



WORKS OF CHARITY

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2019



ON THE COVER:
EMPLOYEE
HIGHLIGHT
DEZIRAE GRANT
PAGE 3

THE NEW
REFUGEE +
IMMIGRATION
SERVICES
PROGRAM
PAGE 2

6 WAYS YOU
CAN SUPPORT
CATHOLIC
CHARITIES
PAGE 4

& MORE!

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

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

THE NEW REFUGEE + IMMIGRATION SERVICES



The children reading a book together.

In 2018, due to drastic changes in the number of refugees admitted into the United States, Catholic Charities sunsetted, after 42 years, the resettling of new refugees. While we are no longer resettling new families, we are still connected to the refugee communities in southeast Wisconsin. Our new Refugee and Immigration Services Program (RIS) integrates the needs of the refugee and the immigrant communities, from both, a social, and a legal perspective. We are committed to providing services to families that will ease the complicated process of succeeding in their new communities while keeping their culture alive.

Claire Reuning, Refugee Integration Specialist, is heading the refugee program and looking to serve our families in a new way. The most important part of her job? “Listening,” Reuning shares. “My job is to listen to the real needs of the families who live here and create services that can give them the tools to succeed.” While the legal services for immigrants will remain the same, the refugee integration services will focus on creating relationships between refugee families and their neighbors, developing cultural humility through educational programs, and connecting with resources in the area. “The program is more of a one-on-one model to fit our client’s needs. Most of our clients work over 40 hours a week while raising families, so our services provide flexibility.”

Reuning works specifically with a team of volunteers in a Befriender Program, where individuals in the community are partnered with refugee clients and their families. Whether it’s helping them with their English lessons or using their professional skills to help them buy a home or cope with anxiety, these community members have developed lasting relationships with their new neighbors.

BEFRIENDER PROGRAM IN ACTION

Kathleen began working with the family pictured right when they arrived in Milwaukee. The family fled the Congo in 2010 and resided in a refugee camp in Kenya until July 2017. When they were resettled here, Kathleen looked forward to building a relationship with the family of 15. She knew that this would take dedication and a lot of time. “The weekly meetings have made such a difference. Every time we work with someone, they become an integral part of the community. We get so much out of it too.”



The children with Sheila (left) and Kathleen

Kathleen and another volunteer, Sheila, meet with four of the children every Thursday to help them with their reading and homework. “I like to do homework, I like to read, I like to dance, I like to get to know a family in America,” one of the children shared.

“We’ve had the most fun; not only do you get to know the family, you get to know the country and culture; not all at once though - it’s a very slow process. It’s more about building the relationship and being friends,” Kathleen shared.

The family recently welcomed a baby girl into the world, and she was named after Kathleen. In Bembe culture, naming your child after someone is the highest form of thanks. Whenever they see the baby, they are reminded of what Kathleen has done for them, and the bond that will continue for years to come.

UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING HIGHLIGHT

In September 2018, we joined several organizations in Sheboygan to celebrate United Way of Sheboygan County's Day of Caring Event. We are so thankful for the 20 volunteers that came from Falls Financial Associates - Thrivent Financial, Prevea Health Center, KOHLER Power, and Family Connections of Southwest Wisconsin!

With the help of these volunteers, we were able to transform our Sheboygan office's outdoor area. They

weeded, planted flowers, trimmed trees, created two new garden beds, mulched and built a picnic table. Our clients and staff are now able to enjoy the outdoor area and take a much needed reprieve.



2018 Sheboygan Day of Caring team



The teams hard at work!



Volunteers also put together over 80 care bags which include toothpaste, toothbrushes, and deodorant. We wouldn't have the means to give these bags out without volunteers and donations!

If you are interested in participating in a Day of Caring event, contact your local United Way!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: DEZIRAE GRANT

Dezira Grant works in our Pregnancy & Parenting Support program, serving individuals and families out of our Milwaukee office. She has a heart for service, both on and off the clock!

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I'm extremely passionate about helping other people. I'm a driven and motivated individual that sees the good in people. In 2017, I received my bachelors in Social Welfare from University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. That same year, I launched my own nonprofit Fearless Indeed, Inc. which is dedicated to helping the youth of Milwaukee transition into adulthood.

What sparks your passion for working with expectant mothers?

I think seeing the progress in the mothers and their relationships with their children, and ultimately themselves. It's awesome to watch them transform from an unsure parent that doesn't have the support they need into a confident mother that can balance time, money, and caring for their children. I don't take credit in changing their lives; they had everything they needed within them long before I met them. I listen and I support them; I remind them that they are smart, important, and wonderful mothers, and that they can do anything they put their mind to. That's what I love most about the people I get to serve.

What do you love most about working at Catholic Charities?

I love that Catholic Charities is rooted in values and that we have a faith foundation. Working here doesn't mean that you have to have a certain faith, but I definitely feel like I don't have to hide it when I'm here. People's beliefs are respected. To me, it's important that my work space allows me to work through some of my tough cases in a way where I don't take it home with me.



TOP 6 WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

1 WORKS OF CHARITY FUND

Our 2019 Works of Charity Fund is a direct way for you to support the individuals we serve by contributing to the programs and services. You can visit our website:

www.ccmke.org/DonateNow to make your contribution that will change lives!

2 PLANNED GIVING

By remembering Catholic Charities in your will, trust, or insurance policy, you can continue to help our clients and our mission to serve those most in need.

Please contact Jackie Rekowski at jrekowski@ccmke.org or 414-769-3524 to learn more information.

3 GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY

The Good Samaritan Society recognizes donors contributing \$1,000 or more to the Catholic Charities' Works of Charity Fund, which accounts for a significant portion of Catholic Charities' annual agency revenue.

4 AMAZON SMILE

You can make an impactful gift to Catholic Charities shopping for your favorite things- when you use Amazon Smile, they donate to us.

5 CAR DONATIONS

CARS (Charitable Auto Resources, Inc.) accepts all types of vehicles- cars, trucks, SUVs, motorcycles, ATVs (even boats and snowmobiles) to benefit local charities. Call 855-920-4483 to speak to a Catholic Charities' CARS representative.

6 VOLUNTEER

If you're looking to give more than your money, we would love to have you volunteer your time! Visit our website www.ccmke.org/VolunteerOpportunities to see what we have available!

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AM Solutions
The Catholic Community Foundation
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Erica P. John Fund
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Greater Milwaukee Foundation-
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Ted and Arleen Koenigs Designated Fund
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William Stark Jones Foundation
Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc.
Ziegler Family Foundation, Inc.

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

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Catholic Stewardship Appeal
Gesu Parish, Milwaukee
Good Shepherd Catholic Church
Racine Dominican Mission Fund
School Sisters of St. Francis
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Racine County
Society of the Divine Savior
SSM St. Clare of Assisi Region
St. Francis Borgia Catholic Church, Cedarburg
St. John Vianney Parish, Brookfield
St. Mary's Parish, Menomonee Falls
St. Thomas Aquinas, Waterford
St. William Parish, Waukesha

*Grants and awards of \$1,000 or more since January 1, 2018.

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