Dear Friends,

Whether you are a donor, board member, volunteer, staff member or someone receiving services from Catholic Charities, hope is the thread that weaves all of our lives together. We are all involved in Catholic Charities because we have hope: hope for a changed life, or hope in the power of Jesus Christ to transform lives. We are connected by hope for a brighter tomorrow.

At Catholic Charities we are truly honored to carry out the Gospel mission to love and serve the poor and vulnerable. We do this by engaging, educating and empowering families out of poverty. On the following pages you will learn more about how we are using education to combat poverty through our six innovative programs. With each life touched, we provide not only immediate relief, but also assess the situation from a holistic perspective, get to the root cause of suffering and offer an opportunity for a different outlook on life. We strive to teach each person about hope for the future, and as any volunteer or staff member can tell you, the clients teach us about perseverance in return.

Catholic Charities’ comprehensive programs are possible because of the generosity of our supporters. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our devoted volunteers, board members, corporate and government partners, private foundations, parishes and individual donors who help us continually evolve and expand to meet changing needs. As you read through this newsletter, it is my greatest wish that you feel further educated and even more hopeful for our clients. Thank you again for your support and enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

Sara Ramirez,
Executive Director
Upcoming Events

kNOw POVERTY HOUR
Join us for an interactive opportunity to see Catholic Charities’ mission in action and learn how you can help to eliminate poverty in Central Texas.
RSVP to www.ccctx.org/know-poverty-hour.html

Austin office: July 3 and 17; August 7 and 21
September 4 and 18; October 2 and 16
10 a.m. Appts. only: 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Bryan office: July 10 and 24; August 14 and 28
September 11 and 25; October 9 and 23
2 p.m.

AMBASSADOR’S CIRCLE HAPPY HOUR
Join a special circle of supporters at these free informational sessions and happy hours! Learn what it means to be a CCCTX Ambassador.

ATX AMBASSADOR’S CIRCLE HAPPY HOUR
Wednesday, August 1, 2018 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
www.ccctx.org/ATXAmbassadorHH

BRAZOS VALLEY AMBASSADOR’S CIRCLE HAPPY HOUR
Tuesday, October 23, 2018 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
www.ccctx.org/BVAmbassadorHH

CCCTX ANNUAL MEETING
Thursday, August 23, 2018 • 5:30 p.m.–7 p.m.
St. Michael’s Catholic Academy, Austin, Texas
www.ccctx.org/AnnualMeeting

CREATING HOPE IN CENTRAL TEXAS LUNCHEON
Creating Hope brings our community together to provide support for Catholic Charities’ mission to end poverty in Central Texas.
RSVP to attend, give or lead others to join us by calling Kristen Erdem at 512-651-6132 or Kristen-erdem@ccctx.org.

CREATING HOPE CENTRAL TEXAS TABLE CAPTAIN KICK-OFF
Wednesday, September 5, 2018 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
at the home of Kacy & Chris Dolce
www.ccctx.org/CreatingHopeCentralTexasCaptainKickOff

CREATING HOPE BRAZOS VALLEY TABLE CAPTAIN KICK-OFF
Wednesday, November 7, 2018 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
www.ccctx.org/CreatingHopeBrazosValleyCaptainKickOff

CREATING HOPE IN CENTRAL TEXAS LUNCHEON
Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 11:30 a.m.
AT&T Conference Center, Austin
www.ccctx.org/CreatingHopeCentralTexas

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER
Catholic Charities 7th Annual Creating Hope in the Brazos Valley Luncheon a Grand Success!

by Rachael Wells, Associate Director of Advancement

Each year, Catholic Charities hosts the Creating Hope Luncheon, a one-hour mission-focused event where the community is invited to learn more about the work we are doing and to support our mission.

At this year’s luncheon in the Brazos Valley, the stakes were higher. The Bryan office has seen tremendous growth in the last year: doubling the size of our staff, doubling our operating budget and adding a new program to serve our veterans. Yet even with all this growth, the demand in our community is still high; we knew we needed to dig deep and make this our most successful luncheon.

The emotion in the room was palpable as guests listened to client stories of the life-changing work Catholic Charities has been doing in the Brazos Valley. Clients shared moving stories of hardship and hope, allowing us the privilege to see the faces of those we serve.

In one such story, Disaster Response client and Hurricane Harvey survivor Rhonesha Proctor gave a heartfelt thank you to all supporters: “Catholic Charities has become a part of my family. This organization is built around a foundation of angels—rebuilding lives and giving families a new beginning.”
After listening to client stories and hearing about the work Catholic Charities has been doing through its six programs in the Brazos Valley, guests were moved to answer the call to action by pledging their time, talent and treasure to further the mission. We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from our community.

We are excited to announce that this year’s Creating Hope Luncheon raised a record-breaking $167,000 to continue expanding services throughout the Brazos Valley.

