

Charities USA

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Nutritious Food Coming Your Way

A MOBILE FOOD PANTRY BRINGS GROCERIES TO NEIGHBORHOODS

Training Food Recipients for Jobs

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OFFERS EPIC PROGRAM IN CHICAGO

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES MINISTRY AND FOOD SERVICES



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Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD,
President and CEO, CCUSA



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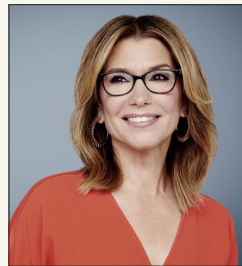
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LAST ISSUE: SPRING 2018



EDITOR'S

COLUMN

Our summer issue concentrates on Christ's call to feed the hungry (See Lk 3:11; Mt 25:35).

To obey Jesus certainly involves handing out bread, fish and other sustenance as he did 2,000 years ago, but getting food to those who need it in a country the size of the United States involves more than the distribution of meals or the efforts of one organization.

As Pope Benedict said about love, the greatest commandment, it "needs to be organized if it is to be an ordered service to the community" (Deus caritas est, No. 20). So it is with food.

The Church, the government, local agencies, and individual citizens share in the responsibility of mutual care and the common good, with particular focus on those who are impoverished and vulnerable. Providing food is most often the starting point for other services, because people who are hungry or worried about the next meal have little time to focus on other concerns.

Beyond food kitchens and pantries, people who experience different levels of what the U.S. Department of Agriculture calls "food insecurity" or "reduced food intake" also benefit from federal food allowances and nutrition education, which covers everything from cooking lessons to shopping for healthy food on a budget.

The articles in this issue demonstrate how the Catholic Charities ministry, the state, and individuals cooperate to provide people with the nutrition necessary not only to live but also to build better lives.

There's the old saying, "Give a person a fish, you feed him or her for the day. Teach a person to fish, you feed him or her for life." For Catholic Charities, the saying is not about either/or; it's about both/and.

David Werning, Managing Editor

To comment on this issue, please write to David Werning at dwerning@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org.

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“All that we do is driven by the gospel mandate to serve those who are poor and vulnerable.” - Sister Donna Markham

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Finding and keeping a job is a difficult task made more burdensome when one is unsure there will be another meal. In the United States, these concerns are experienced by more than 15 million households, or 41 million individuals, who are without stable employment and access to nutritious food.

Catholic Charities is there for these households – in their neighborhoods, rural counties, and city blocks – putting meals on tables and helping people apply for food assistance. Our agencies also help women and men get occupational training that leads to employment. The national office visits Capitol Hill and urges our legislators to keep the safety net strong.

All that we do is driven by the gospel mandate to serve those who are poor and vulnerable. This includes providing them something to eat so they can continue on the path toward achieving their full potential.

If the task seems too big and the people too many, or we feel overwhelmed by the needs, then it's good to remember Pope Francis' address to Caritas Internationalis some years ago: "The food available in the world is enough to feed everyone." If we live as one human family, there will be food for all.



Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President & CEO



FEEDING THE HUNGRY

THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES MINISTRY AND FOOD SERVICES

By David Werning, Managing Editor

Introduced in the House of Representatives on April 12, 2018, the Farm Bill covers most major farm, nutrition assistance, rural development and other U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs. In addition to support to farmers, it also provides federal food benefits to people in the United States and around the world who struggle with affording enough food to feed their families.

The key domestic food program funded by the Farm Bill is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which accounted for 69 percent of all federal food and nutrition assistance spending in FY 2017, totaling \$68 billion (<https://bit.ly/2HW6Y4V>).

The Farm Bill is of critical importance not only to Catholic Charities agencies across the country but also, and more fundamentally, to the people Catholic Charities serves. Catholic Charities agencies implement many of the Farm Bill's programs, such as SNAP enrollment and workforce development programs, and connect people in need with the many benefits that come from the bill.

SNAP remains the nation's first line of defense against hunger. Its strength is the flexibility to expand or contract depending on need. As economic conditions improve, SNAP's caseload decreases.

According to the USDA, 12.3 percent of U.S. households (15.6 million) in 2016 were food insecure, which means they "had difficulty at some time during the year providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources" (<https://bit.ly/2kVo6ga>).

During the reauthorization debate, Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) joined the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Rural Life and the Society of St. Vincent DePaul to advocate for protection of programs which provide critical food assistance, such as SNAP, the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). At the same time, CCUSA urged Congress to strengthen the program by making greater investments in workforce training programs and providing greater assistance for case management in SNAP programs.



At the time this issue went to print, the Farm Bill had not been passed by either chamber in Congress.

The best solution to hunger insecurity is funding robustly both SNAP and workforce development programs. When people have adequate food and assistance in obtaining employment, the need for public assistance will lessen.

Catholic Social Teaching states that having enough healthy food to eat is a fundamental right of every human person. Pope Francis once said, “The planet has enough food for all, but it seems there is a lack of willingness to share it with everyone.”* The following articles show the many ways the Catholic Charities ministry is responding to the needs of people who have little or no nutritious food. ■

*Wooden, Cindy. “Pope Francis: God will judge people on care for the poor, for the planet.” ncronline.org. National Catholic Reporter Publishing Company. 12 May 2015. Web. 25 May 2018.

