



Serving all regardless of background, faith, or circumstance.



Bishop Michael T. Burbidge visits the clients at Christ House.

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Catholic Charities Christ House – an “emergency room” for the poor and vulnerable

NOT LONG AGO, RONALD REDMAN, 62, was unemployed, on the outs with family, and struggling with his years’ long battle with alcohol. He was, he says, “wasted.” He’d moved into a homeless shelter that encouraged sobriety, “but everything else in my life was in shambles.”

Then he was accepted into the Men’s Transitional Housing Program at Christ House, which encourages financial independence and spiritual renewal.

“We only went by two things,” Ronald says, “One was spirituality, and the other was learning how to sustain life outside of Christ House.”

Ronald learned about the importance of structure and daily routines. He added a long predawn morning prayer walk to his routine. Christ House helped him with budgeting and financial accountability. He had one-on-one conversations with his case manager and group about anger and other challenges he faced. Most importantly, he delved deep into his relationship with God.

Today, Ronald has completed the program. He’s employed at a good job and has moved to an apartment near family, where he continues his path of sobriety, routines, and maintaining a meaningful relationship with God.

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“I didn’t know I had this much life in me.”
– RONALD REDMAN

Ronald is one of tens of thousands of people who have been helped at Catholic Charities Christ House.

“Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” -Luke 10:34

Dear Friends,

50 years ago a shelter for the homeless in Old Town Alexandria was established by Catholic Charities of Northern Virginia, soon to become Catholic Charities of the newly founded Diocese of Arlington. Christ House was founded to serve people seeking the most basic of needs: shelter and a meal. Over the ensuing decades, and thanks to thousands of volunteers and donors, Catholic Charities Christ House has also been able to offer the people of Alexandria emergency financial assistance, a food pantry, job training, a thrift store and a clothing bank.

To this day we continue to offer shelter for up to 14 men and an evening meal to anyone in the community who is hungry.

It is an astounding and miraculous story made possible by your prayers, and the hard work and dedication of our employees and volunteers who each day make God's love visible and present to our brothers and sisters in need.

The ministries of Christ House showed what was possible if love, as Pope Benedict wrote, was organized. Catholic Charities realized that what was happening in

Alexandria could also happen in Manassas, and Leesburg, and Woodbridge, and Front Royal and Fredericksburg.

Today, Catholic Charities serves the poor, protects the vulnerable and welcomes the newcomer at more than 20 locations through 12 direct service ministries throughout our diocese. In our most recent fiscal year, we served nearly 28,000 men, women and children. It is a labor of love made possible by the Holy Spirit moving through a small and faith-filled collection of people who, a half-century ago, understood that love of God and love of neighbor are one and the same.

Please join me in thanking God, and the thousands of Good Samaritans who have worked, or volunteered, at Catholic Charities Christ House. And please pray for all of the people we have been blessed to serve, wherever they may be. We are grateful to be the place, the inn, where the love and consolation of Jesus Christ is freely given and received.

Yours in Christ,



STEPHEN CARATTINI
President and CEO

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington

National Migration Week

The Church in the United States and the Diocese of Arlington observed National Migration Week September 18-24. Catholic Charities hosted several events to mark the observance, including an immigration 101 workshop for Catholic leaders, and a naturalization workshop for eligible migrants who needed legal assistance filling out their citizenship paperwork.

On September 24, Bishop Michael T. Burbidge celebrated Mass on World Day of Migrants and Refugees at St. Agnes Catholic Church in Arlington. Following Mass Bishop Burbidge joined Catholic Charities President & CEO Stephen Carattini and Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services staff and



Young Afghan girls served by Catholic Charities.

friends at a reception to meet refugee families from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Central and South America.

“Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security. If we want life, let us give life. If we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities.”

—BISHOP BURBIDGE,
quoting Pope Francis,
World Day of Migrants and
Refugees 2023 homily



The new food pantry in Alexandria will have more refrigeration for perishable food.

Food Pantry Moving This Fall

The number of families served at Catholic Charities Christ House in Old Town Alexandria has grown significantly, from 40 families a week a few years ago, to 75 families now.

The increased demand is one reason the pantry has outgrown its current location. Space is cramped and clients find parking extremely difficult. Volunteers will no longer have to haul heavy boxes of food up and down the narrow stairs from the 200-year-old building's cellar.

This fall Catholic Charities is relocating its Alexandria pantry to a larger space on Eisenhower Avenue. The pantry will be a one-level, 1,700-square-foot facility with plenty of storage and refrigeration. It comes with plenty of parking for clients, who will be able to shop for their food.

