



Administering God's Grace

By Kristina Jolly, Volunteer Coordinator

1 Peter 4:10 says "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." This quote speaks to me, because it perfectly describes the volunteers of Catholic Charities, particularly over the past year. You may think that when I say volunteers, I only mean those that physically come into our building on Church Street; but, our volunteers give their "gifts to faithfully serve others" by serving at the Church Street office, Parish Kitchen and by assisting our brothers and sisters out in the community as well. In whatever role our volunteers choose to serve, they are always "administering God's grace" and showing love and compassion to all who need their assistance.

Midway through the pandemic, when we re-opened our office, volunteers who hadn't left their house in months were willing to come in to answer phones and greet clients. They continue to "faithfully administer God's grace" to our clients that visit our office for counseling services, parenting classes, housing counseling, and whatever else we may need their help with. We also have other volunteers serving the community through helping out in our business and housing office or guiding new clients through their paperwork before their first session with their counselor. Our new Mobile Food Pantry has over 70 volunteers that have all begun to volunteer in their community since the pandemic began. Most of these volunteers went above and beyond by doing their volunteer applications electronically and their initial Virtus class virtually, just to be able to answer to our need for volunteers. While visitation to the jails has been put on hold, our Jail Ministry volunteers have found other ways to "faithfully administer God's grace" to those that are incarcerated, as you will read later in the newsletter.

As the holidays approached, we knew that the need to assist our clients would be more prevalent than in the years past. We were able to kick start the holiday season with the help of St. Pius X Parish in Edgewood. Over 90 Thanksgiving meals were provided to families who were in need of assistance in our community. Next up would be helping our clients fill their children's hearts with joy on Christmas morning. For many families facing financial hardship due to the current pandemic, because of donations from our generous supporters of the Catholic Charities Christmas Family Program, these families were able to have gifts for their children to open Christmas morning. One mom sent a note of thanks when she picked up her packages. She said "I would like to tell you how much this will mean to myself and my daughter. This will make her Christmas morning a true happy Christmas day. Thanks from the bottom of my heart. You are a true blessing from God".

We are so grateful to those who choose to follow the call that "each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others". Whether it's by a donation of a Thanksgiving Meal, sponsoring a family through our Christmas Gifting Program, or whether it's donating their time to volunteer, we are so thankful for all of the ways that allow us to continue to "faithfully administer God's grace" to our clients.



A Letter from the Executive Director

Grateful to Serve

"In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Dear Friends,

Over the past eight or ten months, dealing with the Coronavirus roller coaster and following the political scene and recent election impacted me in a surprising and unexpected way. I struggled with knowing what to do, how to lead or even believe that God was present. How am I supposed to be grateful and offer thanks when I fear what tomorrow will bring and I cannot see where God is in all of this?

A friend recently reminded me that I may need to approach these challenges from another angle, to try and see "the other side of the coin," or what is "on the other hand." Or, when you look at a glass of your favorite beverage, does it look half empty, or does it look half full? Answering this question begs me to see the "half-full" glass instead of the "half-empty" glass. In this approach, with a little effort, I might be able to start seeing the good in any given circumstance, and become grateful.

In one of my favorite scriptures, St. Paul explained that "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God." (Romans 8:28) God is good, all the time. How is it possible that God could take all these circumstances and blend them together to work for the good? I must simply remind myself of this simple truth, God is good, all the time. I wouldn't wish all these events on anyone, yet after looking back, I have seen the hand of God repeatedly in the situations I have been dealing with, individually and collectively, and I know He has been present in all of it. For this, I am grateful.

January is known by some as "Poverty Awareness Month." Our ministry at Catholic Charities has always been focused on the poor, the marginalized, those who have been overlooked and forgotten. We strive to see the glass half full, and to recognize that difficult circumstances provide an opportunity for fulfillment and encouragement by serving others. In all aspects of our ministry at Catholic Charities, we look for and see the dignity in our neighbor, and we treat the people we encounter as friends. In this, we are led to build up the kingdom of God, through our service. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve.

