

## FRIEND,

Time seems to pass so rapidly that we often forget the speed of life is constant and never-changing. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis: The future is something we all reach at the rate of 60 minutes per hour, whatever we do, whoever we are.

This came to mind as I reflected on the anniversaries of two important initiatives here at Catholic Charities. Although it feels like just yesterday, we launched our “Greater Promise” campaign three years ago and our “Love Your Neighbor” call to action one year ago.

Having reached these milestones, I’d like to share a few words about both efforts. First,

I’m thrilled to report that we’re making tremendous progress in turning “Greater Promise” into a reality for those we serve — thanks to your generous support. This edition of Blessings touches on two major components of Greater Promise: Gallagher Services’ expanded services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (“An Accidental Career,” page 2) and our innovative Intergenerational Center (“A Global Approach to Peace,” page 3).

Meanwhile, our year-long “Love Your Neighbor” call-to-action campaign has proven so successful that we have decided to extend it. And why not? Our commitment to answering

this all-important call will never end, so there’s no reason to end our effort to encourage others to do the same.

And while doing so, we must always remember to define “neighbor” as Jesus does — in a way that encompasses everyone, especially those individuals and groups that some in society would try to push to the margins.

Peace,



William J. McCarthy, Jr.,  
Executive Director



SPRING 2025

# BLESSINGS

CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

Inspired by the Gospel mandates to LOVE, SERVE and TEACH, Catholic Charities provides care and services to IMPROVE the LIVES of Marylanders in need.

## “Who Wants to Get on a Boat?”

Tara Stern had only recently started working at the Allegis Group when, in 2010, the firm decided to recruit a team for Catholic Charities’ Dragon Boat Races.

“I just happened to work in the same vicinity as the co-captain, and she was like, ‘who wants to get on a boat?’” she remembers.

Fifteen years later, Stern, a release train engineer at Allegis, is co-captain of the company’s boat and beginning to recruit a team to participate in the races later this year.

The 13th biennial Dragon Boat Races will be held September 13 at Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. The event features a race-day festival, thousands of spectators, and teams from across the region trying to paddle to victory in support of Catholic Charities’ programs.

### EXPANDING THE TEAM

Stern had never been in a dragon boat before volunteering for the Allegis team. Her reaction after the first practice was, “This is hard!” But she kept going back because it was also fun, with camaraderie



Allegis Team Dragon Boat Races 2023 practice

building on the boat and happy hours after every practice.

“Just having that group of people that all want to get better and do better – it’s that whole team-bonding thing,” she said. “I was with people that I’m still friends with today, but we don’t even work near each other anymore.”

Heading into the 2025 races, Stern said Allegis organizers have been thinking about how to get more colleagues involved. Some may want to try paddling for the first time.

Others may volunteer to decorate the company’s race-festival tent. And others will help fundraise for Sarah’s House, Catholic Charities’ shelter for families in Anne Arundel County and Allegis’ program partner since their first race.

Following the 2023 races, a few Allegis paddlers joined the Baltimore Dragon Boat Club to deepen their training in the sport. But Stern said that hasn’t changed the team’s approach to recruiting a boat.

“It’s more about finding the bodies that are willing to do it,” she said. “Of course we want to win, but in the end, it’s fun.”



## Get Onboard Dragon Boats 2025

**ABOUT:** Since 1998, Catholic Charities’ Dragon Boat Races have brought together some of the region’s most philanthropic business to compete, build camaraderie, and have fun.

**WHEN:**  
Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025

**WHERE:**  
Baltimore’s Inner Harbor

**HOW (TO SIGN UP):** Go to [dragonboatsbaltimore.org](https://dragonboatsbaltimore.org) to sign up and learn more about this day of fun!

# Lifelong Career Delivers on Catholic Charities' "Greater Promise"



Kathy Clemente didn't set out with a specific career in mind when she moved to Maryland 36 years ago. Her then-husband had just left the military, and she was simply looking for a job.

