

Charities USA

THE MAGAZINE OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA | SUMMER 2019 ■ VOLUME 46 ■ NUMBER 3



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skills to help others

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The heart of Catholic Charities: Our volunteers

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Catholic Charities USA is the national office for one of the nation's largest social service networks. Member agencies and institutions nationwide provide vital social services to almost 10 million people in need, regardless of their religious, social or economic backgrounds. Catholic Charities USA supports and enhances the work of its members by providing networking opportunities, national advocacy, program development, training and consulting and financial benefits.

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LAST ISSUE: SPRING 2019



EDITOR'S

COLUMN

In the September 1964 issue of the *Catholic Charities Review*, the precursor to *Charities USA*, Gladys Strauss wrote about the importance of volunteers: “You are needed to give that special service which no money can buy – the priceless offer of your friendship, your interest, your love” for your brothers and sisters.

Care and service offered by paid staff does not mean a lack of love and passion – certainly not a lack of skill – but the generosity and charity of the volunteer sends a powerful message to the person being helped: You are worth my time and effort, not because I know you, but because you are valuable as a fellow human being whom I want to help.

Respecting the inherent dignity of each woman, man and child – a foundational principle of Catholic Social Thought – is the common bond in the Catholic Charities ministry, bringing together in loving service both staff and volunteers. In this issue, we shine a light on the work of our volunteers and proudly call them the heart of Catholic Charities.

David Werning, Managing Editor

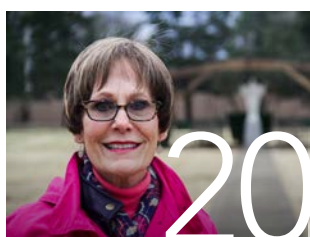
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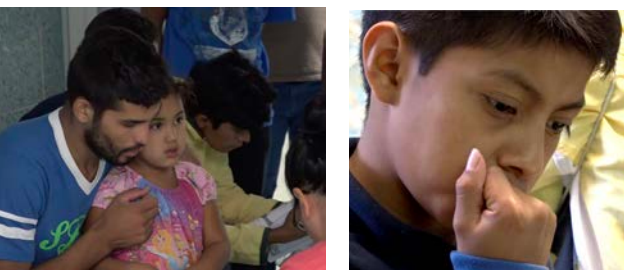


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“Many...employees have traveled to their sister agencies in border cities in Texas, Arizona and California and have used their paid time off to serve the migrants coming to the United States in search of a life free from violence and poverty.”

- Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD



CCUSA deployed volunteers to help migrants who crossed US/Mexico border



volunteers from Catholic Charities agencies



women religious volunteers

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

- ▶ Pausing from one's daily routine for reflection is a good practice. When I reflect on Catholic Charities, a blessing that often comes to mind is our generous and substantial community of volunteers, more than 300,000 across our ministry in the United States.

The types of service provided by volunteers range from the traditional to the innovative. Many give their time in providing meals to the elderly, handicapped veterans and children from families struggling with poverty. We have volunteers who tutor students, teach basic finances to single moms and help returning citizens find employment. And then there are volunteers with special skills who write computer programs for agencies, provide medical and dental care to those who are uninsured, and help refugees start micro-businesses. In other words, where there is a need, a volunteer is ready to help.

A group of volunteers I am especially proud of is the Catholic Charities employees who use their personal time to answer special calls. The humanitarian crisis at the southern border is a case in point. Many of these employees have traveled to their sister agencies in border cities in Texas, Arizona and California and have used their paid time off to serve the migrants coming to the United States in search of a life free from violence and poverty.

The blessing of volunteers at Catholic Charities is the kind of gift that keeps giving. They not only serve people in need but also support agency staff. The result is a better, more humane community for all. ■



Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President & CEO





Volunteers serve at every agency within the Catholic Charities ministry, and they are a vital support to the full-time staff.

The heart of Catholic Charities: Our volunteers

By David Werning, Managing Editor

- ▶ What prompts a person to serve meals, tutor students, welcome migrants or extend a helping hand in other ways, all without financial compensation? Why do people volunteer?

One academic study suggests two contrasting perspectives: “Some think the desire to help others is constitutive of volunteering. Others subscribe to the view that volunteering means acting to produce a “public’ good: No reference to motive is necessary.” (Wilson, John. “Volunteering.” annualreviews.org. Annual Reviews. 2000. Web. 3 April 2019.)

Catholic Charities volunteers have another perspective. They see their service as an answer to a divine call. “Love one another as I have loved you,” Jesus said (See Jn 13:34). Jesus cares for all people as members of his family. Imitating him, Catholic Charities volunteers see the people they serve as brothers and sisters. Echoing the divine call, Catholic Charities USA’s

Code of Ethics, which applies to all who work on behalf of Catholic Charities, including volunteers, states that all should strive to “be active witnesses to Christ’s compassion at work in the world.”

