Note to Our Donors on Impact of Diocese of Winona-Rochester Bankruptcy

Dear Friends,

As you know, the Diocese of Winona-Rochester filed for bankruptcy in federal court in November 2018. In his letter to parishioners dated November 18, 2018, Bishop John Quinn explained that his primary reason for taking this action is “to create a path forward that provides just and equitable compensation for the victims” of clergy sexual abuse.

I want you to know that Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota is not filing for bankruptcy. We are a nonprofit corporation of the State of Minnesota; a legal entity separate from the Diocese. In that regard, we are similar to the vast majority of parishes in the diocese.

The Diocese of Winona-Rochester provides about 6% of our annual operating revenue. We are grateful for that support and it is possible that it will not decline, or be eliminated, due to the bankruptcy. Regardless of how that issue is resolved, we intend to persevere in carrying out our mission to serve the poor and marginalized, advocate for social justice, and call all people to the ministry of Christ, throughout southern Minnesota.

Because of the good work of our staff and volunteers and the support of donors, like you, our seventeen programs will continue to provide help and hope for those broken in body and spirit. These include children in need, families in crisis, vulnerable adults, seniors, refugees, the uninsured and under insured, the poor, the homeless, and the unborn - regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, faith tradition or ability to pay.

We share with you your sense of anger, frustration, sorrow, and heartbreak regarding the abuse of innocents that occurred decades ago. And we join with you in praying for all those whose lives have been devastated due to sexual abuse. No one, ever, should be subjected to that.

Thank you for the trust that you have placed with us to serve those in need with great competence, faith, joy, and compassion. We ask for your continued support during these turbulent times.

God bless you always,

Robert Tereba, MA
Executive Director
The Term “Refugee” Doesn’t Define a Person for Life
As lives progress, new roles emerge and are embraced.

While it is easy to think of refugees as being “refugees” forever, they, in fact, become our neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and friends. One such “refugee” was Dheyaa.

Dheyaa and his family became refugees as they escaped the war in Iraq. They had the misfortune of seeking refuge in nearby Syria, which soon thereafter became embroiled in civil war. Realizing that their lives in Syria should only be temporary, they started the lengthy process to resettle in the United States.

After years of waiting, they arrived in 2011 as refugees in our country. They were welcomed and cared for through our Refugee Resettlement Program, then strengthened and empowered by our Match Grant employment program.

Even in those early days, Dheyaa was not one to sit around, walking to and from work each day. His strong work ethic was readily displayed. After working several years with a well respected local employer, Dheyaa started his own sheet rocking business, and owns his own home. He still holds two jobs, and proudly says he hopes to have his house paid off in five more years.

His daughters have grown into beautiful and smart young ladies, attending high school and already looking forward to college. His young son, born in the U.S., is an active and happy child.

Dheyaa, his wife, and children no longer see themselves as refugees but as business owners, students, and members of our community. They have found their “home” and are living the American dream through hard work and perseverance. The term “refugee” clearly no longer applies.

MARY’S KITCHEN TABLE
Mary Alessio, Director of Advancement answers questions around Mary’s Kitchen Table.

Do you feel an agency website really makes a difference when it comes to donor support?

Wow! This question is one I have great passion for and I am excited to share my answer - which is an emphatic yes!

A website is a great venue for sharing stories, in both pictures and in words. And nothing captivates like a well told story. Ken Burns, the famous documentary filmmaker, in a recent interview repeated a favorite quote he’d heard, “The greatest argument won’t change someone’s mind, but a great story will.”

Good stories can transport you into another world. Harper Lee, the author of To Kill a Mockingbird (one of my all time favorite novels), makes this point through the words of her character Atticus Finch, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from their point of view; until you climb inside of their skin and walk around in it.”

That’s what I want you to experience by reading the stories on our website. I want you to visualize exactly how your compassionate generosity transforms the lives of those we serve.

Make no mistake; you are the “behind the scenes” hero in our website stories. Your name may not end up in a history book, but your support generates an impact that is forever etched in the hearts of the poor and vulnerable we serve. You are their game changer—the one who uplifts and inspires. That defines “hero” in my book!

Our new website, with a new look and format, includes pictures and colorful text that describe how your compassionate generosity makes possible the life-changing work of Catholic Charities. Please check it out at www.ccsomn.org. (Our updated DONATE page features an online payment processor charge of 2.9% fee, a 58% reduction from the previous rate.)

Sending my hopes and prayers for God’s blessings to you in 2019! I’d like to share one of my very favorite YouTube videos with you—I have the song downloaded on my phone and listen to it each morning. Google “When You Believe” by One Voice Children’s Choir. I assure you it will be worth your time. It reminds me that despite the challenges I experience, all things are possible with God! God bless. ~Mary