She found a position as an administrative assistant at Gallagher Services, the Catholic Charities program that provides residential and day supports to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And she stayed.

Over the years, Kathy worked in the agency's group homes, oversaw program sites, and eventually transitioned into management roles. By the time Catholic Charities appointed her as Gallagher Services' top administrator in 2015, she had built extensive hands-on experience, formed deep relationships with clients, families, and staff, and developed a career she had never anticipated.

Today, when Kathy walks into the Meaningful Day Center, which opened in Timonium in 2023 as part of Catholic Charities' "Greater Promise" initiative, she is greeted by people she has known for decades, staff members whose careers she helped nurture, and a program that continues to evolve, ensuring every person supported can live the life they choose.

## ADAPTING THE LEGACY

Founded in 1977, Gallagher Services initially focused on providing housing for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through group homes. Over time, the program expanded to include

day programs, offering people a wider variety of therapeutic, occupational, and social opportunities.

When Kathy became Gallagher Services' administrator, the program had already begun shifting its focus to community-based options, empowering people to spend more time on activities that aligned with their hobbies, interests, or work.

Today, the Meaningful Day Center serves as the hub for this approach, offering a space for people who need extensive medical or therapeutic support, as well as a gathering place for those heading out to activities throughout the day.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As Gallagher Services continues to evolve, Kathy can identify challenges on the horizon. Some of the people supported are aging and will require different types of medical care. It has become more difficult to find direct support professionals to meet the diverse needs of the program, especially in the wake of the pandemic. And the program may need to explore new approaches to better meet the needs and expectations of younger people seeking services.

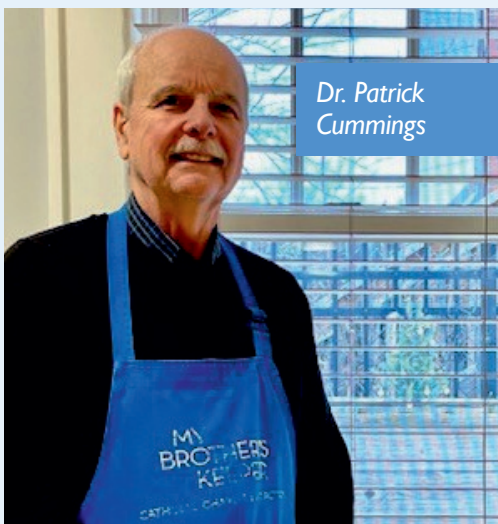
As Kathy prepares for retirement this year, she won't be the one to navigate these future challenges. However, she will leave behind a flexible strategy, a strong, dedicated team, and a dynamic program that will continue to support the work she helped build.

"I don't really like good-byes. I'm more of the 'See you later' type," she said.



Kathy Clemente

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Former Hopkins Professor Serves from the Heart



Dr. Patrick Cummings

As he was nearing retirement and thinking about how he wanted to spend his time, Dr. Patrick Cummings agreed in 2017 to chaperone a church youth group visit to My Brother's Keeper.

Eight years later, he still visits the program once a week – or more – to serve meals, clear tables, and support Catholic Charities' effort to provide a wide range of services to the surrounding West Baltimore community.

"It's well worth the time – getting out of the house and meeting people. And there's such a need across the city," he said. "If there's a small commitment I can make to help provide services and support, I'm going to do that."

Kevin Mason, program director of My Brother's Keeper, said there's nothing "small" about Patrick's commitment.

"We've only got six people – including myself – to run this program 365 days a year," he said. "So, we let the volunteers know clearly that we could not do this without them. We just can't."

## ALMOST FAMILY

Prior to retirement, Patrick served on the faculty of Johns Hopkins University for 18 years, teaching biology and biotechnology and directing a master's program. He regularly volunteered at other organizations, but when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he "migrated" to My Brother's Keeper because they needed the help.

At that time, clients could not enter the building, but My Brother's Keeper was determined to continue serving them. For more than a year, Patrick was part of a small

team that packed lunches and slid them to people waiting outside.

