

Sixty years of
LOVE + HOPE
HEALING

Catholic
Charities
Diocese of Nashville

Acknowledgments

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville wishes to thank Pablo, Carlos, and Luis Fernandez and their families for allowing us into their lives. Likewise, we are grateful to Rosalie Rowan Jordan, Phyllis Rowan, and Cathy Carlton Rowan, and Cathy's incredibly caring late parents James and Bess Rowan, who opened their home for 18 months in 1962 to the three young Fernandez brothers, ages 9, 11, and 13.

Special thanks to Lisa Goodpaster and Jon Kent, of Kent Creative, whose tireless efforts to capture the reunion story of the Rowan and Fernandez families resulted in the remarkable documentary about Operation Pedro Pan. Jon also dropped everything when portraits needed to be taken for this commemorative book, *Sixty Years of Love, Hope, and Healing*.

We are also humbled by the willingness of "alumni" of our agency, who took the time to tell us their happily-ever-after stories, their ongoing struggles, and to share their heartfelt gratitude for the help

Photography Credits

Jon Kent, pages 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 44, 46, 47 ; Theresa Laurence, page 43; Rick Musacchio, page 42; John Partipilo, pages 23, 26, 40 ; Katie Peterson, page 3 ; Andy Telli, page 31

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Catholic Charities offered them, when the rug was pulled out from under them.

Sixty Years of Love, Hope, and Healing was created with the help of many, but it was brought to life by Jenni Ohnstad of Luminea Creative, whose extraordinary talents transformed a simple vision into the elegant design and thoughtful layout of our 60th anniversary commemorative book. The book is a gift to us all for the ages.

Franchelle Jaeger wrote the lyrical and introspective essays and imbued them with the Holy Spirit.

Last but certainly not least, thank you to our amazing staff of caring experts for walking alongside every person who calls, knocks on our door, or emails us with a simple request for help. Your kindness is treasured for a lifetime in the hearts of each person you touch with your care.

Catholic Charities

Diocese of Nashville

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A Word from Bishop J. Mark Spalding

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Since my arrival in February 2018 as the twelfth bishop of the Diocese of Nashville, I have been inspired by the work of Catholic Charities.

From its start in 1962, Catholic Charities welcomed the stranger. Its first program was created in response to a call to action by Monsignor Brian O. Walsh of Miami, director of that diocese's Catholic Welfare Bureau. Monsignor Walsh implored Catholics of goodwill to assist 14,000 children who were being evacuated en masse from a dangerous political situation in Cuba—a notable parallel to the recent evacuation of more than 100,000 people from Afghanistan.

Today through numerous programs in multiple locations, Catholic Charities strives to meet the growing needs of our dynamic community. At 60 years old, Catholic Charities is just hitting its stride. Its mettle has been tested repeatedly in the last few years, but with each new challenge the organization has responded to the needs of people in our community.

Under the direction of longtime Executive Director William P. Sinclair, who retired in 2016, and Pam Russo who followed him, Catholic Charities has grown to be one of the largest nongovernmental social service providers in the area. Judy Orr, who by the grace of God was called to this mission, has taken up the mantle to make Catholic Charities a leader in responding to people in times of

emergency, including the Christmas Day bombing in Nashville, catastrophic flooding in Waverly, and tornadoes that have struck throughout the Middle Tennessee area. She has been instrumental in expanding the footprint of the service area across the diocese. Family resource centers have been established in six counties in the region—vibrant examples of the good that comes from providing compassionate support to vulnerable populations that is tailored to the specific needs of each community. Please know of my appreciation for the work of the leadership, staff, and volunteers who give hands and feet to the mission of the Church.

When I reflect on the expansive body of work of Catholic Charities, I am humbled by the impact of this ministry. This beautiful commemorative book celebrates just a few examples of the thousands who have sought our help over the years. Deploying its special formula of love, hope, and healing, Catholic Charities truly follows Christ's example by helping our neighbors regardless of religious, ethnic, racial, or cultural background. The Rowan and Fernandez families, among others, have lent their stories to this special 60th anniversary book so that we might remember the kindness and love we show one another today can blossom far beyond our ability to comprehend. This is the life-changing impact of the work of Catholic Charities.



Bishop Spalding with Waverly flood survivors, August 2021.

Thank you for your ongoing support and your partnership in addressing the needs of the people of Middle Tennessee.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Mark Spalding". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend J. Mark Spalding, J.C.L.
Bishop of Nashville

The Fernandez Brothers

SPONSORED BY THE
DIOCESE OF NASHVILLE

The voicemail message was haunting: “My name is Carlos Fernandez. I read on your website that you resettled 43 Cuban children in 1962—I am one of those children. I went to Christ the King School. I lived with the Rowan family on Brightwood Avenue. I am hoping to connect to the other children who came to Nashville when we did.” These then-and-now photos of Carlos and his brothers Pablo and Luis evoke their journey.



Pablo, Carlos, and Luis



Luis, Pablo, and Carlos

A Long Ago Letter

Around 60 A.D., from an undisclosed location probably somewhere in Jerusalem, a man named James wrote a letter.

James spent his parchment on teachings about moral living. This letter serves as one of the first written documents on the topic of Catholic social thought. He offered the early Church a practical roadmap for how to love one another, how to find and give hope amidst suffering, and how to access the healing power of Jesus Christ for human flourishing.

Nearly two thousand years later and six thousand miles away from the writing of James' letter, another man put pen to paper to formally establish Catholic Charities of Tennessee with that same vision in mind.

On July 17, 1962, Bishop William L. Adrian, the seventh Bishop of the Diocese of Nashville—which encompassed all of Tennessee at that time—continued and codified the legacy of two millennia of Catholic social teaching for his place and time. Like James, Bishop Adrian aimed to guide his people in the interest of honoring their religious adherence to God through their behavior toward others. His vision celebrates 60 years of service in 2022.

Pure Religion


Near the beginning of his letter, James offered a short but powerful definition of religion for the early Christians:

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”

It is not coincidence, but an unavoidable Divine correlation, that Bishop Adrian began this new endeavor of religious activity in Tennessee with a very similar theme of care for children and the afflicted.

Only one month after its founding, in the context of the communist revolution in Cuba, the newly appointed executive director of Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Father Leo Siener received a call from a young priest in the Diocese of Miami. The U.S. State Department had asked the Miami priest to facilitate Operation Pedro Pan, which would bring Cuban children to U.S. soil and safety. He needed Nashville's help. He asked the nascent Catholic Charities of Tennessee to find foster families for 43 Cuban children who would be arriving without their parents.

Thus, as an act of true religion, care for unaccompanied refugee children became the first service of Catholic Charities. The children were given a home among the Catholic communities in Nashville and Memphis.



The sacred bond between parent and child is palpable in this 2021 Christmas-time portrait. A recently arrived Cuban family was busy decorating their Christmas tree, when father and son shared this precious moment of connection.

