receive weekly or monthly updates at

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Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.