While considering gratitude, I can't miss the opportunity to say "thank you" to all of our partners who come along side us in our ministry, sharing your gifts of time, talent and treasure. We are grateful for any act of kindness and mercy you have shown us and those we serve. We could not do what we do without you. Our prayer for 2021 is that it will be a year of blessing, service and gratitude for all of us.

In God's mercy,



Alan Pickett
Executive Director



News and Events

Annual Campaign “Let Your Light Shine”

Your DONATION helps make a difference! Here are a few notes of gratitude from people who have seen the impact of our School Counseling Program first hand:

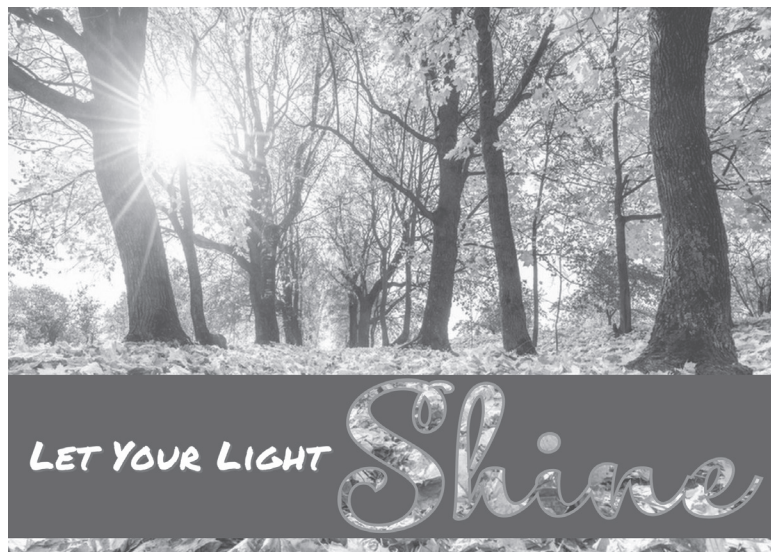
From a student: “Thank you so much for walking through this journey with me and helping me every step of the way!!!”

From a parent: “Thank you for all your help with my daughter these past four years, you have been a huge part of her growth!”

From a Principal: “Many thanks for the efforts during NTI” and “Thanks so much for all you do for the students and for us!”

From darkness to light, give today and help us illuminate the path for others.

Ways to donate: Scan the QR code to donate through Pay Pal or visit www.covingtoncharities.org or use the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your continued support!



Cassba
Catholic Charities Diocese of Covington

Save the Date

This year's event will be held on August 29, 2021, mark your calendars!

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 a Catholic Charities staff member on the show talk 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



Truly Blessed

By Karen Horgan Kuhlman

The year 2020 is not likely to be fondly remembered. The pandemic added another layer of concern on top of the discord and turmoil that seemed to be everywhere. It was easy to be overwhelmed by the unrelentingly discouraging news, and we might momentarily conclude that our best days were behind us. And yet, there were bright moments when, despite everything, one could take a breath, look around and say: "Yes. I am truly blessed."

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington has long been a blessing in the lives of those to whom it ministers. Child and Family Services, Counseling Services, Housing Services, and Community Outreach Services touch the lives of so many and make some of life's difficult moments bearable. But being a blessing in the lives of others is a two-way street, and the counselors and staff of Catholic Charities often find that it is they whose lives are blessed.

In her position as a Certified Housing Counselor for Catholic Charities, Patti Anderson helps clients navigate the narrow path they must travel to achieve the goal of homeownership. Some may have doubts about the outcome but discover that they can become successful by following Anderson's advice. She has assisted those with special needs, those with limited funds, or those with special circumstances to realize their goals and attain the blessing of living in a home of their own. And those successes impart a blessing to Anderson herself.