The Reynaldo Clausell Family

SPONSORED BY FATHER RYAN HIGH SCHOOL

Kathleen Carlton

SPONSORED BY THE
ROWAN FAMILY

Kathleen Rowan Carlton was a young bride-to-be in August 1962 when Pablo, Carlos, and Luis Fernandez came to live at her parents' home, a block from Christ the King. Kathleen, the youngest of the ten Rowan children, recalled Monsignor Duffy's call to service in support of the Cuban children.



Then and Now

As Catholic Charities was organizing its operation for fostering and resettling Cuban refugees, it also began to quickly expand beyond those initial services. Headquartered in Nashville, Catholic Charities grew deep roots throughout Tennessee with the help of three additional area directors reaching into the expanse of the Tennessee landscape from Knoxville to the East, Memphis to the West, and Chattanooga to the South. With this expansion, Catholic Charities became the hands and feet of Christ across the state.

Over the next half century two new Tennessee dioceses emerged: the Diocese of Memphis in 1970 and the Diocese of Knoxville in 1988. With that new diocesan structure in place, Catholic Charities of Tennessee became Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville, formalizing the name in 2020. It is now aligned with the 38 counties in Middle Tennessee comprising the Diocese of Nashville. Today, in 2022, Catholic Charities continues to assist refugees, the downtrodden, and all who are vulnerable.

In 1962, a small but mighty team began the mission of Catholic Charities in Tennessee with a humble budget of \$1,100. One hundred of those dollars was a private donation and the remaining thousand dollars was a loan from the diocese. In 2022, that sum would have the purchasing power of around \$10,000, a tiny fraction of the current \$15 million budget. Today, its purse derives from five

percent diocesan funds and ten percent private donations, with the balance supplied by charitable foundations and program-specific federal, state, and local funding.

Secular agencies and community leaders have cultivated a real and abiding faith in the work of Catholic Charities. Through relationships with the U.S. State Department, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the State of Tennessee, and many private foundations and corporations, Catholic Charities is now a sophisticated faith-based nonprofit which responds efficiently and strategically as Christ's missionaries. Maintaining a true heart for Christian charity and justice, Catholic Charities has spent decades building the capacity to work for the people it serves. No other single agency in the region has Catholic Charities' skill and muscle, informed by its faith-filled mission, to do what is needed.

The seedling organization began with a necessarily myopic focus on the resettlement of a few dozen Cuban children. It has grown by leaps and bounds, but still welcomes the stranger and works tirelessly to make each one a true neighbor. After the Cubans came South Asians in the 1970's, Kurdish in the 1990's, Sudanese students in the 2000's, and most recently Afghan refugees in 2021. Building on its resettlement program, Catholic Charities has developed into a multi-faceted organization serving up love, hope, and healing to 25,000 clients each year.

Love Is the Foundation

Pope Francis instructs us, “In today’s world, voices are being raised which we cannot ignore and which implore our Churches to live deeply our identity as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ....[We are] building a new civilization of love and solidarity.”

This civilization of love has always been the mission of Catholic Charities. Love is the foundation upon which every act of charity is built. Love writes the checks, feeds the hungry, shelters, provides a bus pass, and observes every basic human need. Catholic Charities embraces people of every religion, ethnicity, race, culture, and age with the loving eyes of Christ and responds with a ready and equipped force.

Within one decade of its founding, Catholic Charities was already well positioned to serve from the very first heartbeat to the last breath, assisted by volunteers like the Ladies of Charity. They closely partnered with Catholic Charities in the Cuban resettlement to provide clothing and food, vital outside financial and volunteer support essential to the organization. Volunteers are the organization’s first-line missionaries, an embedded force within Catholic Charities that provides witness to the love, hope, and healing dispensed every day.

Other community partners help provide the basic human needs of clothes, food, rent, and utility bill assistance, in true Christian love. Coupled with these robust resources, Catholic Charities is a powerhouse in Middle Tennessee.

Mother Church, with a mother’s heart, also recognizes the fundamental human need for love in a family. Inspired by Mother Mary, Catholic Charities early on offered pregnancy counseling and adoption services, and the agency quickly expanded its mission of helping families. In the 1960’s it grew

to include childcare for lower income working mothers, an outgrowth of the old St. Mary Villa orphanage.

A new decade brought a new executive director to guide Catholic Charities’ mission of love in new directions. In 1970, Father Louis J. Junod began his impact with a loving gaze focused on the impoverished communities of the Appalachian region in East Tennessee. In partnership with the Appalachian Community Development Agency, he helped the poor and vulnerable of East Tennessee through joint charitable efforts between Catholic Charities and the Knoxville Knights of Columbus to shelter and provide for neglected or abandoned children. At the same time, the broadcloth of human dignity was lovingly embraced in the same region with outreach to older adults.

Spreading the love even further, Sister Andrea Vaughan, D.C. took over as the third executive director in 1977. Under her wing, Catholic Charities extended its loving touch to even more people due to increased collaborations with local and state agencies and organizations. While still holding the hands of children, in 1984 she reached for the hands of those later along in life’s journey. The first of its kind, an adult day program began ministering to disabled elderly especially in need of tender care. A home visit program followed in that same vein, giving older adults the resources needed to remain at home.

Informed by love of neighbor, Catholic Charities established, with the parishes of Assumption and St. Vincent de Paul, a North Nashville outreach to meet basic needs of those nearest to them. This model of local, loving provision for at-risk communities is one that Catholic Charities began in earnest in

Love is the foundation upon which every act of charity is built.



Killy Bins has found joy out of the pain of grief and loss. His precious daughter Taylor was murdered in a senseless crime. But her spirit lives on now through her daughter Charli, now being raised by her dotting grandfather and extended family.

Killy Bins, Sr.

SPONSORED BY THE MORRISON FAMILY

In 1997, Aram arrived from Kurdistan and soon was working to help other Kurdish arrivals in Catholic Charities' resettlement program. His facility as a medical translator led to his current role as a senior director with Family & Children's Service, helping Tennessee families and individuals access health care.

Aram Khoshnaw

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the 1980's and expanded in 2020 with a new vision for onsite full-service family resource centers embedded in more rural communities starting with Montgomery, Maury, Marshall, Bedford, Coffee, and Grundy counties.

William P. Sinclair was named the fourth executive director, after rising through the ranks. He helmed an organization beloved and respected locally and nationally for its years of important and diverse impact on the communities of Middle Tennessee. He burnished its reputation, navigating floods and other natural disasters, addressing systemic poverty, and building stronger families and communities with the characteristic love for which the organization is known.

Over the next 25 years, Catholic Charities branched widely to lovingly meet almost every human basic need. Catholic Charities began transportation services for older adult and low-income families. Care for at-risk children remained in the forefront in the mid-1980's, with a parenting training and mentoring program designed for families at risk of losing custody. In 2003, Holy Name Church's longstanding Loaves and Fishes operation moved under the Catholic Charities umbrella to supply meals and fellowship to hungry neighbors. And Catholic Charities' love for all its ethnic and cultural neighbors was made manifest in its outreach to the Hispanic community. Following demographic trends, the Hispanic ministries continue to grow at the South Nashville Family Resource Center, located at Conexión Americas' Casa Azafran.

