

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



Catholic Charities staff recently welcomed this Sudanese refugee family at Dulles International Airport.

Catholic Charities welcomes 1,000th newcomer in 8 months

Since October, MRS has broken records welcoming refugees and other desperate migrants

It's been a hectic eight months for Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) ministry staff. Beginning last August, MRS staff started welcoming and resettling hundreds of Afghan refugees, men, women, and children, who fled to the U.S. for safety after the fall of Kabul. Many of these Afghans had assisted the American mission abroad.

Since October, when the U.S. government granted humanitarian parolee status to 78,000 additional refugees under "Operation Allies Welcome," Catholic Charities, one of three resettlement agencies in Northern Virginia, has welcomed more than 1,000 newcomers.

To continue to provide services to all refugees and other newcomers – including employment and housing assistance, mental health, youth and senior services, English and other education classes and cultural integration, Catholic Charities quickly increased its staff and opened a new office in Woodbridge, specifically for clients with humanitarian parolee status.

Since 1975, MRS has been serving refugees from around the world. While the bulk of newcomers in the last eight months were from Afghanistan, MRS has also welcomed refugees and migrants

→ *continued on page 2*

INSIDE this ISSUE

03 *Seniors Hit Hard With Soaring Inflation*

04 *Helping Homeless Mothers and Their Children*

05 *Focusing on Eye Care*

GET SOCIAL

🐦 @CCDArlington 📘 /CatholicCharitiesArlington
www.cceda.net

“We are grateful to God for the opportunity to extend our ministry of hospitality to people seeking refuge in our community. The dedication and commitment of our employees and volunteers has been remarkable. The generosity of so many people in our diocese who have supported our new neighbors is truly a sign of God’s love.”

– STEPHEN CARATTINI,
PRESIDENT AND CEO

“Do not neglect hospitality...” HEBREWS 13:1

Dear Friends,

In late May, Catholic Charities was blessed to welcome a family of seven from Sudan. Their arrival, after a nearly 20-year wait in a refugee camp, marked a milestone, certainly for them, and for our diocese as well. Since October of 2021, Catholic Charities has been privileged to welcome and formally resettle more than 1,000 men, women, and children into our community.

The response of our diocese has been remarkable and inspiring. In carrying out this ministry of hospitality, showing kindness and compassion to some of the most vulnerable people in the world, we put our faith into action. Pope Francis calls us, in his encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, to “welcome, protect, promote, and integrate” all migrants.

It was just a year ago that we witnessed the collapse of the government of Afghanistan and the evacuation of more than 100,000 people, with nearly 80,000 brought to the U.S. Each and every person has a story and carries with them the bittersweetness of being an emigrant.

The challenges are immense, and often overwhelming. Recently, I was made aware of one individual who was

literally dropped off at our office in Manassas. He is deaf and mute. Another newcomer is a paraplegic. Both individuals have demonstrated resilience and determination to make a new life in America, and I am pleased to share that through the efforts of many people and organizations, both are receiving the care and resources they need and are doing well.

Thank you for your prayers, for your volunteer service, and for your financial support that allows us to exercise our ministry of hospitality every day at Catholic Charities. I suspect that in doing so, you have given us the opportunity to *entertain angels without knowing it*.

Please accept my prayers for a safe, and joyful summer!

Gratefully yours in Christ,



STEPHEN CARATTINI
President and CEO

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington

Continued from page 1

Catholic Charities welcomes 1,000th newcomer in 8 months

from Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Guatemala under the “traditional” refugee resettlement program through the U.S. State Department. Catholic Charities MRS is one of many affiliates of USCCB working throughout the country to serve newcomers.

“Many of our staff know all too well the journey of migration, as they were once newcomers themselves,” said Jessica Estrada, Director of Newcomer Services. “They can speak to why this is important not only for our clients, but also for our diocesan family. ‘Welcoming the stranger’ is a longstanding, biblical tradition of the Church. Drawing strength from each other and the unique experiences we all have not only enriches our own faith journey but also provides new insight into the ways our world is interconnected.” †

? How can you help?

Learn how to help Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) at ccda.net/helpimmigrantsandrefugees.

Our home, your home!

Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee staff celebrated #WorldRefugeeDay2022 by hosting an open house for refugees and other newcomers who came to the U.S. since late last year. The event was held at MRS’s newest location in Woodbridge.

Most of the 80 clients, including children and families who came were Afghan humanitarian parolees who fled their country last fall. Among these was MRS client Zahidullah Faiz, who arrived in the U.S. six months ago, along with his daughter Sara. Born here 3 months ago, Sara is the first American citizen in the family.