FEEDING THOSE IN THE BREADBASKET

By Lucas Swanepoel, Vice President for Social Policy, Catholic Charities USA

At regular intervals since 1933, Congress has come together to discuss the shared connection between those who produce food in our country and those who do not have enough to make ends meet.

Throughout most of its history, the Farm Bill was built on three pillars:



1

rural and agricultural support;



2

domestic nutrition programs in the form of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or food stamps; and



3

international food aid programs.

These three pillars worked in a synergy that recognized the connected interests of rural producers living in the breadbasket regions of our country and urban consumers, who often lived in communities with a higher concentration of poverty.

However, times are changing. No longer are the highest concentrations of people receiving food assistance found in our cities. Instead they are increasingly found in the very communities that produce the food that feeds our nation. From 2012 to 2016, 16 percent of people living in small towns and rural areas received SNAP nutrition assistance, compared to 13 percent who lived in metro areas. As Congress debates the 2018 Farm Bill, this reality brings into focus the plight of communities in our country. It also highlights a renewed need for members of Congress from rural communities and urban areas to come together to create a strong Farm Bill – one that recognizes not only the shared needs and challenges but also the shared interests and goals in building stronger communities where all people have enough to eat.

Pope Francis reminds us that food is not only a basic human need but also a fundamental human right. Catholic Charities agencies across the country see, each day, the sacrifices parents have to make to do the most basic task of putting food on the table for their families.

When Gloria walked into Catholic Charities of Rochester, N.Y., workers saw first-hand the life-changing difference even a few dollars can make in a person's life.

Gloria is 86 and lives alone near the small village of Nichols, N.Y., in Tioga County, which is as rural as Appalachia. There are no nearby cities, hospitals, colleges or public bus service. There are no large grocery stores that Gloria can reach easily. For food, she has two options: shop at a convenience store close to home or use the Catholic Charities food pantry in Nichols.

The pantry is where Gloria learned about a third option: SNAP. Aware that Gloria made frequent visits, a staff member at the pantry introduced her to Patty Porter, whose job – funded by Catholic Charities USA – is to help people in need apply for and receive SNAP benefits.

Porter introduced Gloria to SNAP and helped her through the application process, which involved identifying and collecting all the documents that verified Gloria's eligibility. Through the process, Gloria learned that SNAP benefits would help her afford nutritious foods. She also discovered that she qualified for a government-funded cell phone, which meant a saving of \$60 per month for her.

A few weeks after her application had been submitted, Gloria walked into Catholic Charities with her new SNAP EBT (electronic benefits transfer) card, which she had received in the mail. She wanted to know how to set up the personal identification number and how much in benefits she would receive. When Porter told her that the benefits totaled \$60 per month, Gloria started to cry.

Porter, not knowing what the tears meant, asked if she was okay. Gloria smiled through her tears of joy and said she could not believe her good fortune.

On the other side of our nation, in the small rural city of Escalon, Calif., Luz and her family experienced a similar difficulty in purchasing food. Luz works on a farm, the same place where her husband works every day. Both are paid minimum wage, which is not enough to cover rent, utilities, food and other expenses. Like Gloria, they were not aware of SNAP (known as CalFresh in California) until Catholic Charities of Stockton helped them apply and receive benefits. Through this assistance, they can not only feed their family but also begin to save for a more secure future.

These are just two stories of the millions of individuals and families that Catholic Charities agencies assist each year. It's a reminder that while our country's prosperity improves, there are still far too many among us who are struggling to meet the most basic of needs. And while progress is being made in reducing hunger in urban areas, we must not forget those like Gloria and the Luz family who struggle to feed themselves and their families despite living in the very communities that feed our nation and the world. The Farm Bill Reauthorization of 2018 provides a critical opportunity to stand in solidarity with these families and communities to ensure that the bounty of our nation can be enjoyed by all. ■

“...times are changing. No longer are the highest concentrations of people receiving food assistance found in our cities. Instead they are increasingly found in the very communities that produce the food that feeds our nation.”

– Lucas Swanepoel





Everything's Connected:

BUILDING LOCAL AND GLOBAL SOLIDARITY FOR FEEDING PEOPLE IN NEED

By Lucas Swanepoel, Vice President for Social Policy, Catholic Charities USA

Advocates affiliated with Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) gathered at three locations in the Western, South-Central, and Eastern United States over the last year to study the connection between local and global hunger relief efforts and to strengthen their capacity to represent those who have little or no food.

These one-day gatherings trained nearly 200 local advocates and created solidarity through peer-to-peer learning about the impact of hunger in the U.S. and around the world.

The gatherings, co-sponsored by Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) and CRS, provided information on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2) and the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill reauthorization. This is the full text of SDG2: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg2>).

The gatherings developed from a call for proposals by Caritas Internationalis on how national Catholic institutions could work together to promote greater solidarity in addressing hunger in the world. Caritas is a global confederation of 160 local and national Catholic social service and advocacy organizations – including CCUSA and CRS – that collaborate in building a world based on justice and fraternal love.