Succeeding Sinclair in 2017, Pamela J. Russo took the lead as the fifth executive director during a dynamic period for the Diocese of Nashville. The diocese, including Catholic Charities, had just

consolidated operations at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Donelson. With new Bishop J. Mark Spalding shepherding the Nashville diocesan territory, Russo kept a steady eye on the mission of charity she inherited. At a national level, support for resettlement dwindled, and the Board worked to examine the strategic priorities of the agency.

Today, 60 years after its founding, Judy K. Orr serves as the sixth executive director, having been appointed by Bishop J. Mark Spalding in 2019. As a native Nashvillian, her love for the region's people is abundant. She has fleshed out the strategic plan, bringing with her a corporate mind for efficiency and order. With a sensibility that each of us could be that person in need, Orr has assessed the mechanics of Catholic Charities as one service with three facets: Love, hope, healing, and in which the dignity of every person is respected by "giving them a fish and teaching them to fish."

A new era for Catholic Charities began in 2020 with destructive tornadoes, floods, and a global pandemic. As fear and distress spread among people of every community and demographic, Catholic Charities stepped up to comfort those most affected by the devastation of natural disasters and the aftermath of pandemic layoffs. As a key partner with Metro Nashville, Catholic Charities dispensed food and help with shelter and utility payments.

Barely out of the woods from those challenges in her first year, Orr led Catholic Charities relief efforts after the 2020 Christmas Day bombing. As the world celebrated the newness of life brought about by the miracle of the Incarnation, Catholic Charities continued its own participation in the Body of Christ by sharing Christ's love to a hurting community, building the civilization of love one person at a time.

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The emotional wellbeing of the individual has always been at the forefront of the whole person centered approach.

Sowing Hope

Pope Francis teaches, “Poverty calls us to sow hope....Poverty is the flesh of the poor Jesus, in that child who is hungry, in the one who is sick, in those unjust social structures.” In addition to love, a second prong of Catholic Charities’ mission in the Diocese of Nashville is to cultivate real and tangible hope.

Catholic Charities began sowing hope in 1962 for dozens of Cuban refugees. In 2022, hope is found in every facet of the organization’s mission, but most especially through the holistic support offered through Catholic Charities’ therapy services, parent and life skill training, adoption services, safety programming to protect children from trafficking, and crime victim assistance.

The tradition of providing counseling began in the early days with pregnancy and family support and parenting preparation services. The emotional wellbeing of the individual has always been at the forefront of the whole person centered approach. With its characteristic special care for children, the organization began providing school counseling services for five diocesan schools in 1978. Today, its professionally credentialed staff offers numerous avenues of therapeutic support for individuals, families, school children, and trauma victims. It is essential to address trauma and mental illness, as it is often a barrier to self-reliance.

Catholic Charities responds with love to our neighbors. Caseworkers triage each situation and

individual, connecting them to resources. Hope is a deep well of many things that can move a person forward to a point of not needing help. The specialized staff at Catholic Charities knows how to reveal hope and restore dignity.

Sustainable Healing

“The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity,” observes Pope Francis.

Healing is the third way that Catholic Charities serves the Middle Tennessee community. Catholic Charities endeavors to provide the essential training and education needed for sustainable employment.

Similar to its counterparts of love and hope, Catholic Charities began its promise of healing with special focus programs that provided job training and the prospect of a sustainable livelihood for young mothers in the late 1960’s. This effort was in conjunction with its child daycare programs.

Today, Catholic Charities offers an array of job training programs in banking, trades, culinary, and sewing, and it is focused on enhancing them. From the newly arrived immigrant to a person newly unemployed, Catholic Charities’ goal is to help people find whatever skills they have, their own personal gifts and God-given talents, and to help them find work that would be meaningful to them, so that they can provide for themselves and their families.



The Pyszka Family

SPONSORED BY
GRESHAM SMITH

This house full of love started with the adoption of Isabella twelve years ago, just three weeks after Matt and Tahira met with Catholic Charities. They first sought an international adoption, expecting it might be a long process. But Bella's birth mother, living nearby, chose them then and again several years later. They were ecstatic to grow their family, when Ava joined her half-sister four years ago.

The ongoing legacy of refugee resettlement exemplifies the organization's commitment to facilitate healing after the stressful transition to a strange land and new community. Catholic Charities is a significant player in the global network of refugee resettlement, partnering with the federal government through the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Assisting with core services such as housing, food assistance, community contacts, and other essential needs, Catholic Charities helps to begin the healing process and get new American neighbors on their feet and rooted within six months of arrival to Tennessee. With love as a foundation, offering hope on the horizon, Catholic Charities promotes real healing for those who need it to persevere and prosper.

“Following Christ’s example, we recognize the dignity of all people and serve our neighbors.”

Today's Letters

James' letter to first century Christians was a clear mandate for Catholic charity. Catholic Charities embraces it with its mission: “Following Christ’s example, we recognize the dignity of all people and serve our neighbors.”

With decades of success and a dedicated team of volunteers, community partnerships, and 145 staff, Catholic Charities is well positioned to grow its impact on the needs of neighbors in Middle Tennessee. In a recent e-newsletter, Executive Director Judy Orr wrote, “The challenges of the past year along with the disasters taught us all that any of us can be in harm’s way. We are grateful for the privilege of being on the front lines as the hands and feet of Christ. We are called to this sacred work of helping individuals and families restore their lives and become self-reliant through counseling, housing, job training, and a multitude of social services that return the sense of normalcy that has been lost. I believe love, hope, and healing will unite us.”

Sixty years is a legacy of true religion worth celebrating.



After-School Kids

SPONSORED BY THE KROGER COMPANY

Each afternoon the halls of the Catholic Charities offices are filled with the sweet sounds of refugee children playing and laughing after school. Caseworkers pick them up at the end of the school day while their parents are working and take them home at the end of the day.



The Pumpalovic Family

SPONSORED BY IROQUOIS CAPITAL GROUP

Now a psychiatric nurse practitioner, Vanja (center) fled Bosnia in 1997 along with her brother and parents, who were forbidden to live together because one was Catholic and the other Serbian Orthodox. Each parent was relegated to a different region and could choose one or both of the young children to take along. Instead, they sought asylum in the U.S.



SPONSORED BY
FIRST HORIZON
FOUNDATION

Christan Riley

An artistic soul, Christan is a music and youth director with a theatre company. But only a few years ago she and her children experienced homelessness. She flourished with the help of caseworkers and says she strives to model the same charity to her own children.

A portrait of Muna Muday, a woman wearing a dark purple hijab and a matching top. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle smile. Her right hand is resting on her left shoulder. The background is softly blurred, showing a circular decorative element on the wall.

Muna Muday

SPONSORED BY THE POPE FAMILY

As a 9-year-old refugee from Somalia, Muna participated in the after-school program through high school. Inspired by her journey as a refugee, she earned a Master's degree in Public Health from Vanderbilt and now works bringing expert clinical care to medically underserved parts of the world.