"Staff were getting sick, but [Kevin] continued to have a core group of volunteers come in and help him keep the wheels turning," Patrick said. "I think the community really appreciated that and benefited tremendously because it was dark times."

These days, he's a regular on a two-hour shift Sunday mornings, one of three volunteers who help with meal service.

"When I first started, I wasn't sure whether I was going to continue," he said. "But you form a friendship with the other volunteers and staff. It's almost like a family atmosphere, and that's ... something that allows me to come back and continue to do what I can to help."

Kevin said Patrick's approach to volunteering resonates with guests, staff and other volunteers.

"When you think of serving from the heart – he really does," Kevin explained. "There's not a task he won't do. And he not only has a sense of what the work is, he believes in the mission."



# A Global Approach To Peace, Starting with Basketball



When PeacePlayers International launches at Catholic Charities' new Intergenerational Center in West

Baltimore, the program will take no time to catch on with the young people it is designed to serve, program manager Rashawn Martin predicts.

Based on the organization's 25-year track record at locations around the world, Martin expects that kids will be hooked on the program and spreading the good news to their friends by the end of the first week of operations.

The program manager for PeacePlayers Baltimore is not offering a typical recreational basketball program. There are no tryouts, no tournaments, and no games against rival teams.

Rather, the program combines basketball, peace education, and leadership development

to provide young people – from 8 years old through high school – with the skills to mitigate conflict and grow as ambassadors for peace in their own communities. As important: it's really fun.

Catholic Charities' Intergenerational Center will include three basketball courts, including a covered outdoor court modeled after the legendary Dome on the east side of the city. The center and these courts will also serve as PeacePlayers' first hub in Baltimore.

## “KNOCK DOWN THAT BARRIER”

Established in 2001, PeacePlayers International has worked in more than 40 conflict-plagued locations around the globe, including South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Jerusalem, using the unifying power of basketball to build more peaceful and thriving communities. One of three cities chosen for programs when the group expanded to the U.S. in 2017, with Nike's support, Baltimore is now among five PeacePlayers cities in this country.

“I grew up in Baltimore, and there is this arbitrary line between the East and West side of Baltimore – it's a territorial thing,” Martin said. “So, we're here to knock down that barrier. The city is very under-resourced on both sides, and there's more power in unity.

We essentially believe that our PeacePlayers are going to be the future decision-makers and leaders of the city. We want to equip them with all the tools necessary to be a great leader.”



Today, PeacePlayers works with individual schools on both sides of the city, periodically organizing games that bring them together, highlighting how much the players have in common. But the group operates without a home base, and some players drop out when they graduate or switch schools.

“We haven't had space to keep our kids involved in the way we want to. We want to keep them on a journey with us,” Martin said. “The [Intergenerational Center] gives us that hub ... and space to host programming for all

*Catholic Charities of Baltimore not only serves those in need. We also advocate for our brothers and sisters in the halls of government at the state and local level. To that end, our two-person advocacy team — Val Twanmoh and Madelin Martinez — conducted an agency-wide meeting in Annapolis during the early days of the 2025 session of the Maryland General Assembly, which will conclude on April 7. The objective: To provide instruction on issues relevant to our clients and on ways staff can share clients' experiences and needs with lawmakers. Shortly after the legislative session ends, we will post an article on our website highlighting measures that matter most to the people you support through your generous gifts and volunteer efforts.*



## Donate for the Dignity of the Unsheltered

Please consider donating small toiletry items to uphold the dignity of unsheltered families and individuals. We are collecting unopened travel-size items of soap, deodorant, toothpaste, and mouthwash, as well as adult diapers and sanitary pads. Contact [csaucier@cc-md.org](mailto:csaucier@cc-md.org) for more information and for instructions about drop off locations.





# Catholic Charities to Play Larger Role in Combatting Overdose Deaths



Adam Trionfo

While the state of Maryland made significant progress last year in the effort to reduce fatal overdoses, too many lives continue to be lost to the opioid-fueled epidemic.

