

FRIEND,

Spring is here and with it comes a rejuvenated energy for our work at Catholic Charities. Our centennial year has kicked off wonderfully with celebrations of our history and excitement for our future. Throughout the year, along with our colleagues, you will have the opportunity to participate in events in Arundel, Baltimore and Harford Counties, Baltimore City and Western Maryland where we will highlight our programs and people.

In this issue of Blessings, we prepare for our inaugural symposium on April 20, and I would like to invite you to this unique and meaningful experience. Our mission, vision and values have inspired the creation of this event focused on an imperative "Journey to Social Justice." Human life is sacred, and we are called to identify inequities and address them. As the largest private provider of social services in Maryland, Catholic Charities aims to engage our neighbors and partners from different communities, faiths, and backgrounds around the state

for this conversation. Together, we can respond to the call to action and make change in our world. I hope you'll join us!

I wish you and your family the joy, renewal, and hope that the Easter Season brings.



William J. McCarthy, Jr.,
Executive Director

Bill McCarthy

SPRING 2023

BLESSINGS

100
YEARS
CATHOLIC CHARITIES
CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

Agency celebrates centennial with inaugural symposium on social justice

IN LESS THAN A MONTH, hundreds of people will gather at sites across Maryland to attend the centerpiece event of Catholic Charities' centennial year – an interactive symposium focused on social and racial justice.

Featuring author and theologian Dr. Greer G. Gordon, the symposium will include a talk and an opportunity for groups to consider how they can engage in meaningful ways with issues that are central to the agency's work and advocacy.

"We've never done anything like this before in our history," said Mary Anne O'Donnell, project manager for Catholic Charities' centennial. "This symposium reflects and builds on the goals of the agency's recently concluded Greater Promise campaign, which asked our community to consider how can we do more and be more, together."

INCLUSION AND ACTION

Organizers envisioned the symposium as an inclusive, action-oriented event that could elevate the visibility of Catholic Charities programs and the current-day context of its work. Racial justice emerged as a central theme for this year's event, addressing historical inequities that

JOURNEY TO SOCIAL JUSTICE



continue to affect populations the agency serves.

Dr. Gordon will speak from the Church of the Nativity in Timonium, Md., and Catholic Charities will livestream her remarks to at least a dozen locations from Baltimore to western Maryland, reaching sites as varied as a community center, a college campus and a Jewish synagogue. To foster conversations, facilitators at each site will be trained, and registered attendees will receive materials to read before they arrive. The goal is for each group to report not only what they intend to do, but what actions they will take as a result of the experience.

See page 2 for a Q&A with the symposium keynote speaker.

More information about the event and registration details are available at www.cc-md.org/justice



As part of the year-long commemoration of our centennial, we're sharing photos from our archives. Here is a look at some of our seniors at Jenkins Senior Living Campus, then and now.

Meet Dr. Greer G. Gordon, Keynote Speaker at Social Justice Symposium

Dr. Gordon responded to questions on the focus of her upcoming talk and how Catholic Charities is rapidly moving forward in its centennial year.



Dr. Greer G. Gordon

Q: Can you describe the focus of your talk?

A: In my opinion, we are really living in a highly polarized time and so people are easily drawn into picking sides. We are being encouraged into a life posture of disliking, or suspecting, the other.

I am being asked to assist people in coming together around issues, to cross over their differences, to embrace each other as human – and not only as human but as higher-level, self-reflective beings who have value and worth. We need to begin forming valuable alliances, where one is able to support the other no matter the color of skin, no matter what ideological perspectives, or religious beliefs.

Q: What does it mean for a community to forge those alliances?

A: A community with no alliances is stuck where it is, impoverished and unable to move. Such a community cannot help its injured, sick, or hungry family members because they have no allies who have the resources that they need.

Humans need alliances in order to rebuild our communities, to get us back to a place where we can be filled with a deep and abiding sense of respect and regard for one another; a place where, we have value simply by virtue of the fact that we, like all other human beings, have something to contribute to this great society of ours.

