We are many parts, yet one body.

–1 Corinthians 12:20
Dear Friends,

Many parts, but one body. When I think about the work of Catholic Charities – all we have accomplished and all we have yet to achieve – one thought comes to my mind, gratitude that we are not alone in this work.

Our staff have incredible leadership and talent, but we cannot be successful without the community of experts who lend their time and talent to ensure Catholic Charities is doing the most good for the most people. Together, we make up one body, dedicated to the work of eliminating poverty.

Catholic Charities’ community includes 43 staff, 21 board committee members, more than 300 volunteers and countless community partners.

And at the end of the day, no one is more invested in seeing an end to poverty than our clients and they are helping us in this mission. They work alongside our staff to achieve a better future. From them we learn patience, compassion and love. They push us to be better, to work smarter and to live out our calling.

Add all those groups together and you get over 16,000 people working together to help Catholic Charities end poverty in our community.

We are indeed many parts, but one body. Together we will end poverty.

Sincerely,

Sara

Sara Ramirez
Executive Director
Come see the Mission in Action!

Get to know your Catholic Charities of Central Texas at one of our free CC101 lunch-and-learn events. Enjoy a delicious lunch and take a tour of Catholic Charities.

Thanks to a generous sponsorship from Jason’s Deli, we can offer the meal at these events at no cost to the agency! 

#iGiveCatholic on #GivingTuesday
See the back cover for more details!

Brazos Valley Christmas Open House
Join Catholic Charities supporters and staff as we kick off the Christmas season with an open house at our Brazos Valley office.

Thursday, December 1, 2016
5:30 – 7 p.m.
1410 Cavitt Ave, Bryan Texas 77801
Contact: Jackie Zimmerman, jackie-zimmerman@ccctx.org

Creating Hope - Two Cities, One Cause
Join us as we raise awareness and funds for Catholic Charities programs across Central Texas. Enjoy a complimentary lunch as you see how you can help end poverty in Central Texas.

Attend the Creating Hope Luncheon in either Austin or the Brazos Valley.

Brazos Valley
Thursday, February 23, 2017 | Noon – 1 p.m.
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church
2541 Earl Rudder Frwy | College Station, TX 77845
Contact: Jackie Zimmerman, jackie-zimmerman@ccctx.org

Austin
Thursday, April 27, 2017 | Noon – 1 p.m.
JW Marriott Austin
110 E 2nd Street | Austin, TX, 78701
Contact: Margarita Ramos, margarita-ramos@ccctx.org

www.ccctx.org/get-to-know-catholic-charities
Most people are able to think back and remember a special teacher who made a difference in their lives. Whether it was a classroom instructor or a beloved mentor, we each are formed by those who teach us.

What our Gabriel Project Life Center (GPLC) participants learn quickly is that the teachers in our program can be anyone in the room, whether the person is a Catholic Charities staff member, guest speaker or even another student.

Students in the GPLC’s educational classes work with case managers who care about their individual needs, while enhancing their learning experiences with new opportunities to grow and engaging content. Catholic Charities staff from other departments often join the class series to share their expertise. Attorneys from Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services present on the immigration process. Counselors talk about topics such as overcoming depression.

Built into the 10-week pregnancy and parenting series are opportunities for experts outside the program or agency to share knowledge and resources so our families have every tool available to give their children a safe and healthy start at life. In the last year, Catholic Charities has invited speakers from Austin-Travis County EMS, Central Health and numerous others to teach classes. Utilizing the time and expertise of volunteers from other organizations allows us to enhance our programmatic value, while being good stewards of our resources.

The best teachers in the class aren’t always the ones in front of the room. Often, the GPLC students give their own personal experience and tips for success. These peer-to-peer teaching moments are special because they build up the confidence of all the students.

“We were able to talk through problems,” says Angela, a GPLC client. “It made me feel better hearing about when other people went through [post-partum depression] – knowing I’m not the only one.”

A Community of Teachers

Above: Case managers Mari and Adrianna celebrate with client Ingrid at the Gabriel Project Life Center’s spring graduation ceremony. Left: Randy Chhabra of the Austin-Travis County EMS teaches a class on infant CPR.
Making Mental Healthcare Affordable

The cheerful chatter in the room softens as the group’s facilitator takes her seat and the session begins. Just one of the many support groups available from Catholic Charities, this group is made up of new moms. Because of barriers such as cost or the social stigma of mental health services, these women have never participated in counseling before this group.

