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 cares 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!

Accio Ellis
Director of Social Justice Advocacy
You provide Antoine a place to sleep, to work, to dream

Tooth to me, Antoine knows he has a place to sleep every night. In fact, it’s the very back of Catholic Charities’ Higher Ground shelter, where 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 hurt me,” 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.

“I really need a mom,” he said.

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 volunteer resource specialist. “On many occasions they have answered our calls on short notice,” the agency says.

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. Jim and Char are devoted to helping others. Every time we 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 who have come through our doors over the years.

Youth counselor builds tree house media room

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.

Berg has worked at St. Joe’s for 17 years. In his role, Berg seeks 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 youths he serves, not limitations.

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

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

The girls reached out to their tours, friends and families. In one winter night the pair collected more than $860.

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

The money grew and grew. Marta and her mom collected money in their community to deliver their new thin envelope of money—$4,424 in all—and tour the shelter. Thank you Adele and Marta!

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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, said he 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.

One day last fall, eighth grader Adele Bohler 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 went out with the homeless. Adele decided she would work to help those seeking support and shelter at the Center.

On a cold winter night this January, the girls came to Dorothy Day Center to deliver their new thin envelope of money—$4,424 in all—and tour the shelter. Thank you Adele and Marta!

Youths work to make a difference, inspire others

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“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.
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!
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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. Recently, Best Buy recently donated and delivered much-needed appliances, including a new refrigerator for those most in need in our community. Additionally, in partnership with the Homes for All Coalition, Best Buy has been a long-time supporter of Catholic Charities to be more active in regional transportation policy.