Dear Friends,

As a part of the CC family, you know we place an emphasis on our three key value drivers—being faith-driven, service-centered, and community-focused. But what do these three pillars of our agency look like in practice? In our newsletters to come, we will give special attention to one of these three value drivers to give insight into how they shape our operations. In this newsletter, we will highlight our community focus.

An important piece of our community focus is our attentiveness to the needs of the populations we serve. We achieve this through personal interactions with our clients through our case managers and from the expertise of our leadership. This year, our new Board Fellows from Texas A&M University will continue to ensure the perspectives of our Bryan/College Station constituents are represented at Catholic Charities’ highest level of decision-making.

Collaborations with other organizations dedicated to combating poverty are another important layer to our community focus. Our Counseling Services program was recently awarded a grant from the Austin Community Foundation to improve access for populations less likely to get mental healthcare they need. By joining forces with other like-minded organizations, we are better able to fill gaps in need and provide greater value to our clients and their families.

Of course, our work would be impossible without the financial support of our donors. Funds raised at events like our recent Creating Hope in Central Texas Luncheon provide us with the resources we need to continue our mission. We look forward to our April luncheon in the Brazos Valley to support our goal to serve more clients than ever in 2020.

Our community is a key to the success of our agency because we can’t do the work we do alone. Thank you continuing to be a part of the solution to the challenges faced by your Central Texas neighbors. Read on for more detail about this year’s community-focused initiatives at your Catholic Charities!

In His peace,

Sara Ramirez
Executive Director
WELCOMING THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES BUSH BOARD FELLOWS

This month, Catholic Charities welcomed the addition of three fellows from the Texas A&M University Bush School of Government and Public Service to our Board of Directors. The Bush Board Fellows program provides leadership experience to graduate-level students by allowing them to serve as board members for local nonprofits.

The Catholic Charities Bush Board Fellows will serve our agency for an entire calendar year, blending their classroom studies with real-world experience. Our Board Fellows will engage in discussions and provide suggestions at our board meetings, bringing the energy and creativity of students from a top-tier university like Texas A&M. We look forward to the unique perspective they will bring to Catholic Charities, with a special focus on the Bryan/College Station community.

Please join us in welcoming our 2020 Bush Board Fellows!

Lily Bivins  
Emily Holland  
Zayra Gomez

ST. THERESA’S HOSTS LARGEST-EVER CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIAPER DRIVE!

In February, St. Theresa’s Catholic School had a diaper drive for our Gabriel Project Life Center program. The drive was headed by the Kindergarten and 5th grade classes, and the Pre-K through 8th grade classes had a competition to see which grades could collect the most diapers. It’s safe to say that a little healthy competition can go a long way—the entire school raised 16,000 size 5 diapers in just three days! To finish the project, the Kindergarten and 5th grade students helped wrap and package the diapers so they are ready to be distributed to our clients. With this drive, we will be able to serve 667 more client families over the next eight months. This was Catholic Charities’ largest diaper drive ever, and we couldn’t be prouder of our very own St. Theresa’s Catholic School!

COUNSELING SERVICES AWARDED HISPANIC IMPACT FUND GRANT

Catholic Charities was awarded a $50,000 grant from the Austin Community Foundation’s Hispanic Impact Fund in November 2019. This grant will increase our ability to serve more Hispanic individuals and families. This money will allow us to provide 850 more counseling sessions this year, make more evening and weekend appointments available, and deliver mental health services which prioritize cultural competence.

Hispanic individuals are statistically less likely to seek out the mental healthcare they need. By choosing Catholic Charities for this grant, the Hispanic Impact Fund is helping to combat the barriers to access this community faces. With help from this grant, our Counseling Services program will continue to provide affordable quality mental health services to all Central Texans, especially those in underserved areas across our 25-county service region.
YMSL DONATES RESPITE PATIO ON AUSTIN CAMPUS

In 2019, CCCTX submitted an application to the Young Men's Service League (YMSL) Northwest Hills chapter to be the recipient of their Ultimate Gift.

YMSL is a non-profit organization that initiates and encourages high school men and their mothers to pursue philanthropic involvement in their community. Inspired by the novel The Ultimate Gift by Jim Stovall, the National YMSL has been organizing annual philanthropy events, called the “Ultimate Gift Event.” The focus for this event is to achieve high impact on a project that might otherwise not be completed.