Luisa V. Hough

SPONSORED BY THE
DRAKE FAMILY

Luisa arrived with her sister Lourdes as part of Operation Pedro Pan in 1962. "At first, it was like an adventure, but then it hits you: this is real. We could only hope that we would see our parents again." As an adult, her volunteer work with Catholic Charities refugees is her way of giving back.



Needs of a Neighbor

EMERGENCIES, HUNGER, AND HOUSING

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” MARK 12:31

Every person is a neighbor worthy of love. The movement of love is God-infused, lavish charity, especially in times of need. At some time in every person’s life, there will be a lack that needs filling. There will come an emergency which needs attending. There will be a hunger that needs feeding. There will be insecurity requiring the assurance of a safe haven and hope for tomorrow. This is the core mission of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville: Following Christ’s example, we recognize the dignity of all people and serve our neighbors. Everyone is a neighbor and Catholic Charities sees the needs and meets them with the love of Christ every day.

Over the six decades of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Nashville, countless individuals have been assisted in times of emergency through the charitable giving of donors and the ever evolving programs and services within the organization. Whether a person is seeking help because of a natural disaster or a personal crisis, Catholic Charities provides direct and immediate assistance or knows exactly where to find it. Alerted by a call from a person in need, professional triage teams and individual caseworkers assess the needs of a neighbor and quickly get to the work of relief.

Our Basic Needs program is just one arm of the organization that can immediately respond to an emergency. When a mother uses the last diaper

for her baby with no means to buy more, Catholic Charities has a closet filled to resupply her. If a family in crisis lacks the funds to pay a utility bill in the middle of winter, Catholic Charities can turn the heat back on. Neighbors facing the threat of eviction can find emergency resourcing to stay in their home or can receive help with temporary housing while awaiting a more sustainable solution. The shame and hopelessness of not being able to provide for one’s basic needs are met with boundless mercy and love by the well-trained staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities.

The Gospel accounts of Jesus’ provision for the people almost all begin with a “feed them first” philosophy. From the miracle of the loaves and the fishes to the Last Supper, Jesus supplies his friends with food for the journey. Catholic Charities follows that same method of loving provision through Hunger Relief services in many different forms. Food boxes, filled with essential food supplies, are available for distribution at a moment’s notice at several sites including C.E. McGruder, South Nashville, and Holy Name Strobel Hall, as well as at the Catholic Pastoral Center. At St. Stephen’s Catholic Community in Old Hickory, Tennessee, Catholic Charities provides a hot, to-go meal to anyone in need on Thursdays. The Loaves and Fishes program is a longstanding tradition in the Diocese, offering meals to nearly 25,000 hungry

people each year across multiple locations. Through community partnerships and creative programming, Christ’s desire to feed the hungry is made manifest by Catholic Charities in Middle Tennessee.

The love of Christ is also demonstrated in the way Catholic Charities helps neighbors find stable housing for their families. Our Blessed Lord entered the world in a manger unsuited for proper human shelter, so His heart is especially moved to help parents find safe and appropriate housing for their children. Catholic Charities shares His heart in this effort. Eligible families with school-aged children can partner with Catholic Charities to solve immediate housing needs and provide preparedness for stability in the future, to prevent homelessness.

Financial hardships and personal challenges are often the first introduction a neighbor has to Catholic Charities. And, once that neighbor finds love, hope, healing, it is often the case that he reciprocates that love in his own community, building stronger relationships of trust and care for others. This is the Body of Christ at work to meet the needs of all neighbors. Many who have been served by Catholic Charities want to “pay it forward,” and they return to serve in various ways, through employment, volunteering, and financial gifts. When you give to those in need, you get paid back one hundred fold.



Loaves and Fishes Guests

SPONSORED
BY HOLY NAME
CATHOLIC CHURCH

All are welcome for a meal at Loaves and Fishes, and by gathering around the table with neighbors, fellowship is created. Father Charlie Strobel's simple gesture of offering a sandwich to those who gather at the door of Holy Name Church is the inspiration for this 40-years-long tradition.



Vickie Bellamy

SPONSORED BY BANC CARD OF AMERICA

Vickie Bellamy stays busy caring for her adult daughter who has autism, along with three other young children of a family friend. When Vickie moved to a safer home for her family, she experienced some financial difficulty, but with a little help from Catholic Charities, she now has the tools she needs to continue to provide for those in her care.



Deanna Dibin

**SPONSORED BY CATHOLIC CHARITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

When asked what would have happened if she had stayed in her homeland of Azerbaijan, Deanna stated plainly, “we would have been killed.” She and her sister, both teenagers, along with their parents, escaped the civil uprising in the 1990s. She is now a CPA and a member of the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees.



The Shiema Reid Family

SPONSORED BY CENTRIC ARCHITECTURE

After the home she was renting went up in flames, Shiema hit a dead end when looking for affordable housing for her family. She turned to Catholic Charities and was able to move into a comfortable, safe, and reasonably priced apartment with a playground nearby, a blessing for her disabled son Asia.

Carrying Each Other

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. GALATIANS 6:2

A jobless, young mother carries the burden of an empty pantry as her children get home from school. A new American arriving from a war-torn country across the ocean carries the burden of being a stranger in a foreign land. Having lost his home in a recent flood and struggling with addiction, a man carries the burden of hopelessness. A 10-year-old girl carries the burden of caring for her sick grandmother who cannot speak English while she struggles to finish her English homework for the next school day.

These are just a few of the burdens carried by the people of Middle Tennessee. Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville knows how to help and is right next door.

The model for the way Catholic Charities operates in several Middle Tennessee counties is local and love-based. Beginning with the longstanding C.E. McGruder Center in North Nashville, Catholic Charities serves as familiar and trusted one-stop hub next door, where help can be found in times of crisis and ongoing need. Through

the trained professionals and volunteers at each family resource center, the eyes of Christ see the needs of a struggling neighbor and the Body of Christ responds.

With seed money from a 2020 grant from the State of Tennessee, Catholic Charities expanded the model and is finding a real and abiding place in many communities across Middle Tennessee with the Tennessee Serves Neighbors expansion program. In Montgomery, Maury, Marshall, Bedford, Grundy, and Coffee Counties, neighbors are receiving custom-tailored help for their unique situations in a locally planted, accessible location that offers a wide array of social services. More family resource centers in other localities are planned, fulfilling Bishop Spalding's vision to have Catholic Charities presence in all parts of the diocese.

For the young mother, a family resource center can help with immediate access to her most basic needs and an opportunity to plug into parenting skills and workforce training programs to foster security into the future. A new American family

can receive a warm welcome through the help of a family resource center caseworker assisting them with community integration support for long-term success and self-sustainability in a new country. The homeless man needing hope can find housing assistance and counseling to begin again. And the 10-year-old girl and her grandmother can get bilingual logistical support for navigating both homework and healthcare challenges.

The variety of services are offered with the intention that no need would go unmet because of one's ability to pay. Focus on the dignity of the person is a fundamental principle, helping our neighbors find a safe home, feel positive about their futures, and secure sustainable employment to care for themselves and their families.

