



FINDING *the* LIGHT



Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



OUR MISSION

Impelled by the love and teaching of Jesus Christ, while respecting the dignity and potential of all people, we collaborate to offer life-giving programs, advocate for the voiceless and empower the vulnerable to foster a just society.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

During the Angelus for the Solemnity of the Epiphany on January 6, 2021, Pope Francis addressed the “darkness” of modern times which had manifested itself in human strife, natural disasters, and the global pandemic which had caused so much loss of life. He implored us to remember Christ as the light through the darkness but also that as Christ is our “star” he said, “we too can and must also be the star for our brothers and sisters, as witnesses of the treasures of goodness and infinite mercy that the Redeemer offers freely to everyone.”

For those that are lost in the darkness of poverty or mental illness, those who are forced to flee their countries or children whose parents are incarcerated, we are blessed with the opportunity to be the guides to aid them in their search for the light in their worlds. Last year, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans acted as that “light” for over 55,000 children, women, and men of our community. The programs represented in this report are just a snapshot of the challenges presented to the dedicated case managers, foster parents, mentors, and teachers who work to assist any who seek the services of the agency.

As we continue to struggle through the everyday things that may tax our mind, body, and spirit, I ask that you continue to act as the “star” mentioned by Pope Francis to those in need in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

I am grateful to Sr. Marjorie Hebert, MSC for her tireless dedication to the mission of Catholic Charities and I am proud to recognize our staff and thank them for their sacrifices over the past year in their service to our most vulnerable sisters and brothers among us.

Wishing you God’s blessings, and with gratitude for your participation in the work of Catholic Charities, I am,

Gratefully in Christ,



Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans

Last year,

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Archdiocese of

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Build a better world said God

And I asked how?

The world is such a vast place and

so complicated now

I am small and useless

What can I do?

God in all His wisdom said, “Just build a better you.”

— author unknown

Dear Friends of Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans:

The quote above appeared in the program of the funeral mass of a longtime supporter of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans. As I contemplated his life of service to the community and his dedication to his faith, it made me think of the work we do in service to those men, women and children in our Archdiocese in the context of this quote which was so meaningful to him. Last year, over 50,000 people sought the services of CCANO. All they sought was to be healthy in mind and body, have a roof over their heads and food on their tables, and provide for those who could not care for themselves. In their efforts to be “better” they may stumble and fall, as we all do from time to time. As Christians, we are called to raise our brothers and sisters up from their struggles and travails when they fall. We work to build a better world by helping all of those who seek our assistance to be the “better” versions of themselves. As the world becomes more complicated and the struggles more challenging, I am calling on you to be our partner in building a better world through the programs of Catholic Charities.

As you will read throughout this Annual Report and the programs we have highlighted, your support has enabled us to welcome the stranger, strengthen the mind of the suffering, mentor youths, and foster voluntarism to seniors in their service to children. I am grateful to all who believe in the mission of Catholic Charities and support us with their time, talent, and treasure. A better world is in reach for all of us when we work together in spirit and grace.

Sincerely,

Sr. Marjorie Hebert, MSC

Sr. Marjorie Hebert, MSC
President and CEO



Ciara Independent Resident Thrives with Assistance Provided

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans' Ciara House program took on its first clients, homeless individuals with a form of mental illness, in April of 1983. Since then Ciara House has served hundreds of residents and transitioned them into their own housing throughout New Orleans and surrounding parishes. In Louisiana, there are 3,178 homeless individuals and 20-45% of homeless individuals have mental illness.

Over the years, the program has transitioned from a group home setting into independent living. Ciara Independent Living has 34 residents in Orleans and Jefferson Parish and their length of stay varies depending on their individual goals. Residents pay a modest rent, provide their own meals, and are able to live relatively independently. The residents are referred to Ciara from other CCANO programs, hospitals, the National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI), Beacon Behavioral, Metropolitan Human Services, and Health Care for the Homeless.

