

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COMMUNITY SERVICES

Connections

SPRING-SUMMER 2021



EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

Lori VanAuken

Executive Director

Challenges Bring Change

It is often said that changes come about when challenges arise and discomfort occurs. Last year certainly proved this to be true. As we begin to come out of the pandemic and the call to action to address structural racism is more urgent than ever, I am pleased to share some of our work with you.

2020 marked our 40th anniversary. Though our celebratory activities were dampened to some extent by COVID, our anniversary reminded us of our humble beginnings in 1980. The opening of one residential program in Lyons, NY became home to 12 individuals with developmental disabilities and a strong foundation for what we would accomplish in years to come.

With our strong foundation, the passion of our staff and generosity of our donors, we were able to thrive and serve during the fear and uncertainty of COVID 19. Catholic Charities Community Services never closed its doors. Over \$200,000 in grants from generous foundations and donors allowed us to help clients keep in touch through technology. Our care managers delivered food and clothing to their clients and conducted socially distanced well visits. Staff provided health education and support groups through telehealth. And our residential staff donned personal protective equipment each day to continue to care for our residents who were quarantined. I am proud to share that our agency was one of the first in the region to secure vaccines for our residential

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WWW.CCCSROCHESTER.ORG

SERVING TOGETHER:

CCCS and CFC become Catholic Charities Family and Community Services

On June 29, 2021, the Board of Directors of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester (CCDOR) approved the merger of Catholic Charities Community Services (CCCS) and Catholic Family Center (CFC). The combined agency will be called Catholic Charities Family and Community Services, providing clients with easier access to a wider range of services and enabling staff to offer more comprehensive care and treatment options in a more efficient delivery model. Serving together, the staff will continue a combined 140 years of service to the most vulnerable individuals and families living in the City of Rochester, as well as throughout all 12 counties of the Diocese.

The agency will continue to serve clients across all stages of life, with services and programs that enable independence and promote human dignity. These services and programs span refugee resettlement to services assisting vulnerable individuals and families, supporting people on their journey to independence. Lori VanAuken, MPA, current Executive Director of CCCS will lead Catholic Charities Family & Community Services as President and CEO. Both the CFC and CCCS Boards, as well as the Bishop of Rochester and the Board of CCDOR, have all expressed unanimous support for appointment of Lori VanAuken as CEO of the combined agency. Marlene Bessette, who has served as President and CEO of Catholic Family Center for nearly ten years will be retiring. Marlene's work has touched the lives of thousands, and her leadership has made a lasting impact that will be felt throughout the region for many years to come.

"CCCS and CFC are sister agencies operating from positions of strength, which was a key driver in this strategic decision to combine our work knowing that we will be able to provide vital services more efficiently," remarked Lori VanAuken. "This merger addresses an important element of CCCS' 2019-2021 strategic plan, which called for an exploration of ways to work more deliberately with our sister Catholic Charities agencies. Clients will be better served through a continuum of comprehensive services in an expanded geographic footprint."

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Catholic Charities

Community Services



SERVING TOGETHER

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“As sister agencies under Catholic Charities, both Catholic Charities Community Services and Catholic Family Center share a common mission and vision for helping the most vulnerable members of our community in answer to the mandate of Jesus to love God and to love our neighbor,” remarked the Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester. “In answering this call to serve together, the dedicated staff of both agencies will be even more strongly supported to continue their service, in faith and charity and in love. On behalf of the Diocese, and all who have been served by her leadership, our prayerful wishes and gratitude to Marlene Bessette for her dedication to the service of Catholic Charities.”

Both Boards of Directors are enthusiastic and support the merger. Stephanie Schaeffer, Board Chair for CFC, and Denny Fries, Board Chair for CCCS, commented on the enhanced services and streamlined processes the new agency will be able to provide to all of their constituents noting that both CFC and CCCS have long histories of successful service to the community and together, they will be able to combine the best of both organizations.

Jaime Saunders, President & CEO of United Way of Greater Rochester, remarked, “This is true leadership in action and shows what is possible when dedicated, community-driven organizations, their boards and staff come together to best meet the needs of the individuals and families they serve.”

Bringing the two agencies together combines the strengths of both organizations in a unique and natural way that will benefit our community. The merger will be effective in January, 2022.

