Catholic Charities Book Celebrates Compassion
*The City That Locked In* Captures the Spirit of the Locks of Compassion
The Dalai Lama Wrote the Foreword to the Book

For the first time ever, we have published a book. *The City That Locked In*, written by Mary Alessio our Director of Advancement, captures the spirit of the Locks of Compassion project that captivated the city of Rochester, Minnesota in the summer of 2017.

In colorful pictures and engaging text, *The City That Locked In* describes how the vision for the Locks of Compassion became a reality and grew, via social media and YouTube, to become a worldwide symbol of compassion and tolerance. It includes a paper padlock that you can decorate, take a picture of, and post on social media.

The Locks of Compassion consisted of a display at the Peace Plaza in downtown Rochester of over 2,500 padlocks, each one decorated with a message of compassion or hope. Anyone could purchase a lock, decorate it, and hang it on the display.

The students of Winona’s Cotter High School adopted the Locks of Compassion as a Lenten project this spring. Their 500 brightly colored padlocks conveying messages of compassion and tolerance are now prominently displayed at the school.

Now, more than ever, compassion and tolerance are values that our world needs. That’s why generous sponsors have distributed *The City That Locked In* to local schools, libraries, and health & assisted living facilities. Copies for Spirit Circle members were made possible by our friends at Merchants Bank. Email Mary at malessio@ccsomn.org if you would like to sponsor books for your favorite organization or group.

Visit our website [www.ccsomn.org](http://www.ccsomn.org) to purchase additional copies of *The City That Locked In*. Net proceeds benefit Catholic Charities’ 17 programs serving poor and marginalized persons throughout southern Minnesota.

Why Catholic Charities?
Our Staff Share What Working Here Means to Them

At a recent agency wide meeting, our staff shared their thoughts on what it means to them to work at Catholic Charities. In small group discussions, staff from different programs and offices answered the following two questions:

1. What makes a Catholic Charities agency different from other social service agencies?
2. Why did you choose to come to work for a Catholic Charities agency?

The responses from those small groups were then summarized and shared with the whole group. The experience proved to be both funny and touching.

We share with you a sampling of those comments so you get a sense of what drives the people whose good work accomplishes our mission.

(OVER)
Responses to Question 1

- Our broad range of programs empower clients to achieve durable solutions.
- In terms of level of difficulty and geographic scope, our programs fill gaps that other agencies don’t address.
- We work collaboratively, both internally and externally, to achieve what’s best for our clients.
- We treat our clients as persons, not numbers.
- Our morals and values direct our work. We “walk the talk” as we serve all people. We are loving and accepting of differences.

Responses to Question 2

- Its mission and core values fit with my values. Working here is an expression of my faith. I have a passion for this work.
- It allows me to give back to my community.
- It has a very positive reputation for helping families and others.
- It has a positive work environment that is flexible with the demands of my family life.
- The good staff produces a “halo” effect. It’s good to be part of a winning team.
- My education fits with my job responsibilities.
- Here, service is valued over profit.
- Working here makes my grandma happy!

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

Today’s question comes from a parish secretary. She notes that several parishioners were discussing the value of us spending dollars on our Annual Appeal mailers and bulletin inserts. Was this a good use of our funds? This is a thoughtful question that merits a thoughtful response from my seat at the kitchen table.

Our Mother’s Day Annual Appeal mailer is one of only two “asks” that we do each year. The other is at Christmas. Most non-profits do several mailings each year. And it is customary for many to do a thank you that includes an additional ask. (We don’t follow that practice). We choose to not burden our parishioners with a cascade of “asks” out of respect for them and our commitment to practice good stewardship.

We produce the bulletin insert once a year after consulting with each parish on the number needed in order to minimize printing costs. The bulletin insert provides parishioners with helpful information including brief descriptions of our programs, the volume of services delivered (both locally and across our system), and how to contact us. In a very economical format, it provides information that many nonprofits include in very expensive annual reports.

So, getting back to the question, was this a good use of our funds? The answer is a resounding “yes”!

Here’s why.

The cost to produce these pieces amount to pennies per copy, yet that cost helps yield a high return. Last fiscal every $1.00 we spent on fundraising generated $4.47 in donation revenue, which includes donations at Christmas and throughout the year and our Annual Appeal and Spirit Circle donations.

No donor likes to see nonprofits spend excessive amounts on fundraising. We don’t either. We strive to produce fundraising pieces that are engaging, succinct, affordable, and accurate that both tell our story and treat our donors with respect. Got a question? Contact Mary at malessio@ccsomn.org.