

# WORKS OF *Charity*



**CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES**

*Thank you for making an impact!*

**SUMMER 2021**

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# Making a difference

## Learning Reimagined

Last year taught us all the importance of essential workers, but one of the titles that sometimes gets lost is *Mom* and *Dad*. Parents everywhere had to adjust to the new normal of their children being home all the time. That most likely meant a messy house, food constantly being eaten, and virtual learning. Typically, most families rely on the school to provide lunches, technology, and most importantly lessons and activities. Sarah, our Supported Parenting Director, describes the difficulties her clients were having, such as grieving the loss of a loved one, no in-home internet, and not fully being able to help their kids with schoolwork as they have disabilities of their own. Sarah and her staff are there to be a support system, motivator, and offer a sense of normality and routine. Because of community partnerships, staff helped to access computers, food, and household items for families. *“We don’t show up empty handed,”* Sarah shares. She points out the need for Supported Parenting in our community, and how much of a difference it makes that we go to them, as her clients either can’t drive, or don’t have a car. *“Someone has to be there for moms and dads.”*



## Counseling with Erika Riobó-Gómez

Devoted to serving the Latino community, Erika is a bilingual Mental Health Therapist at our Milwaukee office. When Erika moved to the United States from Colombia, she heard about the need for Spanish speaking therapists. Having a passion and vision for her community she obtained her masters, and worked at a hospital counseling center, as well as a private practice before joining our team.

### **What drew you to work for Catholic Charities?**

I love that it is community based and that we can help people who may not have access elsewhere. I want people to know that there is help, and there are resources.

### **How many of your clients are Spanish speaking, and how do you think they benefit from you being bilingual?**

Over half of my clients are Spanish speaking. I find that they feel I can relate on a more personal level. Being an immigrant myself, I understand their culture, lifestyle, and emotions. Some of my clients travel a great distance to see me, because having someone speak their language means they can focus better on treating their trauma.

### **What is the best thing about your job?**

I love helping my clients find their strengths and watching them heal and grow. It is an honor for me to have them share their story, because now they are not suffering alone. I like to remind them that they are the ones doing the work, and I am just walking by their side.

One of my clients had been doing different forms of therapy for years before finding me, and for the first time she has been able to say, *“I’m waking up, and I feel like I want to live.”*



# Because of you

## Creating Forever Families with Adoption Intern Clare Schultz

This past Spring, Clare completed her internship in our adoption program, and said it was an honor to go into clients' homes and have the opportunity to be present and learn about their journey. In her time with Catholic Charities, Clare was able to work with different families throughout the lengthy adoption process, where she was able to take the lead on cases and conduct home visits.

There were times when she thought she would not be able to help or say the right things, but she soon realized that being present and listening goes a long way. She had a client who was suffering from severe trauma and postpartum depression, and with the guidance of our Director of Child Welfare Services, the words and support naturally fell into place. The client is now doing well, and Clare enjoyed working with her over the course of her internship. Watching her grow and accomplish the goals they set, while also overcoming the things life has thrown her way has been incredibly moving for Clare to witness.



*“Social work is an amazing profession, and I am grateful to help and be present for clients. This experience has helped me affirm my decision to pursue work that supports individuals through their journey.”*

## Adult Day Center, Where Friends Are Family



Last year, the Adult Day Center was temporarily closed as a safety precaution for our clients. The staff remained working through wellness-calls to members and noticed that many of them were missing their friends and a social connection. Our staff could see how debilitating this pandemic has been for them from the isolation of quarantine. This led to the center adapting their safety protocols and activities, which allowed them to re-open last July at limited capacity. Annette, ADC Director shed light on the members needing to be around others, and how critical it is for their physical and mental health. *“This is their safe haven.”* Members connect through activities that range from an outing on the patio, to piñata days, and something they all enjoy, table games like Farkle. The group really gets into it and likes teasing one another. The center is looking forward to growing and getting back to full attendance. Annette says there is a great need for adult day centers, and that it is a good alternative option to a nursing home. *“I believe the interactions between members really makes a difference in their wellbeing.”*

# For all you do, thank you!



## From One Family to Another

“On behalf of our family, I wanted to express our complete and total appreciation for all that you and your colleagues have provided our brother in addressing his hoarding disorder. It means even more when such loving care is provided to a brother who is long distance from us. Catholic Charities staff and volunteers have both been invaluable in their attention and dedication. Our brother continues to rave about the help he has received in my weekly follow-up chats with him. His volunteer coach has been kind enough to keep me informed with photos on the progress he and my brother are making together. As a token of our deep appreciation to Catholic Charities of Milwaukee, I will be putting a check in the mail today. *Thank you to everyone at Catholic Charities. You all helped to save our brother!*”

Our Hoarding Intervention & Treatment Program is designed to meet individuals where they are at and create a plan to start the healing journey. Our unique logic model starts with a phone call with a case manager, an in-home assessment visit, weekly visits with a home coach, and counseling to work through the underlying issues.

No one should go through this alone.

## From Your Family at Catholic Charities

Early in 2020, our staff came together to discuss how this destructive pandemic would impact the people we serve; families and adults of all ages affected by poverty. You helped us respond to needs for food, cleaning supplies, masks, and direct cash assistance to prevent homelessness.

You made it possible for our staff to continue safely providing essential social services to attend to immediate needs, mental health, pregnancy and parenting support, adoption services, adult day services, refugee and immigration services, in-home care and hoarding intervention. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being there for neighbors in need!



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