Catholic Charities is deeply thankful to everyone who helped make the luncheon possible: our table captains, leadership gift contributors and the more than 300 people who came to show support and solidarity for our brothers and sisters in need.

On behalf of every family who will receive life-changing assistance due to your generosity, thank you for creating hope in the Brazos Valley.
Mental Health: An Important Ingredient to Health and Wellbeing

by Allison Cavazos, Parish Relations Coordinator

At Catholic Charities, we promote the inherent dignity of the human person, gifted to us by God at the moment of conception. We work not only to lift our families out of financial poverty but also to address educational, social and spiritual poverty. We believe that for a person to truly thrive, we must promote their well-being in all aspects of life.

But, did you know that 1 in 5 people will suffer from poor mental health in their lifetime? Yet fewer than half of those will receive the treatment they need to address their mental health challenges. By 2020, the World Health Organization projects that depression will be the second leading cause of world disability, and the leading cause of global disease burden by 2030. At Catholic Charities, our Counseling Services program strives to ensure that barriers of cost, distance, time, language and stigma are overcome so that all Central Texans will have access to the mental healthcare they need.

We want our community to better understand mental health challenges and how to get help for themselves or their loved ones. During Mental Health Awareness Month in May, our counselors at Catholic Charities hosted a series of events to promote understanding of mental health and wellness. We also hosted a training for staff and volunteers on prevalent mental health issues in our community and how our counselors address them with clients. We recognize that many of the clients who walk through our doors each day suffer from anxiety, grief or trauma. They suffer from broken relationships, separation from family members and the stress of a lost job, a crisis pregnancy or a disaster that has displaced them from their homes. While our clients may be seeking help for other needs, our staff in all programs recognize the importance of addressing the whole person, especially in the area of mental health.
Did you know that 1 in 5 people will suffer from poor mental health in their lifetime?

Additionally, we partnered with local Catholic schools to provide education for middle-school students on recognizing mental health issues and gave some practical tips to cope with natural stress and anxiety to promote overall wellness.

Catholic Charities works day after day to eliminate the stigma of mental illness and seeking help. We want to engage, educate and empower all members of our community to live up to their fullest potential. To schedule a counseling appointment or to learn more about hosting a presentation at your parish, school or organization, contact Catholic Charities Counseling Services at 512-651-6150.
The Gabriel Project Life Center (GPLC) supports mothers and fathers to help them become the best parents they can be. On March 3, 2018, the GPLC was celebrated along with its parent program, the Gabriel Project, in a Mass said by Auxiliary Bishop Daniel E. Garcia at St. Louis Catholic Church in Austin.

The Gabriel Project Life Center accompanies new and expectant mothers and fathers on their parenting journey until their child’s 2nd birthday. The primary services offered are pregnancy tests, case management, material assistance and parenting classes, which include an Earn While You Learn component. An important aspect of the GPLC is the relationship that exists between the case managers and the clients. Whether it be in the one-on-one sessions or in the classroom, the case managers of the Gabriel Project Life Center establish a relationship and build a strong rapport with each client they serve. One of the goals of the program is not to create a teacher-student dynamic between case manager and client, but rather foster a connection where both parties learn from each other.

Sarah Contreras, a case manager of the Gabriel Project Life Center in the Brazos Valley, explains the valuable experience she has working with clients on a daily basis. “The Gabriel Project Life Center has allowed me to serve and watch people grow in every way because of the program,” she says. “Being able to help someone in their time of need is a feeling like no other.” A unique quality of the Gabriel Project Life Center is that both case manager and client are meant to grow and develop together, a value that Sarah learns through her client experiences every day. Together, the parish-based Gabriel Project and the Gabriel Project Life Center work to ensure that all parents have the support they need to say “yes” to life and provide their children with a safe and healthy start.
As a counselor with Catholic Charities, I work with active duty and retired veterans, as well as their dependents. We strive to help individuals who struggle with various mental health issues with the generous support of a grant we received from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans’ Assistance. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the most common obstacle I witness as a counselor. With the help of our agency, clients have been willing to participate in the process of learning and healing from PTSD through counseling.

Our program has been able to address what exactly PTSD is and how it appears in many forms: anxiety, depression and stress. Many veterans want to be heard and not judged, especially by civilians. I find that allowing the client to bring up prior military experience in a session when he or she is ready creates trust and support. Providing a safe place for each client creates the opportunity for education and acceptance of PTSD and the work that is required to deal with it.