Soaring Inflation, Food, and Rent Hitting Seniors on Fixed Incomes Hard

EVERYONE HAS BEEN AFFECTED by the increased cost of living. But for those living at the margins or on a fixed income such as many of our elderly neighbors, those issues present a significant risk. Even a modest increase in prices has an outsized effect on someone who's living month-to-month.

Sure enough, Catholic Charities Emergency Assistance (EA) ministry is seeing a rising number of senior clients who rely on social security or disability struggling to keep up with inflation-fueled expenses, says EA director Sherri Longhill.

Retired professional Fairfax County resident Meredith Smith, not her real name, came to Catholic Charities for help. Her income hasn't kept up with the times: if she pays rent for her apartment – where she's lived comfortably for many years – she can't afford her utilities. She's so far been unable to find cheaper lodging – and she's not sure how she'll come up with a security deposit and pay moving expenses when she does. She has started looking for a job to supplement her retirement income but has been unable to find anyone willing to hire her.

With your support, Catholic Charities is able to help people like Meredith. "I never in my wildest dreams would have thought this would happen to me," Meredith says. "I've never known financial hardship. If it weren't for organizations like Catholic Charities, I wouldn't be able to pay my utility bills." †



Do you or someone you know need assistance?

Visit ccda.net and click on "Need Help?" and "Rent, Utility Assistance, and Basic Household Needs" for more information.

A New Commandment

Jesus said, I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

JOHN 13:34-35

There is a story of a famous artist traveling across Europe. He was crossing into another country but misplaced his passport. He explained this to the border guard and told him who he was. The guard responded, "Lots of people tell me they are someone they are not." The guard took out a blank sheet of paper and a pencil, handed it to the artist, and said, "Draw a picture of that couple standing over there." He did it so quickly and skillfully that the guard was convinced that the artist was who he said he was. His actions confirmed his identity.

The Catholic response to the moral issues of our day, at its best, always includes the new commandment to love as Jesus loved. That love must include compassion, forgiveness, understanding and solidarity. Catholic Charities strives to live this new commandment each day through the service and generosity of its 4,000 volunteers and dedicated staff.

A beautiful picture of love is painted on the canvas of life in Northern Virginia through pregnancy support and adoption services, transitional housing for the homeless, free medical clinics for the uninsured and underinsured, food distribution centers for the needy, outreach to the elderly and newcomer services to refugees and immigrants. Like the artist, these women and men are the visible hands and feet of Christ reaching out, listening, and touching lives with love. As a Catholic community, we believe in the dignity and value of every person beginning at conception and at every stage throughout the life cycle. This is what we have seen in Catholic Charities. Our actions confirm our identity. Love is the Christian passport. Continue to live in such a way that through our generosity and sacrifices people have a glimpse of the unbounded and unconditional love of Jesus. Living the new commandment of Jesus does amazing things and brings the church credibility. We are who we say we are.

Love and blessings,



F. Robert Cilinski
FATHER ROBERT CILINSKI
Episcopal Vicar for
Charitable Works

St. Margaret of Cortona Helps Homeless Mothers and Their Children Build Future, Thrive



Bishop Burbidge at a 2020 visit to St. Margaret of Cortona

LIFE WAS ROUGH A YEAR AGO for Delores, a 30-year-old mother of three. She had no degree, only a part-time seasonal job, was single and homeless and living in a shelter with her 9-year-old son and two daughters under seven.

A little over a year later, after moving into Catholic Charities St. Margaret of Cortona Maternity and Transitional Housing for Families, a unique ministry that helps moms build a future where they and their families can thrive, Delores has turned her life around. With the help of her St. Margaret’s caseworker, she is enrolled in a Catholic Charities GED course,

works a full-time job with benefits, has embarked on a path to financial literacy and freedom, and, as of this spring, was

able to secure a new home for her family that she can afford.

St. Margaret’s provides housing and services including case management, job development including education and certification programs, counseling, budgeting, and parenting classes. It enables formerly homeless women and their children, and expectant moms in crisis pregnancies, to get the resources and support they need to become employed and self-sustaining, to acquire independent living, and for their families to grow and thrive.

Earlier this year six mothers and their families were able to successfully “graduate” from St. Margaret after landing jobs and securing affordable housing through the county. Although they’ve moved on, these moms can still call on St. Margaret for budgeting, counseling, or other assistance. St. Margaret’s has accepted 10 new clients in recent weeks, including one expectant mother.