CCUSA and CRS proposed the gatherings, which they call “Advocacy Capacity Building Summits,” as a way to educate their supporters and Catholics on the global effort that is needed to end hunger.

The summits stressed that in a world where walls of division are constantly erected, bridges of understanding that make a lasting difference are necessary as counteractions. Participants were chal-

lenged to build bridges through education and advocacy between those who produce food and those in need, between farmers in rural America and hungry people half a world away.

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorization was identified as a unique opportunity not only to inform participants on the challenges of hunger but also to train them in advocacy.

In many ways, the Farm Bill is an example of legislation that encourages the connection between the local and the global. The Farm Bill addresses subjects that one might expect, such as rural development, crop and dairy pricing, and conservation programs. But it also addresses something linked directly to food production, namely those who consume food products.

Through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the U.S., previously referred to as food stamps, and a host of global nutrition programs, the Farm Bill feeds people in need in towns and communities throughout our country and in villages and cities around the world.

Because of its wide reach, the Farm Bill is a lesson in global solidarity. It affirms that without thriving farms and rural communities people will go hungry. At the same time, it asserts that providing food to those in need gives an additional economic benefit to farmers, who operate so often on impossibly slim margins.

While local Catholic Charities agencies and CRS serve and feed millions of people each year, the global effort to eradicate hunger still requires that everything and everyone be connected. ■



FAMILIES STRUGGLING WITH POVERTY LEARN THAT

HEALTHY FOODS

CAN BE AFFORDABLE

By Cynthia King MSW, MPH, Assistant Director, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa (CCSR) uses the Two-Generation (2Gen) model of service to help impoverished families attain a healthy, self-sustaining lifestyle.

2Gen programs consider the holistic needs of families and the individual needs of family members, both children and adults. The 2Gen service model provides high quality and mutually reinforcing services for both adults and children in the areas of education, workforce and economic assets, social capital, and health and well-being grounded in cultural competency.

At CCSR, 2Gen is implemented through programs focused on economic assets and health and well-being. These two program areas are the foundation for the other components of the model. They also reinforce each other. Access to food and health care increase economic assets and improve health and well-being, producing a multiplier effect.

CCSR has found that the first step in helping a family move from poverty to self-sufficiency begins with a healthy diet, meaning that all members have access to nutritious food. CCSR's food access program, in fact, is the "front door" to many services, providing food and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) assistance to nearly 10,000 people a year.



Staff and volunteers who distribute food at agency sites and stock family emergency shelter kitchens are trained in CCSR's Health Food Standards, which provides guidance on the level of food quality that can be accepted and disbursed. In order to respect the dignity of clients, a variety of foods are stocked to allow for more choices. Nutrition workshops that include recipes featuring items from the weekly food distributions are also provided.

For clients who are enrolled or eligible for SNAP, CCSR offers the SNAP Education (SNAP-Ed) program as well. Families that struggle with limited resources tend to buy more affordable, but less nutritious food, which increases the risk of mental and physical health problems for children and adults. SNAP-Ed helps families increase their skills and knowledge about obtaining and preparing healthier and affordable foods.

CCSR has other education programs that support the knowledge gained through SNAP-Ed. One myth that is debunked is the notion that healthy food has to be expensive. For instance, cooking a family's meals at home and using fresh produce not only saves money but also improves eating habits. When parents involve the children in the preparation of a meal, it supports multiple 2Gen outcomes, such as socio-emotional and language development.

A family referred to CCSR by Sonoma County in the summer of 2016 – Maria and her son and daughter – had lost their rental apartment through

no fault of their own. They went to CCSR for help. In addition to housing aid, the family was given a bag of emergency food and provided assistance in applying for SNAP benefits.

When the SNAP benefits were approved, Maria used them to purchase a box of fresh fruits and vegetables from a local farm that CCSR partnered with. She told staff it was wonderful to have such nutritional food for her children, and her son chimed in: "I love strawberries!"

Maria talked about how much the food and cooking class helped to stretch their meals until the end of the month. The family was able to make their own meals with food they enjoyed and that supported their health and increased their food security.

Food is a central part of every culture and life itself. The quality, abundance, and rituals surrounding food reflect the quality, abundance, and rituals of people's lives. For CCSR, food is a point of engagement, a balm in a moment of crisis, and a connector to those in need.

What it comes down to is that when families can get food, whether through food pantries or SNAP benefits or some other source, they have additional resources to pay for other necessities such as utilities and rent. Having enough nutritious food is the crucial ingredient and a stepping stone that allows a family to move out of poverty. ■

THE NUTRITION THEY NEED

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF STOCKTON

By David Werning, Managing Editor

It is hard to believe that people who live in areas rich with food go to bed hungry every night. Yet in San Joaquin County, California – which has been referred to as the breadbasket of the nation – “mixed status” families are not getting the nutrition they need.

“Mixed status” families have at least one member who is a non-citizen. The non-citizen may be undocumented or may be pursuing citizenship. Given the fierce political debate on welcoming newcomers to the United States, mixed status families worry about applying for food benefits, even if they qualify. They fear that once they document their need, the non-citizen member will be detained or deported.