The centers relieve the burdens of the community, partnering with local parishes and community agencies. Each site serves as both a safety net and a launching pad for future success and self-reliance. Every neighbor who walks through the door is met with love, hope, and healing in the most tangible ways.



*Anna Warner and
Kitty Webster Holmes*
SPONSORED BY A&H COMPANIES

Sisters at heart if not in fact, Anna and Kitty became close—despite the language barrier—when Kitty’s family fostered Anna as member of the original cohort of Operation Pedro Pan kids. Anna stayed with the Websters four years until Catholic Charities’ then Executive Director Father Leo Seiner helped Anna’s mother emigrate from Cuba.



The Ortega-Rocha Family

SPONSORED BY
THE CURLEY FAMILY

Gabriel and Dianna recalled, “If we had not had that first frank conversation to start the adoption process, Ana Sofia would not be with Mariana and us today. For that and all the support that Catholic Charities provided after that first meeting, we will always be grateful.”

Disaster Recovery

“For as Christ’s sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow.” 2 CORINTHIANS 1:5

One of the most ancient questions in our fallen world, fraught with suffering, is “Why?” Any history book or modern news report will expose all nature of disaster, from terror and tumult to winds and floods. Yet, God has a plan in all of it even if we cannot see it clearly except through His assurance of a good purpose. Part of that good purpose is surely the love, hope, and healing that the Body of Christ offers through the work of Catholic Charities. Hope means that suffering exists. And, Catholic Charities is in the business of hope.

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville plays a unique part in making sense out of suffering and bringing healing to our world by shining light where there is immense darkness. One of the brightest lights is the work it does in disaster recovery, preparedness, and assistance. When darkness is brought about by a terrible tornado, catastrophic floods, or the unprecedented event of a bombing, Catholic Charities is capable and ready to bring the light.

As an active member of the local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) group, Catholic Charities leads and partners with various Nashville area disaster relief outreach organizations to attend to the needs of a hurting community. Through the generous support of Catholic Charities’ donors and volunteers, help is always on the horizon and hope is around the corner. When a neighbor’s home is decimated, Catholic Charities can offer


assistance in the short term to find quick and safe shelter, food, and clothing. When a community is ravaged by the effects of a widespread flood, it can sweep in and help with food assistance and housing challenges. And, when the breadwinner in a family loses a job because of an unexpected calamity in the neighborhood, Catholic Charities can bridge the gaps with help paying bills and turn the tide with counseling and job training for future employment.

On Christmas morning of 2020, an intentional bomb exploded in downtown Nashville causing widespread hardship and anxiety in the community. Buildings were damaged, property was destroyed, businesses had to close, jobs were lost, and lives were devastated in one catastrophic moment. Catholic Charities was there and still is. With its strong reputation for responsiveness in natural disaster recovery, it picked up a new mantle as a leader in the Nashville Strong 2021 recovery effort. Through a special grant from the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Catholic Charities is resourced to help businesses and individuals recover financially from the impact of the bomb. The mission of restoration does not end when the streets reopen and the buildings are repaired. Catholic Charities continues to bring emotional healing to the victims of the bombing in the form of ongoing counseling services through a partnership with Family & Children’s Service.

Thousands of people have been helped and

millions of dollars have been allocated through Catholic Charities’ disaster recovery services throughout the years. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, Catholic Charities was a major player in providing pandemic resources to the tune of \$1.5 million from the Nashville Covid-19 Response Fund and CARES Act funding. The tornadoes that struck through Middle Tennessee in 2020 were especially catastrophic, leaving behind them a trail of destruction that caught the attention of people and organizations locally and well beyond the Tennessee state line. Out-of-state donations poured in after that natural disaster and supplied relief in plenty to communities and individuals. The Christ-like example of such an outpouring has, in turn, shone a light on the importance of reaching beyond our own Middle Tennessee and diocesan boundaries. With the long reach of a well-equipped and generous support system, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville is positioned to deliver love wherever it is needed to our neighbors far and wide.

The disasters and misfortunes of human existence can bring about despair, but Catholic Charities has the means and the experience to mend the broken and tend to the broken hearted in imitation of the One who came to save. The Catholic identity of the organization is the lifeblood that keeps its heart beating for the next unexpected disaster—natural or otherwise. The shock of disaster is disorienting, and Catholic Charities stands out as a beacon of light to direct a pathway toward resources that neighbors need to recover hearts and homes for God’s good purpose.

A close-up portrait of a Black woman with long, dark, braided hair. She is wearing a blue denim shirt and looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a building with columns.

Rebuilding after the 2020 tornado was a daunting task. Ivery's damaged home was surrounded on all sides by homes whose roofs were ripped off, windows blown out, and precious belongings strewn for miles. Finding respite at C.E. McGruder Family Resource Center gave many neighbors the strength they needed to move forward from the devastation.

Ivery Frazier

SPONSORED BY ST. PATRICK CHURCH

A portrait of Linda Epps, an elderly woman with short dark hair, wearing a large black hat with a wide brim and a patterned scarf. She is wearing a white jacket with a large floral and architectural print over a black turtleneck. She is seated in a red chair. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

