



Navigating Through A Pandemic

In mid-February, all our lives as we knew them began to change drastically. The stress of the unknown hit us all, and within a month our states had “stay at home” orders. In mid-March Catholic Charities main office in Latonia closed for several weeks, but Catholic Charities services continue. As safely as possible, we continued to serve the most vulnerable in our community.

Parish Kitchen, which has served a lunch meal 365 days a year for over 45 years, made a quick decision and begin serving their meals as a carry-out. Manager Maria Meyer along with her staff (Amy Bauer and Mindy Garcia) made the move in a matter of hours so that our guests would not miss a lunch-time meal. Since the change to carry-out, there have been many wonderful volunteers and donors who have helped to make the meals special. Everyone

continue to work together to provide a nutritious meal for our guests during this time of crisis, and the guests are grateful for a consistent meal. Due to the fact that many in our community were experiencing unforeseen hardship during these past 3 months, Parish Kitchen has served an additional 3,000 meals during this time. We are also happy to say that the relocation plans of Parish Kitchen have continued to move forward and we hope and pray that the move will occur around the end of June.

At our St. Joseph Apartments, which house sixteen previously homeless families, our staff have not missed a beat. We have been able to provide our residents with continued case management remotely. The case manager provides phone appointments weekly in order to make sure that our residents are provided with all of the resources that they need in order for their continued success. Every mother was also gifted a wonderful Mother’s Day bag, which was provided by an amazing donor. Our residents are vulnerable and that can be heightened during this pandemic; therefore, it is important that we keep supporting them and providing them with our case management services.

While this is also a time for many to experience mental health struggles, both our mental health School Counseling Program and our Latonia based Mental Health Counseling Program have continued offering services remotely via phone and Telehealth. These services were made available to all our clients including, teachers, principals, and students from elementary to high school age. We strive to be able to provide all of our clients with healing and hope while they may be in a heightened state of distress.

In addition, the Pregnancy and Adoption Program continued to receive calls and serve clients during their times of need. Pregnancy does not stop during a pandemic, and our staff made sure that the clients were supported and had what they need.

Our Housing Department has begun to see new clients through the Unemployed Bridge Program which is available for those who are unemployed and collecting unemployment benefits or for those who are disabled and collecting permanent disability payments. Eligible participants must show a 15% reduction in income. This program offers a five year, 0% interest, deferred, forgivable, subordinate loan due and payable by the terms set forth by KY Housing Corporation. This program is very limited and funds will most likely be exhausted in the next few months. This is becoming a more popular program, as there are now even more people who will qualify for this program, so we are trying to assist as many people we can who qualify.

Catholic Charities prides itself on being here to serve the needs of all people by providing services or referrals throughout the 14 counties within the Diocese of Covington. If you have a question, need help, or really just have no idea where to go for assistance call (859) 581-8974 and speak to our Client Care department. While we all are still trying to navigate through this pandemic, we invite all who need our help to walk through our front door of hope.



Maria Meyer, Parish Kitchen Manager, and Volunteer, Luke, serving a carry out lunch to our guests.

A Letter from the Executive Director



"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you." (John 15:16)

Dear Friends,

Our Lord chose us and called us to serve, and then the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything! These past few months have been extremely challenging, knowing that individual needs don't go away, in fact in many cases the needs have grown during the pandemic. And yet with so many restrictions, closings and social distancing, we have been limited in the ways we can serve at this time. For me and many other staff and volunteers at Catholic Charities, these restrictions have created a lot of stress, not knowing if or how we can maintain our connection with existing clients and reach others who need help and have nowhere else to go.

What I have missed most over the past few months is the connections and interpersonal interactions that we normally enjoy through our ministry. I especially miss seeing the volunteers who frequent our office to assist us in our daily operations and ministries to serve those in need. I also miss the daily activity in our office as people come to us for help and leave with peace, having received respect and dignity which is part of what everyone comes looking for.

As I reflect on what we have been going through and what we have accomplished over the past few months, I realize that we have actually been able to do quite a lot, despite these restrictions. This edition of our Partners newsletter highlights much of what and how we have been able to continue serving, even while our offices have been closed to visitors and clients. Of course we look forward to the day when we can resume all of the programs we have been called to serve.

One of the things we have been learning during the pandemic is how to get creative. We are still called to serve, so we have had to adapt. I trust that our ministry and our presence has a purpose, even during these times. With this assurance, we are encouraged and motivated to get creative to find new opportunities for serving others.

Now more than ever, we ask your prayers for all those who struggle with being isolated, marginalized, or forgotten. We pray for the sick and the unemployed, especially those directly impacted by the pandemic. We will continue to pray for all you, our volunteers and benefactors, and anyone who shares our call to serve. We also ask your prayers and support for our staff and our ministry.

In God's mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Pickett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan Pickett
Executive Director

News and Events

Save the Date: Sunday, August 30th

Cassba 2020 is going virtual! Our time-honored tradition of Cassba Cash continues this year (information can be found on the enclosed flyer). More details to come for how you can help support our mission through this virtual event.