Members of these families often work at seasonal, low-paying jobs in San Joaquin’s farming industry and have no idea where their next meal will come from. It is a tragic irony that the people who pick, package and ship fresh produce to the nation and around the world are suffering as some of the most food insecure.

Food is available for those in need but there is a longstanding misperception among mixed status families that they are ineligible. The confusion centers on the term “public charge.” According to U.S. immigration law, a person “who is likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence” is considered a public charge and may not enter the United States or become a legal permanent resident. (www.uscis.gov/greencard/public-charge)

Ana Guzman, program manager for Nutrition Assistance Services at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton in San Joaquin County, has been working with mixed status families since 2011. Her team works directly with the needy to explain the benefits process and get them the help they need.

“Our agency usually travels to the families because public transportation is always an issue,” Guzman said. “We do this by partnering with churches and food banks and community agencies. Sometimes we do home visits if that’s easier for the client. We make ourselves available to them to ease their concerns.”

Guzman makes it clear to mixed status families that receiving food assistance does not mean being “primarily dependent on the government for subsistence.” She also gives the families a letter from Kim McCoy Wade that makes the same point. Wade is the chief of CalFresh, California’s vehicle for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

But even these assurances are not enough. Mixed status families, filled with anxiety, forgo even emergency food services rather than fill out applications or share information about their situations to the state or Catholic Charities. Even the places set up to help hungry people can become centers of hostility, depending on the reception given to clients.

“I have never experienced it as bad as we’ve seen it in the past year,” said Guzman. “Even at our presentations to the community, we hear people say: ‘We don’t mind immigrants being here, but they have to be here legally.’”

Guzman thinks the atmosphere can be improved through encountering others. Mixed status families can be safely and privately met at their homes and workplaces to give them the facts about food benefits. Encountering people who object to aiding non-citizens should also happen. They should be engaged and helped to understand the realities facing the vast majority of newcomers, most of whom are fleeing violence and poverty.

For Guzman it all comes down to Catholic Charities’ mission, which aligns with Catholic Social Teaching. “We believe in the inherent dignity of each person. I always have to tie it back to that and remind everyone, including ourselves, that we don’t view a person based on race, age, gender, religion or immigration status. We see them with human dignity.” ■



Nutritious Food Coming Your Way

A MOBILE FOOD PANTRY BRINGS GROCERIES TO NEIGHBORHOODS

By Tomas A. Olivo-Valentin, Family Education & Support Coordinator
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford

Families in Waterbury, Connecticut, who struggle putting food on the table may have a solution right outside their front door. Meet the GROW truck – Groceries on Wheels – a mobile food pantry program that goes where the need is greatest.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford partners with the Connecticut Food Bank, operator of the GROW truck, to bring quality food to families in Waterbury who generate just enough income to pay all their monthly bills except groceries.

In Connecticut, many families struggle daily to make ends meet. The struggle affects not only non-working families living in extreme poverty but also working families that the state places in a category called ALICE or “Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed.” (For more information on ALICE, please visit www.unitedwayalice.org/home.)

ALICE families work very hard for low pay. Their income, however, is above the poverty level, according to state guidelines, and they do not qualify for any public assistance. These are at-risk families, because one emergency or unplanned expense can derail them.

The GROW truck visits a targeted neighborhood twice monthly for a period of six months. Catholic Charities in Waterbury chooses a location in conjunction with its family programs and provides groceries to families with children in an effort to reduce child hunger.



In addition to dairy, produce, meats, poultry, and goods unavailable at other local food pantries, the GROW truck provides families with a 30-minute educational presentation. The topics include financial instruction, nutritional health, and information on other local programs.

The GROW truck is a popular service in the community because of its accessibility, the variety of foods, and the supplementary education it provides. It also is a great way for families to meet each other, develop friendships and deepen their sense of community. ■



“The GROW truck

is a popular service in the community because of its accessibility, the variety of foods, and the supplementary education it provides. It also is a great way for families to meet each other, develop friendships and deepen their sense of community.”

- Tomas A. Olivo-Valentin





TRAINING FOOD RECIPIENTS FOR JOBS

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OFFERS EPIC PROGRAM IN CHICAGO

By Kendrea Atkins, M.A., Program Supervisor, EPIC Program, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago

People in the Chicago area who struggle with job issues and receive federal food benefits are changing their lives with the help of a new employment and training program called EPIC.

EPIC stands for “Employment Opportunity, Personalized Service, Individualized Training, and Career Planning.” The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service launched the program in March 2016 as one way for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – formerly known as food stamps – to become less dependent on public assistance.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) oversees EPIC in the state. IDHS selected Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago in January 2017 to administer the program at agency offices in the city and surrounding counties.

To qualify for EPIC, participants must be currently enrolled in SNAP. They also must be unemployed, underemployed, or employed with a need for skill improvement. After an orientation session, the participants are assigned to the EPIC program at Catholic Charities. The intended outcome includes a good job, increased earnings, and self-sufficiency for each person.



“We faced some challenges getting started,” said Kendrea Atkins, EPIC program supervisor for Catholic Charities. “Participant availability was dependent on referrals from IDHS, which selected SNAP recipients in a random process. And there were IDHS requirements to attend to as well. But we set to work establishing efficient operations and procedures to best serve those who came to us.”

