Have you ever experienced an open door and the feeling of hope it instills? God promises us that when He sees us developing what He has given us—He will “open doors” no one can shut. (Rev. 3:8)

Those who support the mission of Catholic Charities “open doors” that leads to endless opportunities for the poor and vulnerable. During challenging times that open door of help and hope can make all the difference.

When Mary and Joseph ran from door to door asking for a room that holy night little did they know that an open stable door would create an opportunity of hope. That open door fulfilled God’s prophecy and plan of salvation for you and me!

Join me in “taking a peek” at a few of the doors you opened this year for the poor and marginalized. Because of you…our mission was invigorated and lives were changed forever.

Meet Amira..., she arrived as a refugee from a world of violence and death. When her parents were forced to leave their country and a home they treasured, it felt like the doors of hope were slammed shut forever. Because of your help, Catholic Charities was able to “open doors” for her family through our Refugee Resettlement Program. Today Amira walks proudly through the doors of a classroom at a community college where she is studying to become a nurse. Her dreams are to “open doors” of healing in thanksgiving for the opportunities and blessings she’s received.

Tim needed to be on a brand-name medication that his insurance company would not approve. The insurance would pay for the generic version, but Tim suffered from side effects of that generic version. Tim called the MediAppS caseworker at Catholic Charities for help. The caseworker advocated for Tim and petitioned the pharmaceutical company explaining the situation; opening doors of health and healing. To Tim’s surprise, the pharmaceutical company approved him for a year of free brand-name medication shipped to his doctor’s office.

Angie was facing her first pregnancy alone. She works part time and wants to go back to school to become a dental hygienist, but is worried about raising her child alone. Thanks to Catholic Charities’ Mother and Child Assistance Fund, Angie received some help with her rent. Her Catholic Charities Social Worker helped her make
a plan for her and her baby’s future. Her social worker is educating Angie regarding managing her finances in the future. Angie is becoming the best parent she can be, and she is excited to welcome her baby into the world in February.

**Joan** spent her entire married life as a farm wife. She joined her local Bone Builders (Osteoporosis Exercise) class when it became available through Catholic Charities Common Good RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program). Until joining this class, Joan needed assistance from her husband or son in order to climb into the combine to help with fall harvest because “that first step of the combine is high off the ground.” Within a couple years of attending Bone Builders classes, Joan noticed she could climb into the combine unassisted due to the arm strength she developed using weights in exercise class. Doors of independence were opened for Joan through the Bone Builders program. Earlier this year at her annual physical, Joan’s doctor was checking her legs for fluid retention. Finding none, he commented that she had firm muscles and “good looking legs for a person her age.”

**Maria** had devoted her life to caring for her children emotionally and financially as a single parent. As they began lives on their own, she became depressed, and concerned that she faced a sad, lonely future. Thanks to Catholic Charities counseling services, Maria set new goals, and began to care for herself after a lifetime of caring for others. She envisioned a future filled with promise for herself and as a treasured heart of her family. When she felt one door of her life had closed, another door of great promise opened.

**Thomas** is 66 years old and living alone in his own home. He was unable to remember the day he ate his last meal or took his medications. He had threatened to commit suicide. He sustained fractured ribs due to a recent fall. Thomas had been physically abused and financially exploited. Catholic Charities was appointed Emergency Guardian & Conservator for Thomas. Caseworkers have secured help with shopping and housekeeping seven days a week, connected with Meals on Wheels, and established a Life Alert system and an electronic medication reminder. The locks of his home have been changed and his assets safeguarded. Thomas is happier and now feels safe and cared for because you partnered with Catholic Charities to open doors of help and hope for him.

Our staff and volunteers serve in a wide range of programs, addressing many unique life situations. In every situation doors are opened, providing endless opportunities for those in need. When we reflect on the stories of those served through Catholic Charities this year, we are ever mindful that their lives were transformed because of the life-changing support of our donors. **Hope Lives Here—Because of You!**

During this season of hope our board, staff, volunteers, and those we serve send our heartfelt thanks for the gift of you in our lives. We are ever grateful for your trust and confidence in our work; a mission that provides help and creates hope in southern Minnesota. God bless you for your compassion and support. You “open doors” that lead to endless opportunities for families in crisis, vulnerable adults and seniors, and children in need. Wishing you great joy this Christmas and in the New Year!

Mary Alessio-Director of Advancement
Catholic Charities

*(Please note names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of those we serve)*