

While caring for a pre-schooler and a preemie, she just needed some help

When Ashley had her daughter six years ago, she didn't have family or friends who could offer support as she recovered from a cesarean section and tried to meet the infant's needs.

"It was just me and her dad – and he had a job with crazy hours. He couldn't take time off to be there with us," she said. "He had to work extra hard to afford the new baby. ... I just had to do everything myself."

When the couple had their second child four years later, the experience was even harder. Unexpectedly born weeks early, Ashley's son needed to spend two months in the neonatal intensive care unit. Now two years later, she still remembers the difficulty of juggling her daughter's school schedule and daily visits to the hospital to see her newborn – all while recovering from her second C-section. As much as the children's father wanted to help, he was in a new job, working contract security, and could not miss work.

This is the kind of story that drives the supporters of the Time to Care Act, proposed legislation that would provide paid family and medical leave for Maryland workers. The bill, a key priority

for Catholic Charities in the 2022 legislative session, requires both employers and employees to pay into an insurance pool. Workers needing to take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones would have a portion of their salary covered through the pooled funding for up to 12 weeks.

PART OF A BROADER EFFORT

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act protects the jobs of certain workers who need to take time off to care for themselves or a loved one, but that leave is unpaid. At a recent briefing hosted with the Maryland Catholic Labor Network, Lisa Klingensmaier, Catholic Charities' assistant director of advocacy, explained that across the U.S., fewer than 40% of workers have access to paid leave for short-term disabilities, and just 17% have access to paid family leave.

Under the Time to Care Act, a worker's benefit would be determined by their weekly wage, with low-income earners receiving a greater percentage of their income. The approach aligns with legislation already adopted by nine states and Washington, D.C.



How compassion can lead to a new career



The staggering need for medical care providers – including certified nursing assistants and geriatric nursing assistants – has led to a new Catholic Charities program aimed at helping individuals achieve their career goals while finding the assistants the medical community – and its patients – need.

"Compassionate Caregivers is a program designed to train the next generation of nursing assistants," said Mark Saunders, Compassionate Caregivers program manager. "People are in need of work, and there is an endless need for nursing assistants in the medical field."

Day and night training sessions and intensive case management to address concerns such as childcare, behavioral health and transportation will help lesson barriers to participation.



There is a specialized approach to meeting those needs. Applicants must be at least 18 years old, residents of Baltimore City, and adversely affected by COVID-19 – by way of loss of employment, or alteration of income or housing.

The program is a partnership between the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development and Catholic Charities as part of an effort to address the city's interconnected economic and public health crises caused by the pandemic.

When enrollees complete the program, they may be hired at any of the area medical institutions including St. Elizabeth Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, and Ascension Saint Agnes Hospital.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

Catholic Charities is the largest multi-service charitable organization in Maryland. Serving all, we provide innovative programming to accompany people on life's journey including assistance to those living in poverty, individuals with developmental disabilities, immigrants, older adults, families and children in crisis.

Catholic Charities
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In December, we called our friends together to offer a month of music, crafts, games, trivia and more through Comfort & Joy. The outpouring of support was heartwarming.

With help from volunteers, we raised \$160,000 and received \$200,000 in gifts from program wish lists. Thank you to all of you who participated in this annual event!

For more information on programs and events, visit cc-md.org

Greater Promise

the Campaign for CATHOLIC CHARITIES

agreaterpromise.org

FRIEND,

When was the last time you asked yourself how you could do more for others and your community? Chances are, you think about it often; in fact, your concern for this is part of why you receive this newsletter. So you might have noticed that we've been publicly asking for months, "How can I love more?" "How can I help more?" "How can I give more?"

The idea behind these questions is, first, reflection – the opportunity to meaningfully ask and answer within ourselves – and

second, action. We want to do more to accompany our neighbors toward their better lives, and we cannot do it alone. Together, though, we can walk with each neighbor in their work to strengthen themselves, and to walk among communities toward greater promise.

In December, we announced our first major, comprehensive fundraising campaign in nearly 20 years. In this issue of Blessings, you'll learn why some of our campaign's most supportive leaders are involved, and

what we will do to steward the strength of our neighbors and communities with the investment our supporters make.

This is an invigorating opportunity for all of us – with reflection and action – to make great strides toward our greater promise.

I hope the spring that is arriving brightens your days with joy and health.

Bill McCarthy
William J. McCarthy, Jr.,
Executive Director



SPRING 2022

BLESSINGS

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL



LEVELING UP TO A LONG-TERM CAREER

Dysha Spady always wanted to be a certified nursing assistant, like her mother and the women she watched care for her grandmother in hospice. So when she saw an internet posting about a program that would connect her to the required training, she jumped at the opportunity.

Calling the number in the post connected her with Level Up. The federally funded program sponsored by Baltimore City supports young adults ages 18 to 24 as they work toward certification in promising career fields. Run by Catholic Charities, Level Up connects participants to workforce-development partners who train certified and geriatric nursing assistants (CNA/GNA), child care providers, auto repair specialists or heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) experts.