The topic of each session is largely chosen by the participants and is facilitated by a trained counselor. Whether they talk about struggling with postpartum depression, the stress of keeping pace with all their responsibilities or fears about not doing things right as a new parent, this is a safe space for sharing, growth and support. To these women, the weekly session is time integral to their mental health needs. Without the support of others facing similar daily challenges, they feel alone.

Breaking Down Barriers to Affordability

While most people agree that it is just as important to take care of the mind as the body, mental health needs are not prioritized. Cost is a major barrier to services, especially for families struggling to make ends meet.

Children who live in low-income households are at risk of having mental health issues, which can impact how they function at school, at home or in the community both immediately and long term. Sadly, 75-80% of children who need mental health services do not receive them.

In September, Catholic Charities took an important step to make counseling services more accessible. We applied and were approved to accept Medicaid insurance. This means families will be able to use the insurance they already have in place to pay for counseling services at Catholic Charities. Since many private practitioners do not accept Medicaid, we will be increasing access for the community by providing another option for services.

“Accepting Medicaid opens us up to serving many more children,” says Catholic Charities Counseling Supervisor Kristen Pierce, LMFT-S. “Many more people who might otherwise not be able to get the services they need will find help.”

“Sadly, 75-80% of children who need mental health services do not receive them.”

Accepting insurance can have a positive effect on the success of the counseling process as well. Clients with strained resources often meet less often, skip scheduled sessions or end services early. By reducing the cost burden, these clients will be able to access all the services they need to reach their desired outcomes.

Families who do not have Medicaid insurance can still access counseling at an affordable rate. We offer high-quality mental health services on a sliding fee scale. Counseling sessions are provided by licensed professional counselors for as low as $15 per session, and no one is turned away due to inability to pay.

Catholic Charities can provide these low-cost services because of generous support from the community.

The Episcopal Health Foundation (EHF) is one such supporter. With a $50,000 grant for Counseling Services, EHF made a significant investment in our mission. The purpose of their funding is to support access to quality mental health care for low-income, vulnerable populations in Central Texas.

Catholic Charities Counseling Services is well-aligned with the Episcopal Health Foundation’s strategy to support mental health and wellness.
“We are truly honored to partner with EHF,” said Executive Director Sara Ramirez. “Their investment in our work will allow us to provide 1,000 counseling sessions to 200 clients who otherwise could not afford the service.”

The Episcopal Health Foundation believes all Texans deserve to be healthy. EHF is committed to transform the health of our communities by going beyond just the doctor’s office. By providing millions of dollars in grants, working with congregations and community partners, and providing important research, EHF is supporting solutions that address the underlying causes of poor health. EHF was established in 2013 and is based in Houston. With more than $1.2 billion in estimated assets, the Foundation operates as a supporting organization of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and works to help 10 million people across 57 Texas counties.

“Mental Health Services to End Poverty

“Poverty is not just a financial circumstance,” says Kristen.

For families facing chronic or generational poverty, mental health services can be key to reaching stability and self-sufficiency. Counseling clients often talk about feeling “stuck.” Whether it is anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or other causes, mental health issues can become barriers that families cannot overcome alone.

“If you are poor and are stuck, maybe you don’t pursue more education, a GED, prenatal care or ways out of a violent relationship,” says Kristen. “A huge part of mental health is helping people to address their life circumstances from a different perspective.”

Helping people overcome certain barriers, emotional, psychological or otherwise, can unlock a new trajectory for their lives, leading to higher levels of education and increased salaries.

For the women who participate in the weekly support group for new moms, this trajectory also means a better life for their children.

“An A World Without Poverty

As the group session comes to a close, hugs and “see you soon’s” are shared. The group will reconvene in another week to continue building this community of support. While much of the group’s time is spent working through challenges, the most valuable moments are those when each individual can share her goals and dreams for herself and her family.

For Catholic Charities, these moments represent hope. Hope for a day when all people, regardless of who they are and from where they come, thrive in their God-given gifts and dignity. A world without poverty of any kind.”
Welcoming our Newest Citizen

When passionate people from across the community unite to address great need, beautiful, life changing results are often the outcome. This was never truer than when Mr. Bernard came to Catholic Charities last year.

Mr. Bernard’s story begins more than 37 years ago during a period of extreme violence in his home country of Burundi. During the genocide there in 1972, somewhere between 150,000 and 300,000 people were killed. He lost his wife and child when they ran for their lives and spent the next 30 years living in a refugee camp in Tanzania before he was admitted into the United States as a refugee.