“Moving past entry-level employment is the best chance these mothers have to secure stability and housing, that is the chance St. Margaret tries to offer,” Roth says. †

“We focus on mothers and children in need, and we see the impact of God’s grace daily. Changes for the better, forgiveness and a renewal of minds and hearts happen in this place, through His will.”

– VERONICA ROTH,
DIRECTOR OF ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA IN WOODBRIDGE

Catholic Charities Free Clinic Sees a Need for Eye Care

By ZOEY MARAIST | A longer version of this story appeared in *The Arlington Catholic Herald*. Reprinted with permission.

ALLEXANDRA LUEVANO NEEDED glasses. Optometrist Dr. Gregory Johnson, a nondenominational Christian who works at Virginia Vision Therapy, was looking for ways he could volunteer. When Johnson learned that Luevano, his new patient, was the program director of Catholic Charities Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic, he realized his prayers had been answered. “God did the rest,” said Luevano. Less than a year after Johnson and Luevano met, the Mother of Mercy clinic in Woodbridge began offering in-house eye care for clinic patients.

On the opening morning, April 25, Johnson saw five patients, including William Brefo. Though he’s long had problems with his eyes, it’s been difficult for him to receive medical care. “I’m very grateful because I haven’t had my eyes checked in a long time, over five years. I lost my insurance from work and I’m not working right now,” he said. “(Mother of Mercy helps) with my medication, my treatments, all of my health problems. They’re doing great.”

Ernesto Unias made an appointment because he was having trouble reading. His wife Blanca Cortez also was having vision problems and her eyes were burning. “(Being able to get eye care) is a blessing from God,” said Cortez. “God blesses (the doctors’) hearts so they can treat the illnesses we have.”

Funding for the new medical equipment, such as a phoropter — the instrument patients look through to see an eye chart during vision tests — came from an unexpected source, said Luevano. “We submitted for a grant (for general operating expenses) not thinking about



Optometrist Gregory Johnson uses a slit lamp to examine William Brefo at Catholic Charities Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic in Woodbridge.

eye care and they actually ended up giving us more money than we asked for, which was the perfect amount we needed,” she said. “It’s all God.”

With Johnson’s help, volunteer John Mallonee ordered the necessary equipment. Northern Virginia Family Service, a local nonprofit, will mail pairs of glasses to patients who need them. Though they hope more optometrists and ophthalmologists volunteer, for now Johnson will be at the clinic one morning a month. Currently, there is a waiting list of more than 200 patients looking for eye care, said Luevano.

Through his work, Johnson has seen what a difference having healthy, functioning eyes makes in a person’s life. “A lot about how we see is how we



Dr. Johnson adjusts the phoropter while examining Blanca Cortez.

think, and our emotions and our vision are intertwined very deeply,” he said. “So changing how someone sees can really make or break their life.”

Luevano is grateful that Mother of Mercy is able to offer this new service to patients. “It’s such a blessing that God is able to do this through this clinic,” she said. †



Professional volunteers still needed

We have a **waiting list of over 200 patients** who need eye care. Do you know someone, with professional experience in optometry, who would be willing to help? If so, please contact Alexandra Luevano at Alexandra.Luevano@ccda.net or (703) 420-8992.



Resource Teaches Young People the Beauty of Church Serving the Vulnerable Through Catholic Charities

BISHOP MICHAEL BURBIDGE, who regularly meets with students and young people, was concerned last year after speaking to several young people who told him their peers had only negative impressions of the Catholic Church. Bishop Burbidge believed sharing Catholic Charities' story of the Church sharing God's love with those most in need would give these young people a response to those who have false understanding of the Church and its ministries.

Last fall, after he was interviewed for the most recent Catholic Charities Ball video, Bishop Burbidge asked the diocesan Office of Communications to work with Catholic Charities, the Office of Catholic Schools, Youth Ministries and Faith Formation to design a video guide

to use as a resource for sharing Catholic Social Teaching about the Church's preferential option for the poor.

Directors of several Catholic Charities ministries featured in the 2022 video – Migration and Refugee Services, Emergency Assistance, and Pregnancy and Adoption – provided summaries of their ministries. They worked with the Office of Youth and Young Adults to develop engaging questions to consider about issues their ministries address. The Office of Schools helped shape the resource. The Office of Faith Formation and the Office of Family, Marriage and Respect Life also contributed to the project.

This learning resource was shared with school leaders, Directors of

Youth Ministry, parish Religious Education Directors and will be used with students in a variety of settings – classrooms, retreats, service club meetings, youth groups, and more. It was used by parishes prior to this summer's WorkCamp. It can also be used in faculty development as well as with parent groups. †



Learn more

See the video resource guide:
bit.ly/ccdavideoresource

View the video:
bit.ly/charitiesvideo



Meet Sylvester Harriett

“I am sure that my story is like that of so many others who see the positive in life despite the losses, obstacles or lack of resources. Our family is honored to help.”

