

Catholic Charities' Programs Embrace 2019 with Joy, Faith, Love, and Determination

Dear Friends,

We live in turbulent and unsettling times. We seem to speak more of what divides us instead of the underlying values that unite us. We can all too readily become vindictive, harsh, and petty.

At Catholic Charities, our staff and volunteers strive to be a counterpoint to the tone and tenor of our times. We strive to double down on our mission, which is to serve the poor and marginalized, advocate for social justice, and call all people to the ministry of Christ.

Combining that determination with great joy, faith, and love, we embrace both the challenges and opportunities of 2019. What follows is an update on our programs as we begin the new year.



Family and Individual Counseling

Our therapists help families and individuals address issues and concerns that are causing a high degree of stress in their lives. Our therapists help clients change unhealthy patterns of acting, thinking, or feeling that work to sustain problems to more positive patterns that work to reduce or eliminate problems.

In the summer of 2018 we added a part-time therapist in our Austin office, Angela Loecke, a clinical psychologist with expertise in the field of geriatrics. Building on that momentum, I am confident that we will add a full-time therapist in our Rochester office early in 2019.

Active Aging

The Health and Wellness segment of our Active Aging program offers volunteer led, evidence based exercise classes that promote health, strength, balance, and socialization for seniors. The programs, which are offered free of charge, meet a great need of the growing senior population in our twenty counties.

We anticipate that our Health and Wellness classes will continue to grow in communities throughout our diocese. We expect to exceed last year's total when over 1,700 persons participated in our classes.

Financial Literacy

Our Financial Literacy program provides low-income and vulnerable populations with basic financial knowledge instrumental to daily living. We provide participants with the information, skills, tools, and resources they need to improve their understanding of financial systems so that they can secure and maintain a better quality of life through proper money management.

While we provide education on budgeting, borrowing, savings, and the banking system, we go beyond that. We examine how our emotions, culture, peers, and family influence our spending habits and how we manage money on a daily basis.

Last year we served 389 individuals. We hope to exceed that number this year by increasing the number of classes offered through our Rochester office. The resources to do that will likely come through grants from private foundations. While nothing is assured, we remain optimistic.

Guardian/Conservator

Our Guardian/Conservator program provides valuable assistance to persons who can no longer make decisions that are necessary in order to protect themselves and/or their finances.

Appointed by the courts to serve as the guardian/conservator, Catholic Charities is given the responsibility to manage the personal and financial affairs of these vulnerable persons.

We expect that demand for services in this program will increase in 2019; just as they did last year when we assisted 100 individuals.

Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption

Catholic Charities offers free, confidential support to those who are pregnant. We help women and men thoughtfully decide between either parenting or adoption so they can confidently pursue the best plan for themselves and their babies.

We anticipate that the number of persons served will remain strong in 2019. Last year we served over 1,300 persons.

Our Licensed Social Workers continue to staff our Pregnancy Helpline (1-800-222-5859) twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We remain the only Catholic agency in the state of Minnesota that is licensed to do adoptive placements.



Onward and Upward

Onward and Upward, an initiative of our Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Program, helps low income single parents and pregnant women complete their post-secondary education, secure employment, and begin earning, for the first time ever, a livable wage. The goal is to help these young families break the cycle of poverty and achieve financial stability and self-sufficiency.

Onward and Upward started by assisting only those studying nursing at Rochester Community and Technical College. We have expanded the fields of study that applicants can pursue in order to qualify for the program, and we have made the financial assistance available through the program more timely and significant. These changes position the program to serve even more young families in 2019.

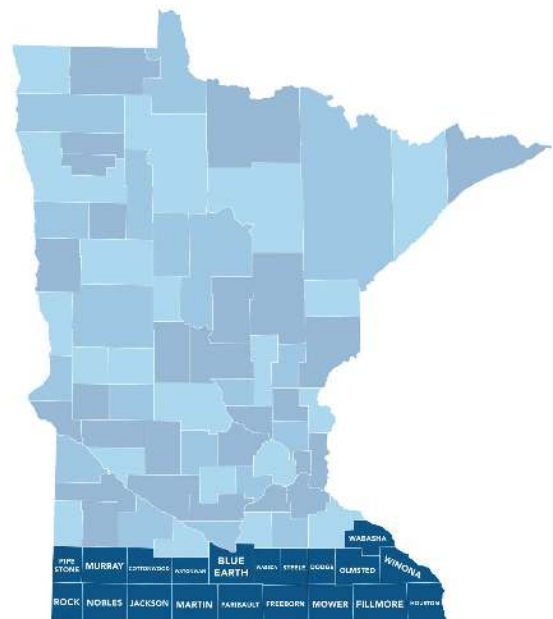
Parish Social Ministry

The Parish Social Ministry Program of Catholic Charities (PSM) helps the parishes in our diocese live out the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The program provides leadership, education, guidance, and service to the people and institutions of our diocesan church in their task of bringing the church's social mission to life.

We have added a PSM Coordinator to serve the parishes in the Mankato Deanery. We already have a PSM Coordinator in the Worthington Deanery.

A key initiative of the PSM Program is to develop and foster small base communities at the parish level. The groups meet once a week for six or eight weeks to pray, read, share, and reflect on Scripture, Church documents, or the Catechism. Three cycles of this process are completed in the span of a year.

Through this process and guided by the Holy Spirit, parishioners will grow in faith and in missionary discipleship. They will become alive in the Spirit and they will transform their lives, their parishes, and their communities.



On that note, I bring this piece to a close. You can learn more about these and other Catholic Charities programs, by visiting our website www.ccsomn.org

Thank you for your prayers and support of Catholic Charities. And may God bless you and strengthen you in your compassion, generosity, and works of service to others!

With warm regards always,

Robert Tereba,
Executive Director