

## FRIEND,

As we enter this season of light and giving, I reflect on the countless ways Catholic Charities brings hope into the world—and it's all because of you. Your compassion and generosity bring warmth to those facing cold, hunger, and hardship. Each story in this edition of Blessings reminds us that when we act in love, healing follows.

Earlier this year, Bianca Coates, a former resident of St. Vincent's Villa, returned to our campus with tears, laughter, and a message of hope. Two decades after finding refuge with us, she walked through the same doors to tell the young girls in our care: "This is not the end of

the road for you." Her words and willingness to give back show that the seeds of compassion you help plant continue to grow.

The Dundalk Adolescent Clubhouse helps young people break generational cycles of trauma and addiction. Teens there are learning life skills, building confidence, and volunteering to feed neighbors, even while facing hunger themselves. Their efforts remind us that healing is not just an individual journey, but one we take together as a community.

At Anna's House, Brenda Miller has spent more than a decade volunteering to support families transitioning out of homelessness. From cleaning apartments to adopting families

at Christmas, her selfless love embodies the spirit of this season: sharing God's love through service and compassion.

Thanks to your generosity, Catholic Charities served more than 527,700 meals and provided 131,500 nights of warm, safe shelter this year. Every meal, bed, and act of compassion brightens our community with hope.

This holiday season, I invite you to continue being part of that light—through volunteering, giving, or sharing a kind word. Your actions help carry the message of love far beyond the winter months.

*Dave*  
Dave Kinkopf,  
Executive Director



WINTER 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.

## Welcome to the Clubhouse

*Teens in Dundalk find hope and healing through community and creativity.*

When you look at a map of overdose deaths in Maryland, Dundalk stands out. The waterfront community's population is less than 8% of Baltimore County but accounted for nearly a quarter of its opioid-related overdose deaths in the first half of 2025.

"Opiate-use disorder is rampant, and it's destroying families," said Emily Winicki, the supervisor of Catholic Charities' Villa Maria Behavioral Health Clinic in Dundalk. "We're here fighting the good fight and trying to treat these kids, these adults, these parents with substance-use disorders. We're trying to help heal and treat the entire family."

That's why the Dundalk Adolescent Clubhouse is so important.

### USING THEIR GIFTS TO REACH THEIR GOALS

Offering a safe, fun space for local 12- to 18-year-olds, Clubhouse focuses on harm prevention and reduction. This is particularly important for kids who may be diagnosed with or have been affected by substance use and mental health challenges.

"Kids get exposed to violence and trauma, and then they're set up to repeat those same patterns," Emily explained. "We see that a lot. So, we see treating trauma in kids as helping them make better choices as they age."

**"We see treating trauma in kids as helping them make better choices as they age."**



*Clients and staff of Clubhouse*

The program includes a wide array of activities, from trips to amusement parks and museums to intense discussions of current events. Participants learn how to craft a resume, apply to job postings, and follow up on applications. They learn how to tie a tie, how to cook a meal with fresh ingredients and where to volunteer in ways that bolster their community. Private donations have enabled some teens to sign up for extracurricular activities, take barbering classes and graduate from driving school.

Being able to tailor support to each child's goals and interests is essential, said Clubhouse manager Brittany Champagne.

"All of my kids are special. I have artists, chefs, and kids who want to go into fashion or music," she said. "I try to base our groups on things I see in them, to build their long-term goals and remind them of their gifts."

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

Clubhouse's impact also stretches purposefully into the community.

"The thing I see the most is that a lot of families don't have their basic needs met. And if you don't have your basic needs met, you're not going to focus as much on your mental wellness or your sobriety," Brittany said.

The kids help meet those basic needs by volunteering at Dundalk High's pantry, partnering with other groups to distribute food locally, and serving their parents special holiday meals. This work ties in seamlessly with other Catholic Charities programs in Dundalk.

"Overall, change will come not just from this program, but from all of what Catholic Charities is doing, how involved we are with families," Brittany said. "It's about us collaborating, continuing to provide services to the community and continuing to bring families together."

...Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. — MATTHEW 5:16





# "I can't even tell you where I would be..."

When Aaron Allaire's sister told him their siblings had all chipped in to rent him a hotel room for a month, she had one stipulation: start making calls.

"She wanted me to call everybody I could call so that I could find something more established," he said. "So, I did what she asked."

Then in his mid-50s, Aaron had no place to live. He had no home, his adult daughters had asked him to leave after stints in theirs, and he had spent a month on the streets. He was also facing physical challenges, including torn-up knees, back injuries that made it hard to get around, and the effects of three strokes.

Every day from the hotel, he called state and federal offices, looking to access the benefits he was eligible for and the help he needed. Just a few days before his month at the hotel ran out, he learned he would be given a place at Sarah's House.

## STEADY PROGRESS IS NOT ALWAYS SMOOTH

Sarah's House offers emergency shelter, supportive housing and a range of other services for people experiencing homelessness in Anne Arundel County.

From day one, the program offered Aaron more than he expected. He moved into a disability-accessible room shared with just one roommate,



Aaron Allaire

and Sarah's House case workers leaned in with support.

They helped him access Social Security Disability Insurance, which he had spent more than a year chasing, along with other benefits. They advised him on how to raise his flatlined credit score to support his long-term goals. They encouraged his move to Project North, supportive housing on the Sarah's House property. And they

helped him restore rocky relationships with family members.

It wasn't always a smooth process. Smoke damage from a kitchen fire in his Project North unit and an unexpected adjustment to his rent depleted his savings and upended his credit as he opened new cards to cover his costs.

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In September, Aaron learned he had qualified for a federal housing voucher. He started making plans to live on his own for a year, with the goal of moving back in with his daughter and her family.

"It has been a godsend. I can't even tell you where I would be if I didn't get in here," he said of Sarah's House. "There's no way I could have done it without all the people here ... I feel like the future is bright."



## Doing whatever it takes to help families in need



Over a decade of volunteering at Anna's House, Brenda Miller has washed walls, cleaned rooms and prepped apartments for new families' arrivals. She has helped restock the pantry, refill prescriptions, adopted families at Christmas – and much more.

Week after week, she makes the 45-minute drive from her home in Pennsylvania to do, as she puts it, "whatever they need."

"I have such an open heart to all of them," she explained. "We each have heartbreak and suffering. We need more hearts understanding that we all go through obstacles in life."

Her open heart and deep kindness have made her a beloved presence at Anna's House, the Catholic Charities program that serves families and adults experiencing homelessness in Harford County, offering supportive housing and opening pathways to self-sufficiency.

## LOVING SUPPORT

Brenda got married at 18. After her first child was born, her husband enlisted in the Navy and spent six years in a career that required frequent moves. She was far from family and found herself stretching the paycheck, juggling his travel, and working when she could.



Brenda Miller

"I have a sense of all the things you go through, especially single moms, having the kids and not having anyone around," she said.

Today, she loves being "the backup" for her seven grandchildren, ages 3 to 12. That same grandmotherly love extends to Anna's House, where children run to her when she arrives and she gets to know residents by name.

"I love all the families we have here, and the kids are like my own," she said. "I want everybody to succeed and get the help they need to take care of their families."

## JOY IN HELPING OTHERS

Over the years, Brenda has seen volunteers at Anna's House care for the property, make casseroles, and adopt families at Christmas. Each act of kindness matters.

"If somebody wants to help, and God has placed it in their heart, they should do it," she said. "The biggest joy is knowing you're helping somebody, making a difference for them. The joy God gives us is that He directs us to a place where He wants us to help."





# This is why we do what we do

*A reflection from Ezra Buchdahl, Administrator,  
St. Vincent's Villa and Villa Maria School*



A former resident of St. Vincent's Villa, Bianca Coates, was in the neighborhood doing a DoorDash delivery when, as she said: "God told me to go inside."