Volunteers serve at every agency within the Catholic Charities ministry, and they are a vital support to the full-time staff. Indeed, whereas there are 50,880 full-time staff, there are more than 300,000 volunteers. Such numbers bespeak the generosity of these women and men, and their service gives glory to God by tending to the needs of those who are impoverished and vulnerable.

The articles that follow this introduction offer a glimpse into the volunteer activities across the Catholic Charities ministry, from opportunities for people of all ages to networks of national service programs. ■

The lifelong continuum of volunteering at Catholic Charities

By Sarah Hendley, Senior Manager, Corporation for National and Community Service Programs, Catholic Charities USA

- ▶ Over 8 million individuals received services from Catholic Charities agencies across the country in 2017. Serving such a vast number of people in need was possible because of the commitment and compassion of over 300,000 volunteers. These volunteers ranged in age from over 100 years to just a few years old. The lifelong continuum of volunteering shows the varied opportunities Catholic Charities provides to volunteers from cradle through career and retirement. Catholic Charities keeps the call to service relevant and applicable to those of any age.

There are four main life stages of a volunteer: youth, young adulthood, family life, and retirement. With each stage, intentional strategies are used to engage individuals, helping them to have the greatest impact on those they serve, to grow in their faith and to understand those in need.

Youth

By Shannon F. Murphy, Director of Volunteers, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans

- ▶ Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans' SERVE (Students Engaging in Reflective Volunteer Experiences) began in 2009 to provide high school students with impactful service experiences through a week of summertime volunteering. Multiple sites are offered throughout the summer to fit students' interests and schedules. Since 2009, SERVE has worked with over 870 students, leveraging 32,201 volunteer hours in New Orleans.

SERVE experiences have included homeless shelters, food banks, senior centers, kids' summer camps, home painting and helping with backpack drives.

Students participating in SERVE not only commit to a week of volunteer service but also participate in a Reflection Day, during which they engage in activities and learn about topics that challenge them to think critically about Catholic Social Teaching.

In 2018, 42 students provided over 1,000 hours of service to our community! Sixty-five percent of those participants said that SERVE exposed them to people with backgrounds different than their own. Whether this comes from interaction with clients, other students, or staff, this is a valuable lesson to all young people.



SERVE experiences have included homeless shelters, food banks, senior centers, kids' summer camps, home painting and helping with backpack drives.

Young professionals

By Karina Hernández, Director of Community Relations, Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston

- ▶ Wanting to reach more young professionals in the Greater Houston community, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston created a new group to serve as a voice for sharing its mission. The Young Leaders of Catholic Charities invites young adults with a passion for faith and service to come together to make an impact on the community.

This dynamic group leads volunteer activities, social events, and fundraising efforts to encourage area young professionals to become more engaged with Catholic Charities and help raise the profile of the organization. To educate this group about Catholic Charities' programs and services, social events will highlight different programs. Volunteer opportunities that benefit the highlight-

ed programs will also be offered. This hands-on experience will give the young adults a stronger connection to the organization's mission and increase compassion for the families in need who receive the agency's services.

Board members will provide mentorship to this group by sharing their own experiences and encouraging them toward continued service. Members are encouraged to invite friends, colleagues and family members to join, and all faith backgrounds are welcome. Benefits include invitations to fun social and networking events, volunteer opportunities, leadership experience and more.

Families

By Maggie O'Neill, Senior Program Manager for Volunteer Engagement, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

- ▶ Alfonso, Paula, his wife, and their two middle-school-aged children volunteer together for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington. They were looking for meaningful activities to do together when they heard the call to serve preached by Father John Enzler, CEO of Catholic Charities DC, at the Mass he says weekly at their parish. Over the past year, this special family has become increasingly involved. Alfonso says they volunteer together for two reasons, "to help people and to teach their children that [their parents] volunteer and they should, too." At Christmas-time they attended an event to pack gifts for people who are homeless. On another Saturday, they helped pack groceries to be distributed to families. Since January, every Monday evening they participate in *Strengthening Families Initiative* program activities with families that are integrating recently arrived unaccompanied minor-children immigrants.

Successful volunteering rests on a good fit between the volunteer and the activities – carefully lining up volunteers' expectations, skills and abilities with the program needs. Karina Navas, *Strengthening*



Families Initiative program manager, says this family is an especially good fit for her program. Alfonso, Paula, and their children make the families in the program feel welcomed into another family. Navas says it is nice for everyone to see family members graciously interacting with one another. Alfonso and family also speak Spanish, like the families in the program, making the fit even better.

Retirees

By Kassi Kain, Assistant Director, Volunteer Services & Community Relations, Catholic Charities Eastern Washington

- ▶ Catholic Charities Eastern Washington started a retirement volunteer club in the fall of 2018. What began as a way to assist retirees looking for volunteer opportunities to offer their time and talent has become a delightful community of cheerleaders for the work of Catholic Charities.

The “Give and Receive Club” meets each month and tours a different program of our agency. We then do a service project designed specifically for the group. Volunteers assist with mailings, serving meals, sorting donations, etc., and in the process learn about our work and the challenges we face in supporting the most vulnerable members of the Spokane community.