We were thrilled to be chosen as the YMSL Ultimate Gift recipient for 2019! This project focused on client hospitality and community building through the development of a respite patio area on the Austin campus. This patio will serve as a covered waiting area for clients, a break area for hardworking staff, and will beautify the campus for all to enjoy.

To complete this project, YMSL provided 200+ volunteers to work roughly 500 total hours and provide over $2,000 toward the supplies and equipment. The project began in October 2019 and was completed in January.

We were delighted to have Board Member Fr. Bruce Nieli bless the CCCTX Respite Patio space on January 28, 2020. We hope all will be inspired by the new space and continue to share hospitality and fellowship with our clients and colleagues. Thank you for your patience as we worked on this project. And thank you to everyone who helped make this bright, new addition to our campus possible.

"We were touched by the mission and the people CCCTX serves. We hope the clients and staff will enjoy the patio for years to come!" —Megan Helmbrecht, YMSL Anderson High School, Ultimate Gift Co-Chair

INAUGURAL CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEEKEND A SUCCESS!

Catholic Charities celebrated our inaugural Catholic Charities Weekend at parishes throughout the Diocese of Austin on September 28-29. Catholic Charities Weekend is an awareness campaign to share information about our work to eliminate financial, educational, social, and spiritual poverty in Central Texas.

We are grateful to the 67 parishes and missions across our 25-county service region that participated in the campaign by sharing information in their bulletins, newsletters, social media, prayers of the faithful and homilies. We want to recognize in a special way those parishes that exhibited outstanding participation:

† St. Thomas More Catholic Church, Austin
† St. Eugene Catholic Church, McGregor
† St. Paul Catholic Church, Smithville
† St. Edward’s Campus Ministry, Austin
† St. Austin Catholic Church, Austin
† Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, Austin
† St. Theresa Catholic Church, Austin

Catholic Charities is grateful to Bishop Joe Vásquez for his support and endorsement of Catholic Charities Weekend. We are honored to serve as the social service arm of the Catholic Church in Central Texas and to engage the faithful in the social mission of our Church.
13TH ANNUAL CREATING HOPE IN CENTRAL TEXAS LUNCHEON

In December 2019, Catholic Charities hosted our 13th Annual Creating Hope in Central Texas Luncheon. Thanks to our many supporters, we were able to raise almost $700,000 in just one hour!

In celebration of our 20th anniversary, we introduced a new luncheon program. The majority of the program consisted of a panel discussion facilitated by our special moderator Judy Maggio, a respected journalist in the Austin area. Judy led the discussion between our four panelists—Justin Estep (director of the CCCTX Immigration Legal Services program), Melinda Vaughn (longtime CCCTX volunteer), Rev. Chris Downey (pastor at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Killeen and CCCTX board member), and David Stephens (client of the CCCTX Financial Stability program).

During their discussion, our panelists reaffirmed that Catholic Charities is a life line and vital resource for those living in poverty in our community. This was especially true for David Stephens, who opened up about his long struggle with alcoholism. After becoming estranged from his family and on the verge of becoming homeless, David was able to turn his life around thanks to his own hard work and the unwavering support of his CCCTX case manager. David is now reunited with his family and has a bright future after recently passing his real estate license exam.

“The assistance provided by Catholic Charities provided me with safe housing and the necessary window of time I needed to focus and prep for my exam,” said David. “Today I am a licensed Texas realtor and owe my deepest gratitude and respect to this organization for helping me make my dreams come true.”

The donations made at this luncheon are a life-changing gift for the individuals and families that Catholic Charities serves across Central Texas. Your donation ensures access to quality and affordable services that clients like David rely upon.

Thank you for helping make this year’s luncheon a success, and for joining us in giving a hand up to Central Texans living in poverty. Be sure to join us at our Creating Hope in the Brazos Valley luncheon on April 30. You won't want to miss it!

JOIN US

Amplify Austin: March 5-6, 2020
Creating Hope in the Brazos Valley Luncheon:
April 30, 2020, 12:00 – 1:00 PM
Hilton College Station & Conference Center
Ccctx.org/CreatingHopeBrazosValley
2nd Annual Catholic Charities Weekend:
August 29 & 30, 2020
Annual Meeting: September 10, 2020
kNOW Poverty Hour:
Join us for an interactive opportunity to see our mission in action and learn how you can help eliminate poverty in Central Texas. RSVP at ccctx.org
Austin office 10 a.m. • Brazos Valley Office 2 p.m.
March 3 & 17, April 7 & 21, May 5 & 19, June 2 & 16, July 7 & 14, August 4 & 18

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