WORKS OF Charity

FALL 2021

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Volunteer Feature
Eagle Scout Garden Project
Community & Parish Partners

SERVING MILWAUKEE, WAUKESHA, SHEBOYGAN, RACINE, FOND DU LAC, KENOSHA, WALWORTH, DODGE, WASHINGTON, OZAUKEE COUNTIES
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Together Again

This summer, our annual Adoption Picnic brought families together to reconnect in an afternoon filled with sunshine, laughter, food, and the familiar ease of friendship. Families and staff reunited, sharing stories and creating fun memories. “It is such a joy to see our families together,” Erika, our Pregnancy Support case manager continues, “It is such a blessing to be a part of their adoption journey!” Catholic Charities’ staff provide support and guide the family triad of child, birth mother, and adoptive parents to make the best, loving choices for the child. Since opening our doors in 1920, the foundation of our mission continues to be caring for the needs of children and families.

Our Mission Through Generations with Volunteer Jen

When COVID first reached the U.S. in early 2020, Jen looked for a place where she could help others in her community. She found our website, ccmke.org, and signed up to volunteer. Talking with Jessica, our Volunteer Coordinator, she said, “Whatever you need, just ask me.”

This began Jen’s Catholic Charities volunteer story.

We were looking for more volunteers to work with refugees from different countries who speak other languages including Karen, Swahili, and French. Jen volunteered to help refugee parents learn English to help their children navigate school, understand health needs during the pandemic, and feel more connected at work and in the community. To keep families and volunteers safe in the pandemic, the Refugee & Immigration Services (RIS) mentoring program transitioned to virtual tutoring sessions. Jen connected with her refugee partner through Zoom and WhatsApp.

Getting involved led to new opportunities.

As the pandemic continued and community needs deepened, Jessica asked Jen for her help with the Catholic Charities Coat Drive. An anonymous donor provided thousands of warm winter coats. Volunteers were needed to sort and prepare the jackets for families in need and when asked to help Jen said, “yes.”
Part of the mission of Catholic Charities is to “call upon others to do the same.”

Jen’s Catholic faith was a leading force in her childhood. “Service to others is what we are meant to do as Catholics,” she said. Jen and her husband involve their children in volunteer efforts with Catholic Charities and other organizations as a living example of generous volunteering. When Jen asked what more she and her family could do, she learned about our Adult Day Center and the sprucing up needed in the walking garden that members enjoy. Having a parent with Alzheimer’s, Jen related to the needs of the ADC members and wanted to see something special happen. She suggested the garden project to her son, Michael who, searching for his Eagle Scout project, took the lead. This spring, Michael, his family, and Boy Scout troop improved the outdoor space at Catholic Charities’ Adult Day Center. Over two weekends the group constructed a new aluminum fence, cleaned up debris, added mulch and assembled two new gliding chairs. “I cannot begin to thank Michael enough for choosing us for his Eagle Scout project. It will bring joy and happiness to our members for years to come,” remarked the director of our Adult Day Center.

“People don’t realize how much Catholic Charities does for the community. Just reach out and keep asking what you can do. Look outward and spread love. There’s a world that needs you.”

Surprisingly, Jen’s Catholic Charities story does not begin with volunteering.

What led her to Catholic Charities? Jen and her three siblings were adopted by their parents through another Catholic Charities in Wisconsin. Jen and her siblings grew up knowing they were adopted; she believes that it’s a very exciting and proud piece of who they are. She said her siblings have always valued and cared for their birth mothers and she expressed her gratitude by saying, “what a wonderful gift, love chose us.” Jen shares that her life is a blessing and there’s not a day that goes by when she’s not thankful. She once participated in an adoption panel and recognized how fortunate she is to live the life she leads. “There are a lot of different adoption stories and journeys. The foundation comes down to love. Just love them and show them what love is.”

Impacting Generations

A special memory from Jen’s childhood was attending a fun adoption gathering at Christmas time with 50 plus adoptive families. As a volunteer at Catholic Charities she is helping others make new friends and cherished memories. This summer Jen and her children volunteered at our Adoption Picnic; talk about a full circle moment!
Community Partners
Grants and awards of $500 or more since January 1, 2020.

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Fond du Lac Area United Way
United Way of Dodge County
United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County
United Way of Kenosha County
United Way of Sheboygan County
United Way of Walworth County
United Way of Washington County

PARISHES & CATHOLIC PARTNERS
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
- Catholic Stewardship Appeal
- Emergency COVID Relief Fund
Catholic Business Forum
Catholic Campus Ministry
at UW-Whitewater
Catholic Charities USA
Christ King Parish, Wauwatosa
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary
Good Shepherd Parish, Menomonee Falls
Holy Family Church, Fond du Lac
Holy Name of Jesus, Sheboygan
Hospital Sisters of St. Francis - USA, Inc.
Knights of Columbus
- No. 4520
- No. 6448
- Michael James Feider Council 7048
- Wisconsin State Council
Pere Marquette Jesuit Community
Racine Dominican Mission Fund
Sacred Heart, Racine
Sisters of Charity of St. Joan Antida Inc.
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St. Mark Parish, Kenosha
St. Martin of Tours, Franklin
St. Mary’s, Menomonee Falls
St. Patrick, Elkhorn
St. Patrick, Racine
St. Paul, Genesee Depot
St. Peter Claver, Sheboygan
Three Holy Women Catholic Parish, Milwaukee
Urban Initiative MKE Inc.
Wheaton Franciscan Sisters

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Western Snowplows
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