The club has contributed over 160 hours of service as a team, and all the members individually volunteer in one of our programs. The “silver lining” of this group is not only their commitment to service but also their representation as amazing ambassadors of our agency. Through sharing their volunteer experiences with friends, family and other parishioners, they have encouraged other people to join our volunteer ranks.



National Service in Action at Catholic Charities

By Sarah Hendley, Senior Manager, CNCS Programs, Catholic Charities USA

- ▶ Through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency that leads service, volunteering and related grant-making efforts in the United States, the Catholic Charities network receives millions of dollars each year. Through CNCS grants, Catholic Charities’ programs help thousands of Americans improve their lives and the lives of their fellow citizens through service.

AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members serve at more than 45,000 locations across the country to meet community needs related to education, health, energy and conservation, economic development, veterans and military families, and disaster services. At Catholic Charities, almost half of our 167 member agencies had national service members serving at their site, providing direct services and capacity building activities that increased the effectiveness and reach of participating programs.

As a part of CNCS, there are two long-term service branches: AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. The Catholic Charities network received over 1,000 volunteers through these two programs.

At Catholic Charities, almost half of our 167 member agencies had national service members serving at their site...

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs made up of three primary programs, each of which take a different approach to strengthening communities through service.



State & National

By Christie Crane, Manager of Volunteer Resources, Catholic Charities of Atlanta

- ▶ AmeriCorps volunteers provide Catholic Charities Atlanta (CCA) with over 3,600 hours of service each year. This volunteer service helps CCA fulfill its vision that all families live independent, self-directed lives. AmeriCorps members work hand in hand with staff to serve our clients.

In our Refugee Services program, AmeriCorps members provide vital connections between donors, volunteers and clients through donation pickups, apartment setups, and financial literacy education for new refugee arrivals. In addition, our afterschool program could not function without an AmeriCorps member connecting volunteer mentors to our refugee elementary school students.

AmeriCorps members are the backbone of our Veterans Case Management Program. If they are veterans themselves or have relatives who have served, then members influence the lives of clients in a more effective way. They can empathize, share experiences and relate to clients on a personal level.

Through service, AmeriCorps members build meaningful and trusting relationships with clients in order to help them achieve their goals and ultimately reach self-sufficiency.

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)

By Samantha Astley, Volunteer Coordinator, Catholic Charities of Camden



- ▶ Serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA is a life-changing experience. Through this opportunity, one is able to interact, learn and grow while building and strengthening the capacity of the designated organization. AmeriCorps VISTAs are engaged in the mission and operations of their agency and serve by recruiting and managing volunteers, handling donations, and helping various programs. Volunteer managers within the organization engage VISTAs by allowing them to be creative and strategic while also guiding them to extract all they can from their service on both a personal and professional level.

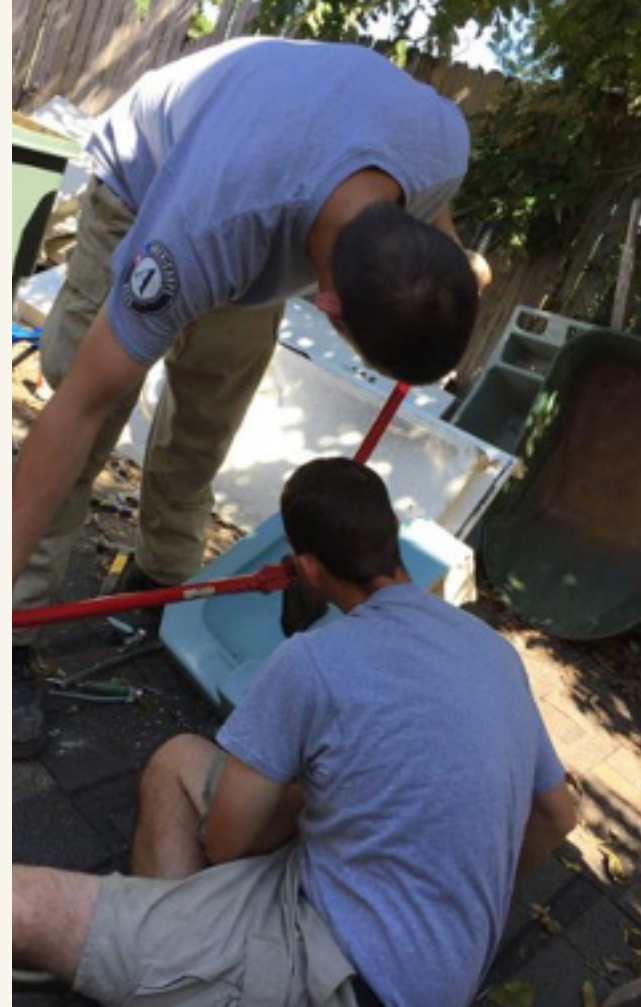
Personally, I served two years as an AmeriCorps VISTA for the Refugee Resettlement Program at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden in New Jersey. During these two years, the Refugee Program grew from less than five volunteers to over 65 volunteers, and this number is still growing. My service is only one example of the amazing work VISTAs can do. Others have recruited volunteers, created new programs, increased the capacity of their organization and brought a new and creative light to agencies across the country.

