

## *“Catch the Spirit”*

Are there really people out there who live the true “spirit” of Christmas and hold it in their hearts every day of the year?



To shed light on this question, I decided to reach out to a group of individuals who embrace a “spirit” of compassion and great joy—our Spirit Circle donors. I asked what draws them to the mission of Catholic Charities.

To my delight, I received numerous emails, notes, and letters. I am honored to share a small sample of what they had to say:

- Our family has been touched by the generosity of Catholic Charities. As a father I witnessed the care and love of Catholic Charities and how they *uphold the dignity of those they serve*. I truly believe in their mission and believe they make a difference in the lives of those in need. My wife and I feel blessed to be in partnership of your work and mission.
- Catholic Charities *assisted us in successful marriage counseling* and four years later helped us with the *adoption of our two children*. Later, for a period of ten years, we served as foster parents for newborns to give back a little of ourselves to Catholic Charities
- When I served my country in Vietnam I witnessed good works done by missionaries, and I feel *Catholic Charities does the same work in the U.S. that missionaries do in foreign countries*.
- I believe in the mission of Catholic Charities. I have relatives who were Catholic Charities clients and I feel they were served well.
- Being a Catholic Chaplain within a hospital setting, frequently with those dealing with mental health issues and/or addictions. *Catholic Charities are often there for them before and after as they deal with the difficult issues in life*.
- As senior citizens we are not in need of many of the services of Catholic Charities, but we believe that every dollar given to God comes back to us ten-fold. *Catholic Charities serves the spiritual, mental, and physical need of the diocese. There are many whose lives are made bearable by their services*.

- Our history with Catholic Charities goes way back, but its most important connection was with *your help with our family and the pregnancy of our youngest daughter*. She was a student and CC helped us with comfort and support. God bless you for what you do!
- My husband had a pretty tough time when his first marriage fell apart. He will always be *indebted to Catholic Charities for the counseling and moral support* he received after his divorce. He learned a lot about himself and feels he became a better person and subsequently a great husband. *(He's not a Catholic)*
- I was left as the sole parent and provider of seven children many years ago. Living on a farm, we had enough to eat, but other necessities of life were harder to provide. Years later I became the beneficiary of a relative's estate. *As a Spirit Circle member I can now help some less fortunate people and give them the boost they need to live a little better.*

Pope Francis recently told us the ***Spirit of Christmas*** is emulating Christ. We're called to bring God's love to the poor and marginalized of our time. After reading these comments, I think you'll agree with me that the mission of Catholic Charities aligns very closely with the spirit of Christmas.

The St. Francis prayer reminds us that "it is in giving that we receive". That reality helps sustain the spirit of Christmas in each one of us every day of the year.

Sending our hopes that you and your family are blessed with the spirit and immense joy of Christmas now and throughout the Holy Year of Mercy!

(If you would like additional information regarding Catholic Charities Spirit Circle, please email Mary Alessio/Director of Advancement—[malessio@ccwinona.org](mailto:malessio@ccwinona.org) or call 1-507-281-6606)