Listen to Catholic Charities on Sacred Heart Radio



Driving Home the Faith with Fr. Rob Jack, every month on the 2nd Thursday at 5:09 p.m.

Son Rise Morning Show with Anna Mitchell, every month on the 4th Thursday at 8:20 a.m.

Hear Catholic Charities staff member on the show talking about the programs offered by Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington. You can listen live or through the podcast available on the website at www.covingtoncharities.org/news-events

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Join Our Team!

Are you looking for a job where you can make a difference? Join our team! Catholic Charities has several job openings:

Clinical Director of Counseling Programs
Mental Health and Pregnancy/Adoption Counselor
Parish Kitchen Weekend Manager

We would love to hear from you. Visit www.covingtoncharities.org/news-events for more info.

For I Was Hungry, and You Gave Me Food

By: Karen Horgan Kuhlman

The Diocese of Covington, a presence in Kentucky since 1853, was originally comprised of territory in the eastern portion of the state. That configuration has changed over time, and today the Diocese ministers to the people of 14 counties in the northern and eastern portions of Kentucky. The variety of spiritual and corporal works of mercy provided by the Diocese to its residents are as varied as their needs. Many Kentucky families experience generational life-long hunger and alleviating hunger has always been an important ministry of the Catholic Church. The Parish Kitchen in Covington feeds the hungry daily in the Diocese's northernmost counties, but there is widespread hunger in many rural areas of the Bluegrass as well.

Shannon Braun, Assistant Executive Director of Catholic Charities said "Individuals can find themselves facing hunger for reasons beyond their control. Some Kentuckians who reside in our poorest counties might also find themselves living in food deserts—areas where there are no grocery stores offering nutritious, affordable food. Items available at convenience stores may be unaffordable, while foods offered at other outlets may be near expiration." Daily bread can be a luxury for elderly residents who must choose between buying food or paying for medications. Parents with special needs children, individuals who cannot find work, caregivers unable to work—all face a harsh reality: Putting food into the mouths of family members is a daunting task.

Recognizing the growing need for food assistance in many of the Diocese of Covington's poorest counties, Bishop Roger Foyes and Catholic Charities have been working on a plan of action that would assist many who are struggling. That plan is soon to become a reality as Catholic Charities prepares to expand its services to rural counties with the launch of its first Mobile Food Pantry. Beginning this summer, residents of Bracken County can look forward to the monthly arrival of hope on wheels as delicious and nutritious food arrives at St. James Church Hall in Brooksville.

John Hehman, Mobile Food Pantry Coordinator, explains "This new initiative is modeled after the successful Mobile Pantry program at Catholic Charities, Southwest Ohio and will be made possible in part with the assistance of the Freestore Foodbank and Feeding America through The Federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Our target counties are Bracken, Gallatin, Grant, Mason, Owen, and Pendleton. Sixty percent of the residents of those counties are living at or below the Federal poverty threshold for income. We are beginning our efforts with this first location in Brooksville, located in Bracken County. It meets our requirements for a suitable facility with the availability of WiFi, a large parking area, easy access for patrons and food deliveries, our goal is to set up at least two pantries in additional counties by the end of the year once similar locations are secured."



*John Hehman,
Mobile Food Pantry Coordinator*



Each month, the FreeStore Food Bank will load supplies onto a truck and a driver will make deliveries of food to a different mobile pantry location every month. At the pantry, clients will sign in, fill out paperwork, provide an ID and proof of residency to become eligible for the program. Households will find a variety of food items available and will take a generous amount home with them. Each household will leave with 20 to 40 food items all without cost to them. Depending on availability, there may be meat, fresh fruit and fresh vegetables to take home, as well.

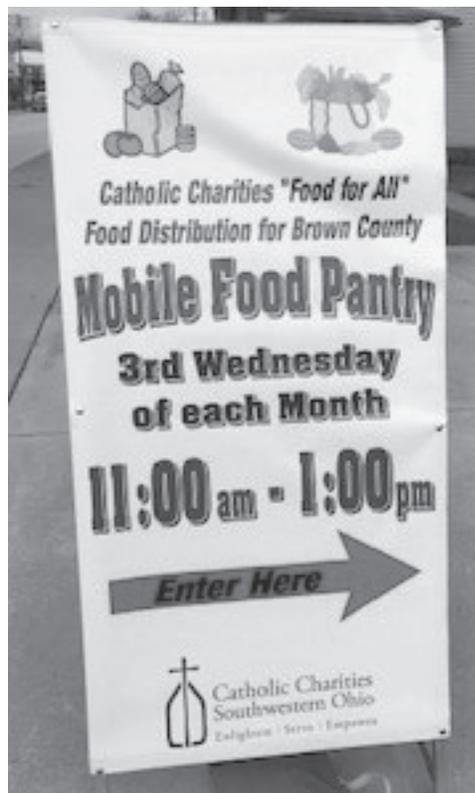
The goal of this ministry is to provide nutritious and delicious food items without cost to help supplement family pantry. That might help families stretch their monthly income a little so that they can direct a bit of it toward some of the other necessities of life.