Tracey Rice, case manager for Level Up, said she remembers Spady beginning the process in September. The program is geared to people facing significant obstacles, and for some, even the intake process – which includes paperwork, an interview and an assessment – can be too daunting. But Spady was determined.



"I'm a single mom of two kids – a 3-year-old and a 5-year old – so I've got to do whatever I've got to do," Spady said. "And CNA/GNA is something I always wanted to do."

WORKING FOR WHAT YOU WANT

The COVID-19 pandemic added to trainees' challenges as workforce partner IT Works shifted to an all-virtual format.

"It was what I expected, but much harder. And it's harder doing it virtually – I would rather be hands on," Spady said. "It's

basically like having a job. This has got to be something that you actually want."

The trainings are intense. IT Works' CNA program, for example, runs for five or more hours daily over six weeks. Level Up enables participation by providing a stipend for attendance. And while partners provide the trainings, Level Up staff follow participants' progress, wrapping them in any supports they need to succeed, whether that's a connection to a day care program, a financial literacy training, or legal aid.

"All along through the classes, I'm talking to them about what's next. ... I sent them links. I sent them phone numbers. I sent them emails," said Rice. "I swing the bat to make sure they get what they need."

At the start of the program, Spady struggled to pass quizzes. But the IT Works teacher offered advice on how to adjust her study habits. By the end of class, she had a 3.5 GPA and received not only her CNA and GNA certifications, but also an award for being the most improved student.

"This is something I needed. I always wanted to be a CNA/GNA," Spady said. "If you have your mind set, you can do it."

For more information on programs and events, visit cc-md.org

This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. — 1 JOHN 2:25

Greater Promise

the Campaign for CATHOLIC CHARITIES



L to R: Abbey Smith; John Stanton, Campaign Cabinet Member; Carol Gould; Sharon Stanton, Campaign Cabinet Member

I
can
help
more

Frank Otenasek

My siblings and I all did social service as part of our high school requirements. I did it really because it was a school requirement. My younger sister Lindsey began to volunteer at Gallagher Services when she was a freshman, and she did it because she truly cared about it. She volunteered throughout her high school years and into college.

When my sister was a senior in college, she was on Pan Am 103, the plane that was bombed and crashed in Lockerbie, Scotland. When my family was dealing with that tragedy, the three things that really got us through were our faith, our family and our friends. Our family decided to honor Lindsey's legacy [and] endow a scholarship with Gallagher. Coming up on 26 years after Lindsey's death, we are still very involved at Gallagher Services.

We're inspired by...all the people at Catholic Charities who serve other people, because it's a calling, because it's the right thing to do. [Catholic Charities] reminds us of the calling that our sister Lindsey had. It's important that we make time to serve other people and to cherish the divine within everyone.

Interviews edited for length and clarity.



L to R: Scott Wilfong; Archbishop William Lori; Chuck Bauermann

GUESTS ENTERING A CATHOLIC CHARITIES BREAKFAST

late last year picked up a name tag with a three-part question: How can I help more or give more or love more? That question is at the root of the organization's largest-ever fundraising effort, a \$75 million campaign, announced at that event.

"Along with others in our community who are responding to those questions, we're going to start finding the answers," said Catholic Charities Executive Director Bill McCarthy. "And then we're going to take another, major step forward on the journey we share."

Funds raised will support the organization's nearly 100 programs, with particular focus on several significant infrastructure improvements to help children, support intellectually and developmentally disabled adults, and stimulate community revitalization in Baltimore.



L to R: Bill Stromberg, Campaign Co-Chair; Scott Somerville; Mike Sullivan

I
can
give
more



L to R: Mike Gill; Sen. Frank Kelly; Jim Sellinger



L to R: Marc Bunting, Campaign Co-Chair; Ed Bradley; Mike Sullivan

Marc Bunting, Campaign co-chair

Catholic Charities is an organization that makes the greatest impact when it comes to human services and helping folks in Baltimore and greater Maryland region – [those] that need some assistance in getting a helping hand and moving to a more positive place in their life.

They're very efficient with their use of dollars and really have a great impact. That's really a top priority for me. My family has [made a commitment] to the Greater Promise campaign, which is by far the largest gift we have made to an organization.

The impact of Catholic Charities and the way that they deliver services [is] unique and different than other organizations.



L to R: Sen. Frank Kelly; Frank Kelly III

Daniel Rizzo, board member

Catholic Charities is, in my mind, the largest and most impactful human services organization in the state of Maryland. The reach of its programs and the number of lives it impacts is so meaningful.

Our Greater Promise campaign is really a way for Catholic Charities to speak to the Maryland community and say, here's why the work we do is so important and why we need help to make it happen for the neighbors around us who need that help so badly.

One of the things I really appreciate about Catholic Charities is the commitment to innovation. Over the years, we've demonstrated an ability to see a problem and find new and interesting and effective solutions...I'm looking forward to the unknown of what's the next innovation Catholic Charities is going to bring to...help our neighbors.



L to R: Tim Regan; Bill McCarthy



L to R: John Minutoli; Bill McCarthy; Greg Farno

I
can
love
more



L to R: Bob Cawley; Terri Becks, Campaign Cabinet Member; Bill McCarthy; Tim Voelkel