Catholic Charities offers two apprenticeship courses in the EPIC program: forklift operator and food service sanitation manager. Participants receive not only job-specific skills but also personal readiness training. After participants learn the basics, they are offered opportunities for on-the-job experience through external partners. Participants who finish a program receive an industry-recognized certification in their particular skill.

Following certification, participants are linked with a career navigator, who outlines the process for obtaining a job. The navigators introduce participants to skills such as resume building, interview techniques, filling out employment applications, and writing cover and thank-you letters. Participants also have access to Mary’s Closet, which is a professional clothing service run by Catholic Charities for people going on interviews.

Atkins remembers a participant in the forklift apprenticeship. “He came to the program without any goals or motivation to complete it,” she said. “He referred to the EPIC staff as ‘Sis’ and refused to call them by their last names. He also became homeless a few weeks after entering the program.”

But the staff refused to give up. During the personal readiness training, they taught the man the importance of addressing other individuals as “Mr.” or “Mrs.” They also used the title “Mr.” with him. Soon the man began to address each of the staff with the same courtesy.

“It may seem like a small thing, but it really seems to have built up his confidence,” Atkins said. “He went on to pass the written and practicum tests for his forklift certification, and he worked diligently at a warehouse for his on-the-job training.”

Upon completion of on-the-job training, the man began working with a career navigator for supportive services. Three weeks later, he received a full-time employment offer with Koch Foods. He also found an apartment with the assistance of the EPIC staff.

Atkins is optimistic about the future of the EPIC program at Catholic Charities. She notes that IDHS will no longer use a random process to select participants, but will extend eligibility to anyone receiving SNAP benefits. She also hopes that the new federal Farm Bill will allocate more funding to employment and training programs like EPIC.

“We need to increase the number of participants who receive industry-recognized training, work experience, and assistance in obtaining employment,” Atkins said. “People who get nutritious food and job support move toward self-sufficiency. The EPIC program and programs like it really help people with a passageway out of poverty.” ■

“We need to increase the number of participants who receive industry-recognized training, work experience, and assistance in obtaining employment. People who get nutritious food and job support move toward self-sufficiency.”

– Kendrea Atkins



A “MONTH” OF POVERTY

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND STAFF PARTICIPATE IN POVERTY SIMULATION

By: Sarah Hendley, Program Manager, AmeriCorps Refugee Resettlement, and Kimberly Mazyck, Senior Manager, Engagement and Educational Outreach

More than 60 congressional staff and four members of Congress participated in a poverty simulation May 23, 2018 at the Capitol Visitors Center to understand the struggles that millions of Americans face every day. One congressman called the experience an “eye opener.”

During the event, sponsored by Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) and Entergy Corporation, participants assumed the roles of low-income family members living on a limited budget and enduring a range of circumstances that resulted in poverty. They interacted with volunteers who played the roles of social service providers from various community organizations.

One member of Congress was assigned the role of “Eunice Ussar,” a widowed senior citizen in reasonably good health but who requires arthritis medicine not covered by Medicare/Medicaid and help with

unpaid bills. A senior staffer played the role of a single parent who, with limited resources and no transportation, had to find a way to get to work and to get her child to daycare. A communication specialist took on the role of a young adult who must care for his siblings while their parent is incarcerated.

During the simulation, participants experienced poverty for one “month,” which was divided into four 15-minute “weeks.” During these “weeks,” each family unit, in order to meet their basic needs, had to connect with community resources, such as schools, a utility company, a mortgage firm, and social service workers.

The experience lasted about two hours and included a preliminary briefing, the simulation exercise, and a debriefing period during which participants and volunteers shared their reactions and learned about ways to get involved in reducing poverty.

CCUSA realizes that poverty is not a game – it is a reality throughout our country for people whom our network serves every day. Poverty simulations are a powerful, experiential opportunity for people to learn about and engage in poverty reduction.

By participating in a simulation, members of Congress and their staff increased their understanding of the dynamics of poverty and the struggle for self-sufficiency many people face.

“Too often, low-income families and working Americans bear the brunt of our government’s inaction or the unintended consequences of our policies,” said Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-MA), who took part in the poverty simulation exercise. “With this poverty simulation hosted by Catholic Charities, Congress was given a welcome opportunity to better understand the daily struggles facing too many of our constituents.”

Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-AL), who also participated in the event, said, “The Poverty Simulation on Capitol Hill was an eye-opening experience for all those who participated, and I applaud all the organizers and sponsors for making the event a success. It demonstrated both

the highs and the lows facing Americans in poverty today. Through the exercise, we should all be emboldened to redouble our efforts to lift Americans out of poverty and improve the quality of life for all those in our country.”

The simulation exercise is one part of a new, broader effort at CCUSA to engage and educate local communities, helping them to become grassroots advocates.

CCUSA can present a poverty simulation in your community. It will allow parish leaders, politicians, donors, and community supporters to walk in the shoes of people who are impoverished. Through a live-action experience, participants can gain the empathy and motivation to join in the effort to end poverty.

If you are interested in having a poverty simulation at your agency, please contact Kimberly Mazyck at kmazyck@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org.