Corporal works of mercy often require many helping hands and the Mobile Pantry is no exception: between 15 to 25 volunteers will be needed at each location to help unload the Freestore Foodbank truck, sort the items, place them on tables, check clients into the system, assist them with food selections and help them take groceries to their cars.

The Mobile Pantry is a challenging, long-term ministry just now in its early stages. But, since 1948, Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Covington has always done it's very best to help those in need, especially those who have no one else to whom they can turn for assistance.

Due to COVID-19 the start of the mobile pantry has been delayed. We are looking into the best and safest way to serve the communities because we realize the need is greater than ever.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact John Hehman at 859-581-8974 ext.124 or visit www.covingtoncharities.org/services/community-outreach-services/mobile-food-pantry



Parish Kitchen Needs Your Help!

Deodorant, razors, socks, feminine hygiene products and small size toiletries are needed for our guests. If you can help please drop off items to Parish Kitchen, Pike and Russell Streets Covington, KY 41011, 8 am -2 pm or Catholic Charities, 3629 Church St, Latonia, KY 41015 9 am -5 pm M-F

News and Events continued

Parish Kitchen to Relocate to New Home Soon

Every year, we witness the rebirth of nature as springtime arrives. This year, Parish Kitchen is experiencing its own exciting renewal and growth as it relocates in late spring to a newly renovated space in Covington. Dignity, respect, affection, attention, and hospitality are the inspirational words that adorn the walls at Parish Kitchen. These five affirming words are the foundation on which Parish Kitchen is built, the food is served, and represent how the guests are treated. The guests we serve may come in feeling hungry and hopeless, but after a nutritious meal they leave feeling welcomed, respected, and loved. This will not change in the new location!

Due to redevelopment in Covington's urban core, and aging conditions of our longtime home on the corner of Pike and Russell Streets, Parish Kitchen is moving about one mile south. Our new location at Madison and 16th Street will be in a lower socio-economical neighborhood and puts us in closer proximity to Life Learning Center, Madison Avenue Christian Church, Rose Garden Home Mission, Healthpoint, and Northern Kentucky Career Center, which are all important social services for many of our guests.

In addition to a more central location for guests, longtime volunteer and current weekend Kitchen Manager Jim Young said the new space has many other added benefits. "I am looking forward to Parish Kitchen's new home," he explained. "The new facility will give us a more efficient work space, with storage on the same level as the kitchen and outside access to the storage, plus more space in the walk-in fridge and freezer. The new place will also give our guests a fresh, clean dining room with additional restroom facilities and convenient storage space for their belongings. What's more, they can continue to enjoy the same tasty, nutritious hot lunches served by caring staff and volunteers that Parish Kitchen has been known for over the years."

Added Parish Kitchen Manager Maria Meyer, "The new location will help us expand our menu by housing new equipment and more prep space. In addition to our ranges, we will have a convection oven and food warmer that will allow us to offer new meals to our guests. More prep space means that we can utilize more volunteers to chop fruits and vegetables. One of my main goals as manager is to offer less processed foods and more fresh fruits and vegetables to help improve the health of our guests. We will still offer the same favorite hearty dishes, just with less sodium and added sugar." There will be no interruption of service to our guests as we move from one space to the other and continue our legacy of providing a nutritional, lunch-time meal, served without cost, without question, without judgement, 365 days a year.

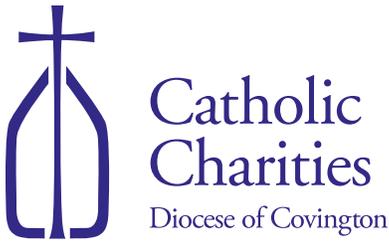
We know that this relocation would not be possible without our dedicated donors and volunteers. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered and who has already donated or is considering giving to our Relocation Appeal. Your donation will help us to continue Parish Kitchen's mission of feeding our hungry brothers and sisters, a mission whose seeds were first planted at Mother of God Parish in the heart of Covington in 1974. We hope you will continue to be a vital part of Parish Kitchen as we grow and bloom in our new home for many years to come! For more information on how to make a donation to the relocation project or for more information on volunteering at Parish Kitchen, please visit us at www.parishkitchen.org or email us at info@covingtoncharities.org.



Thank You Volunteers!



Unfortunately we were unable to celebrate Volunteer Appreciation week with you this year, but we still want to say THANK YOU for being the key to our success at Catholic Charities and Parish Kitchen.



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Serving the community for over 88 years

Our Mission:

*“To promote healing,
restore hope and affirm
human potential through
services that empower,
voices that speak for justice;
and, partnerships that
strengthen communities.”*

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Partners newsletter is published three times a year in spring, summer and winter for friends of Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities provides Child and Family Services; Counseling Services; Housing Services; and Community Outreach Services.