Once a client is able to accept what he or she is struggling with, talking about the traumatic experience(s) will help introduce the coping skills needed. Coping skills come in many forms: self-care plans, management of anxiety, journaling, peer groups and other services offered by Catholic Charities. The counseling department works hand-in-hand with our other programs. Our clients feel even more supported when the same agency is able to provide many services at once.
Immigration Legal Services and Counseling Go Together

by Karen Goldapp, LMSW, Counselor

I am a counselor who speaks a second language in the Catholic Charities counseling program. Our team serves a large number of immigrants who come to us for individual, couples and family psychotherapy. Most of our clients qualify for a discounted rate and have told us that they would not be able to afford the mental health services they need, if it were not for the sliding-scale discount that Catholic Charities offers. Catholic Charities often fills in the financial gap for clients who need support.

We also serve immigrants by partnering with our Immigration Legal Services program. As counselors, we often write letters which include psychological evaluations of our clients to be submitted with their official application for legal status in the United States. Some of our applicants are victims of crime; they have suffered unspeakable and unimaginable abuses and violations of human rights. Many are working hard to maintain financial stability and provide a better education for their children. Catholic Charities is happy to serve these clients who may need both legal services and mental health care.

Providing mental health services for people who face many barriers and writing letters for immigrants’ legal cases is a way of bringing justice and mercy to an often ignored and oppressed population.

Providing mental health services for people who face many barriers and writing letters for immigrants’ legal cases is a way of bringing justice and mercy to an often ignored and oppressed population. These acts of compassion and service are why I am proud to work for Catholic Charities.
When asked why I believe in the work we do in Immigration Legal Services, most often I summarize the following verse from Leviticus 19:34:

*You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God.*

Catholic social teaching is the foundation for why we do the work that we do. It calls for us to encourage the community to work with a responsible government with two primary duties, both of which must be carried out and neither of which can be ignored.

One of those obligations is to welcome the stranger, a core belief rooted in scripture. We know that individuals migrate in an effort to search out safety and the means for a better life which they could not find in their country of origin. The second obligation is to work to provide for the security for all residents in a community. Sovereign nations have the right to enforce their laws and all persons must respect this right. It is the mission of our organization to make communities safer and keep families together.

Beginning in the mid-20th century immigration law began to shift away from a classical quota system that favored northern European immigrants to one favoring family reunification, labor needs and the protection of asylum seekers and refugees. In fact, Catholic Charities’ Immigration Legal Services team has a particular focus on family unification and serving those who have been victims of crime, trafficking, abuse or other hardships. We promote solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters, and we work to debunk certain “myths” associated with the immigrant community.

One myth is that immigrants engage in more criminal behavior on average than native born citizens. This has been discredited by numerous studies over the last 15 years from groups and institutes all over the political spectrum that show that first and second generation immigrants consistently commit fewer crimes than native born citizens.

Other times we hear myths regarding the motivation of families to migrate to the United States. In fact, many immigrants are fleeing areas of the world overrun by drug cartels and corrupt governments and have suffered severe trauma before arriving in the United States to seek a better life through asylum or some other immigration benefit. They struggle with learning a new language, a new culture and finding a support community in an unfamiliar place.

Navigating our country’s lawful processes, Catholic Charities tries to stabilize or improve our client’s immigration status while simultaneously seeking assistance from our counseling department to provide a holistic approach to their well-being. Catholic Charities is privileged to serve the immigrant population and help meet their immediate needs so that they can live up to their God-given potential and dignity.
Volunteer Spotlight:
San Juan Diego Catholic High School

by Claire Bordelon, Volunteer Coordinator

Catholic Charities (CCCTX) has been fortunate to partner with San Juan Diego Catholic High School (SJD) for the 2017-18 academic school year. SJD provides their students the opportunity to earn a Catholic, college preparatory education enriched by participation in a corporate internship program. They believe that a Catholic education combined with a corporate work study program creates spiritual and professional growth for their students. Their program transcends economic barriers and is accessible to all.

Catholic Charities has the pleasure to sponsor three corporate interns in our Advancement Program:

Diego is a freshman at SJD. He is our most tenured intern here at Catholic Charities and specializes in warehousing for our Hope Donation Center. During Hurricane Harvey, Diego was instrumental in loading and unloading many of the trucks that transported disaster relief supplies to hurricane victims in Wharton and Victoria, Texas. Diego has been an amazing asset to CCCTX and hopes to become an auto mechanic after high school.

Glenda is a sophomore at SJD. This is her first year in the corporate internship program and she loves being a student at SJD because the teachers care deeply about her education. Glenda works in the Hope Donation Center at CCCTX. Her duties include sorting, matching, packaging and stocking items that have been donated. These items provide much needed material assistance to clients in our programs. After high school, Glenda would like to go to college to study social work so that she can become a case manager in our Gabriel Project Life Center.

Litzy is a sophomore at SJD. Litzy has been in the corporate internship program for more than a year. She enjoys SJD because it is a small high school where everyone knows her. Litzy is also assigned to work in the Hope Donation Center and enjoys working with and meeting the numerous volunteers on our campus. After graduation, Litzy would like to go to college to study psychology.