The new pantry, located in one of Alexandria's underserved areas, is also close to a major refugee housing complex. Eventually, pantry managers hope to be open four days a week and evenings, depending on volunteer assistance.



A volunteer at the Christ House pantry helps distribute fresh fruit.



To volunteer in Alexandria or another location, visit volunteer.cdda.net and search on keywords "food pantry."

“It’s not your house, this is CHRIST’S HOUSE!”

Jesus instructs us, “Whenever you give a dinner, invite beggars, the lame and blind.” (Luke 14:13) In other words, when you give a banquet as God does, bring in the poor and needy, the ones that other people will not have anything to do with. They are the center of the banquet. They are the reason for the meal.

At Christ House in Alexandria, Catholic Charities has been serving meals to homeless and needy families for 50 years. In the summer of 1978 as a transitional deacon, I served as acting director. It was a life-changing experience. One day, the doorbell rang at 2 a.m. A young man was at the door asking to come in. It was obvious to me that he had been drinking. I reminded him of the rule that in order to be helped, you had to be sober. He asked me who I was. I said “I’m the director.” He looked up at the sign, then looked at me and said, “This isn’t your house, this is Christ’s house!”

He had me. When he spoke those words, he made an impact in my life. I made him a sandwich and gave him a Pepsi. He gave me words to remember throughout my priesthood in every assignment.

It is Christ that is working in us, and it is Christ’s ministry that we share in Catholic Charities. The meals served each evening at Christ House, prepared by volunteers from many parishes, welcome the poor and needy as Jesus instructed us. Thank you for supporting this good work.

Love and blessings,



Fr. Bob Cilinski
FATHER ROBERT CILINSKI
Episcopal Vicar for
Charitable Works



A sister and a young volunteer from St. James School help to prepare the Evening Meal.

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Christ House – an “emergency room” for the poor and vulnerable

“I didn’t know I had this much life in me. I never knew I could be doing the things I’m doing,” Ronald says. “I owe so much of my life to Christ House.”

Ronald is just one of the tens of thousands of people who have been helped over the decades. For 50 years, poor, hungry and vulnerable men, women, and families have flocked to Christ House, located in a three-story, centuries-old yellow brick building in Old Town Alexandria.

Catholic Charities President and CEO Stephen Carattini cites Pope Francis’ metaphor of the church as a field hospital. “If the church is the field hospital,” he says, “Christ House is the emergency room. This is where people first come when they are wounded. We’re providing very basic needs: food, shelter, and clothing. These are the elemental needs of people’s lives. In this emergency room we are carrying out our mission to the poor and the vulnerable.”

This “emergency room” is possible because of generous parishioners and others who offer financial gifts, pray, or roll up their sleeves to volunteer.

“Christ House is a beacon of hope in Alexandria, a sign of Christ’s presence and love for men, women, and children in great need,” says Fr. Edward Hathaway, rector of the nearby Basilica of Saint Mary. “The outreach, involvement, and financial support from Basilica parishioners – and from those in surrounding parishes – has been a constant since its establishment 50 years ago.”

The Basilica’s signature annual Irish Hooley, hosted by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and its Youth Apolostolate Family Summer Program, support Christ House ministries.

A professional staff and faithful lay volunteers

At Christ House, where many needs are addressed at a central location, one can witness the busy emergency room of the field hospital in action. Every day, Catholic Charities staff and scores of parishioners from nearby parishes, as well as community volunteers, roll up their sleeves to pack and haul food in the pantry, tend the vegetable garden out back, sort through boxes of garments in the clothing closet, hand out supply-

laden school backpacks to students, and serve dinner from the dining room.

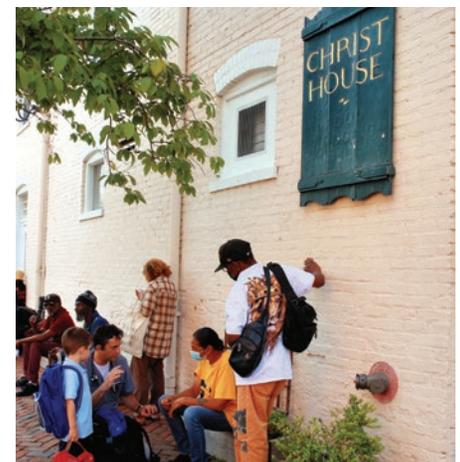
Since its beginning, homeless men and women – and sometimes children – have lined up each night, rain or shine, for the hot evening meal prepared, transported and served by volunteers from more than 40 local parishes and community groups 365 days a year. In recent years, that meal has grown dramatically. More than 17,000 meals were served last year.