Ciara Independent Living assists residents with home management, budgeting, navigating the health care system, employment, medication management, application assistance, behavioral health services, and home visits to ensure that each client is safe and stable. Along with case management services, Ciara Independent strives to foster a sense of community among the residents by providing recreational and educational groups. The residents also enjoy community meals throughout the month.

Ciara collaborates with Counseling Solutions to make sure the residents get the wraparound behavioral health services they need. The therapist with Counseling Solutions is able to meet with the residents in their home, as most of them do not have transportation. They also collaborate with Health Guardians of Catholic Charities, as they assist the residents with navigating the healthcare system.

Jason Bennett was referred to Ciara House several years back as he was discharged from

the hospital in New Orleans. Jason grew up in Atlanta, and after he lost his daughter and girlfriend in a car accident, he moved to New Orleans to start a new life. He lived at the homeless shelter for two years and became depressed and was hospitalized for 7 months. He then transitioned into living at Ciara Independent where he found healing and learned how to better cope with his schizophrenia. Ciara Independent provided a stigma-free supportive community, unlike anything he had ever experienced, which provided a safe space for him to be himself and cope with his mental illness. Jason's case managers provided the education and daily support he needed to really understand his diagnosis and learn healthy coping skills. They worked with him daily to help him overcome his agoraphobia, now he is able to shop and eat in public places without major anxiety.

Ciara Independent Living continues to provide Jason with behavioral health services, monthly food assistance, transportation to doctor's appointments, and a community of support and care. Jason has been with Ciara Independent for many years and says, "I feel at home at Ciara and I need the support of the community."

Jason provides encouragement and support to the new residents moving in, walks along side of them as they start their new life. "What makes Ciara Independent Living so unique is that we have long term and short term residents. When they move in, we work to empower them in reaching their personal goals, and that is different for each resident," says Ciara's program coordinator, Brittany Simmons.

"It has been such a joy to work with James, he is such an encouragement and a bright light to the other residents. We are so happy to have him at Ciara," says Ciara's Brittany Simmons. Jason one day wants to return to his career working in a veterinary clinic.

For more information about Ciara Independent Living, visit www.ccano.org/ciara.

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Cornerstone Kids Mentor Brings Confidence and Success to Mentee

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans' Cornerstone Kids has been connecting youth with adults who volunteer as mentors since 2007. Jan Mitchell became a mentor in 2019 after hearing about the mentoring program at her church. She is a retired teacher, and loves to see youth grow and develop. Jan thought the program would be a good opportunity for her to continue working with children during her retirement. She and her mentee, My-Linh, were matched in January 2020. They didn't know it at the time, but their mentoring relationship would soon take an unconventional path due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

My-Linh joined the program in 2019 as a quiet 6th grader who was very reluctant to interact with other people and didn't feel very confident in herself. My-Linh's mom, Ann, found out about the mentoring program through My-Linh's school. "I enrolled My-Linh in the program because I wanted her to get some guidance and learn how to communicate with people better. She was dealing with some personal issues at school and it was affecting the way she was acting. I saw a big change in her. Her self-esteem and self-confidence was no longer there," says Ann.

In the beginning of their mentoring relationship, My-Linh preferred to stay home, sleep, and do her own thing. She was very guarded and her conversations with Jan were at a surface level. The pandemic presented additional challenges to their new relationship because they could not see each other in-person for several months. They did their best to stay connected through phone calls and sending notes to each other. But now, after more than a year of being matched together, both Jan and Ann have seen some big changes in My-Linh. "As I spend one-on-one time with My-Linh, I can see that she is a different person. She's funny, talkative, and has been opening up to me about school and other experiences. She has also developed a willingness to try new things like doing community service," says Jan. My-Linh has enjoyed participating in the program and getting to know Jan better. One of her favorite one-on-one activities so far was going to Celebration in the

Oaks. "Mrs. Jan has helped me to stay on the right track by encouraging me to do well and to do my best at everything," says My-Linh.

