

When you reach your “fork in the road” moment ...Choose HOPE!

Life is all about choices! With every journey you and I take ...we are faced with a choice. At every “fork in the road” moment...you and I are required to make a decision. What path will you and I take?

If you are like me...you have experienced several “fork in the road” moments; those deciding moments in life when a major choice is required. We often arrive at that fork in the road because of a problem hanging over our heads.

Ironically, when you and I are standing at that fork in the road “fear” often tries to tempt us? Fear is paralyzing; it feeds on anxiety. Fear is an adversary of hope. Did you know that “fear not” is used at least 80 times in the bible, most likely because God knows the enemy uses fear to decrease our hope and limit our victories.

Fear is such an ugly emotion. It preys on the innocent, the vulnerable and those who are suffering. Fear causes us to settle for less than our best because it dilutes our trust in God. It makes us feel unworthy of God’s love. But, most of all, fear robs you and me of peace and joy. St. Paul knew about those “fork in the road” moments we experience and addressed them with his legendary advice to the Romans, “Rejoice in your sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope!”

Over the sixteen years of serving the poor and vulnerable through Catholic Charities I’ve stood beside hundreds of individuals and families faced with “fork in the road” decisions. I have a tattered, love-worn piece of paper with St. Paul’s words of advice and each morning before I head out the door I read those words—they inspire and uplift my days. They remind me that walking the walk of suffering with those I serve is a path to hope.

I will never forget caring for a young refugee man who arrived several years ago to this country. War had beaten down on his life. He appeared thin and weak—he was alone in this world having lost his home and his loved ones. While his outward appearance may have appeared weak, I was in awe of the fact he had not lost hope.

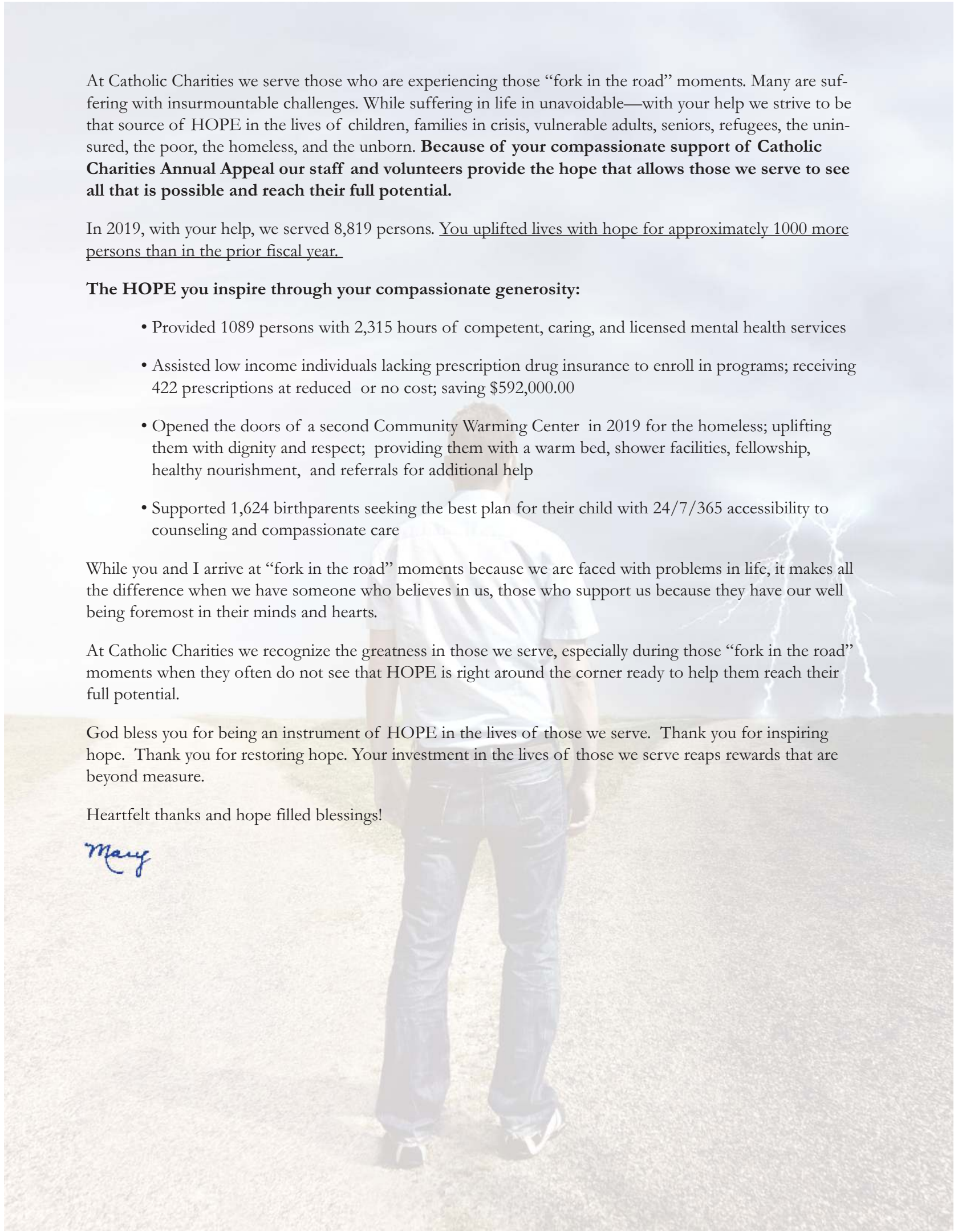
As we drove to register him in English classes this fragile man smiled at me and we discussed his future hopes and dreams. He quoted Dale Carnegie as we chatted over a cup of tea. He told me a man gave him a book when he was young and he remembered sitting on a curb amongst the rubble of bomb ridden buildings reading... *“Two men looked out from prison bars, one saw the mud, the other saw the stars.”* He continued to tell me that I was that star in his life and that Catholic Charities was his hope....