About a decade ago, Catholic Charities recognized a growing need for food in other parts of the diocese. Volunteers, staff and donors began what would become the Catholic Charities St. Lucy Food Project. Last fiscal year St. Lucy collected and distributed 2.2 million pounds of food throughout the diocese.

Responding to changing needs

These days, Christ House is bursting at the seams. The food pantry outgrew its storage and serving space long ago. So later this fall, Catholic Charities will move the Alexandria pantry to a bigger space a couple miles away, on Eisenhower Avenue. (See sidebar on page 3.)

While Christ House has grown, its mission is the same, says Carattini. “Today we remain a place of refuge, a place of respite where people can come,” he says. “They not only receive the food, shelter, and clothing they require, but the love they deserve.” †



Christ House visitors lined up for food can receive basic medical care provided by a volunteer doctor.



Fall Marian Art and Concert Series

THE TRAVELING “REJOICE!” ART SHOW and concert series, launched during the second preparatory year for the Diocesan Golden Jubilee celebration, continues at several diocesan parishes this fall with local Catholic artists displaying newly commissioned artwork, inspired by Catholic Charities ministries.

In addition to the art show, the series will present local Catholic musicians performing a concert of Marian inspired music, both ancient and contemporary. Both the artist and the Catholic Charities ministry staff will discuss their work.

The art and concert series, launched last spring, aims to present the truth, beauty, and goodness of the faith through art featuring Our Lady, while informing and inviting parish communities to share in the good works of Catholic Charities.

Ultimately, each painting will be presented as a gift to its corresponding Catholic Charities ministry, to be enjoyed by the women, children and families served. †

Our Lady of Refuge (detail), by Henry Wingate, one of several area artists commissioned to create new works inspired by a Catholic Charities ministry.



Mark Your Calendar for the Upcoming Marian Art and Concert Series

Oct 27 @ 7 p.m.

All Saints Catholic Church

Veronica Royal will present her new icon of Our Lady, dedicated to Catholic Charities Saint Martin de Porres Center.

Nov 10 @ 7 p.m.

Saint Timothy Catholic Church

Henry Wingate will present his new painting of Our Lady of Refuge, dedicated to Catholic Charities Migrant and Refugee Services.

Nov 17 @ 7 p.m.

Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception

Local Catholic artist Andrew de Sa will debut his new painting of Queen of Heaven, Rejoice, dedicated to Catholic Charities Family Reunification Services.



Learn more about the series at arlingtondiocese.org/marianartconcertseries or scan the QR code.



His final gift to Christ House

A legacy of determination and love



When he was ten years old, Robert Charles “Bob” Cushmac was critically injured in a car accident while on a family vacation. Bob had to be resuscitated and initially was in a coma. He was not expected to survive and doctors at the hospital gave his family devastating news: Bob had sustained a high-level spinal cord injury. If he lived, he would be almost completely paralyzed, would not be able to breathe on his own, speak, eat without a feeding tube, nor ever leave the hospital.

It is a testament to the deep faith and fortitude of Bob’s parents, George and Mary Cushmac, long-time parishioners at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, that the family responded to this devastating news with acceptance of circumstances they could not change, and a fierce determination to make the best of the situation and find success where they could.

Though Bob was a quadriplegic and ventilator-dependent, he refused to be otherwise limited. *Not speak?* When he awoke from the coma, Bob at first communicated by blinking, but quickly regained his

ability to talk. *Not eat?* One of Bob’s first requests was for a cheeseburger! *Never leave the hospital?* After a year-long hospitalization, Bob moved home, went back to his elementary school with the rest of his friends, and never returned to a hospital except for check-ups and routine procedures.

In 1992, when Bob graduated from T.C. Williams High School, *The Washington Post* published a story about him. His personality and sense of humor shined through in the article. When asked about his college plans, Bob said, “I’ll be going to Georgetown next year ... And I won’t be playing basketball either.”

His high school graduation day was a big moment for Bob and his family, but it was just one chapter in his beautiful life story. Bob attended and graduated from Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, and bought his own home. He obtained his J.D. from George Mason University School of Law, and worked as an attorney at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for more than eighteen years.