National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)

By Catholic Charities USA and NCCC Staff

- ▶ Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, Diocese of Lake Charles sponsored two AmeriCorps NCCC teams in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The AmeriCorps members' work primarily consisted of mucking/gutting homes, mold remediation and outreach to homeowners to share what services/help were available to them. In total, the teams worked 3,137 hours, mucking and gutting 16 homes, protecting eight homes from future damage through mold remediation, and assisting a total of 64 individuals impacted by disaster through their various projects.

During their work, the NCCC members helped a resident who had not been able to touch his house since the flood. His house remained as it had before the flood – the only difference was the mold creeping up the walls. The NCCC team set to work, removing damaged furniture and remediating the mold. They also leveraged the donation of a new mattress with bedding to the resident. The NCCC team was grateful to make such an impact on the resident's home and to be a small piece in helping the resident put his life back towards normalcy.



Senior Corps

Senior Corps is a network of national service programs for Americans 55 years and older, made up of three primary programs that each take a different approach to improving lives.



Senior Companion

By Katie Reiner, Program Director, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Joliet, Inc.

- ▶ The Senior Companion Program at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet, Ill., is designed to help homebound seniors remain living independently in their own homes. Volunteers provide weekly social visits that give clients the opportunity to develop a relationship with another senior with similar interests and backgrounds. Volunteers also provide transportation for clients to run errands and attend medical appointments. During Senior Companion visits, family caregivers get a much-needed break.

Karen joined Catholic Charities' Senior Companion Program in 2011 when she was connected with a client named Charlotte. Their biweekly visits lasted for a few hours and they have become close friends. After nearly eight years together, they always look forward to their next visit, proving that Senior Corps programs provide life satisfaction for clients and volunteers.

Volunteers provide weekly social visits that give clients the opportunity to develop a relationship with another senior with similar interests and backgrounds.

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

By Katie E. Rhodes, Development & Marketing Coordinator, Catholic Charities of Chemung & Schuyler Counties

- ▶ Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler Counties operates the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Schuyler & Yates Counties. RSVP currently has 180 active volunteers, ages 55+, who serve businesses and organizations in both counties. Volunteers help with tasks that would not be able to be completed if there were no volunteer to do it. They assist organizations and businesses in meeting their goals and serving their community by volunteering their time and talents.

Faithful volunteers assist at food pantries, distributing food to neighbors in need all year long. Other volunteers help patrons of all ages at local libraries. Additionally, volunteers provide home-de-

livered meals to individuals who might not otherwise be able to remain independent.

One of our biggest programs is Bone Builders. We currently have 160 participants enrolled in multiple classes. Trained leaders teach participants the weight-bearing exercises that promote bone health and prevent bone loss. Many of our enrolled participants are also RSVP volunteers. Bone Builders provides both physical and emotional health benefits. We have volunteers trained to keep our volunteers healthy!

Foster Grandparents

By Chrissy Carver, Director of Foster Grandparent Program, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas

- ▶ Last year, 347 children who needed a little extra attention got it thanks to Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas' Foster Grandparent Program. Ninety Foster Grandparent volunteers served 92,644 hours assisting in 33 public schools, daycares and Head Starts in Wyandotte County. They spent 15-40 hours a week in classrooms helping children learn how to read, write and practice social skills.

Catholic Charities has sponsored the Foster Grandparent Program since 1976, building strong, long-lasting relationships in the community. The Foster Grandparent Program also supports other Catholic Charities' ministries. They participate in an annual Serve Day at a local Catholic grade school, and have collected hygiene items for Shalom House, Catholic Charities' men's shelter.

The Foster Grandparents come from diverse backgrounds, bringing a wide range of life and work experiences to their volunteer assignments. They truly make a difference in children's lives inside and outside the classroom.



As a testament to the value volunteering has on an older person's life, 22 Foster Grandparents have volunteered for 10 or more years, with the longest service being 23 years. ■

Food can be healthy, tasty and affordable

By David Werning, Managing Editor

- ▶ Early in June 2019, Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) convened staff from nine Catholic Charities agencies at the American Heart Association’s (AHA) Simple Cooking with Heart Kitchen in Baltimore, Md., to introduce the staff to Healthy for Life® 20 By 20, made possible by Aramark and AHA. The introduction was meant to help Catholic Charities staff oversee the program at their agencies, six of which had already committed to offering the program.

The meeting included an overview of the Healthy for Life community nutrition program by its national lead, Heather Gavras, and a cooking demonstration by Chef Stephanie Rose, AHA’s kitchen manager. The program will be implemented at the six agencies by AmeriCorps members who have been funded through a Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) grant. The AmeriCorps members will be supervised by Catholic Charities staff.

