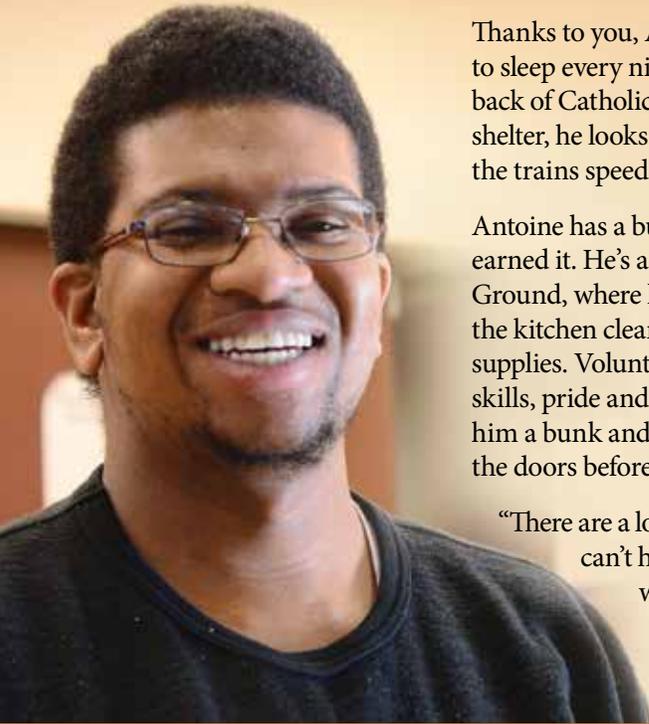




# You provide Antoine a place to sleep, to work, to dream



Thanks to you, Antoine knows he has a place to sleep every night. In bunk 119, at the very back of Catholic Charities' Higher Ground shelter, he looks out the window and watches the trains speed through Minneapolis.

Antoine has a bunk of his own because he earned it. He's a client volunteer at Higher Ground, where he primarily works to keep the kitchen clean and stocked with necessary supplies. Volunteering not only gives Antoine skills, pride and empowerment, but secures him a bunk and allows him to come through the doors before others there.

"There are a lot of things to do in the kitchen; can't have messes," he said. "I love working in the kitchen. My mom and my grandmother taught me something."

Antoine attended culinary school and worked in kitchens and hotels for a long time, before his world was shaken by the loss of his mother.

"My mom was saying it was time for her to go, but I have a learning disability and I didn't understand what she meant," he said.

Seeing his mom be hospitalized and then die was heartbreaking for Antoine. While he already had depression, he sunk even deeper when he quit taking his medications. He tried to pretend all was okay, but he was struggling to get through each day.

"Catholic Charities has done a lot for me," he said. "The staff has motivated me to go out and get a job."

When he daydreams, he thinks of a large house filled with a loving family.

## Answering the call to serve

Each Wednesday, residents at Catholic Charities' Family Service Center have lunch with Jim and Char Kouri. It's a tradition that goes back almost as long as Family Service Center. The Kouris are a much-appreciated fixture at the Ramsey County shelter.