For more detailed information and the full press release, please visit www.cccsrochester.org

Past, Present, Future

Serving Our Community for 40 Years

What a year to have a milestone anniversary! We were not able to celebrate the way we had hoped; nevertheless, 2020 marked the 40th anniversary of Catholic Charities Community Services. Catholic Charities Community Services is one of nine Catholic Charities agencies operating in the 12 counties of the Diocese of Rochester from Lake Ontario to the Pennsylvania border. Community Services started in 1980 at the direction of Bishop Matthew Clark as a single residential home for individuals with developmental disabilities who were being released from deplorable living conditions in state institutions. Today we operate 13 residential homes in several counties and serve thousands of people each year who are living with disabilities,

traumatic brain injuries, mental health challenges and chronic illnesses including HIV/AIDS. Our services continue to expand and address the changing needs of those we serve.

Our client’s successes and their strengths motivate our over 400 employees every day. We are driven by our passion to serve. Our staff, donors and volunteers make that passion a reality. As we reflect on the past, we also look forward to the bright future ahead.

Celebrating
40
Years



CHALLENGES BRING CHANGE from page 1

clients. By the end of February 2021, 96% of our residential clients were vaccinated.

During the pandemic, we came face to face with extremely difficult and distressing events of systemic racism. With humility, our board and staff renewed their commitment to addressing racism, starting within our own organization. In June of 2020, our Cultural Competency/Health Literacy Committee, newly renamed PEACE (Personal Equity And Community Equality), began a series of Lunch & Learn zoom sessions to understand and confront the many facets of racism, and we have begun to shift our own paradigm. With monthly panels, documentaries, speakers, group discussions, individual

work and the completion of an organizational assessment, our board and staff are re-shaping how we do business to do our part in ensuring a just and compassionate society for all.

And because of the pandemic, we have become more future focused ... paying attention to every opportunity to grow and become stronger. The lead story of this issue of Connections is all about the exciting way that CCCS is growing stronger in 2022 by merging with sister agency, Catholic Family Center.

We hope you are inspired by the stories and images in this edition of Connections. It is your support that has helped to create them.



A Wonderful Collaboration

We were both grateful and proud to be able to be one of the first organizations able to access COVID-19 vaccines for our clients. By the beginning of April, 98% of our residents were vaccinated thanks to a wonderful collaboration with our friends at Finger Lakes Community

Health. We are so grateful for the efforts of Mary Zelazny, CEO, and all her dedicated staff who helped organize the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine to our individuals along with their direct care staff.

#LetsUsAndWe

This year our Cultural Competency and Health Literacy committee became the PEACE Committee - Personal Equity and Community Equality. Both the name change and pivot in committee focus was reflective of our agency's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). We knew we had to educate ourselves, commit to learning and unlearning, and dismantle structural racism within our organization and beyond. Our work began with Lunch and Learn zoom meetings - an active introspection and opportunity to have a safe and open dialogue regarding racism and inequity and how to take actionable next steps.

We appreciate our Leadership Team's commitment to this work as well as to our co-chairs, Candyce Singletary and Joe McGee, who have



given their time, energies, and passion for the betterment of our agency and community. There is a robust committee of employees supporting them and together they have developed the agency's DEI statement and the associated hashtag, #LetsUsAndWe. We continue this journey, doing the work of recognizing and celebrating cultural diversity and working toward a world where all voices are heard.

Congratulations Graduates!



Marques Button and Brian Bishop

Congratulations to Marques Button and Brian Bishop, residents of one of our homes in Penn Yan, on their graduation from the D.R.I.V.E. program at Keuka College.

The D.R.I.V.E. Program (Diversity, Responsibility, Inclusion, Vision, and Experiential Learning) has been recognized by the New York State Department of Education and *Think College* as an effective practice in the transition programming for young adults with intellectual disabilities. We are so lucky to have the program so close at Keuka College, where college students serve as peer mentors to D.R.I.V.E. students. They assist students in attending college classes and to assimilate into campus life.

The goal for D.R.I.V.E. students is to obtain meaningful employment upon graduation from the program. We love to see these successful programs allow for the growth and prosperity of our clients. We are so proud and delighted for Marques and Brian. Congratulations guys!

