

Message of Hope

JUNE • 2022

 **CATHOLIC
CHARITIES**
CENTRAL TEXAS
ENGAGE. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

Dear Friends,

I write this letter to you on the heels of an unspeakable tragedy in Uvalde. Recently, it seems we have endured one unprecedented event after another. In times like these, it could be easy to slip into apathy, to feel defeated, and to lose hope.

As believers, we are called to defy that thinking. Instead, we are called to do something.

Do something.

This was the theme of our Creating Hope Luncheon in Bryan, but it's more than that. These are words we live by at Catholic Charities.

When a disaster strikes and families lose everything, we run to them. When families are facing financial burdens due to a crisis or inflation, we deploy and give away free basic needs items to help them live with dignity. When a client is facing a mental health crisis due to years of trauma, we give them the best possible care to help them recover.

If you support Catholic Charities, you are part of this work. You are doing something! We accomplished the things you'll read about in this newsletter (and much more) because of gifts from you and thousands like you. Thank you for stepping up to support our community during such a critical time.

In His Peace,



Sara Ramirez
Executive Director



Sara Ramirez, Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

People of faith serving anyone in need by strengthening families and promoting respect for human dignity and life.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Boyce, President
Ron Gay, Vice President
Brad Heath, Treasurer
John James, Secretary
DeKarlos Blackmon
Scott Brutocao
Rev. Chris Downey
Leah Esparza
Peggy Fernandes
Dorothy Hargrave
Patricia Hayes
Mary Beth Koenig
Pat Macy
Tini Nguyen
Rev. Bruce Nieli
Deacon Patrick O'Beirne
Deacon Bill Scarmardo



CREATING HOPE IN THE BRAZOS VALLEY

In April, Catholic Charities resumed our Creating Hope Brazos Valley Luncheon in Bryan/College Station after pausing the event during the pandemic. We were grateful for the chance to reconnect with our friends in the Brazos Valley and provide an opportunity for them to come together to help families in need in this important community.

Our luncheon's theme was "Do Something." During our program, we emphasized the importance of everyone doing what they can to make our community a better place. Because if we each "do something"—no matter how great or small—collectively we will make a big difference.

Our supporters responded strongly and together, we **met our \$100,000 fundraising goal!** Our generous guests, including 32 new donors and five new Friends Society members, made vital contributions to support our work to provide mental healthcare, pregnancy and parenting resources, support for veterans, and more in the Brazos Valley.

Anna Byrd, a Counseling Services client, shared her story and described how Catholic Charities' mental health services helped break through her trauma to become a better version of herself. Guests also heard from Very Rev. James Misko (Vicar General for the Diocese of Austin), Deacon Frank Ashley (Deacon, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church; Senior Associate Dean, Bush School, Texas A&M University), and John Paci (Director of our Brazos Valley office).

We thank our guests for joining us and we welcome our new supporters and Friends Society members. We can't wait to share more stories of lives changed thanks to you!



Luncheon speaker Deacon Frank Ashley (right) at his table with Wanda J. Watson (middle) and Mary Marchal (left).



(From left) Angelita Garcia-Alonzo, Justin Estep (CCCTX Director of Immigration Legal Services), and Judge Celina Vasquez enjoyed catching up at the Creating Hope Luncheon.



Anna Byrd (CCCTX Counseling Services client) spoke at the Creating Hope Luncheon, sharing how Catholic Charities was there for her in her greatest time of need.

PROVIDING TORNADO RELIEF ACROSS CENTRAL TEXAS

When several tornadoes hit the Central Texas area in March, our Disaster Response program immediately sprung to action. Led by Brooke Swate, Director of Disaster Response, Catholic Charities offered financial assistance, emergency housing, free counseling, and free basic needs items to anyone impacted by the tornadoes.

Since then, our Disaster Response program has **helped more than 100 families impacted by the tornadoes.** We responded to many calls through our Disaster Hotline and participated in Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) events to serve families in Round Rock, Elgin, Taylor, and Madisonville.