The six agencies committed to offer Healthy for Life through the AmeriCorps program are Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh; Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa; Catholic Charities of Buffalo; Catholic Charities of Louisville, Inc.; Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas; and Catholic Charities

“The educational experiences equip individuals with the knowledge, skills and confidence to discover, choose and prepare healthy food.”





Photos: Elias Kontogiannis, CCUSA

Diocese of Camden. Three other agencies participated in the meeting in order to learn more about Healthy for Life: Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington (DC); Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington; and Catholic Charities West Virginia.

During the training, Gavras introduced participants to the educational resources, which are designed for social service organizations like Catholic Charities that serve local communities, including low-income and vulnerable populations. She noted the program resources consist of 26 “educational experiences” that cover topics such as “Tasty, Affordable Meals for Busy Families” and “Food Label Smarts.” All topics are available in Spanish.

According to Gavras, an organization like Catholic Charities might offer four educational experiences over a period of two or three months, providing frequent opportunities for clients and other members of the community to participate in the interactive, hands-on workshops. “The Healthy for Life program is aimed at helping in-

dividuals change their relationship with food and nutrition to improve their health,” Gavras said. “The educational experiences equip individuals with the knowledge, skills and confidence to discover, choose and prepare healthy food.”

Following Gavras’ instruction came an actual cooking demonstration led by Rose, who teaches how to prepare heart-healthy and budget-friendly meals. Participants moved from the classroom to an adjacent kitchen and donned blue aprons emblazoned with the Simple Cooking with Heart logo. The recipe for the day was chicken paella, which per serving costs \$2.39 and contains 380 calories, one gram of saturated fat and 113 milligrams of sodium. For more, information on Healthy for Life, including recipes, visit www.heart.org/healthyforlife.

Rose said that the group of Catholic Charities staff did a great job at cooking the meal, but they are not her usual students. Most of the people Rose works with are referred to her by doctors, other

“I want to help people cook more healthy food. And they shouldn’t be intimidated by using different spices and ingredients because healthy food can also taste good.”

- Chef Stephanie Rose



healthcare providers or social services. Some clients come by word of mouth because they heard that Rose teaches how to cook not only less expensive meals but also tasty ones. But her main goal is clear: “I want to help people cook more healthy food,” Rose said. “And they shouldn’t be intimidated by using different spices and ingredients because healthy food can also taste good.”

The Catholic Charities staff who participated in the daylong meeting and who will be supervising the AmeriCorps members looked forward to bringing the program back to their respective agencies and clients. The kinds of clients who come to Catholic Charities for help with food and nutrition are diverse; it’s not just those struggling with money but includes immigrants unfamiliar with American cuisine and elderly people. Healthy for Life offers equally diverse information such as affordable meal options, cooking with U.S. produce and simple recipes.

Cristina Chillem, program director for the healthy eating program at Catholic Charities Camden, will supervise for the next year two AmeriCorps members who will offer the Healthy for Life curriculum

at food pantries in the Camden diocese. The kitchen demonstration gave Chillem confidence that the same kind of instruction can happen at pantries at her agency.

Chillem also liked the communal aspect of the cooking lesson: “It gets people engaged in conversations with each other, and having a hands-on experience gets them engaged with me too instead of just looking at pamphlets.”

Laura Stevens, program director of Common Earth Gardens and Common Table at Catholic Charities of Louisville, thought the entire Healthy for Life curriculum will help guide the AmeriCorps members who will serve at her agency. About the cooking lesson in particular, she said, “Being on the side of a participant and getting to experience the challenges that someone might face on the learning end really helps to identify methods of instruction that might work.”

All agreed that the training was well worth the time involved, especially if the result is people leading healthier lives. ■



Photos: Elias Kontogiannis, CCUSA

Producing fruit a hundredfold: Catholic Charities USA's 2019 Volunteer of the Year uses gardening skills to help others

By David Werning, Managing Editor

- ▶ You might think that working more than three decades in the Catholic school system should be followed by a calm and relaxing retirement. And it is one way to cap such a generous career.

But there's another way, less traveled perhaps, demonstrated by Jana Hukriede, Catholic Charities USA's (CCUSA) 2019 Volunteer of the Year.

After 34 years of teaching, coaching and administering in the Springfield, Mo., Catholic school system, Hukriede retired not to a beach or mountain getaway but to a wide field of volunteering.

Hukriede volunteers as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and a lector at her parish. She helps local Catholic schools by substitute teaching when needed. She volunteers at Relay for Life, which is a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. And to Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri (CCSOMO) she gives an incredible amount of time and talent, the service for which she received the volunteer of the year award.

"I got started back in 2013 when Catholic Charities moved its offices to its present location and had an open house," Hukriede said. "I wanted to make the garden near the entrance presentable for the opening."

From that humble beginning, so characteristic of her care and service, Hukriede has built an impressive gardening operation that now includes flowers and vegetables. She saw an opportunity to expand her efforts since CCSOMO's new location not only housed the executive offices but also a home for homeless and pregnant women, called LifeHouse, and 11 acres of grounds.