OUR RESIDENTS

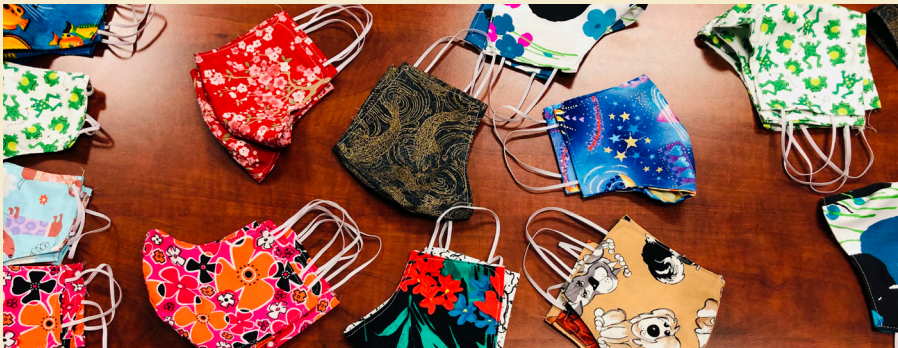
Surviving and Thriving Through COVID



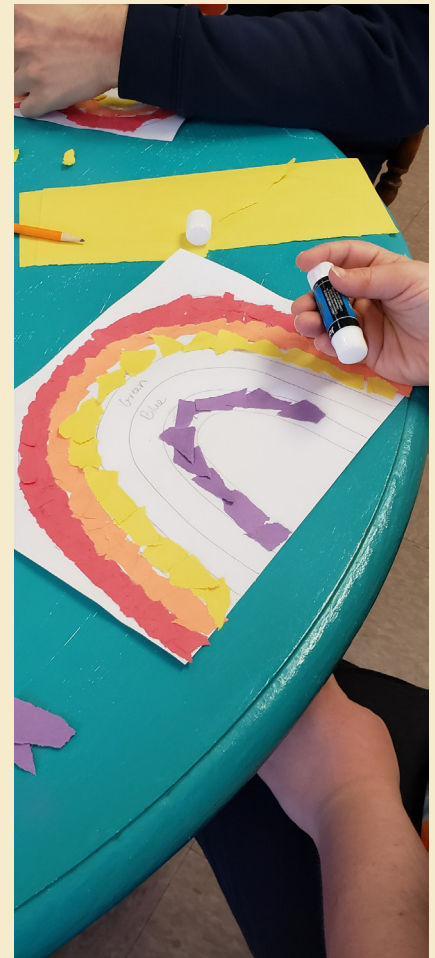
▲ During the pandemic, we have been touched by the outpouring of support and random acts of kindness from the community. In April, we were so grateful for these flowers that were delivered to one of our residences in Penn Yan with a lovely note of hope and encouragement.



▼ Residents took to quarantine the best way they knew how: cookies and crafts! Spring flowers, rainbows and pastel frosted treats helped clients and staff see the bright side of staying home and staying safe. And clients of our residential homes did their part to spread some love with a little sidewalk chalk! ▲



▲ We were so grateful to all the individuals and businesses who donated supplies and masks to keep our staff and residents equipped and protected.



◀ Thank you to: our frontline staff, all those who serve as essential workers, our clients who continued to show resilience and joy throughout this whole year. Our staff has given new meaning to the word hero over the past year. Thank you to our incredible employees here at Catholic Charities Community Services, those who continue to show dedication and compassion for our clients every day.



(Pictured above: Dr. Myra Henry, Lori VanAuken, Dennis Fries keeping 6ft apart!)

HITTING THE LINKS FOR A GOOD CAUSE - CCCS' Premier Annual Golf Tournament

The sun shined all day at our 24th Annual Golf Tournament, and we look forward to another sunny day of golf coming up soon - August 16! Last year's event was a little different due to COVID protocols, and our golfers were fully equipped with hand sanitizer and masks as they hit the links. Everyone had such a great time and were so delighted to be able to enjoy the beautiful day, each other,

and to share our common passion of supporting all individuals with disabilities and those who are living with significant health challenges. A big thank you to all our golfers and sponsors and the Country Club of Rochester. Please join us this year on August 16th, 2021, to see if Team Spencer Davis can hold onto the first-place trophy for the third year in a row!