Q: What made you think of the late Congressman John Lewis and his idea of “good trouble?”

A: One of the things that people like John Lewis saw is that lots of good people get swept up in allowing not-so-good things to transpire because no one’s

helped them see that it’s not good to go along just to get along. John Lewis saw that in order to avoid this, people need to stir up the consciences of good people. This conscience stirring he referred to as “good trouble.”

“Good trouble” is a process. Once alliances are formed, we begin to see ways to challenge systems and people who claim that hatred and hostility are acceptable. The collective strength of alliances allows us to stand against hatred and inhumanity. This is John Lewis’ “good trouble.” The “good trouble,” frankly, that brought about the success of the Civil Rights movement, and eventually called forth the leadership of late Baltimore Congressman Elijah Cummings.

Q: Why have this kind of conversation as part of a centennial year?

A: The way I look at Catholic Charities is bringing to fruition the teachings that came forth from Pope John XXIII’s call for an *aggiornamento*; that is a process of “rapidly moving forward while re-capturing the good things of the past.”

Catholic Charities’ centennial celebration is a clear example of that: looking at the past good things that the Archdiocese of Baltimore did under its charitable arm, while rapidly building alliances to prepare for and address future needs. We have got to anticipate what’s ahead, and we need more workers. We need allies, and those allies need to be people of various perspectives, backgrounds, and religious traditions. We need good people who want to do good things, in order to assist in alleviating the suffering in our society for the next 100 years!

** This conversation was edited for length and clarity.*



Charting the Path Forward

CATHOLIC CHARITIES WELCOMED MAJOR SUPPORTERS FROM THE COMMUNITY to Our Daily Bread Employment Center late last year for breakfast and an update on the agency’s current efforts and plans for continuing innovation and growth.

As part of the breakfast, attendees heard from Felicia Jenkins, a participant in Level Up, a Catholic Charities program that helps youth ages 18 to 24 work through a variety of obstacles so they can find and maintain suitable employment.

Felicia talked about a journey that led from experiencing homelessness and feelings of desperation to where she is today – a college student preparing to become a master technician in automotive repair. She spoke of the importance of the support of her Level Up case manager and others as she set her course.



Felicia Jenkins with Tracey Rice, senior case manager at Level Up

To join in this symposium conversation, register at www.cc-md.org/justice



A Meaningful Opportunity to Serve Others

ON A RAINY THURSDAY MORNING, a white van pulls up behind St. Anthony of Padua church in northeast Baltimore. It's early, so the men in the van wait inside to keep warm. As weekly visitors, they know the schedule.

Brian Bevens, Ty Biggs and Robert Griguolo have volunteered with the Meals on Wheels program at St. Anthony's twice a week for years. They know what time to pick up food to distribute to homebound individuals – particularly seniors – and the regular delivery routes that will lead them through the nearby community.

"We like the elderly and like to be around elderly people," Ty said, explaining their long-standing commitment.

Ty, Brian and Robert all live in homes run by Gallagher Services, Catholic Charities' program to support adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in living the lives of their choice. They also all participate in Gallagher's Meaningful Day program, which organizes this volunteer experience.

A ROUTINE WITH IMPACT

Every Tuesday and Thursday morning, the trio meets Bolaji Badru, a direct support professional,

at Gallagher Services and heads out to St. Anthony's. In the hustle of volunteers coming in and out of the church, the men understand exactly what's expected – how to shuttle the prepared meals to their van, return the cart and set out on their route.

"Because we've been doing this for years, I don't even use the map now," Bolaji explained, as the team finishes piling meals into the van.

Ty, Brian and Robert are just one of four Gallagher Services groups volunteering with Meals on Wheels, an experience that allows participants to engage in and give back to their communities in substantial ways.



Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland lists the area around St. Anthony's as one of the "greatest areas of need." Sometimes, the group needs to make time for a dozen stops, but on this day, their route includes just seven.

A couple of miles from the church, all four men climb out of the van to talk with the person waiting at their first stop. They hand over bags of prepared food and wave as he starts to walk away.