She credits her mentor with helping her to become more self-confident because Jan always says encouraging things to keep her motivated. My-Linh always looks forward to hanging out with her mentor, but really appreciates the open communication with Mrs. Jan. "One of the benefits of having a mentor is knowing that I have someone to talk to when needed," says My-Linh.

Ann often reflects on the changes that she has noticed in her daughter since My-Linh started working with Jan. "I see a very big change in My-Linh! She has definitely opened up a whole lot! I can tell that she's more open to what I have to tell her as her parent. She has gained her self-esteem and self-confidence back. She's more willing to participate in events now especially if Mrs. Jan is involved. She's still a work in progress," says Ann.

Jan has also tried to be resource to My-Linh and Ann. They have been working together to encourage My-Linh to get out of her comfort zone and try new experiences. This summer, Jan supported My-Linh as she participated in CCANO's SERVE. She and My-Linh also participated in Cornerstone Kids' community service activity at the Food for Seniors warehouse. My-Linh also recently became a volunteer with the SPCA and is looking forward to spending time every week helping out at the animal shelter.

As they look ahead, Jan is focused on supporting and encouraging My-Linh as she starts high school and navigates through new experiences and friendships. Ann is grateful for the additional support. "I look forward to My-Linh being more outgoing and not so shy when she's meeting new people! I want her to be able to be herself and not be afraid of whatever comes along, and know that she can conquer all things through knowledge and wisdom," says Ann.

She encourages more parents to consider enrolling their children in Cornerstone Kids. Jan hopes she can

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convince more people to volunteer their time as mentors. "I look at the world, at all the issues involving children and youth, and a lot of people just complain about the problems. But I say, you have to be part of the solution, you have to step up and do something! Even just having an impact on one youth is enough because you have faith that it will spread to the other people in the child's life," says Jan.

For more information about Cornerstone Kids, visit www.ccano.org/cornerstone.

Cornerstone Kids is always looking for mentors, especially male mentors. Sign-up to become a mentor by visiting www.ccano.org/volunteer or contact Kristina Gibson at kgibson@ccano.org.

Immigration and Refugee Services Client Becomes Staff Member

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans' Immigration and Refugee Services provides a broad range of counseling and representation to immigrants and their families. We help clients understand the immigration law, learn their rights under the law, and to complete the immigration process successfully. Our staff includes attorneys, fully-accredited Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) Representatives, a case manager, and a staff translator. Refugee Services Program provides resettlement and self-sufficiency services to newly arrived refugees and other immigrants granted special humanitarian legal status. The refugee services team supports clients with a wide range of resettlement needs from the moment they arrive at the airport and beyond.

Staff welcome refugees to the Greater New Orleans area and provide case management support, continued cultural orientation, employment services, interpretation

services, access to English language training, community outreach and mentorship to ensure their self-sufficiency and integration into the community.

One such refugee, Patricia Briceño Figueredo, fled to the United States from Venezuela as a political refugee and was welcomed by Catholic Charities' Immigration and Refugee Services.

"In 2017, my family and I left Venezuela running from political persecution, torture and death. Our destination was the United States, a country that has demonstrated great solidarity with its hemispheric neighbors and the most vulnerable people. We arrived here with our hearts full of pain because we had to leave behind our family with a lot of fear and uncertainty looking for refuge and protection."

"We found ourselves in a friendly community with a great sensitivity towards human suffering. This

community received us with open arms and gave us the opportunity to establish ourselves, to restart our lives in a safe environment, free of threats," Patricia said. "I, my youngest daughter, who recently graduated from college and my husband, who is a professional who had serious health problems due to malnutrition, were received at an interview by the legal and social services teams at Catholic Charities' Immigration and Refugee Services. In this moment, we saw the light at the end of the tunnel!"

CCANO has a multidisciplinary team full of high quality professionals and with a great sense of solidarity, humanity, and passion to help the most vulnerable.