Walmart Foundation Grants **\$1.5 Million** to Catholic Charities USA

The Walmart Foundation provided \$1.5 million to Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) to increase food security for low-income families in the United States. The period of the grant extends from November 1, 2017, to October 31, 2018.

CCUSA distributed the grant money to 47 Catholic Charities agencies across the United States. The agencies are using the funds to encourage enrollment of eligible people into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to expand the Summer Food Service Program in communities of high need.

CCUSA will also ask its agencies to provide additional outreach into the rural community. This expansion could take many forms, since grant funding may not be sufficient for full-time staff and multiple locations. However, agencies can, where possible, offer SNAP enrollment in partnership with other providers. CCUSA will encour-

age its network to explore additional options to assist underserved communities.

The mission of the Walmart Foundation is to create opportunities so people can live better. It is the responsibility of the Walmart Foundation to make a positive impact in the communities they serve. Whether it is through grants (provided to thousands of organizations that share the Foundation's mission) or through inspiring volunteer efforts of Walmart associates, the Walmart Foundation is passionate about helping people live better, one community at a time. For more information about the Walmart Foundation, please visit the foundation's website at <http://foundation.walmart.com>.

For more information about the Walmart Foundation grant to CCUSA, please contact Jane Stenson at jstenson@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org.

Gulf South States Lag Behind Nation in Social Justice Issues

The Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) released a report May 3, 2018 on the status of social justice issues in the Gulf South region, comprising Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

The JustSouth Index report, published annually, showed that the region lagged far behind other states and Washington, DC, when ranked according to nine indicators of well-being. The indicators, based on Catholic Social Teaching, include: income, health insurance, housing, public school integration, wage equity, employment equity, youth outcomes, English proficiency, and health insurance.

Father Fred Kammer, director of JSRI, presented the report at a Capitol Hill briefing, co-sponsored by Catholic Charities USA. Kammer said that the ultimate goal of the report is to help people improve their lives and attain the essential components of well-being: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living.

At the briefing, Kammer headed a panel that included four experts in social research: Ali R. Bustamante, Ph.D., JSRI, Loyola University New Orleans; Lane Windham, Ph.D., Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor, Georgetown University; Joshua Armstead, Unite Here Local 23, Georgetown University; and James X. Sullivan, Ph.D., Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO), University of Notre Dame.

The panelists agreed that the Gulf South's low ranking was due in part to a history of poverty and racial segregation. Implementing social justice initiatives will take time and a concerted effort on the part of communities. The panelists also noted that the fading strength of the agricultural industry in the region exacerbates an already difficult situation.



According to Sullivan and his colleagues at LEO, improving outcomes for people who are poor and vulnerable starts by understanding that poverty is multi-dimensional and continues by replicating initiatives that have been successful. LEO evaluates the impact of poverty alleviation strategies of Catholic Charities agencies and other national and local NGOs. The vital role of federal programs and interventions in supporting the work of NGOs was also stressed.

JSRI is a center for research, analysis, education, and advocacy on the core issues of poverty, race, and migration in the Gulf South. It is a collaboration between Loyola University New Orleans and the Central and Southern Province of the Society of Jesus. JSRI promotes justice in society through the application of Catholic Social Teaching.

For more information about JSRI's JustSouth Index 2017, please visit www.loyno.edu/jsri/indicators-map. ■

Senior Citizens in Philadelphia Get New Affordable Apartment Building



A few years ago, Catholic Housing and Community Services (CHCS) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia embarked on a new journey. It was the result of listening to senior citizens who told us, “I want to stay where I raised my family, shopped, and went to church. As I grow older, this is still where I want to be.”

The recent opening of Saint John Neumann Place II in South Philadelphia marked the fifth senior housing unit developed by the Archdiocese. Each site allows residents to remain active in their communities while enjoying comfortable, affordable apartment living. The senior citizens have a stabilizing effect on the neighborhoods where the units have been built.

On May 15, 2018, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., dedicated the new building. He was surrounded by community stakeholders, funding partners, and joyful new residents. The residents offered prayers of thanksgiving for their new home and for those who made it possible. One resident shared her heartfelt gratitude by calling Saint John Neumann Place II “a little slice of heaven on earth.”

“Saint John Neumann Place II is another fine example of the continued dedication of Catholic Housing and Community Services to our seniors,” said Archbishop Chaput. “Today’s accomplishment would not be possible without the essential contributions of our skilled and profession-

al staff, dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and committed board members. Their shared commitment to our aging brothers and sisters is another expression of the Church of Philadelphia’s response to our Holy Father’s exhortation to ‘bear witness to our faith with greater enthusiasm and conviction’ and fulfill ‘our responsibility to be a living sign of the Father’s love in the world.’”

Through Saint John Neumann Place II and our four other housing sites, we are confident that we are filling a void for seniors in Philadelphia. The extensive waiting lists at each site demonstrate the continued need and we want to fulfill it. On any given day, 400 senior households are waiting for an opportunity to live at one of our developments, wanting to age with dignity in the neighborhoods they have called home for most of their lives.

CHCS is a leading provider of senior living services throughout the Philadelphia region. Dedicated staff is committed to providing the best quality support for seniors and their loved ones. Programs include senior housing, senior centers, older adult care management, in-home support programs, adult day care, elder care helpline, and senior clubs.