Hukriede's idea was to grow vegetables that could feed the residents of LifeHouse. It was a great idea that continues to pay dividends. The residents are the direct beneficiaries of the vegetables, but CCSOMO also benefits from a significantly lower food bill for LifeHouse, which means the savings can be used for other programs.

To appreciate fully the value of the gardening operation, one needs to keep in mind that Hukriede started from scratch six

years ago with a few fellow planters. Now she manages a team of more than 40 volunteers and provides an abundant crop of vegetables too long to list. Just part of the crop includes broccoli, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, kale, onions, green beans, zucchini, spinach, okra, tomatoes and cucumbers.

In addition to the vegetables, Hukriede is overseeing the building and maintenance of a greenhouse that will allow year-round harvesting. She is currently searching for funds and materials to get the greenhouse in top shape. It still needs electricity, a convenient water source and a roll-down canvas side that can be opened during better weather. In the meantime, Hukriede is also studying and searching for a more effective irrigation system for the garden.

Beyond the material benefits of the gardening operation, there are also intangible ones. The volunteers that work with Hukriede feel a sense of purpose and satisfaction in being involved in such a well-run program. The women of LifeHouse feel loved and included in the community. Some of them help in the garden, too, as



they await the birth of their children, and so they have an experience of working on a team and being valued, something they did not always have.

Maura Taylor, executive director of CCSOMO, commented on this aspect of Hukriede's volunteering: "Jana's commitment to charity and service sets a high standard that is especially restorative of faith in humanity

for many of our clients who have suffered from extreme deficits of these gifts prior to coming into care."

There are many good ways to spend one's retirement, and Hukriede might have chosen a more traditional way. But there are a lot of people in the Springfield, Mo., area that have been blessed because she did not. Asked about her generous volun-

teer efforts, Hukriede said, "God gives you certain gifts, and if you can use those gifts to help others, you should do it."

We thank God for the wonderful gift of our 2019 CCUSA Volunteer of the Year, Jana Hukriede.

Two Catholic Charities staff members receive CCUSA awards

Each year Catholic Charities USA presents the Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan Award to an individual who has made a significant contribution to social service programming for children. The "Children, Youth and Families Professional Interest Section" chooses from the Catholic Charities ministry a member who has contributed to the welfare of children in the same spirit of loving concern as the late Bishop Joseph Sullivan, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn, who dedicated much of his ministry to the well-being of children. The Management Excellence Award recognizes a supervisor or manager who exercises exemplary oversight of staff and helps the staff successfully navigate innovations in the workplace.

Sarah Bidon, winner of the Bishop Sullivan Award



Sarah Bidon joined the staff of Catholic Charities of Central Colorado (CCCC) in 1996. As a Licensed Professional Counselor, she brings skills and knowledge gained from her training to provide birth options counseling for teens and young women experiencing a crisis pregnancy. Bidon ensures that CCCC's adop-

tion and pregnancy counseling services are child-centered, always emphasizing the best interests of the most vulnerable member of the adoption process – the child being placed for adoption. She supports as well birth parents who make the difficult decision to allow another family to raise their children. Bidon also has been the lead staff in providing the required training for prospective adoptive parents. She has a passion that moves her to help children and families. She has made a profound difference in the lives of the children and families with whom she has worked. With nearly 23 years of adoption experience, Bidon's leadership has been the glue holding the program together.

Kathy Donahue, winner of the Excellence in Management Award



Kathy Donahue, senior vice president of Program Development and Evaluation for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, began her career with Catholic Charities as a clinical social worker determined to improve family well-being and she has maintained that passion throughout her tenure. Currently a

member of the senior administration, Donahue still works with clients, viewing each interaction as important to the betterment of the agency and her work as a leader. Donahue supports teamwork; she thrives on it and believes it is essential to the pursuit and realization of the agency's mission. She widely convenes relevant stakeholders, including external contributors, in decision-making processes. She is skilled at helping Catholic Charities continually develop and refine its programs to address the needs of its clients, always with warmth, a positive attitude, patience, creativity and compassion for those she works with and those that Catholic Charities serves. ■

Barbara Decker honored with tribute from Iowa Women’s Foundation



Barbara Q. Decker, executive director of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Des Moines, is featured in the 2019 Ovation: A Tribute to Iowa Women and Girls. Ovation is the Iowa Women’s Foundation’s (IWF) signature annual publication that includes stories of women who have made a difference in the lives of people around them. IWF improves the lives of Iowa’s women

and girls through a mix of action and funding, including research, grant making, advocacy, education and collaboration. Friends and colleagues sponsored Decker for this honor.

Before moving to Catholic Charities, Decker invested her leadership skills and experiences in human resources, health care and higher education. As president of Mercy College of Health Sciences, Decker created endowment funds to support students in their education.