"It is here that our journey began in constructing our refuge in this country by means of asylum for reasons of political persecution," Patricia said. "After one year passed, our case was approved and we were able to have the certainty that our





lives were having a true meaning. While the immigration process was advancing, we had to start from the foundation working to create economic stability to be able to live in this beautiful city.”

Patricia spoke about what life was like once she arrived in the United States and began working with Catholic Charities. “We worked in cleaning and maintenance, painting and construction, child care, super markets and stores,” she said. “At Catholic Charities, marvelous people helped us find a place to live, taught us how to manage our finances, oriented us on how to start studying the English language, and guided us on how to obtain medical assistance to care for our health among many other pieces of advice that helped us establish our new way of life.”

After establishing life in the United States and getting settled, Patricia was thrilled to continue working with Catholic Charities. “Currently, I am very proud to say that I work for Catholic Charities.”

“During our time as clients, the staff members of Catholic Charities Immigration and Refugee Services identified a potential in me to work for and become a part of this great CCANO family,” she said.

Among many people that Patricia is eternally grateful for include Janet Lopez, Marile Rodriguez, Allison Page, Haddi Reikhadi, Maribel Loja, and Stephanie McClellan.

“This job opportunity has been my greatest success so far because I have been able to restart my career in the professional world that I had to abandon in Venezuela,” Patricia said. “I have been able to demonstrate to my countrymen and Hispanic peers that ‘Yes We Can!’ with faith, discipline, and perseverance we can reach our goals and out-do ourselves every day. The path of restarting has its difficult moments that require a lot strength but it does not matter how many times we fall. The important thing is we get back up and preserve with a positive attitude.”

Patricia began her career at Catholic Charities as a legal assistant for the Legal Immigration Program. Patricia is currently the Administrative Assistant for Catholic Charities’ CEO, Sister Marjorie Hebert, M.S.C, and COO, Deacon Martin Gutierrez.

For more information about Immigration and Refugee Services, visit www.ccano.org/immigration-refugee-services.

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Therapeutic Family Services Foster Parent Speaks about Benefits of Volunteering

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans' Therapeutic Family Services (TFS) matches children with moderate to severe emotional, behavioral, or developmental problems, or medically fragile children with families who provide specialized foster care. Children are referred through the Department of Children and Family Services. TFS also trains and supports prospective foster parents. Foster families provide a temporary home for children whose parents cannot care for them. The goal is to reunite these children with their families. If that is not possible, we will find a permanent home, preferably with the foster family.

Foster parent, Sharon Avist, began working for TFS after working at Brook Haven group home. After the program closed, all the children were moved to different foster care programs. Sharon knew she wanted to continue working with foster children.

Sharon spoke about being a foster parent, "Becoming a foster parent has given me insight to why family is important. Family is needed more than love. Families need understanding, strength and most need endurance," she said. "The everyday struggles I see in the children I have, breaks my heart. The children only want someone to care for them and to show them they care. The children in foster care struggle with being selfish and very few who like to share and think about others. This has shown me to express my love for a child daily and never let a child give up on life!"

Sharon also spoke about Catholic Charities staff that trained her and how that has made her a better foster parent and more caring and patience with the children in her care.

She also spoke about her hopes for the future as a foster parent. "My future looks bright and sunny. I enjoy the work that I do with the children. I hope all the children become successful as well as productive citizens. I pray god protect them from all hurt and pain. I pray all the children in my care have a wonderful adulthood life," Sharon said.

For more information about Therapeutic Family Services, becoming a foster parent and the application process, visit www.ccano.org/tfs/.



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Catholic Charities standing hand in hand

Through your generosity, we assisted over **50,000** individuals through our programs.