The crisis remains particularly acute for people who are disconnected from prevention, mitigation, and treatment services, such as those recently released from incarceration and those

experiencing homelessness or housing precarity.

To care for these individuals, Maryland has tapped its longtime partner in the fight to save lives, Catholic Charities, to fulfill a targeted two-year grant called “Bridges to Recovery.”

Catholic Charities will deploy its team of peer recovery coaches behind prison walls and on the streets to perform their successful work to reduce harm and connect people with treatment. The effort will be headed by therapist Miriam Mburu.

Operating with the support of multiple grants, Catholic Charities has long been at the forefront of the initiative to engage people where they live and use — whether it’s on the street, in abandoned houses, or at shelters — rather than wait for them to come into a clinic. This approach is essential, explains Adam Trionfo, a manager of Catholic Charities’ peer recovery team. Many potential clients simply do not know that help is available to them, while others will not travel more than a few blocks from where they sleep and access drugs.

“Our model is to employ those with lived experience [with substance use disorders] to hit the streets and actually go into areas with high drug use and talk to people,” Trionfo says.

## ‘HISTORIC’ REDUCTION

By collaborating with care providers such as Catholic Charities, the state of Maryland’s strategic

effort to reduce fatal overdoses is producing positive results.

Gov. Wes Moore recently announced that overdose deaths in our state declined by an “historic” 38 percent last year, falling from 2,511 in 2023 to 1,553 in 2024. The reduction is proof, Moore said, “that our investments in behavioral health and substance use care and the incredible efforts of people all around our state are paying off.”

The governor immediately added, “We are still losing far too many of our loved ones and neighbors to preventable overdoses, and we will not let up in our efforts to meet people where they are and make connections to care.”

Having worked on overdose reduction in Baltimore City for more than five years, Trionfo says he’s optimistic. “It seems like the city is moving in the right direction.” But he shares the governor’s view that there is a lot of work to be done.

For instance, people who have been held at a prison, jail, or detention center die of overdoses within 30 days of release at alarming rates as they struggle to rebuild their lives.

Under the new grant, Trionfo and his team will be going into jails, meeting with people on pre-release, and helping them not just with substance use but also with a holistic approach to making sure they have everything in place when they’re released. The goal is to not leave them scrambling without a place to live, money, and other essentials.

They’ll also provide clients with the overdose-reversal drug Narcan upon release and offer to help connect them to substance use treatment and places to stay until they get back on their feet.

“Our effort is harm-reduction based not just to prevent recidivism but also to lower overdose rates,” Trionfo says.

The goal in all of our work, he says, is to keep people alive so they can seek the critical treatment that will help them live healthier lives.

Thanks to you,  
we are able to  
continue our work  
in the community.

Use your phone’s camera  
to scan the QR code to  
donate today!



Experts from two Catholic Charities programs recently sat for interviews with WYPR 88.1 FM.

Greg Marshburn, the head of our Safe Streets operation, discussed the successful work he and his colleagues are doing to reduce violence and promote peace.

Matthew Dolamore and Angela Edman, Esperanza’s program director and lead immigration lawyer, respectively, went on air to share information about our important work with the immigrant community.

To listen to these interviews, go to WYPR.org and search “Marshburn” for the Safe Streets interview and “Esperanza” for the conversation about immigration.

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES’ ANNUAL DINNER

Monday, May 12, 2025, from 5:30 to 9 p.m.

at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront (700 Aliceanna Street, Baltimore, MD 21202).

To learn more and to buy tickets, please visit: <https://cc-md.org/annualdinner2025>



June 16, 2025

(Rain Date June 23, 2025)

Baltimore Country Club Five Farms

To register, visit <https://cc-md.org/blasecooke25/>  
Contact Izabella Downs for more information:  
Office: 667-600-2029 | [idowns@cc-md.org](mailto:idowns@cc-md.org)

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

Catholic Charities is the Maryland’s largest and most effective private provider of human services. 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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