Growing up, Decker read a lot. She focused on women pioneers in business, social services and education. Her Italian and Latino heritage instilled an appreciation for all cultures and honed her skills in diplomacy and dispute resolution. Her mother, Mary, was a role model for seven children. At 91, Mary graduated with her high school diploma. Her father, Frank, was a farm laborer, migrating from Mexico and settling in Des Moines. Both parents inspired Decker.

Decker graduated from Drake University earning a Juris Doctorate, Master of Public Administration, and a Bachelor of Arts. She earned national academic honors as a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Pi Alpha Alpha. Upon graduation, Decker was admitted to the Iowa State Bar Association.

Among her many accomplishments, Decker received Drake’s Distinguished Master of Public Administration Alumnus Award, Robert D. Ray Ambassador Award, Excellence in Human Resources Management Award, and the Papal Pro Ecclesia Award. She sits on several boards for various organizations, including Drake Law School Board of Counselors, Bankers Trust and Iowa Catholic Conference.



Catholic Housing and Community Services awarded tax credit allocation for Saint Rita Place by Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA)

Catholic Housing and Community Services of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (CHCS) is pleased to announce it has been awarded with a tax credit allocation of approximately \$12 million for the development of Saint Rita Place, an affordable housing community for independent seniors. These funds were awarded by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) on July 11, 2019. The exact funding amount will be posted by PHFA on its website.

Plans are underway to transform a vacant lot on South Broad and Ellsworth Streets, located next to the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, into a five-story, mixed-use space that incorporates the Shrine's vision for the Cascia Center with affordable senior housing. The new construction is being designed by Cecil Baker Partners and will complement the façade of Saint Rita of Cascia Church, which is located adjacent to the south side of the complex.

The building will consist of 46 one-bedroom apartments for income-eligible seniors 62 and older on the second through fifth floors. All units will be accessible for people with physical disabilities. Through CHCS' extensive experience with service to seniors, combined with its broad array of program offerings and partner-

ships, Saint Rita Place will feature a proactive model that anticipates and addresses each resident's unique needs.

Located on the ground floor, The Cascia Center will advance justice and peace for those in need of healing. The 7,500 square foot center will consist of offices, conference rooms, a kitchen and facilities to serve the needs of individuals and groups who come as religious pilgrims to the National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia. The Augustinian Friars of the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova will provide services to individuals and families affected by violence who are in need of healing.

Construction on the \$16.9 million project is anticipated to begin in spring 2020.

New diocesan directors appointed around the country



Lisa Healy



Michael P. Grace



Judy K. Orr



Wanda Thomas



Cynthia Kinnis



Lisa Healy

Lisa Healy, Executive Director, Catholic Charities of East Tennessee

Bishop Richard F. Stika of the Diocese of Knoxville has named Lisa Healy executive director of Catholic Charities of East Tennessee. Healy had been serving as interim executive director since December 2017.

“During the past two years, Lisa has demonstrated the necessary skills, community awareness and compassion that convinced me that she is the right person to lead Catholic Charities of East Tennessee into the future,” Bishop Stika said. “She has increased awareness and support of Catholic Charities and she brings a vision and perspective necessary to grow this vital ministry in our region.”

"I am grateful to be able to continue my work for Catholic Charities as its new executive director," Healy said. "I have witnessed the powerful and positive impact this organization has had on all of our clients. Our staff and supporters are amazing, and I look forward to continuing my work with them in strengthening our mission."

Prior to joining Catholic Charities of East Tennessee, Healy spent three decades with Sysco Corporation. She started her career in sales and marketing and spent 12 years in leadership positions as executive vice president and president.



Michael P. Grace

Michael P. Grace, President and CEO of Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW)

With 25 years under his belt as an entrepreneur, Michael Grace's portfolio includes driving business development and growth for both startup and mature operations. Grace has founded and run several companies in the oil and gas, social media, music production, mining equipment and food processing industries.

Grace holds an MBA in Finance from the University of Saint Thomas and a BA in Economics from the University of Missouri. Grace has also served in the United States Army as a Combat Medical Specialist, where

he served in Babenhausen Hesse, Germany, for three years. For the past seven years, Grace has served as a team member and held various leadership roles for Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service (ACTS) Retreats. He has worked in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice system as a team member with the Saint Kolbe Men's Retreat at the Hutchins State Jail as well as the Hodge Unit in Rusk, Texas.

Grace has been married to his wife Elizabeth for 27 years. They have two sons: Alexander, who just graduated from Texas Tech, and Christian, who is a sophomore at the University of Colorado in Boulder.



Judy K. Orr

Judy K. Orr, Executive Director, Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Nashville

Judy K. Orr became the executive director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Nashville on May 13. Orr's previous professional experience includes two years as vice president for mission-based services for Alive Hospice, and 20 years as assistant vice chancellor for creative services at Vanderbilt University. A Nashville native, Orr attended Nashville parochial schools and graduated from Father Ryan High School. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Vanderbilt. After a successful career in communications, she earned a master's degree from the University of Tennessee

College of Social Work in 2014. Her focus area was older adults and she worked as a geriatric care manager before leading the grief counseling services department and education and outreach efforts at Alive. Orr served on the board of the Father Ryan High School since 2006, and was chairman 2013-17. It was through that work that she became acquainted with a number of staff at the Diocese and Catholic Charities. "Nashville is a dynamic, rapidly growing city, with dramatic changes that are challenging our safety net," Orr said. "I am gratified to combine my knowledge of the city with my training, skills, and expertise, to grow Catholic Charities to meet the needs of our clientele."