Linda Epps

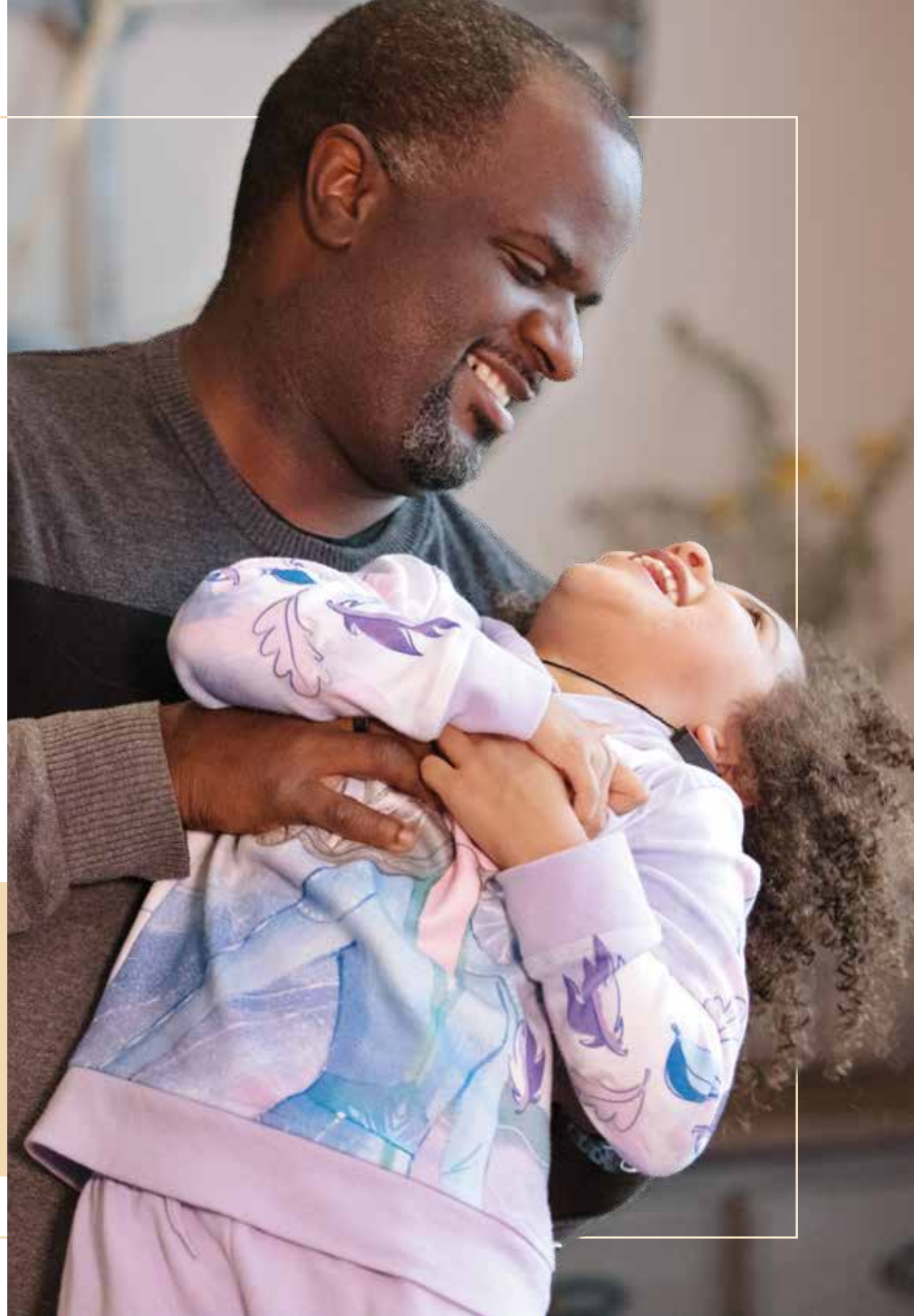
SPONSORED
BY ST. VINCENT
DE PAUL CHURCH

For Linda, the March 2020 tornado was personal. “My father built the house I live in now. We are third generation homeowners in North Nashville. My grandparents built a home on the next block and raised 13 children there. All of my cousins and I went to St. Vincent’s Catholic School.”

The Demetrius Kelley Family

SPONSORED
BY ATHENS
DISTRIBUTING
COMPANY

Just as things were starting to feel a little normal—post pandemic—1,800 residents, business owners, and workers were displaced by the 2020 Christmas Day bombing, including Rodizio Grill manager Demetrius. "Everything seemed dark, and then Catholic Charities just lifted me. The abundance of support was amazing, and I felt there was hope."



Emotional Support

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Fear can be paralyzing. Fear from trauma. Fear of loss. Fear for what is unseen. Fear in times of transition. Fear as life begins and as it ends. Fear can make an individual feel powerless to handle the crosses of life and out of control in times of hardship or uncertainty. One of the most powerful services offered by Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville is emotional support programming—walking alongside of a person grappling with something they cannot manage on their own, or struggling to connect the dots. Sometimes specialized training such as financial literacy or communication skills can remove barriers and resolve a major challenge.

Catholic Charities helps dispel fear through emotional support before a human being even enters the world at birth. With a long tradition of providing support for expectant mothers in Middle Tennessee, Catholic Charities continues to support women in unexpected or crisis pregnancies in making loving choices for the lives of their unborn babies. Pregnancy counseling is help for both a mother and her child, with hope bridging the current crisis to the future.

Parenting does not come easy to everyone who has a baby. The health and safety of young children

is the focus of a specialized parenting training program that gives parents education, tools, and counseling support to give their children a loving homelife, regardless of family dynamics, inter-generational legacies, and everyday challenges of parenthood.

Catholic Charities also knows that some children require special attention due to traumatic events in their young, innocent lives. A specially trained team of counselors provides children who are victims of crime with the exact care and counseling they need. The program offers individual and group support for children who have experienced abuse, loss, and many other forms of trauma, and it trains parents to better manage the effects of those traumas on their children.


School counseling services are another component of emotional support. Available in several Catholic schools in Middle Tennessee, the program is designed for students and families who may not be able to easily access help for grief, loss, divorce, transition, or other stressful times. Help can be had in the familiar environment of a child’s own school. By empowering children to regulate emotions, the school counselors instill hope in each student along with the promise of a better future.

A counseling experience provides a person

with a safe space to work through many different difficulties. The support focuses on each individual’s unique circumstances and mental health challenges. And, the sessions are sensitive to the financial ability of each client. Supported by Catholic Charities donors, those seeking counseling can find affordable, accessible, and effective care.

Catholic Charities also provides emotional support for older adults needing extra care and attention because of age, health, and lack of resources. The loss of the ability to do even small daily tasks due to age is often met with a sense of loss and immense sadness in an older person’s life. A home visit program empowers older, lower income adults in North and West Nashville to continue to live independently and safely in their own homes.


Emotional support programs are an essential piece of the whole person puzzle when pursuing sustainable self-reliance. Mental health services are a key component of comprehensive social service models, such as that of Catholic Charities. A healthy mind and strong relationships are as vital to human flourishing as a full stomach or secure employment, and Catholic Charities is devoted to facilitating all of it as a movement of God’s spirit of love in the community.



Living at Home is designed to help older adults remain in their homes for as long as possible. Our caseworkers walk alongside residents, checking on them, running errands, even providing light housekeeping. In the course of it all, true friendships are formed.

Living at Home

SPONSORED BY POPE JOHN PAUL II
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

A portrait of Magaly Romero, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark grey cardigan over a white top. She is smiling slightly and resting her chin on her hand. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

Struggling to adapt to her new country and hurting from her father's abandonment of the family, 8-year-old Magaly found healing in counseling. In the last few years, as a college student during the pandemic, she reached out for additional counseling and overcame various challenges. She now is a professional in a job where she can make a difference in the Hispanic community—one of her longtime goals.