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ... Our First-Ever Virtual Auction

Our first ever completely virtual silent auction was a success thanks to our incredible Board of Directors, generous donors, and all of you who bid high and often! We had everything from New York Yankees tickets to a five-day stay in Belize, golfing at Oak Hill to a private five-course meal from a celebrity chef

and much more. Terry Clifford, from 92.5 WBEE, joined us to highlight some of the amazing items we had to offer. Thanks to all of you who made our first-ever virtual auction a success!



BREAKFAST WITH FRIENDS Coming Back Strong in 2021!

Breakfast with Friends began in 2012 to help us make more friends and tell the story of the good work we do to empower the people we support so that they can live their best lives. In 2020, we intended to celebrate our 40th anniversary and ask for the support of our friends to help us continue to deliver compassionate, dedicated and much-needed services to our community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, that was not possible.

will receive the Heart and Soul Award. Their sister Alice was one of our first residents, and they have continued to support our work and dedication to enhancing the inclusion and individuality of persons with disabilities. The Community Champion Award will be presented to the Move to Include initiative, a partnership between WXXI and the Golisano Foundation, which was designed to promote inclusion for people with intellectual and physical disabilities.

We are excited to announce that in 2021, *Breakfast with Friends* will be back and better than ever! We will take this opportunity to honor and celebrate our 2020 awardees. The Rogers Family

Please plan to join us on September 24 at Woodcliff Hotel & Spa for a look back at the last 40 years and a sneak peek at the exciting adventure ahead of us.

CREATING A Charitable Legacy

By Carol L Girvin,
Ciccarelli Advisory Services, Inc.

When we purchase life insurance, we're often thinking of protecting our loved ones. But life insurance can also provide a way to create a lasting impact for a charity. It's easy to leave a legacy to a charity (or charities) to which you are connected.

Imagine that Casia Smith contributes \$5,000 a year to an organization that provides books to young girls in developing countries. In 20 years, her charitable gifts would total \$100,000.

It has always been Casia's dream to build a library for these girls, but it is beyond her means. One solution would be for her to use her \$5,000 annual gift to pay premiums on a life insurance policy with a \$500,000 death benefit, with the charity being the beneficiary of the policy. In doing so, Casia has leveraged her donations to potentially be a much larger donation in the future.

A few other planning options include changing the beneficiary on an existing life insurance policy to the charity of your choice. Or, you can purchase a new or donate an existing policy to your favorite charity. Many people use a life insurance policy as a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT).

These are just a few of the possible options that make life insurance a powerful tool for leveraging your donations and accomplishing your charitable goals. Speak with your financial planner to get more details on the powerful legacy that you can easily leave through a life insurance policy.



STEP UP TO EMPLOYMENT
Stepping Up to Meet
2020 Challenges

Step Up to Employment was created to support our clients in securing and maintaining competitive employment with health care benefits. Funded by the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA), it is designed to work toward identifying and removing barriers to employment. Everyone has unique needs and talents; together, we create a plan of support to meet their individual employment goals.

This year with the pandemic putting many out of work, our incredible staff worked to help our clients acquire new jobs that were a perfect fit. Joe was a former client in the program who graduated in February 2020. Due to COVID-19 company cutbacks, in September, he was laid off. He was immediately re-enrolled in our program, and we began working to find other opportunities for him. It was a true blessing to find an open position right here at Catholic Charities Community Services. His job coach assisted with the application and resume, and walked him through the process, step by step. We are happy to say he was hired full time and is now part of our CCCS employee family!



Giving & Helping

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS -
Holidays in the Time of COVID



▲ Staff helps deliver the holiday cheer!

Thank you to our dear friends at Woodcliff Hotel & Spa for once again donating 300 turkeys for our clients! This is their ninth year of giving our clients the gift of a Thanksgiving turkey, and we are so in awe and thankful of Woodcliff's generosity. This year, one in which businesses and individuals alike are all struggling, their compassion and kindness is truly a shining star.

As with much of 2020, we knew this Christmas would look a bit different. But we knew we had to come through for our clients to make sure they had the Christmas joy they so needed. We were truly humbled by the outpouring of support, love and kindness from our beautiful community. We received gifts from 4 churches, 19 business and 21 individuals. As a result, 580 individuals and 8 families received Christmas presents, decorations and dinners. Thank you so much for bringing smiles and laughter to Christmas morning throughout our community.