How profound, don’t you think, that a man who was homeless and outwardly appeared shattered to the core should remind me that hope is like a star and my caring for him through Catholic Charities was

his star. *“Hope itself is like a star—not to be seen in the sunshine of prosperity, and only to be discovered in the night of adversity.”*

D.H/ Spurgeon



A person is seen from behind, standing in a vast, open field. They are wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark jeans. In the distance, a dark, stormy sky is visible with a bright lightning bolt striking down. The overall mood is one of contemplation and hope.

At Catholic Charities we serve those who are experiencing those “fork in the road” moments. Many are suffering with insurmountable challenges. While suffering in life is unavoidable—with your help we strive to be that source of HOPE in the lives of children, families in crisis, vulnerable adults, seniors, refugees, the uninsured, the poor, the homeless, and the unborn. **Because of your compassionate support of Catholic Charities Annual Appeal our staff and volunteers provide the hope that allows those we serve to see all that is possible and reach their full potential.**

In 2019, with your help, we served 8,819 persons. You uplifted lives with hope for approximately 1000 more persons than in the prior fiscal year.

The HOPE you inspire through your compassionate generosity:

- Provided 1089 persons with 2,315 hours of competent, caring, and licensed mental health services
- Assisted low income individuals lacking prescription drug insurance to enroll in programs; receiving 422 prescriptions at reduced or no cost; saving \$592,000.00
- Opened the doors of a second Community Warming Center in 2019 for the homeless; uplifting them with dignity and respect; providing them with a warm bed, shower facilities, fellowship, healthy nourishment, and referrals for additional help
- Supported 1,624 birthparents seeking the best plan for their child with 24/7/365 accessibility to counseling and compassionate care

While you and I arrive at “fork in the road” moments because we are faced with problems in life, it makes all the difference when we have someone who believes in us, those who support us because they have our well being foremost in their minds and hearts.

At Catholic Charities we recognize the greatness in those we serve, especially during those “fork in the road” moments when they often do not see that HOPE is right around the corner ready to help them reach their full potential.

God bless you for being an instrument of HOPE in the lives of those we serve. Thank you for inspiring hope. Thank you for restoring hope. Your investment in the lives of those we serve reaps rewards that are beyond measure.

Heartfelt thanks and hope filled blessings!

Mary