– SYLVESTER HARRIETT, VOLUNTEER

Tell me about your background.

Where do I start? Well, my name is Sylvester Harriett, and I am honored to be included in the Volunteer Spotlight. I have been blessed to meet and marry a wonderful partner named Josan Harriett. We have a combined four children and a fish. We were both born in the country of Jamaica. It is hard for me to talk about myself without mentioning my family.

Professionally, I am an IT Consultant who enjoys helping clients succeed. I have a background in project management and graphic design. In my personal time, I enjoy photography and tasting a variety of foods and beverages. In the near future, I endeavor to publish some of my photographs and produce a line of beverages.

How and when did you get involved with the St. Lucy Project Manassas Warehouse?

It was in 2019, when our family first volunteered at the St. Lucy Project Manassas Warehouse. Our daughter Jade had to perform community support as part of her school’s Honor Society. The entire family—Josan, Jade, Justin and I—volunteered a few times with her. Before that, I was introduced to Ms. Debra Beard (Director of Volunteers) when seeking assistance after losing my job in 2015. She was very welcoming and provided some very good counseling advice which helped to lift my outlook.

What do you do in your role as a volunteer for Catholic Charities?

I serve primarily as a food pickup and delivery driver. One of the more impactful projects that I was privileged to take part in was the “Giving Tree Donations” on December 15, 2021. Volunteers & staff sorted, packed and

picked up two truckloads of holiday gifts, food, appliances, toys and other care items for those in need. This is where I saw how Catholic Charities and the St. Lucy Project Manassas Warehouse truly impact the community during the holiday season.

What might you find rewarding about what you do?

It is rewarding to know that the food that we sort, count, and deliver is helping families in various communities. It only takes a little bit of my time, but I know that my service will contribute to Catholic Charities’ greater mission.

What role, if any, does your faith play in this?

I would say that being raised in the Pentecostal Church during my early childhood in Jamaica definitely played a role in my family values and my need to help in any way I can. I recall during those early years how my mother Florine would help anyone in the community, even if it was just a meal. So, when the factory where she worked closed, we all worked any temporary means to put food on the table with the aid of our local church. And when we immigrated to the United States, it was also in the church where she found emotional and spiritual support while battling cancer.

Please share a story or two about someone you’ve interacted with in this position.

I would say that working with Maria Rodriguez (volunteer coordinator for the Manassas Warehouse), Lori Sikra (Parish Outreach Liaison), Debra Beard, and the entire warehouse staff opened my eyes to the charity of the community and the volume of food which is managed by the St. Lucy Project Manassas warehouse.

The Covid pandemic contributed to more families all over the country feeling the burden of food insecurities. The Prince William County region was not spared from the non-health impacts of Covid. I was tasked with picking up from two elementary schools in the Manassas and Dale City areas on April 8, 2022. The teachers and students were super excited to load the food into the truck. Although I was not feeling my best due to a busy schedule, the excitement of the children gave me an extra boost – seeing young people doing their part to help others whom they may or may not even know.

Anything else you’d like people to know about the St. Lucy Food Distribution Hub and ministry?

I would say that the St. Lucy Food Distribution Hub and ministry provide opportunities for anyone to help when and where they can. If you have half a day or even 2 hours, your small contribution of time can and will impact the life of many people. Having benefited from the contributions of other people years earlier, I never forgot my conversation with Ms. Debra Beard, and what she said about giving a little can help a lot of others. Even if it is a little of your time.

I wish everyone who is reading this Much Love in their life. In giving, you will receive more blessings by helping and serving others. †



Volunteer!

To learn more about ways to get involved, visit volunteer.ccca.net or email Debra Beard at debra.beard@ccda.net.

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 John French at (703) 841-3819 or at john.french@arlingtondiocese.org.



Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events!

Sept. 20-25, 2022	National Migration Week
Nov. 13, 2022	World Day of the Poor
Nov. 29, 2022	Giving Tuesday
Dec. 10-11, 2022	Parish Christmas Collection
Feb. 10, 2023	Catholic Charities Ball



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 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.

ABOUT CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Together, We're Transforming Lives!

21 ministries across 21 Virginia counties
and 7 cities

Serves all regardless of background,
faith, or circumstance

89 cents of every dollar spent goes
to ministries and services



200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22203

Join Our Online Community



ccda.net

Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 24770.