SJD’s corporate internship program provides our agency about 105 work hours per month. Diego, Glenda and Litzy’s contributions to our mission have tremendous value, and we are grateful for this partnership. They have all been a blessing to us, and we thank them for their service.
Thanks for Your Support of Creating Hope in the Brazos Valley

LEADERSHIP GIFTS
Beverly and Josiah Barrow
Bryan Texas Utilities
Cashion Dental
CHI St. Joseph Health
Sandra and Frank DaConturbia
Sam and Carol DeStefano Charitable Foundation
Patricia and Adrien F. Drouilhet III
Friends of Catholic Charities (7)
Patty and Ray Hannigan
Holy Rosary Catholic Church
Jack Hilliard Distributing Company
Knights of Columbus Assembly #2587
Knights of Columbus Council #6366
Jennifer and John Kristynik
In Memory of Vancy Mayes
Shirley and Jimmy E. Mudd
Mrs. Anne and Dr. Tom O'Shea
Becky and Jeff Paradowski
Pilger’s Tire & Auto Center
Margaret Polansky
RED-C Catholic Radio
Sheran Riley
Deacon Bill Scarmardo
Rochelle Wells-Schroter and David Schroter
Spirit Companies
Mary and David Stasny
Sta. Teresa Catholic Church
St. Anthony Catholic Church
St. Mary’s Catholic Center
St. Mary’s Catholic Church
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church
The Bank & Trust
Mary and Duncan Walker
Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez

TABLE CAPTAINS
Edward Allison
Angelita and Armando Alonzo
Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce
CHI St. Joseph Health
Charlene Clark
Carol Davis-Rios
Judy Edwards
First Presbyterian Church
Terri and Ron Gay
Holy Rosary Catholic Church
Joan Horn
Jack Hilliard Distributing Company
Diana Jetter
Gerilyn and Kenneth Kleckley
Richard Konzen
Anne LaTour
Deacon Mark Olivieri
Becky and Jeff Paradowski
RED-C Catholic Radio
Dr. Ann Reed
Sheran Riley
Pearl Marie Robertson
Denisse Rodriguez
Robyn and Thaddeus Romansky
Sta. Teresa Catholic Church
St. Anthony Catholic Church
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
St. Mary’s Catholic Center
St. Mary’s Catholic Church
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church
Spirit Companies
Krysten and Tom Snow
Paul Turney
Nancy Winn
Women’s Guild of St. Joseph Catholic Church

IN-KIND GIFTS
Post Oak Florist
St. Mary’s Catholic Center
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

SPECIAL THANKS
Jason’s Deli, College Station
RDM Pros
St. Joseph’s Catholic School Elementary Choir
Anita Kapchinski
Marilyn Scarmardo
Volunteering at Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities of Central Texas has volunteer opportunities in our offices in Austin and Bryan, and we are in particular need of volunteers who are bilingual in Spanish and English. Please review our list below, and visit our website to begin the volunteer application process. You may RSVP to attend a kNOw Poverty Hour in Austin or Bryan. Volunteers also complete Ethics and Integrity in Ministry training through the Diocese of Austin. If you have questions about a specific volunteer opportunity described below, please contact Claire Bordelon at 512-651-6159.

AUSTIN OFFICE
• Hope Donation Center Assistant or Attendant
• Bilingual/Spanish Counseling Intake
• Bilingual/Arabic Counseling Interpreter
• Financial Stability Intake
• Immigration Legal Services E-Conversion
• Bilingual/Spanish Immigration Legal Services Office Assistance
• Advancement Administrative Support
• Bilingual/Spanish Receptionist Assistant

BRYAN OFFICE
• Hope Donation Center Assistant
• Bilingual/Spanish Gabriel Project Life Center Classroom Assistant
• Bilingual/Spanish Counseling Intake
• Bilingual/Spanish Financial Stability Intake
• Bilingual/Spanish Reception/Administrative Support

CHECKLIST: BECOMING A CATHOLIC CHARITIES VOLUNTEER

☑ Learn about current volunteer opportunities.
☑ Attend a “kNOw Poverty Hour” in Austin or Bryan.
☑ Attain EIM Certification through Diocese of Austin.
☑ Complete and return our application.

WWW.CCCTX.ORG/VOLUNTEER
1. Couples counseling improves _____________ skills.
2. Healthy _____________ skills are taught in family therapy.
3. _____ therapy helps children with emotional issues.
4. Veterans can call _____________ regularly for support.
5. ______ therapy allows clients to access services through a smart device.
6. _____________ poverty is addressed with clients enrolled in the counseling program.
MISSION STATEMENT
People of faith serving anyone in need by strengthening families and promoting respect for human dignity and life.