Magaly Romero

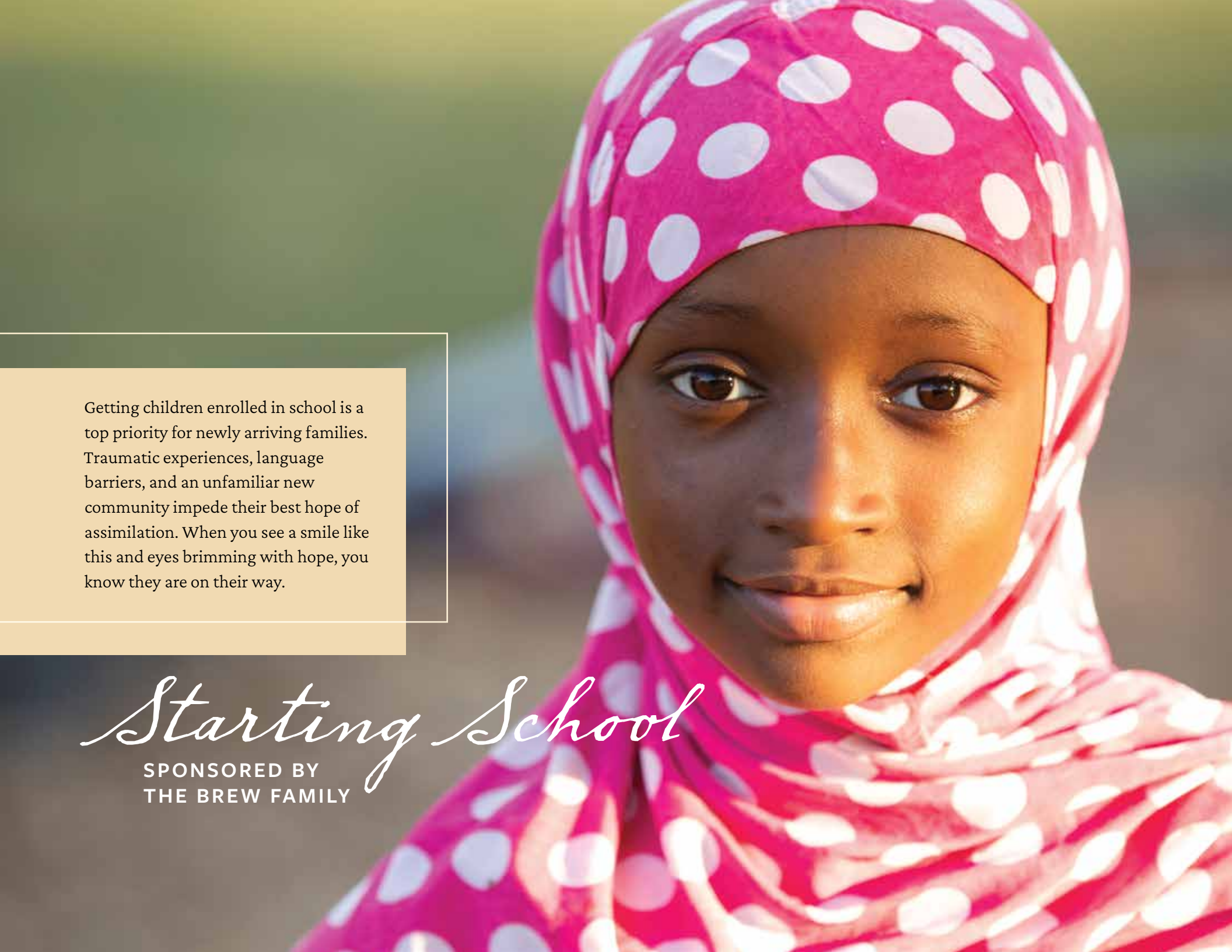
SPONSORED BY TAYLOR,
PIGUE, MARCHETTI,
AND BLAIR

Ana Aquilera

SPONSORED BY THE
RODGERS FAMILY

Ana sought counseling for her 13- and 10-year-old children, but discovered with the help of a therapist that she needed help sorting through feelings from her own difficult childhood and early adult life. After a two-year journey, she feels she is a more confident and stronger person and a better wife and mother.





Getting children enrolled in school is a top priority for newly arriving families. Traumatic experiences, language barriers, and an unfamiliar new community impede their best hope of assimilation. When you see a smile like this and eyes brimming with hope, you know they are on their way.

Starting School

SPONSORED BY
THE BREW FAMILY

New Americans

“Do not oppress a stranger; you yourselves know how it feels to be a stranger, because you were strangers in Egypt.” EXODUS 2 2:20

At the end of the ages, there will be a reckoning. Jesus will say to his friends, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.” Tucked in the middle of the Lord’s accounting is particular care for the stranger. Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville notices and responds with a simple gesture of welcome and a sophisticated apparatus for resettlement.

Catholic Charities in this diocese began its work 60 years ago by welcoming the stranger and it continues that work today. Most recently, after the U.S. government evacuated more than 100,000 Afghans in 2021, Catholic Charities was selected to assist 332 Afghan refugees to resettle in Nashville through a robust and expert process of welcoming and provision. Catholic Charities makes sure that no time is lost in making the stranger a true neighbor.

Beginning in 1962 with a call from a priest in another diocese asking for help in resettling Cuban refugee children, Catholic Charities has proven to be a trusted partner in the great tableau of international humanitarian work. This specialized expertise earned Catholic Charities the role of “replacement designee” in 2008, and it serves the state of Tennessee in administering the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement

(ORR) program. Just as it provides help for displaced persons native to our region, it extends that same love, hope, and healing of Jesus Christ to those who have literally run from violence and disaster in their native countries. Through its resettlement services, Catholic Charities demonstrates its abiding commitment to the Gospel mandates.

Many refugees arrive with little more than the clothes on their backs, typically having spent several years in temporary refugee housing abroad. Providing the immediate resources for clothing, food, and shelter is the first line of help for a new neighbor. Beyond that, acclimation to this new land takes months and years, and it is fraught with numerous processes that can seem daunting and intrusive, especially for those who do not yet speak English. Catholic Charities is there to help make those steps as easy and efficient as possible, while care for the body and soul of the individual is prioritized and never lost in the bustle of paperwork.

As a New American begins her life in her new home, Catholic Charities remains by her side to assist with adaptation to the new environment and community. Reassured by the provision of basic needs, a New American can still feel the sting of lonesomeness for what she left behind, the hardship of not speaking English, or the ongoing trauma of the experience of being uprooted. Catholic Charities is well equipped with the staff and tools needed to provide continuing emotional support during this

time of transition. Counseling and mentorship are just two ways that Catholic Charities cares for the heart and mind of a new neighbor.

A New American also finds that hope and healing are often best accessed in concrete ways like a well-stocked kitchen or job training and placement. He may need help getting around a new town or help learning a new language. The many details of acclimating as an immigrant or refugee can be overwhelming, but the help of a friend is a comfort that will have lasting effects on the individual and the community. Between its professional staff and its volunteer corps, Catholic Charities supplies that much-needed friendship, along with wraparound support. The goal of resettlement is to move a person beyond temporary needs and into permanent self-sustainability and strong roots in a new community.

Children are especially affected by the trauma of being brought to a new country under difficult circumstances. Attuned case workers can help a child feel more secure and cared for in the context of therapeutic after-school programs for refugee, asylee, and migrant children. Likewise, Catholic Charities recognizes the complex needs of older adult immigrants and refugees, and it serves them with social capital-building activities. Catholic Charities helps shape the lives of immigrants and refugees with the loving touch of Jesus Christ, for the glory of God.

Grandparents

SPONSORED BY
JUDGE LYNDA JONES

Older adults migrating to our country have extra burdens. While their adult children are at work and grandchildren are at school, they are isolated at home. They often do not speak the language, they have no transportation, and they have not yet made new friends. They come together as a group each week at Catholic Charities to build community and fellowship.



A portrait of Miguel Viera, a young man with dark hair, wearing a blue polo shirt, smiling slightly. He is positioned on the left side of the frame. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

Miguel Viera

SPONSORED BY THE
WENZLER FAMILY

“Catholic Charities has been a blessing for me. I came to the U.S. looking for freedom and a better future.” After arriving from Cuba, Miguel found community in Nashville and assistance from Catholic Charities to start over. He is now an eligibility specialist with Catholic Charities, using his experience to serve others who also seek a better future.