Wilmington, Delaware, Senior Citizens Get Renovated Affordable Housing

Catholic Charities Diocese of Wilmington celebrated Older Americans Month in May by rededicating Marydale Retirement Village, an affordable rental community for low-income persons aged 62 and older. The community recently completed a 2-year reconstruction of the entire complex.

On May 2, the Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly, Bishop of Wilmington, rededicated the community to the service of our older neighbors.

“In 1980, we dedicated Marydale Retirement Village to the service of our senior citizens so that they could live in dignity,” Bishop Malooly said. “For 37 years it has faithfully served the seniors of our community. We rejoice to once again commit ourselves to their care – through accommodations that provide a safe, affordable, and dignified home.”

Bishop Malooly blessed the nine residential courts individually and then offered a benediction at the community building for the entire village. After the blessing, the Marydale community, 116 residents in all, met the many partners involved in the project.

Marydale Retirement Village didn't just get a fresh coat of paint. Each of the 108 one-bedroom apartments, the community building, staff offices, and the area grounds underwent an extensive renovation from top to bottom. Funding came from the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program in Delaware.

The complex received exterior upgrades to resident buildings, including Energy Star windows, exterior doors, and exterior light fixtures, new roofs, gutters, downspouts, siding and shutters, and accessible entry porches to designated handicap units.

Interior resident unit upgrades included Energy Star heat pumps, kitchen appliances, and hot water heaters, as well as new kitchen cabinets, countertops, low-flow/energy-saving bathroom fixtures, bathroom grab bars, interior doors, flooring, and a

sprinkler fire suppression system. Outside, the community now boasts new accessible paths from all handicap units, new accessible trash enclosures, and landscape upgrades and drainage improvements.

Present for the rededication were representatives from Leon N. Weiner & Associates, the project's development partner and general contractor; Delaware State Housing Authority, administrator of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program; New Castle County, administrator of the HOME Funding program; Cinnaire, the project's investor partner and permanent lender; Citizens Bank, the construction lender; Kitchen & Associates, project architects; and Landmark Engineering, the civil engineering firm.



Helping People Help Others: The Open Table Model of Service

Catholic Charities of Central Florida uses the Open Table model of service to educate people on how to use their talents and gifts to help individuals and families who are experiencing economic poverty.

The Open Table model trains faith, government, business, nonprofit and other populations to transform their intellectual and social capital and personal networks into tools that help impoverished people develop and implement plans to have better lives. Open Table emphasizes intentional, mutual, and ongoing relationships to solve poverty as opposed to a situational response method.

The Open Table method brings persons in need and persons ready to share their talents to one “table” where the relationship begins (see chart). A table is the platform through which persons or families in need (called brothers and sisters) and community members come together.

The community members make a year commitment to act as a team of life specialists, encouragers, and advocates for brothers and sisters experiencing poverty or other life challenges. Everyone at the table works together to establish an overall implementation plan for the brothers and sisters. Table members also network in the greater community for resources to support the plan.

Catholic Charities of Central Florida, in an effort to harmonize ministries with participating parishes, embraced the Open Table

model as a unique way to provide parishioners with an opportunity to engage in a personal relationship with someone seeking a better life. Open Table allows each interested person to become a light of Christ to others.

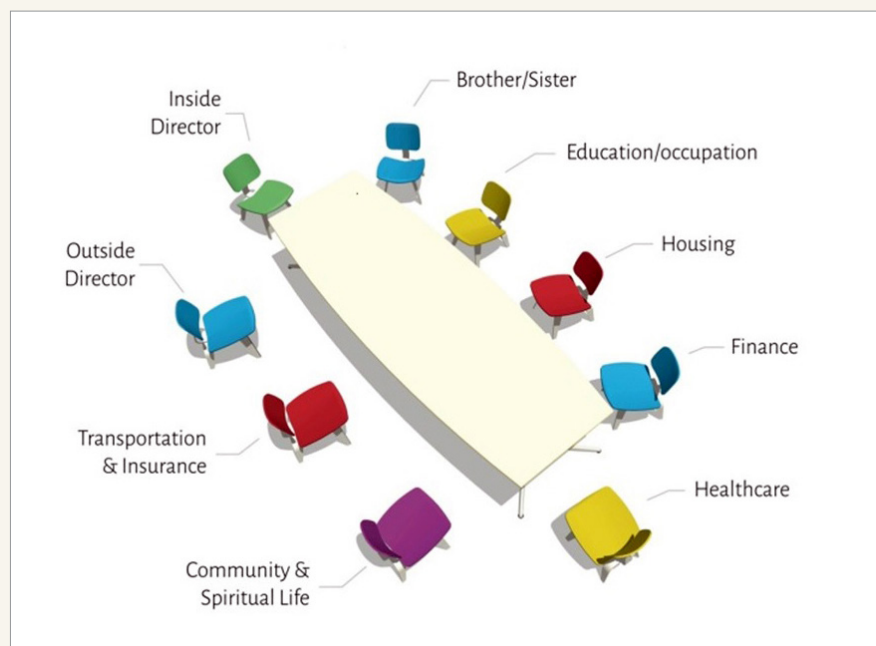
Each person has skills, knowledge and experience that lends to a parish’s social/human capital potential. When men and women bring these together, they create a powerful support for the young person aging out of foster care, the immigrant family just arriving in the United States, the homeless veteran seeking a new life, or the homeless family restarting in a new home.