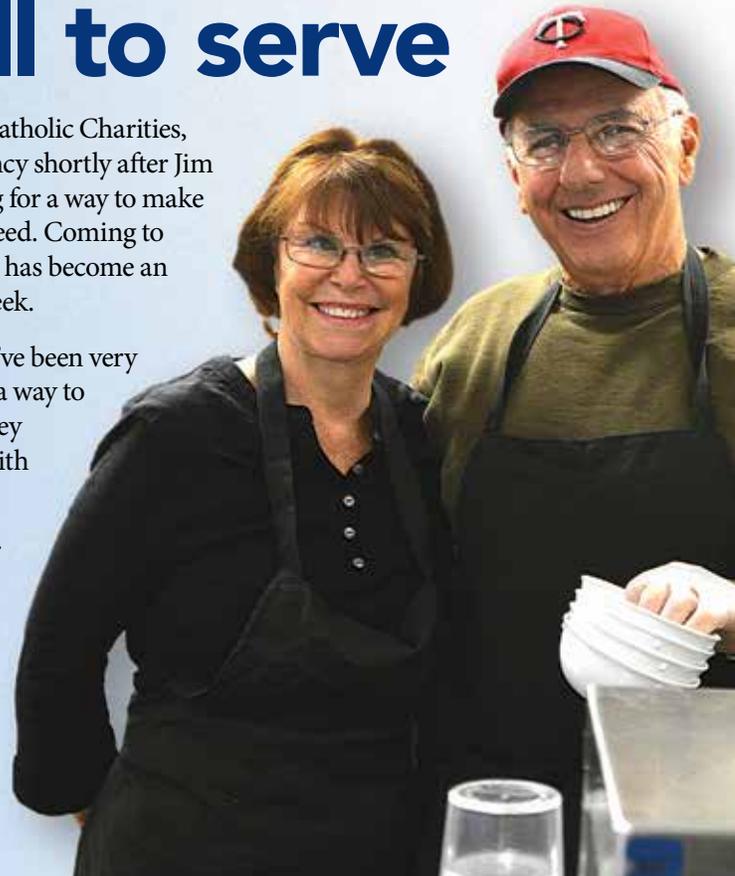
"Over the years, Jim and Char have been a constant and stable force at the Family Service Center," said John Gambino, volunteer resource specialist. "On many occasions they have answered our calls on days they have not been scheduled to come in and help out. We can always depend on Jim and Char."

The couple serves meals, helps with food preparation, cleans what needs to be cleaned, fills the ice machine, mops floors, waters flowers in the dining room—simply anything that needs to be done for the families there.

Longtime supporters of Catholic Charities, they first came to the agency shortly after Jim retired. They were looking for a way to make a difference for those in need. Coming to the Family Service Center has become an important part of their week.

"We enjoy the people. We've been very blessed in our life. This is a way to help others. Every time they call, we come," Jim says with a smile.

Thanks, Jim and Char, for being such an important part of the Family Service Center and for being present to the many families that have come through our doors over the years.



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# Teens work to make a difference, inspire others

Sometimes, changing the world can be a matter of looking across the street.

One day last fall, eighth grader Adele Bolier was at the Xcel Center for WE Day, a day to celebrate and inspire youth who make a difference.

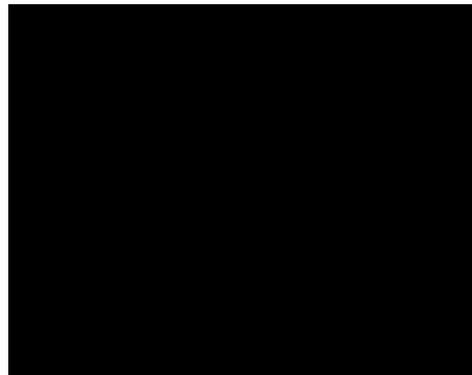
Just across the way, she could see the Dorothy Day Center, a place she was familiar with having lived in downtown St. Paul and to which Adele and her little sister had given their own money in the past. Her heart with the homeless, Adele decided she would work to help those seeking support and shelter at the Center.

In her new venture, Adele enlisted the help of fellow Friendly Hills Middle School student Marta Koch. Together the pair set out to raise money.

The girls reached out to their neighbors, friends and families. In one winter night the pair collected more than \$600.

"When we counted the money, we were like, oh my gosh, we could actually do something," Adele said.

The money grew and grew. Marta and her mom collected money in their neighborhood. When Adele's dad told his co-workers at Coldwell Banker Burnet, they decided their foundation would pitch in with silent auction dollars.



Adele, even though she was a little nervous, went to her dad's work to tell them about Dorothy Day Center. One by one, people were inspired to give what they could.

Indeed, Adele and Marta certainly "did something." On a cold winter night this January, the girls came to Dorothy Day Center to deliver their now-thick envelope of money—\$4,424 in all—and tour the shelter. Thank you Adele and Marta!

See how you change lives!

## PROGRAM TOURS

**St. Joseph's Home for Children and Hope Street for Homeless Youth**  
8:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 19

**Higher Ground Minneapolis**  
11:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 17

**Family Service Center**  
3:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 25

**Space is limited!** Reserve a spot by contacting [ellen.sexton@cctwincities.org](mailto:ellen.sexton@cctwincities.org) or call 612-204-8442.