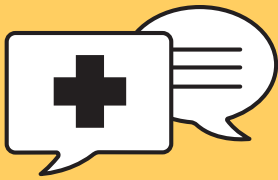
Pro-Life Services distributed **88,551** diapers during office visits to **1500** individuals/families



807 legal & support issues handled through Immigration Services



33,552 days attended through Head Start programs



PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) provided **1,078** primary care visits and **6,721** social worker encounters

Catholic Charities School Based Counseling provided **2,218** units of individual therapy



152 Individuals served through Domestic Violence Project Save

Therapeutic Family Services Foster Parents provided **4,175** days of foster care



553 ESL/Citizenship Classes and additional individual/family services

Padua House Program served individuals totalling **8888** days of care

Ciara Services supplied **10,705** days of care



Dedicated Volunteers donated **138,230** hours of volunteer services valued at **\$1,941,962**



Food for Seniors distributed **308,130** food boxes in all **64** Louisiana Civil Parishes

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Archbishop of New Orleans

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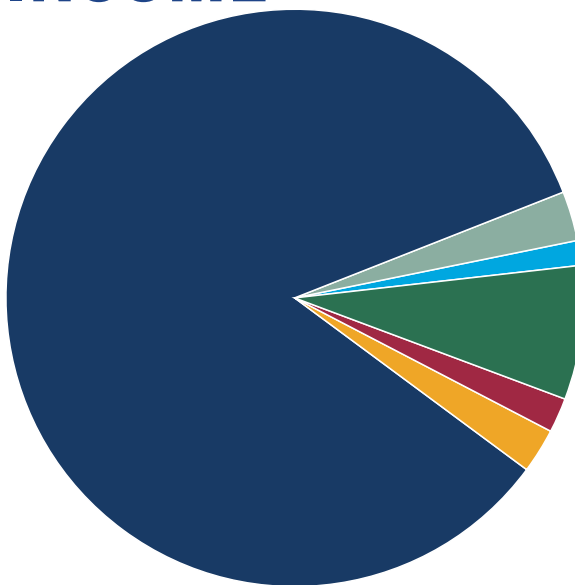
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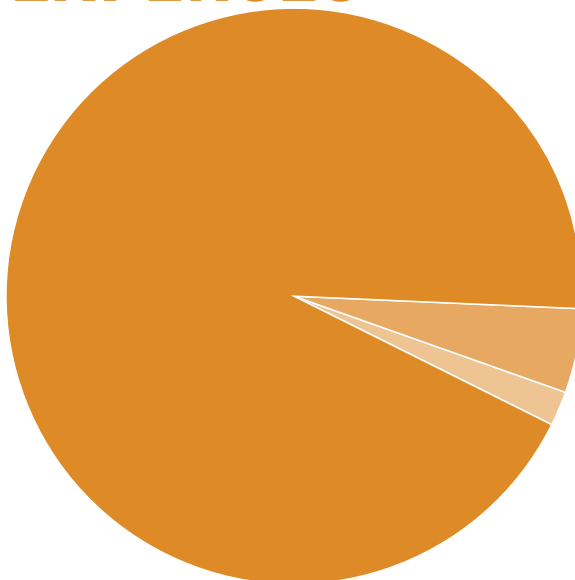
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INCOME



OPERATING INCOME	AMOUNT
● Public Sources	\$34,970,577
● Program Service Fees	\$1,172,800
● Private Grants	\$860,947
● Contributions	\$3,150,987
● Donated Goods and Services Received	\$463,728
● United Way	\$1,024,955
TOTAL	\$41,643,994

EXPENSES



93%
of expenses
are spent
on program
services, care,
and goods.

EXPENSES	AMOUNT
● Program Services	\$40,662,619
● Management & General	\$2,127,575
● Fundraising	\$769,726
TOTAL	\$43,559,920

(a) Unaudited fiscal year ended June 30, 2021

(b) Program services amount does not include 469,278 commodity food boxes distributed by Food for Families/Food for Seniors with a retail value of approximately \$23,463,900

(c) A portion of current year expenses were covered by grants from prior years.

The background consists of seven vertical stripes of equal width in the following colors from left to right: yellow, maroon, blue, light green, dark blue, orange, and dark green.

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Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans

1000 Howard Avenue, Ste. 200 • New Orleans, LA 70113



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