Wanda Thomas

**Wanda Thomas, Chief Executive Officer,
Catholic Charities of Jackson**

Wanda Thomas, the new CEO for Catholic Charities of Jackson, is no stranger to the agency and the great service being done there. Thomas worked as a therapist at Charities in the early 2000s and has gone on to earn more credentials and experience in social work and the supervision of that work at other agencies in the state.

Thomas has 20 plus years of experience in social work and in positions that facilitated organizational change. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and has managed programs similar to the ones offered at Catholic Charities.

Thomas describes herself as being mission-driven with a passion for serving others. Thomas always aspires to be in a position that allows her to empower others, advocate for policy changes and be a voice for those in need. Thomas believes the key to doing this is to be an encourager, motivator and a positive change agent.

On the administrative and leadership side, Thomas enjoys developing and implementing strategic plans to increase and maintain organizational efficiency and effectiveness. In her new role, Thomas will continue to serve in the manner she knows is best: to always be a servant leader.



Cynthia Kinnis

**Cynthia Kinnis, Director of Catholic
Charities of South Georgia**

Cynthia Kinnis is full of gratitude and joy for the opportunity to lead Catholic Charities of South Georgia. She thinks it will be an opportunity to wear “many hats” while improving the organization’s effectiveness and performance.

Born and raised in Northern California, Kinnis attended California State University, Chico, where she graduated with a BS in Business Administration. She went on to receive an MBA in Human Resources Management from Columbia Southern University. Her 20 years of professional work experience includes various roles to include organizing, administering, supervising and evaluating the effectiveness of programs within the for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Half of her work experience has been in community service, through volunteer work teaching Sunday school, taking leadership roles in the Army’s Family Readiness Groups and working as a federal employee

within family programs for the Department of the Army in North Carolina and Georgia and as a contractor for another military base in California. She now calls Savannah home, where she lives with her husband and two children.

Kinnis was amazed to learn that this position was open for about six months before she became aware of it. She had taken a year off work to enjoy life and had just started to seek either a volunteer opportunity or a paid position where she could use her bilingual skills (she is fluent in Spanish) when she saw the announcement for this position. At that moment, she just knew that she was the perfect match and went for it. ■

Volunteers make the world a better place

By Sister Judy Dohner, Catholic Charities Diocese of Venice, Inc.



- ▶ Every day is a day to recognize volunteers. Every day presents an opportunity to thank and appreciate those who serve day in and day out on behalf of nonprofit, civic and religious organizations.

Guadalupe Social Services of Catholic Charities of Venice Diocese (GSS) has been offering assistance to newly arrived immigrants, farmworkers and people in need in Immokalee, Fla., for almost 40 years. The work would not be possible without the help of generous men and women who volunteer weekly, monthly or seasonally.

Volunteers come from all over southwest Florida, including Immokalee: Collier, Lee, Charlotte and Sarasota counties. They come as individuals, club members and church groups. They work in the food pantry and the soup kitchen. They cook, serve, clean up, pack bags, deliver food in GSS' mobile van and donate food, clothing and money to accomplish the mission of GSS.

The reasons for volunteering are many.

It is important to reach out and give back to others who have fallen on hard times; volunteering makes a positive difference. When one has been given much it is important to reach out to those who have little.

There are spiritual reasons: Scripture says when you have two coats give one to someone in need and “feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty.” When helping a neighbor in need, one is serving God and doing God’s will. Reaching out to others makes one more aware of God’s presence in all people.

Volunteers help because it adds to their social life and sense of community. Volunteering is not just work. It builds relationships, creates community and brings joy that can be shared with other volunteers, staff and clients.

It is important to encourage volunteering. Over 2,300 years ago the philosopher Aristotle said, “What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.” Volunteers – those who can afford time, travel and funding for agencies like GSS – become increasingly important with so many less fortunate in our community and all over the country. There is no shortage of ways volunteering can make a difference. GSS is grateful for its amazing volunteers and is always willing to accept more people who want to share our mission with the needy people of Immokalee. ■

2019-2020

UPCOMING TRAINING & EVENTS

September 25-27, 2019

Annual Gathering

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Jean Beil

events@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

May 11-15, 2020

O'Grady Leadership Institutes, Bethany Center

Lutz, Fla.

Scott Hurd

shurd@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

October 27-30, 2020

Annual Gathering

Cleveland, Ohio

Jean Beil

jbeil@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

December 2-6, 2019

Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence (AIDE)

Jacksonville, Fla.

Disaster Operations

disasteroperations@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

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703-236-6259 or email
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