I happened to be near the front desk when I saw her and her big smile. Even though it had been 20 years, I recognized her face right away, and she remembered me, saying, "You're still here!" I gave her a big hug and told her how happy it made me to see her and the courage it must have taken to walk through the doors.

St. Vincent's Villa is our comprehensive residential treatment program for children ages 12 and younger who haven't adequately responded to community-based interventions. Bianca lived here from ages 8 to 12. She now has three beautiful children and works at Einstein Bros. Bagels six days a week. She is also going to school to become a mental health counselor so she can help children who have gone through experiences similar to hers.

We walked through the halls and talked as she reminisced about all the places and people she remembered. We stopped in a unit, and she asked if she could talk to the girls. In an impassioned speech, she told them, "I sat where you are sitting. I had the same feelings of loneliness, isolation, anger, sadness, hurt. I made it hard for the staff with all my running and behavior. You will get out of here and you will be ok. This is not the end of the road for you." When she finished, you could hear a pin drop. The girls were

**"This is not the end of the road for you."**

in awe of her and asked her several poignant questions. It was a group therapy session like I had never seen before – unscripted, spontaneous, magical.

We were visiting other parts of the building when we ran into Angie Perry, a longtime counselor, who remembered her right away and gave her a big hug. They reminisced, and Bianca told her, "I want to sincerely apologize for my behavior when I was here." Angie responded, "Hey, baby, it's ok. Look at you now!" and Bianca beamed from ear to ear.

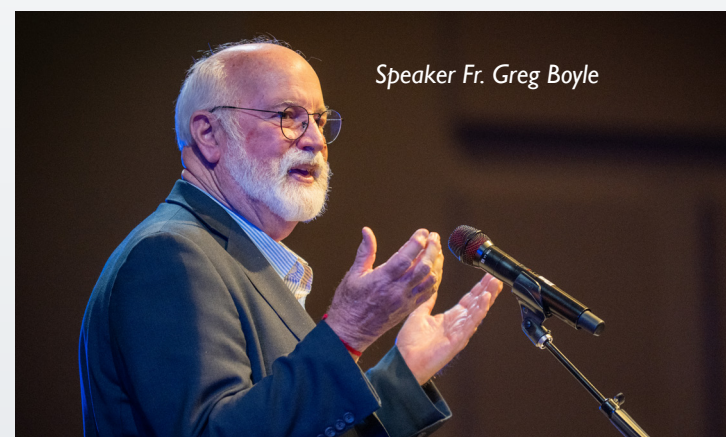
Near the end of the visit, we ran into Volunteer Manager Maria Busko, and they talked about volunteer opportunities. Bianca said, "Call me. Anytime. I am here for the kids. I don't want money. God called me here to help, and that's what I want to do."

This will not be the last time we will see her.

## Journey to Social Justice: Conversation with Fr. Boyle

The 3rd Annual Journey to Social Justice Symposium, held at the Church of the Nativity on October 22, 2025, was a resounding success, with over 800 in attendance, young and old, waiting in line to hear Fr. Greg Boyle speak about his book Cherished Belonging.

Watch the video of the event by scanning the QR code with your phone's camera.



## Catholic Charities invites you to join our Good Samaritan Society!

Leave a legacy that will have a lasting impact  
on our Maryland neighbors in need.

The Good Samaritan Society honors those who remember Catholic Charities in their estate and long-term financial plans.



We welcome a conversation with you about your legacy gift.

Contact Les Goldsborough,  
Director of Planned & Major Giving:  
[lgoldsborough@cc-md.org](mailto:lgoldsborough@cc-md.org) | 667-600-2023



# A CONVERSATION WITH AUGIE CHIASERA

## HOW DID YOU FIRST CONNECT WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES?

I first connected with Catholic Charities more than a decade ago through their work in the community. What struck me right away was how deeply the organization is woven into the fabric of Baltimore—serving people with dignity and compassion, no matter their circumstances. Over time, I've had the opportunity to visit several of their programs and see firsthand the impact they have on families and individuals who are working to build a better life. That connection has only deepened my respect and admiration for the mission.