A young woman who is blind enrolled in Catholic Charities Homebuyer Education Classes, but the required reading presented a barrier. So, Anderson decided to read the entire book to her client. With determination, counselor and client worked together to overcome all challenges. They were rewarded for their efforts when the client was able to purchase a home of her own. Another client suffered a reduction in income and was in danger of falling into foreclosure. By following Anderson's recommendations to the letter, the husband and his wife were able to avoid losing their home. "When you can help someone with a daunting disability become a homeowner or when you find a way to help a family struggling with debt hold onto the home they dearly love, it makes you feel good. When you can make a difference in the life of another, it gives you purpose, helps you in your work, and keeps things in perspective."

Sheila Dumford is the Counseling Supervisor and a School Counselor for Catholic Charities School-based Counseling Program. This program provides direct mental health services to students in 11 schools with a combined student population of about 2,900 students. The program is especially important now when students are





so isolated as a result of the pandemic, and social distancing requires that air hugs and air high-fives replace the real thing. "Hearing the students' stories about their lives and seeing them begin to trust the counselors is such a gift, Dumford says. "There are so many little blessings in so many ways for Catholic Charities' counselors: to be a presence in the lives of children who are experiencing loss after loss: loss of social contact with others; loss of opportunities usually considered part of the day-to-day. Meeting a child to whom you are a stranger and being able to gain their trust is huge. Seeing things through their eyes, hearing their stories, being there when they are going through a hard time, knowing that they are being vulnerable to us is such a gift. The trust they place in us is so impactful. It helps you heal. We feel blessed to be mental health advocates for children during these difficult times."

Megan Bowling is a Pregnancy/Adoption Counselor with Catholic Charities. Before coming to Catholic Charities, she worked in a women's only rehab clinic but felt that something was missing in the care that birth mothers and clients seeking adoption services were receiving. Now, she understands that holistic care for all people involved in the adoption process is what makes Catholic Charities special.



To Bowling, it is a blessing to be able to connect and guide birth mothers and adoptive parents. "It is an overwhelming feeling to play such an integral part of people's lives and truly helping them change. It is a joy to see so many families weaving together," she said. "Birth parents are able to place and be involved in that child's life however they see fit, and I just help pave the course. Sometimes, I am able to offer peace to others from past adoptions. Whether connecting a birth child to their birth parents or providing some information to link to the past, I am glad to be able to connect some puzzle pieces when appropriate. When I became a therapist, I never expected to fall into this work, but it has added to the feeling of truly loving what I do!"



Charlotte Boemker is an Institutional Advancement & Development Associate with Catholic Charities. Her position does not involve working with clients, but she feels blessed to observe the fruits of the labors of the many who do. She witnesses counselors work tirelessly to help those in need by providing direct services; the dedication of the often-invisible supportive staff who work behind the scenes to assure that everything runs smoothly; the tireless devotion of volunteers who give freely of their time; generous donors who invest their trust and their treasure in Catholic Charities because of those it serves and who understand the bigger picture of the ministry. Boemker enjoys being a part of these good works, the blessing they provide to so many, their hopeful sign of what is right in the world, and an understanding of what Christ would have us do for one another.

News and Events continued

Friends & Family of the Incarcerated *Free Support Group*

3rd Tuesday of the month

6:30 p.m.

Virtual Event

A safe, welcoming community where you will be accepted without judgment.

Questions? Contact dcapella@covingtoncharities.org

Parents of Addicted Loved-Ones (PAL) *Free Support Group*

Wednesdays | 6:30–8:00 p.m.

Catholic Charities

3629 Church Street, Latonia

PAL meets every week and provides continuing education along with support, at no charge, for parents with a son or daughter suffering from alcohol or drug addiction.

Free Homebuyer Education Class

Saturday, March 6

Saturday, April 10

9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Catholic Charities

3629 Church Street, Latonia

Learn about managing money, budgeting, insurance, inspections, mortgage lending, realtors, protecting your investment and predatory lending. Class size is limited. REGISTRATION REQUIRED: (859) 581-8974.

Food for Friends Grows!