“You guys really have it right! I appreciate everyone for taking good care of me. God bless!” – QUOTE FROM CCCS CLIENT

Yes! I will support Catholic Charities Community Services.

Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500
- \$1,000 Other: _____

- Make your gift count even more with a gift matched by your employer. (Please enclose a completed matching gift form from the company.)
- I have included Catholic Charities Community Services in my will.
- Please contact me about leaving Catholic Charities Community Services in my will.

Please clip out this form and mail it along with your donation to:

Catholic Charities Community Services, Development Department,
 1099 Jay Street, Building J, Rochester, NY 14611

Or donate online at www.cccsrochester.org



Form of payment:

- Check enclosed
- Please charge my: VISA MC AmEx Discover

Card # _____

Security #: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____

Signature (required): _____

Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

You may contact me via email at: _____



SUPPORTING CLIENT-DRIVEN WORK

Our Consumer Advisory Board Receives Gift of Technology

The Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) is comprised of CCCS service recipients who gather to advise the agency on service relevance, quality, and emerging needs. They also provide community information, knowledge, and outreach to those we serve.

The pandemic made in-person meetings impossible, and that initially brought CAB to halt. But a generous grant from the Community Crisis Fund of the United Way of Greater Rochester and Rochester Area Community Foundation enabled our Supportive Services Department to purchase tablet computers with broadband capabilities for use by our clients, including our CAB members. The tablets have given clients



**United Way
of Greater Rochester**



the opportunity to attend virtual Health Education groups, as well start up their CAB meetings again. Through the gift of technology, clients can continue to learn in their own environment and attend meetings with their peers.

Calling Tech Support!

Thanks to our generous partners and friends, The Golisano Foundation, and their COVID-19 Response Grants. We received a \$50,000 grant, which allowed us to purchase and distribute much-needed upgraded laptops across the agency and in every department. This was instrumental in allowing our staff to continue to provide high-quality service even though they could not meet their clients in person. As a result, our care managers were able to connect with clients as often as necessary to ensure our care, compassion and commitment would continue no



Golisano FOUNDATION

matter the circumstances. This gift of support was mission critical to our success in a year filled with unprecedented challenges.

“I’ve been with CCCS for a very long time and they helped me through stuff I never thought they could help me with. Sobriety, loss of my family, they have been there for me when I wasn’t there for myself.” – QUOTE FROM CCCS CLIENT

Our Mission

Catholic Charities Community Services, in conjunction with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester and those we serve, is deeply committed to enhancing and strengthening the independence, inclusion, and individuality of persons with disabilities and those who are living with significant health challenges.

We provide services that support, coordinate, advocate, and educate in order to foster individual and community empowerment. We strive to build a just and compassionate society for all individuals to live with dignity as people of God.

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- Tim Mason, *Immediate Past Chair*
- Iveth Reynolds, *Vice-Chair*
- Matthew Livernash, *Treasurer*
- Stevan Ramirez, *Secretary*
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- Virgil Joseph
- Sarah Kwiatkowski
- Joseph Pocious
- Jim Prinzi
- Laura Purcell
- Lori VanAuken, *Executive Director*

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Services are provided to all people without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, gender or ability to pay.

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Celebrating
40
Years

**WE'RE
HIRING**



We're Hiring! Entry level staff can join us at pay rates between \$15 - \$16.25 per hour. If you are hardworking, experienced and compassionate, you belong here. We have several opportunities available to serve those living with disabilities and significant health challenges. Be a part of something special!



Apply online at
cccsrochester.org/hiring

Register Now!

**Catholic Charities Community Services
Golf Tournament**

Monday, August 16, 2021

Country Club of Rochester
2935 East Avenue, Rochester

Don't miss your chance to play!

www.cccsrochester.org/golf



Save the Date!

Breakfast with Friends

Friday, September 24, 2021

Woodcliff Hotel & Spa
199 Woodcliff Drive, Fairport

*Reflecting on our Past ...
Envisioning our Future ...*

Empowering the Community for 40 Years

BID

Virtual Silent Auction

August 11 - 16, 2021

www.cccsrochester.org/auction