As a refugee, Mr. Bernard received support to help him settle into life in the United States. He was unable to work because of his age and multiple ailments from living so long in a refugee camp where his medical and nutritional needs were not always met. He did qualify for additional assistance, but that eventually expired. With no support system or means to make a living, Mr. Bernard was stuck in the system.

Mr. Bernard’s situation declined when he became sick and was admitted to the hospital. As he recovered, his doctors realized they could not discharge him from the hospital because he could no longer safely care for himself or afford home healthcare.

The hospital referred him to Family Eldercare where his social worker secured limited funding to pay for Mr. Bernard to move to a nursing home. A long-term solution was needed to ensure he would get the care he desperately needed. Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services came on board to be Mr. Bernard’s legal advocate in his naturalization process. As a naturalized citizen, Mr. Bernard would be eligible to receive supplemental aid once more, ensuring he would receive care for the remainder of his life.

“An immigration officer was able to accommodate my request to hold the naturalization interview at his bedside, because he was medically fragile and unable to travel to San Antonio,” says Catholic Charities Attorney Hannah Silk Kapasi.

Mr. Bernard’s application was approved and he completed the oath ceremony in July in his nursing home. During the ceremony, Mr. Bernard was presented with a certificate of naturalization, an American flag and a letter of welcome and congratulations from the President of the United States. After nearly 40 years, Mr. Bernard’s journey to safety and stability has been fulfilled because our community stood together to help him.

“His story is a typical refugee story,” says Hannah. “And it is why I am driven to do what we can to aid those who desperately need help.”
Angels of Hope Golf Tournament Success
Thanks to the generous sponsors of the CHI St. Joseph Health 8th Annual Angels of Hope Golf Tournament. Together, we raised more than $48,000 in support of our services in the Brazos Valley.

### ANGELS OF PEACE
- Abuelo’s Mexican Restaurant
- Ana Maria Denena
- Capital Farm Credit
- R.E.C. Industries Inc.
- The Rhodes Group
- Patricia Scarmardo Charitable Trust
- St. Anthony Altar Society

### GUARDIAN ANGELS
- The Bank & Trust
- Cashion Dental
- Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas - KJZT
- Dabbs Oil Company
- eCatholic
- M.G. Cangelose & Associates, LP
- Patti & Cullen Mancuso
- Linda & William O’Brien
- Readfield Meats & Deli
- Mark B. Riley, MD
- Sam and Carol DeStefano Charitable Foundation
- South Construction
- St. Mary’s Catholic Center
- Sterling Auto Group

### GOLF CART ANGELS
- Sandra & Sam Buyajian
- Catalena Hatters
- Anna & David Damian
- Edward Jones
- Greg Browning
- Fedstar Credit Union
- Laurie & James L. Henry
- Holy Rosary Altar Society
- Jennifer & John Kristynik
- Msgr. John Malinowski
- Patrick O’Beirne
- Pilger’s Tire & Auto Center
- Randy Flasowski Insurance
- St. Mary’s Women’s Club - Caldwell
- St. Thomas Aquinas Women’s Guild

### IN-KIND DONORS
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- Galleria Day Spa
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- Kristen Distributing
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- Memorial Funeral Home
- Neutral Posture
- Nothing Bundt Cakes
- Readfield Meats & Deli
- Mary Rowell

### CCCTX BRAZOS VALLEY DEVELOPMENT/PR COMMITTEE
- Beverly Barrow
- Marian Beauvais
- Cynthia Denena
- Judy Edwards
- Mary Jo Lindsay
- Clotilde Pichon
- Carol Rhodes
- Regina South

### Congratulations to our tournament winners!
- 1st - The Rhodes Group
- 2nd - Masters of Turf Destruction
- 3rd - Bryan Fire Department sponsored by Ana Maria Denena
Ana Todd-Noonan Awarded Volunteer of the Year

Each year Catholic Charities is blessed with individuals who dedicate countless hours of their time and talent to promote the mission of Catholic Charities through volunteerism. Every volunteer offers skills and expertise that add unique value to the agency and our clients. This year we are thrilled to recognize Ana Todd-Noonan as the 2016 Volunteer of the Year.