*By John Hehman,
Mobile Food Pantry
Coordinator*

In December, the Mobile Food Pantry “Food for Friends” started a second pantry location serving our brothers and sisters who are residents in Grant County. The pantry is hosted each month at St. William Church Hall located at 6 Church Street in Williamstown. The pantry will continue to be held on the second Monday of each month from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm. At our initial pantry in our new Grant County location, we were able to provide food to 51 households! What a great start.

Our first location began in August and is hosted by St. James Church Hall located at 122 Garrett Ave in Brooksville. This location's pantry is hosted on the 4th Friday of each month from 12:00 pm until 2:00 pm and is for residents of Bracken County. At this location, our pantry is providing food for about 80 households a month and the number keeps growing. Many more families are seeking food assistance during the current pandemic.

Our goal is to open two to three more pantries in the rural communities of the Diocese of Covington in 2021. To open a new pantry location, we first ask the pastor of the Catholic Church in a county for their support. From there, we find a suitable location that can handle the food, crowds, as well as the traffic. Once that is done, we start recruitment of local volunteers. Even though it takes a lot of work and planning, seeing the smiles on people's faces each month when we load their car with groceries makes it all worth it knowing that we are being the hands and feet of Christ to help those in need.

We are proud of the way that the pantries are continuing to expand. We know it could not be done without the assistance of the volunteers and staff who show dedication not only to the pantries and those who are served, but also to the parishes in which they are proud members.



Parish Kitchen and Jail Ministries

Parish Kitchen Updates

While 2020 might be a year for the history books, for Parish Kitchen, it is a year to be celebrated. We could not have continued to serve and successfully relocate during such an epic and eventful year without the tremendous support from our volunteers, donors, and staff. While the move was successful, we wait for the day to serve our guest inside our wonderful space. But for now we continue to serve our guests in takeout containers. Since the move to 16th and Madison, we have seen an increase of 8500 meals served from June to December. We are blessed to serve all those who come to our doors.

We also have a few more additional updates at our new location. Our new fencing and awning has been installed. Our raised garden beds will be installed soon to prepare for the spring planting. We are so excited to continue to serve and find new ways to provide our guests with the best meals.



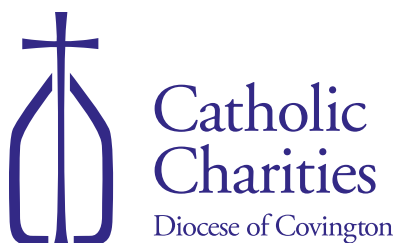
Jail Ministry Continues to Serve

By Dave Capella, Jail Ministry Coordinator

Like many other activities, our visits to the local detention centers have been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. However, we have made adjustments to the restrictions by finding new ways to reach those incarcerated. While these don't replace the dignity affirming face to face meetings we last had in the past, they still show Christ's love for others. Since mid-June, Boone County detention center has allowed us to record and deliver videos reflecting upon Scripture. In addition, they have allowed us to provide written reflections for distribution. All three local detention centers are collecting reading materials for distribution and clothes to be given to released inmates. Our volunteers have been writing to people in all the detention centers. These letters are welcomed contact with the outside world. Many inmates have little contact with anyone outside the detention center walls.

We were excited to find these new ways to connect, because the Jail Ministry program was having great success prior to the Covid-19 restrictions. From July 2019 to March 2020 our team of volunteers made approximately 1600 contacts through our programs at the three detention centers. We distributed 600 goodie bags at Christmas in Campbell County. We had over 800 student contacts at the Kenton County parenting classes. 61 people graduated from the parenting classes, and 48 were eligible for a 90 day sentence reduction which means we shaved 4,320 days off of people's sentences – about 11 years and 10 months. We had just started a Bible study program in February at Kenton County before Covid changed how we served. In addition to meeting with inmates, our volunteers provided reading glasses, copies of *Word Among Us* (bilingual), Bibles (bilingual), prayer books, and *Our Daily Bread*.

Our volunteers look forward to when we can safely return to the local detention centers and spread God's word.



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Serving the community for over 89 years

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**“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.*