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# Youth counselor builds tree house media room Labor of love

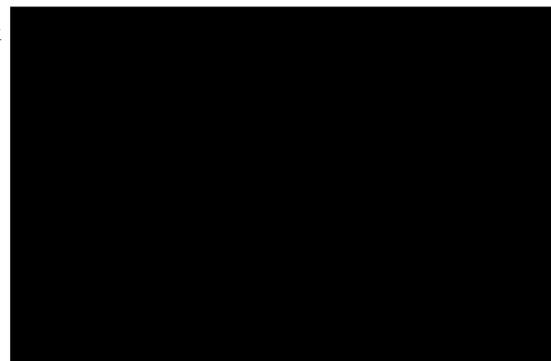
It's simply love built out of wood, a tangible example of above and beyond the call of duty.

A media room in King Hall at Catholic Charities' St. Joseph's Home for Children was custom made to meet the needs of the children there. Dan Berg, a senior youth counselor at St. Joe's, used his own time and resources to transform a room with cinder block walls and a castoff entertainment center into a tree house of sorts. It's where children can watch movies, listen to music and play games in a way that is comfortable for them.

Children often come through our doors because of trauma they experienced in their home, the safe environment provided by St.

Joe's is key to helping them overcome emotional barriers.

There are 10 individual seating areas so each of the children in King Hall can have their own space. Built with solid oak, the pieces are meant to last. It's a colorful, comfortable spot for children staying there.



Berg's work can be seen throughout King Hall, not only in the tree house, but in the fish tank stand, the murals painted on the walls and the comic book calendars he creates each month.

Berg has worked at St. Joe's for 17 years. In his role, Berg works to teach kids social and coping skills and plans activities and programs for children. His co-workers know him as a gentle, calm and positive person. He sees the potential in the youth he serves, not limitations.

"For the most part, these kids are really good kids, kind-hearted kids. These are kids that care about others," he said. "They're fun kids, active and like to play games."

Your support makes it possible for us to employ amazing staff like Dan who dedicate their lives to serve those most in need.

2016 MARKS THE FINAL BREAKFAST AT THE CURRENT DOROTHY DAY CENTER

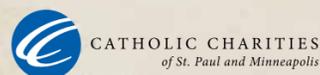
Please join us for the Dorothy Day Community Breakfast

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2016 7:00-9:00 A.M.

183 Old Sixth Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102

Space is limited!

RSVP BY APRIL 29 at cctwincities.org/ddcbreakfast or call 612-204-8422



# VOICE

Published by Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis 1200 Second Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55403

Phone: 612-204-8500 To donate: 612-204-8374 To volunteer: 612-204-8435 cctwincities.org

Tim Marx President & Chief Executive Officer Kathleen M. Cooney Chair, Board of Directors



## Your voice can make a difference

Incredible things happen every day at Catholic Charities—because of you. You help people like Antoine recover from tragic life events. Your generosity enables us to employ amazing staff like Dan, who care so deeply about their work that they go above and beyond the call of duty. And your voices help to make others aware of the hardships our most vulnerable neighbors face.

In my role at Catholic Charities as Director of Social Justice Advocacy, I meet with lawmakers and government officials—sharing this life-changing work that happens every day. I also shed light on challenges and barriers our clients face as they seek hope, safety, stability, and self-sufficiency. This is a critical part of our mission and work—advocating for justice in the community. When we raise awareness of the struggles and successes we see every day, we can inspire changes that will not only lift up the most vulnerable, but make our entire community stronger. Your generous support through volunteerism, philanthropy and advocacy changes lives every day! Thank you!

*Acooa Ellis*

Acooa Ellis Director of Social Justice Advocacy



WITH YOUR HELP, HIGHER GROUND SAINT PAUL IS RISING UP!

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

# VOICE

MARCH / APRIL 2016

## Investing in our future

Inside this issue:

- Young donors make a difference
- Celebrating volunteers
- Giving above and beyond at St. Joe's
- Raising our voice at the capitol



## Thank you, Best Buy!

Best Buy has been a long-time supporter of Catholic Charities, providing volunteers, funding and in-kind donations to help those most in need in our community. They recently donated and delivered much-needed appliances, including a new refrigerator for our Kids' Kitchen at St. Joseph's Home for Children.



