

Closing in on a Century of Service

Catholic Charities USA will celebrate its 100th anniversary this year and Catholic Charities here in Fairfield County has been around almost that long. 94 years ago Catholic Charities opened its doors for the sole purpose of serving the neediest among us and today is Fairfield County's largest private family service agency operating 28 programs to serve the most vulnerable members of society. These programs alleviate hunger, homelessness, and psychological suffering. They offer hope and help when it seems like there is none. Catholic Charities also works for social justice and the empowerment of people in need – all without regard to age, race, religion or ability to pay. We don't do what we do for Catholics; we do what we do because we are Catholic. We're proud of the work we've done to serve people of all faiths and we'd like to take this opportunity to highlight not only what we do, but what drives us as we do it.



Bishop William Lori enjoys chatting with one of our guests.

CORE VALUES

Four key values drive all aspects of Catholic Charities' work. Leadership. Compassion. Dedication. Performance. Combined these values allow us to deliver a high level of service while ensuring the long term stability of our organization. Leaders are not defined by a single style and leadership can not be contained to one aspect. There are quiet leaders and leaders that roar. Some show strength in their eloquence, others in their judgment, still others in their courage. Catholic Charities is fortunate to have a strong core of internal leadership and to be known as a leading agency in Fairfield County and beyond.

Reducing the physical, emotional and spiritual suffering of others and doing

so with compassion is the primary goal of everyone involved with Catholic Charities. We provide help and hope to those in need through a variety of programs designed to address client issues and the approach is always a holistic one. While tending to the most basic needs of food and shelter, staff and volunteers layer in a sense of safety and security, provide community and work to build self esteem. Everyone and everything works together to provide the highest level of support.

Catholic Charities embodies the spirit of complete dedication in two significant ways. The first is in simply showing up. Because need never takes a day off Catholic Charities operates 365 days a year. That means soup kitchens open every single day. The preschool doesn't close

on snow days. Adoption coordinators are on call 24-7. Case Managers respond to need not to select office hours. Weekends and holidays are simply days where our staff and volunteers offer a helping hand. Beyond showing up - we stay put. This means that Catholic Charities doesn't shy away from the tough assignments and if the going gets tough Catholic Charities digs in and defines patient persistence. At times helping others can be a challenging enterprise. Dedication involves commitment to the cause, with unwavering focus and, thankfully, the support of strong community leaders. Nothing gets in the way of serving the needs of the clients. This total dedication is simply part of the culture.

Across the organization there exists an attitude of "it's performance that

counts” and success is a clear goal. Yet it is important to note that performance is measured and success is defined in different, yet always meaningful, ways. Performance could be meeting financial goals but it could also be seeing a chronically mentally ill client return for yet another day of shelter. While focusing on significant existing needs Catholic Charities keeps an eye toward future needs knowing that performance is measured one life, one day, one success at a time.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES in Stamford / Norwalk

In short, Catholic Charities improves lives — and so our society — by providing and maintaining significant programs throughout Fairfield County to enable people of goodwill to reach out to those who need hope and help. Some of those programs are housed in Norwalk and Stamford.

The **Behavioral Health Clinic** operates out of the Park Street office and offers outpatient behavioral health services. Our clients come from all walks of life. They are adults, children, adolescents, couples and families. They seek a variety of treatment including psychotherapy, case management, medication management and group therapy. Our clinic is licensed by the State of Connecticut and all of our clinicians are professionally trained to assist their clients. The clinic also offers anger management classes and is a provider for the Parent Education Program. Our clients are frequently referred to us by someone they trust so they feel safe engaging us. For additional information or to seek counseling please call (203) 750-9711.

Room To Grow is an NAEYC accredited preschool founded in Norwalk in 1995. RTG operates year-round and pro-

vides affordable, quality educational child care for children aged three to five from primarily working poor families. Not only do the children experience a diversity of economic, social, and ethnic groups, they are also better prepared emotionally and cognitively as they begin formal schooling. Additionally RTG is one of only 2 day care facilities chosen by the state of Connecticut to serve as a lab school. Questions? Contact Nancy Owens at (203) 831-8200 or nowens@ccfc-ct.org.

Catholic Charities’ **Senior Nutrition** provides healthy meals to seniors in the lower Fairfield area. Eleven community cafes are in operation in the Stamford/Norwalk area as well as Greenwich and Westport. Noontime meals are in warm community settings to seniors age 60 and over. Additionally, the SN team delivers meals to the homes of over 400 seniors each day. Last year alone SN provided 300,000 meals. More importantly, each meal is served or delivered by a caring person asking, “How are you doing today?” It isn’t enough to just feed the body; the spirit must be nourished as well.

Elder Hispanic Outreach provides daily social support services to Hispanic elderly in greater Stamford. Our mission is to provide structural outreach and link to services to the struggling, third age population. Our goal is to assist poor and needy clients through assessments, case management, translation and interpretation, education, home-visits, advocacy, socialization and recreational activity services. What makes this program unique is the positive attitude and the nurturing atmosphere that fosters the invaluable services we offer at no charge. Touching lives is part of our mission and answering needs is our goal.

The **New Covenant House** of Hospitality is the only soup kitchen in the greater Stamford area. The mission is simple: to feed and serve the poor. To that end NCH serves a hot lunch and a hot dinner to anyone in need 365 days per year. NCH opened in 1978 and was founded on the premise that all are welcome and that each person who enters will be treated with the same respect and dignity that one would provide to a guest in his or her own home. Additionally, NCH runs a food pantry, offers counseling services, makes referrals, and through collaboration with The Stamford Community Health Center of-



Catholic Charities volunteers are honored with the St. Augustine Medal of Service.

fers comprehensive medical services. And just as important as meeting basic needs, NCH offers companionship and a caring community to all guests. Volunteers are the lifeblood of NCH and every one of the 250,000 meals is served by a volunteer.

Fairfield County is a tough place to be poor, yet poverty exists in record numbers. An obvious symptom of poverty is hunger and we provide more than 1 million meals annually. People come to us seeking daytime shelter from summer heat, winter chill, or plain loneliness. We answer that call with New Heights, Homeless Outreach, New Covenant House and the Merton Center. Immigrants are sometimes an invisible and frequently taken advantage of. Catholic Charities is certified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to practice in matters of immigration and naturalization. To address chronic homelessness Catholic Charities has Conger House, PHD supportive housing and an expanding inventory of full time housing options through Thomas Merton Homes.

Catholic Charities is a 501(c) 3 not for profit charitable agency funded primarily through private contributions, support from the Annual Bishop’s Appeal and a mix of public and private grants. In addition to the monetary support Catholic Charities receives significant in-kind donations of food, clothing, personal care and household items, pro bono expertise and countless hours of volunteer labor. Catholic Charities understands the great responsibility it holds in delivering a significant return to the community for every asset entrusted to its care and for that reason there is continuous focus on improvement with a mindset that more must always be done with less.

For more information about any Catholic Charities program or to offer support, please contact Debbie Frederick at (203) 416-1338 or dfrederick@ccfc-ct.org or visit www.ccfairfield.org.



Children from Room To Grow deliver food collected to help families during the holidays.