"See you next week, sir!" one of them calls out as they climb back in the van for their next stop.

Catholic Charities Surpasses Goal in Greater Promise Campaign

IN DECEMBER 2021, Catholic Charities announced its largest-ever community effort, the \$75 million Greater Promise campaign. Asking the crucial questions – How can we help more? How can we give more? How can we love more? – Greater Promise became a vow to help our communities live up to their greatest potential.

The successful campaign is now enabling Catholic Charities to continue supporting neighbors in need and is spurring progress on several large-scale initiatives, including:

- The Cherry Hill Town Center, a multi-phase project that includes delivering critical services lacking in this South Baltimore community for generations and providing new opportunities for local entrepreneurs.
- The Gallagher Center, ensuring the space designed for adults with intellectual disabilities serves as a hub of activity of activity and community engagement.



- The Intergenerational Center, a new space in West Baltimore designed to provide a continuum of support for all ages, fostering the healthy development of youth and the well-being of seniors.
- Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly – or PACE, a coalition of community partners working to help older neighbors live healthy, vibrant lives while aging in place, with a hub planned at the Touchpoint Empowerment Center.

At a campaign celebration event this January, Catholic Charities Executive Director Bill McCarthy encouraged partners and supporters to personally live up to the ideals of Greater Promise: "We can aim to continuously ask ourselves —how can we be more, together? Your compassion, your generosity, and your commitment are a beacon of hope for our neighbors and community along with the future of Catholic Charities of Baltimore."

WHY I RACE



The winning M&T Bank team from 2018, with Ousa to the right of the trophy

Ousa Tran is Vice President: Business and Professional Banking and captain of the Dragon Boat Team at M&T Bank, the presenting sponsor for 2023 and defending champion from 2018.

I was asked to be a part of the team back in 2010. I had paddled for another community team in the prior two races and the bank was looking for experienced individuals to participate. I had only dabbled in Dragon Boat prior to this, and somewhere around that time the sport changed for me from an excuse to exercise to a passion project.

The race itself is a culmination of an entire summer's worth of networking with other corporate participants, forming bonds with the individual partner program from Catholic Charities and grueling water practices with your fellow employees/teammates. I cannot overstate the tremendous rewards that came with it: team building, relationship development, giving back to our community. It is very gratifying.

The last race, 2018, was a long time ago. We don't think of ourselves as defending champions. To paraphrase one catchphrase in my division of the bank: "What are we doing next?"

Being the lead sponsor for Catholic Charities 2023 Dragon Boat Races is a tremendous opportunity for M&T Bank to highlight and bring attention to the vital work Catholic Charities does in our communities every day. M&T Bank's mission is to use our community-focused service model to make a difference in people's lives. There is no better way to lend a hand than to partner with the largest human services provider in Maryland.

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.

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They're back!

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER CATHOLIC CHARITIES FIRST BROUGHT THE DRAGON BOAT RACES TO BALTIMORE'S INNER HARBOR, the festivities are returning – featuring more fun than ever.

The 2023 race will include a family-friendly festival with food trucks, live music, a section for children and activities for all.

"We wanted this to be part of Catholic Charities' centennial year, and we wanted to make it bigger and bolder," said Natalia M. Ramirez, director of stewardship and events. "This helps us highlight what we do and who we are."

THE TRADITION CONTINUES

Launched as part of Catholic Charities' 75th anniversary, the Dragon Boat Races provide opportunities for sponsored teams from local companies, nonprofits and schools to practice paddling together throughout the summer before racing in the narrow, decorative boats.

Typically, Catholic Charities hosted the races biennially, raising more than \$5 million across the 11 previous events. The agency paused the tradition during the COVID pandemic, then decided to tie the 12th race to centennial celebrations.

The 2023 Dragon Boat Races will be held on Sept. 9 at West Shore Park along the Baltimore Waterfront Promenade.

More information about how to register a team, sponsor the event or attend is available at <https://dragonboatsbaltimore.org/>



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