Special thanks to those who donated toward our tornado relief efforts. Your gifts allowed us to help families, some of whom lost everything, meet their basic needs and begin the road to recovery.



The CCCTX Disaster Response team assists families at a MARC in Round Rock on March 24, 2022.

SERVING WACO FAMILIES AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES GIVING DAY

Catholic Charities recently hosted our first drive-thru material giveaway event in Waco. “Catholic Charities Giving Day” in Waco took place on May 6 outside St. Mary Catholic Church. In two hours, we **served 51 Waco families with diapers, wipes, cleaning supplies, books for children and more.**

This event was sponsored by the St. Gabriel’s Pregnancy and Parenting Program (SGPPP) to encourage Waco residents to sign up for support.

“We know many families are facing financial strain right now. We want our Waco community to know we are here for them if they are in need,” said Angelica Reyes, Director of SGPPP.

Catholic Charities is planning several other Giving Day events across Central Texas in the months to come.



Angelica Reyes, Director of the St. Gabriel's Pregnancy and Parenting Program, hands out diapers to families in need alongside her team.

“Time and again, we hear that our Giving Day events are a lifeline for families who are struggling. As you hand them a pack of diapers, you can see a little weight lift off their shoulders. It’s a blessing to be a source of hope to them.”

Suzanne Leggett
Chief Advancement Officer.



Suzanne Leggett (Chief Advancement Officer), Jennifer Orr (Controller), and Dorothy Hargrave (board member) all participated in the Catholic Charities Giving Day Waco event.

ENGAGING STUDENTS AT FIRST-EVER CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FAIR

On April 22, the Catholic Charities Parish Relations team hosted our first-ever Catholic Social Teaching (CST) Fair at St. Joseph Catholic Academy in Killeen. This event featured hands-on activities designed to teach students about the seven themes of CST.

More than 230 students participated in the fair. Students in Kindergarten through 5th grade received a CST Fair passport, and had it stamped as they traveled to different CST stations. Each station featured activities focused on one of the seven CST Themes, helping students understand each tenet of CST and how to apply them in their daily lives. Middle school students served as student leaders and facilitated activities and stations for the younger students.

Students also had the option to participate in a take-home activity centered around the CST Theme of “Care for God’s Creation.” 35 students chose to fill up recyclable bags to clean up their community.

The Parish Relations team hopes to replicate the CST Fair at other Catholic schools across the Diocese of Austin to provide more hands-on learning experiences centered on our Catholic faith. If you are interested in a CST Fair for your school, contact Emmanuel Villarreal, Parish Outreach Associate at [512-651-6157](tel:512-651-6157) or emmanuel-villarreal@ccctx.org.



Allison Cavazos and Emmanuel Villarreal from the Parish Relations team educate students about Catholic Social Teaching at the CST Fair.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND!

Catholic Charities would like to extend a special thank you to our Friends Society members. Your sustainable gift allows us to respond quickly in times of crisis, expand our services, and even add new services based on community need. We are grateful for your faith in our mission and for your long-term commitment to serving our community.

You can join our Friends Society for as little as \$2.75 per day! If you are interested in becoming a Friend, you can learn more by contacting Erin Rivers at [512-651-6132](tel:512-651-6132) or erin-rivers@ccctx.org.

Save the dates

CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEEKEND

August 27 & 28
at your parish

ANNUAL MEETING

September 8, 2022
Location TBD
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Look for your invitation in
the mail and online soon

CREATING HOPE IN CENTRAL TEXAS EVENT

November 17, 2022
Renaissance Austin Hotel
Glass Oaks Ballroom
5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

GET INVOLVED



Become a Sustaining Donor

Support our six innovative programs at ccctx.org/donate






Volunteer or host a donation drive

Contact Hazmin Martinez at hazmin-martinez@ccctx.org.



Become an Online Warrior

Help us get the word out through social media!

 @ccctx
 @CCcentraltexas
 @catholiccharitiesCTX

PROUD PARTNERS



CCCTX is proud to partner with BTU to provide utility assistance for families in the Brazos Valley.