Bob died peacefully at home during Holy Week in 2019 at the age of 44. During his life, he was uncomfortable being called “courageous” or “accomplished.” His family prefers to say that Bob had “an indomitable spirit” that motivated him to persevere and thrive despite his limitations, and they take comfort in knowing that Bob’s deep faith in God’s providence enabled him to live a life of goodness and courage that they call “a triumph beyond measure.”

Bob was also known for having “an open, loving heart” and he believed fully in the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person. This was reflected in his final estate planning. Bob designated a generous bequest to benefit Catholic Charities Christ House to help this ministry continue its life-affirming work. Because of this, the memory of Bob’s thoughtfulness and generosity will live on forever.

Catholic Charities Future Needs

You can leave a gift to Catholic Charities in your Will or Trust with as little as one sentence.

For information view our website ccda.net or contact John French at (703) 841-3819 or john.french@arlingtondiocese.org.

Meet Beth Monroe



Beth helps to harvest and distribute food.

I started volunteering at Catholic Charities in 2012, preparing and serving the evening meal at Christ House.

I still volunteer for the evening meal six times a year. The highlight of my week is distributing food on Wednesdays and Thursdays. My husband teases me because I do my absolute best to schedule everything around my volunteer schedule: including appointments, my work, and trips out of town.

I take on many roles, from making the morning coffee for the clients to setting up chairs and organizing the food we plan to give away for the day. My main task is assisting with the

intake process and doing data entry for the clients, updating their records and offering them extra food choices.

I enjoy making connections with the people, hearing their stories, and sharing in their joys and sorrows. For one person, I wished her a Happy Birthday and she looked at me with surprise. Then her face shined with the brightest, most beautiful smile. She said that she almost forgot – I was the first person to wish her a Happy Birthday that day. Another client recently received a prosthetic leg and he was so excited that he danced a jig with us.

“I schedule everything around my volunteer schedule...it’s the highlight of my week.”

Knowing I am making a difference in the lives of others by helping them receive the food they need for their families keeps bringing me back week after week. I am grateful and feel blessed for the opportunity to serve at Christ House.

Meet Joe Cigliano

I help take care of the garden at Christ House. That includes planning the planting season, growing seedlings, fertilizing, spraying, weeding... I can't multiply loaves, but I can grow vegetables.

“I can't multiply loaves, but I can grow vegetables.”

I started volunteering at the prompting of a friend when I was going through a really bad period in my life. She pointed out that I should work in a soup kitchen just to remind myself that as bad as I had it, there are others who have it much worse. I learned that people who wind up in “less than fortunate” circumstances often get there despite their best efforts. Bad things really do happen to everyone.

One resident used to come and chat with me when I worked in the garden. He had been incarcerated for a crime he'd committed many years prior and was struggling to put his life back together. No one gave him a break until Christ House.



Joe preps the garden beds to grow fresh food at Christ House.

We once talked about how he wanted to go fishing, but didn't have the equipment. As I was driving home I saw someone was throwing out a fishing rod and reel. I grabbed it and brought it back to him. The look on his face was priceless.

There are lots of volunteer opportunities: from gardening and food distribution, to general assistance of the residents. It's nice to volunteer on Christmas, Easter, or Thanksgiving, but if you want to really make a difference, there are 362 other days that things need to be done. Make a commitment to assist and stick with it. You will reap the personal rewards and gain perspective you would never otherwise gain.



Can't multiply loaves? Volunteer!

To learn more about our volunteer opportunities and ways you can get involved, please visit volunteer.ccca.net or email Debra Beard at debra.beard@ccca.net.



Workplace Giving

Every day, Catholic Charities brings transformational services, delivered with compassion, to meet the needs of every person who seeks our help, regardless of background, belief, or circumstance.

You can be a part of this transformation by making a pledge to Catholic Charities during this CFC campaign season.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington's CFC number is #24770

The CFC also allows:

- You to pledge volunteer hours to help Catholic Charities serve tens of thousands of clients each year; and
- Federal retirees to make a recurring donation by a deduction from their annuity.

Please remember to check "YES" to share your pledge information so we can keep you updated on the impact of your gift.

Thank you for your generous support of our work.

It's Easy to Donate Online!

To make a gift online, visit ccda.net/donate or scan here →



Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events!

Nov. 19, 2023	World Day of the Poor
Nov 28, 2023	Giving Tuesday
Dec. 9-10, 2023	Parish Christmas Collection
Feb. 2, 2024	Catholic Charities Ball

CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

*Join Us—Together,
We're Transforming Lives!*



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Arlington, VA 22203

Join Our Online Community



Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.