Catholic Charities of Central Florida supports Open Table by providing information sessions in each deanery and then meeting with parishes expressing interest in the opportunity. They have staff who help guide parishes through the process of recruiting

and engaging table members and assisting them in their training process through Open Table University, the online training application. They also assist in locating a brother or sister to support, using networks within and outside the Diocese.

In the year that Open Table has been an official endeavor of Catholic Charities of Central Florida and the Diocese of Orlando, more than a dozen parishes have held information sessions and several have launched the program at least once.

The beauty of the opportunity is that it is voluntary – a parish can participate if it desires. With so many parishes engaging in various social outreach ministries, this program can help tie them together and engage more parishioners. To learn more about Open Table, visit their website: www.theopentable.org. ■





Thousands of Homeless Men in Philadelphia Find Respite at St. John's Hospice

AGENCY PHOTO

Founded in 1963, Saint John's Hospice is an emergency shelter and day services program located in Center City, Philadelphia.

By Kris Jaeger, Director, Development & Community Relations, St. John's Hospice

Every morning at 5:30 a.m., Michael D'Ambrosio arrives for work at Saint John's Hospice. It's his job to drive the large, refrigerated truck that picks up over 1,000 donated casseroles received by the hospice every month from over 47 parishes in Philadelphia and its four suburban counties.

The large dish casseroles, prepared dutifully by parishioners, feed tens of thousands of homeless men each year. "Their generosity is overwhelming," Mike said, speaking about those who prepare the casseroles. "Their selfless work and dedication to Saint John's mission is a great example of true kindness and love for our homeless brothers."

The kitchen staff at the hospice reheat and serve the casseroles each weekday to feed the men who participate in St. John's day services program. On a busy day, Saint John's serves well over 300 men. In addition to a hot meal, they benefit from clean clothing, toiletries, a shower, case management, nursing care, mental health counseling, and mailroom services. Most of the clothing and per-

sonal care items are donated by parishes, schools, and local community groups.

Saint John's Hospice also provides short-term shelter for 40 homeless men. Rooms for 12 medically-fragile homeless men are available at the adjacent Good Shepherd Program. Those in need of lodging are referred to these programs from local government partners.

The average stay for a resident is six months, during which he works with a case manager to apply for housing and to connect with support services as he transitions back into the community.

"At Saint John's, we create an environment that fosters opportunities for permanent change," said Steve Walenta, case management supervisor. "Each person is provided with the structure and encouragement needed to pursue his goals. This would not be possible living on the streets."

Men not able or ready to move into Saint John's as residents, often due to mental illness or addiction, are welcome to stay the night in the Saint John's Coffee House, an emergency drop-in center located in a covered garage adjacent to the shelter.

Every night of the week, chronically homeless men come to the Coffee House at 10 o'clock in the evening and stay until six o'clock in the morning. They receive a welcoming and safe place to rest, a hot meal, use of bathroom facilities, and a shower in the morning. Unlike the residents of Saint John's and Good Shepherd, these men are transient and not committed to return each night to the shelter. Instead, Saint John's "meets them where they're at" in their journey, in the hope that the stability provided by the Coffee House services and welcoming staff will encourage them to seek more help and make positive changes in their lives.

All of these programs at Saint John's Hospice provide life-sustaining services to thousands of men each year with one unifying goal – to provide nourishment and opportunities for change to the homeless community of Philadelphia, offered with respect for their inherent God-given dignity.

To offer these vital services, Saint John's development team works diligently to raise money through several fundraisers and campaigns during the year. "We at Saint John's are extremely fortunate to have the support of very loyal and generous donors," said Marty Farrell, community relations coordinator. "While we do receive some government and foundation grants, the majority of our funding is from individual donors. We are honored to have the responsibility of ensuring that their contributions have a direct and positive impact on the homeless community of Philadelphia."

Every day the staff and volunteers of Saint John's Hospice feed, clothe, and comfort those who suffer from poverty, hunger, and homelessness. Saint John's benefits from over 38,000 hours of donated service from 1,740 volunteers each year. Their mission – to serve "the homeless Jesus" whose presence is seen daily in our brothers in need – is a beacon of light for all who seek help and hope. That light shines brightly today and every day as Saint John's Hospice continues to be a place of compassion, acceptance, and support for thousands of homeless men year after year. ■



Homeless Jesus statue by Timothy Schmalz, a gift from the George C. Beyers Family to Saint John's Hospice

AGENCY PHOTO

2018 UPCOMING TRAINING & EVENTS

September 12-14

Annual Gathering
Buffalo, N.Y.

Bea Lewis
events@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

December 3-7

Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Dorothy Breeden/Simona Wright-James
disasteroperations@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

May 13-17, 2019

O'Grady Leadership Institutes, Bethany Center
Lutz, Fla.

Scott Hurd
shurd@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org



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HUMANITY.

- Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD, CCUSA President & CEO