Ana has been involved with the Catholic Charities Gabriel Project Life Center (GPLC) since 2011. As Assistant Professor of Nursing at the University of Texas at Austin, Ana brings extensive knowledge of maternal and infant health which she and her students impart to clients who participate in the GPLC’s educational classes. Each fall and spring semester, Ana and her students meet with program staff to assess learning needs and develop customized curriculums that the nursing students then implement with Catholic Charities clients. As a certified childbirth educator, Ana also offers her time to teach childbirth classes in English and Spanish for the GPLC. Her passion for the health and wellbeing of all people drives her work.

Congratulations, Ana! We are grateful for your dedication to Catholic Charities and the clients that we serve.

Intel Sponsors Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Catholic Charities’ work to end poverty in our community, but without dedicated recruitment, training and support, the volunteer program cannot grow.

With help from Intel, Catholic Charities was able to bring on a Volunteer Coordinator to re-design the program. Intel sponsors employees to participate in the Encore Fellowship Program, a program that assists recently retired employees through the transition to retirement. My Van-Dinh retired from Intel Corporation after a 28-year career, where he held both technical and managerial positions. Through the Encore Fellowship, he will work with Catholic Charities full-time for six months.

When My was deciding where he might want to complete his fellowship, Catholic Charities was his first and only choice. In the 1970s, Catholic Charities provided financial support to help his family and his wife’s family settle in the United States. For My, the Encore Fellowship program gives a unique opportunity to fulfill his dream of “paying it forward.”

Ana receives the Volunteer of the Year award from Board President Tom Howard and Gabriel Project Life Center Director Yahaira Rodriguez.
Imagine you lost your job. Your unemployment compensation was less than half of your previous income, and that too has run out. You are the sole provider for your wife and two teenage daughters, one of whom has been in some trouble and you’re making sure she keeps up her counseling appointments. Your savings is dwindling and the mortgage is due again. Where do you turn?

Students at Reicher Catholic High School in Waco experienced this type of scenario firsthand through a poverty simulation hosted by Catholic Charities of Central Texas. Students were divided into groups and given a lifelike scenario of a family living in poverty. Each student had their own role to play—a parent, a child or a senior adult. As a family, they needed to survive one month in poverty. That meant paying all of their bills, keeping kids in school, maintaining any medical appointments and searching for a way to increase income to meet the family’s basic needs.

The school was transformed into a small city, complete with a grocery store, bank, school, utility company and other important vendors. Because transportation is commonly a challenge for families living in poverty, individuals could go nowhere without a transportation pass, available for purchase. Students learned that families living in poverty are often faced with tough choices. Do I pay my electric bill or buy groceries? Do I purchase my prescription medication or buy diapers for my infant?

“They are learning the values that will define what careers they choose, how they give back to the community and how they interact with people who need their compassion.”

The simulation was held as part of Reicher’s annual three-day Triduum, with the theme of “Service in the Year of Mercy.” It was intended to help students better understand the challenges of living in poverty so that they have a renewed perspective when engaging in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy throughout the year. Students also had the opportunity to hear from Catholic Charities
Executive Director Sara Ramirez, as well as representatives from Caritas of Waco, Waco Habitat for Humanity and Society’s Forgotten Children to learn about the families that the agencies serve and what the organizations are doing to end poverty.

“One parent...had been thinking for years about helping out in the community more. The simulation gave her the courage to go and do it.”

Dirk Stephens, Director of Campus Ministry at Reicher, says “We consider the simulation a complete success. Students have talked about it quite a bit and many parents are still mentioning it. In fact, one parent who participated mentioned that she had been thinking for years about helping out in the community more. The simulation gave her the courage to go and do it.”

While the goal of the event is to provide a unique growth opportunity for the students, the community will benefit from their experience as well. All Reicher students will spend time throughout the school year in service to others with a deeper appreciation of why their service is so important.

For Catholic Charities, the value of the simulation is longer lasting—it is an investment in the future.

“These students are our future leaders,” says Sara. “At this age, they are learning the values that will define what careers they choose, how they give back to the community and how they interact with people who need their compassion. We hope they gained a valuable experience that will help them grow into servant leaders—leaders who will continue the fight to end poverty in our community.”

To learn more about poverty education opportunities through Catholic Charities of Central Texas, contact Parish Relations Coordinator Allison Cavazos at allison-cavazos@ccctx.org or 512-651-6105.
People of faith serving anyone in need by strengthening families and promoting respect for human dignity and life.

#GivingTuesday
November 29, 2016

This Thanksgiving, invest in our community with a Giving Tuesday donation through iGiveCatholic.

www.ccctx.org/iGiveCatholic