*Augie Chiasera is the Executive Vice President and Head of Community Markets at M&T Bank, and the 2025 chair of the Catholic Charities Leadership Breakfast*



## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TAKE ON THIS ROLE AS LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST CHAIR?

The Leadership Breakfast is more than an event—it's a movement of business and civic leaders who believe in Baltimore's potential. I was inspired to take on this role because I believe leadership should start with service. When we gather around a shared mission like this, we can amplify Catholic Charities' work and ensure more people get the support they deserve. It's also a chance to lead by example—to show that when businesses and nonprofits come together, real change happens.

## WHY DO YOU SUPPORT CATHOLIC CHARITIES NOW?

I support Catholic Charities because they consistently show up for our community. They're not just responding to needs—they're transforming lives. Whether it's housing, job readiness, food assistance, or mental health services, they approach every challenge with empathy and action. As someone who believes in strengthening communities through partnership, I see Catholic Charities as one of Baltimore's greatest forces for good.

## ARE THERE ASPECTS OF THE AGENCY'S WORK THAT ARE PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL FOR YOU?

What really resonates with me is their focus on human dignity—helping people not only meet immediate needs but also regain hope and independence. Programs like Our Daily Bread Employment Center and My Sister's Place Women's Center are incredible examples of how compassion and structure can change the trajectory of someone's life. Seeing the faces and hearing the stories of people who've found stability through Catholic Charities reminds me why this work matters so deeply.

## WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR OTHERS TO JOIN THE LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST CAMPAIGN?

Because Baltimore needs all of us. The challenges we face as a community can't be solved by one organization or one person—they require collective leadership, compassion, and commitment. Supporting the Leadership Breakfast campaign is a tangible way to invest in solutions that work. Every contribution, every partnership helps Catholic Charities continue their life-changing mission. When we come together in this way, we're not just giving back—we're helping build a stronger, more hopeful Baltimore for everyone.



## DRAGON BOAT RACES CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF BALTIMORE 2025

This year marked the 13th Biennial Dragon Boat Races, bringing together local businesses, nonprofits, and schools to compete for the coveted dragon trophy while raising more than \$400,000 for Catholic Charities programs. Brown Advisory captured the Division A title, and the Archdiocese of Baltimore secured first place in Division B. A special thank you to our 2025 presenting sponsor, M&T Bank, for their continued partnership and support.

*Brown Advisory celebrates a win*



*Paddlers going strong*

## 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!



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

*Catholic Charities is Maryland's largest 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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LEARN ALL THE  
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CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

# Six Ways to Gift the Holidays

**Let your compassion shine bright!  
Your generosity is a light in the darkness for thousands  
of our neighbors who are struggling this Christmas.**

**YOU BRING THE LOVE — WE'LL MAKE SURE IT REACHES THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.**

## **Make a year-end gift today**

Provide immediate help to our neighbors by  
check or online today: [cc-md.org/donate](https://cc-md.org/donate).



## **Become a monthly donor**

Spread your generosity all year long! Monthly giving is  
the most effective way to support our lifesaving mission:  
[cc-md.org/monthlygiving](https://cc-md.org/monthlygiving).

## **Support us with a DAF gift or stock transfer**

Make an impact directly from your donor-advised fund  
or make a gift of stock — a simple and tax-smart way to give:  
[cc-md.org/ways-to-give/stocks-mutual-funds/](https://cc-md.org/ways-to-give/stocks-mutual-funds/).



## **Create a lasting legacy through an estate gift**

Show your support for our mission while accommodating your  
own personal, financial, estate-planning and philanthropic goals:  
<https://catholiccharities-md.giftplans.org/>.

## **Donate your car**

Turn your wheels into meals, shelter, and lifesaving services. It's  
fast, easy, and tax-deductible: [cc-md.org/vehicle-donations](https://cc-md.org/vehicle-donations).



**To see the wish lists across our programs, visit [cc-md.org/holidaygiving](https://cc-md.org/holidaygiving).**

*Inspired by the Gospel mandates to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need.*