"We sincerely appreciate the partnership we have enjoyed with St. Joseph's Home for Children over the years," said Susan Bass Roberts, head of Community Relations/Diversity & Inclusion at Best Buy. "The contribution St. Joe's makes to the children of our community is invaluable, so fulfilling a wish list like this one was a dream come true for us too."

## The pursuit of opportunity

Right now, our legislators are at the Minnesota State Capitol making decisions that will impact Minnesotans for years to come. Catholic Charities is there too, working on issues that advance our mission to be a leader at solving poverty in our community.

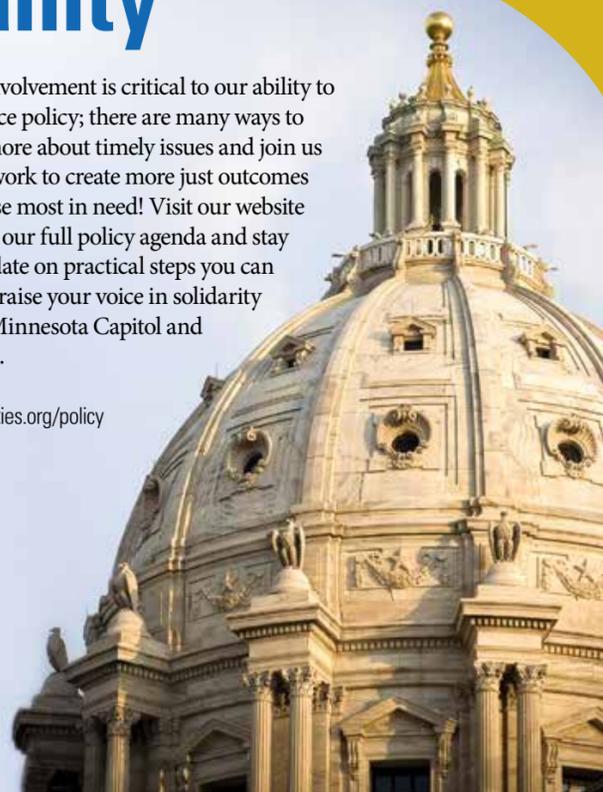
Housing is an incredibly important issue for us during this legislative session. We are requesting \$12 million in bonding to help fund the Saint Paul Opportunity Center, part of phase two of the new vision for the Dorothy Day Center. This funding will directly contribute to this historic public private partnership and help us create pathways out of poverty for those most in need.

Additionally, in partnership with the Homes for All Coalition, we are advocating for dollars to fund housing-related projects across the state. People who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and military veterans are priority among those who will benefit from this investment.

While housing will be front and center at the legislature, we see first-hand the barriers to self-sufficiency. For instance, adequate access to transit options that connect community members with opportunity has emerged as a real need. Look for Catholic Charities to be more active in regional transportation policy.

Your involvement is critical to our ability to influence policy; there are many ways to learn more about timely issues and join us in the work to create more just outcomes for those most in need! Visit our website to view our full policy agenda and stay up-to-date on practical steps you can take to raise your voice in solidarity at the Minnesota Capitol and beyond.

cctwincities.org/policy



Shelter client returns to Hope Street as intern

## Paying it forward



Mazer\* first came to Catholic Charities' Hope Street Shelter in 2012—memories are fresh, though she has come so far since you provided her a stable place to grow four years ago.

A college student working toward a bachelor's degree, Mazer is at Hope Street as an intern. She also works full-time as a youth advocate at YouthLink. In her new role, Mazer leads an art group Saturday and Sunday nights, gets feedback from youth who are staying at Hope Street and reaches out to Hope Street alumni.

Eric Richert, a program manager at Hope Street, said Mazer brings a valuable perspective to youth there.

"The youth know she's been through it; there is some immediate trust there," Richert said. "She shows the youth here that there is a path toward stability."

"I remember it like it was yesterday," she said while sitting in an office at the shelter recently. The young woman has returned to Hope Street not because she is in need, but to give back.

Mazer came to Hope Street when she was in desperate need of support during an unstable time in her youth.

"I hope I can create a unit or department to work with youth who have a mental health diagnosis," she said.

Mazer is confident her goals are achievable and, while careful to never say never, believes she never again will be without a place to call home.

"My support network is stronger. Financially, I'm stronger," she said. "There's always a way out; it's up to you to take that chance."

\*Name has been changed.