Eager to learn English, Khadija quickly jumped into language classes after arriving from Somalia in 2007. As do many New Americans, she learned quickly, receiving instruction at Catholic Charities' former resettlement office location at Holy Name parish in East Nashville.

Khadija Hussien

SPONSORED BY NASHVILLE CATHOLIC
BUSINESS WOMEN'S LEAGUE



Refugee children forge international bonds in our summer program. Hamming it up for the camera are at center Shayesta Rahman, from Afghanistan, surrounded by Mawazo Natani, Mariamu Natani, and Prince Irakoze, all from Democratic Republic of Congo.

Summer School

SPONSORED BY THE HCA FOUNDATION

Liz Hodder

SPONSORED BY THE CROCKETT FAMILY

A single mom raising two children, Liz struggled with many challenges. She was referred to the Sewing Training Academy, which enabled her to build a business while working from home and be present for her children in a way that a traditional job would not allow.



God's Workmanship

JOB TRAINING

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” EPHESIANS

From the beginning, in the Garden, a most basic part of the human experience is work. All people are called to some work in the world as a participation in a community and as a function of God's original design for the human beings made in His image. Yet, some people, because of social circumstances, natural disasters, disabilities, or other challenges find it difficult to find meaningful work to sustain their lives and families. Work is a dignified universal calling, but some people have real difficulty in finding sustainable employment.

This is the focus of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville's job training services. Through intensive job training and skill development, a woman can learn what she needs to seek first time employment for personal vitality and self-sustainability. A man can re-enter the workforce with confidence and clear career goals for his future. Women and men in all situations can receive experience in growing industries and high-demand fields by participating in highly developed job training programs in Middle Tennessee offered by Catholic Charities.

Whether it is culinary, sewing, or banking training, each program is specifically designed and taught by experts in the field to communicate

the skills and knowledge needed to be successful for job placement. And the job training is always partnered with essential wraparound services like financial literacy, workplace communications, or transportation support to make sure every graduate is well equipped for the work ahead.

Catholic Charities' Culinary Training Academy (CTA) gives students training for many of the food service jobs available in Middle Tennessee's thriving hospitality industry. CTA is certified by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to ensure the best outcomes for its graduates. From basic cooking and nutrition skills to an education in culinary math and communication, CTA students spend eight weeks getting commercial kitchen and general workplace instruction.

The Sewing Training Academy (STA) has developed programming that offers students everything from basic sewing classes to a year-long program for certification in three distinct career pathways in the sewing industry. Sewing enthusiasts can learn new skills or enter a new career through participation in STA. Certifications in Production Sewing or Alterations and Tailoring provide technical degrees alongside apprenticeships

to gain work experience in those highly skilled fields. The Sew Entrepreneurship program is a doorway into a sewing job that flexibly fits one's individual career goals and family obligations.

The Unidos in Banking program serves as an entry point into the finance and banking industry for those with bilingual skills. Each cohort of students is carefully selected with special consideration for the security interests and requirements of the banking industry. Many are highly trained and credentialed professionals whose certifications do not transfer across countries. Unidos prepares them for a career in U.S. banking, starting with basics of cash handling and customer service and extending to essential networking for job placement.

Catholic Charities job training initiatives give the individual not only the fundamental skills, but also the confidence to find good jobs for long-lasting financial stability. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation, according to Catholic Social Teaching. And as the old adage goes, you can give a man a fish and feed him for a day, but when you teach him to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.

Christiana owns Threads by Dreads, a company that has its roots in her Ghanaian heritage. She is a second-generation American, and because of her full-time job, she needed a non-degree based program like Sewing Training Academy to further her skills and knowledge of clothing construction, to build her business.

Christiana Atofey

SPONSORED BY REGIONS BANK



Culinary Training

SPONSORED BY HOLY FAMILY
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Nashville's famous tourism and hospitality industry opens doors for many, if they have the right skills. Catholic Charities' culinary training program taps neighbors who are eager to learn the trade and make a career in the restaurant world or become entrepreneurs with catering companies.



A Final Letter



“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” ROMANS 8:28

It is the people. At the end of the day, when we are distraught by the heartbreaking circumstances, when we are discouraged by the misfortunes, when we are overwhelmed with our inability to make everything right, it is the eyes and the beautiful faces with their profound expressions that inspire us.

In my short three years as executive director of Catholic Charities, I have seen a world of hurt, from the 2020 tornado, the massive joblessness brought on by the pandemic layoffs, flooding, a bombing, and a surge of refugees not seen in 40 years. And yet the resilience shown by people is astonishing.

When I started at Catholic Charities, the organization seemed complex and diverse. But I did not fathom the breadth and range of people whom we help. I quickly came to understand that programs can come and go, but they are all built around the same principles of helping.

One day I tagged along with one of our social workers to visit an elderly and infirmed woman. Towards the end of the conversation, she motioned us both over, held up a hand to each of us, grasped it firmly, closed her eyes, and prayed, “Jesus, Lord, please send down your blessings on Terri and—” She paused, having forgotten my name, and peeked up at me. She then continued, “—and new director, and bless their ministries.” The power of love, hope, and healing was palpable.

A couple of months later, one of our regular Loaves and Fishes guests had died of natural causes. His friends wanted to honor him at L&F with a memorial service. One of his wheelchair-bound friends gave a testimonial: “Jerry—he didn’t have much, but whatever he had he would give it to you. He would always share whatever he had.”

Weeks after the pandemic layoffs, we were overwhelmed by calls and emails from those

desperate for help to pay rent and utilities. I was working late one evening trying to catch up on emails, and I nearly overlooked this especially poignant one:

“I lost my job a few weeks back from this Corona Virus mess. I've been sleeping in my car for 10 days now. Less than 10 bucks in my pocket. I've never been one to ask for help. I'm not homeless or indigent even if my circumstance appears that way. I've never not worked...had the same job for 6 years now. I don't know what if any help'y'all can provide me and even if you have none, I'll be ok. If nothing else, you've given me a chance to open up, let my mind and soul be emptied out a bit. For that alone I thank you. I pray a little more these days but in a different way. More talking w/Christ than before. My thoughts and prayers are w/you at this moment that you and your family and coworkers are all safe and blessed.”

Many years ago, when I was mid-way through college, I, too, had the rug pulled out from under me. My pastor, Father Bill Fleming, ever wise and compassionate, introduced me to Ann Cain at Catholic Charities, a counselor in the adoptions department. My dreams of living happily ever after hadn’t worked out. Ann walked alongside of me for many months as I weighed options, but in the end, I could not part with my baby. That beautiful child, an angel sent by God, all grown up now, is the husband and father that I had hoped his father could be.

I never dreamed in a million years that I would be running the very agency that helped me. And which blesses me every day with the opportunity to give back. And if that is not the work of the Holy Spirit, I don’t know what is.

Judy Orr, Executive Director,
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville
April 2022