

CATHOLIC CHARITIES



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VOICE

FALL 2021

Family Service Center guest
Karyna Jiminez

Celebrating new beginnings

Inside:

- Investments in emergency services
- Two decades of volunteering
- Visit the Warming House and Giving Tree



Lost to found

Overcoming every parent's greatest fear at Family Service Center

Losing a child, especially during a pandemic, challenges the strongest of wills. **Karyna Jiminez** was living in Arizona when she learned her son died. She returned to Minnesota to be with family as she faced the shock of her loss. As family returned to their regular lives, Karyna—who was pregnant and with two other small children—found herself spiraling, becoming homeless and relapsing into old habits with addiction. “I knew it was wrong, but it was the only thing killing the pain,” shared Karyna. She knew she couldn’t keep staying in cars or on friends’ couches, so she lifted herself up, recognized she needed help, and called Ramsey County. That call led her to Catholic Charities and Family Service Center.

Having never been in a shelter, Karyna remembers: “When I got to Family Service Center, I was embarrassed at first.” But the stability helped her to immediately return to sobriety. “The support made me feel like I was family. I was home. I couldn’t have done it without them. I had tons of support.”

One of those support systems is **Robin Bridge**, who runs the Children’s Resource Center and a special group for moms. “Karyna is stronger than she realizes,” shared Robin. “Karyna had a lot going on—all of the moms do, and they need ways to get some order out of chaos.”



Robin helped Karyna learn about the importance of life balance while in a period of constant trauma, the power of self-care, and how Karyna was not just a strong woman but a leader. Robin

“We give them a safe space to share their story, allow it to be what it is, and find what support is needed.”

—**Robin Bridge**, Children’s Resource Center

added, “I knew something was going on—you can see trauma. But once you uncover a person’s story—everyone comes with a story inside a shelter or not—we give them a safe space to share

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Family Service Center's Irene O'Ryan

Two decades of giving back

Irene O'Ryan and her husband were happily retired when she read in her church bulletin about a need for volunteers at the newly-opened Catholic Charities Family Service Center. That was 21 years ago. This past spring, days after being vaccinated, 81-year-old Irene returned to support the thousands of mothers, fathers, and children served there. "I wasn't sure if I was ready," shared Irene. "But they had good safety measures. It feels like home." The

"I hope my being here encourages other people to give their time or in other ways"

—Irene O'Ryan

Family Service Center agreed; "It felt great to see Irene walk through the door, healthy and safe," shared Program Manager **Allie Shaul**.

Little has changed since Irene, a grandmother of 23, began volunteering. "Kids will be kids; they don't change much. Grandparents raising small children,

a mother with two kids, pregnant, taking online college courses—these are things I really admire. My weakness is falling in love with the kids... one little girl kept calling me 'grandma,' When I asked how she knew I was a grandma, she pointed to my chin!"

Irene works at the front desk while other volunteers help in the children's resource center and kitchen. "It's heartwarming. Irene brings experience, warmth and works with her church to find things like hats and mittens; she's community-driven," added Shaul.

"I hope my being here encourages other people to give their time or in other ways. At over 80, I may not be able to do this much longer." Irene then adds, "We've had a good life. God's been good to me. I want to give back any way I can."



In Memoriam: 1933–2021

Mary F. Frey



The generosity and kindness of the Frey family have impacted thousands of lives over the years, with

Mary F. Frey leading the way. Starting in the late 1960s, Mary brought her children to volunteer with her at the Branch III location (now The Mary F. Frey Minneapolis Opportunity Center). Together, the family made sandwiches and other food for men and women in need. Mary and her husband Gene were instrumental in the original purchase and renovation of the Minneapolis Opportunity Center and the original Dorothy Day Center in Saint Paul.

Mary passed away in July. We remember her as a bright light devoted to those we serve. A fierce champion of Catholic Charities, Mary served on the board for 18 years and as board chair in 1989. In 2014, she and her husband, Gene, were honored with the Life of Distinction Award. Mary has left a beautiful legacy of generosity and hope for generations to come.

Minnesota's historic investment in homelessness prevention, housing

In a strong statement to the power of home, Minnesota legislators this year made historic investments in homelessness prevention and housing, including several priorities led by Catholic Charities:

The Emergency Services Program, Minnesota's most flexible funding source for emergency shelters, will see an extra \$6 million annually to support operations and services like housing navigators, medical and mental health help, employment counseling, transportation and more.

Housing Support, which is perhaps our state's best tool to prevent and end homelessness, will see a \$50 per month benefit increase. More than rental assistance, Housing Support ensures everyday essentials—like meals, laundry, a bed and linens—are provided to those at risk of homelessness.

Housing Support beneficiaries no longer need worry about choosing between health or housing. As of July 1, anyone requiring an extended hospitalization for a chronic medical condition or mental health or substance abuse treatment can seek the care they need and know they will have a home to return to after.

Social justice is the foundation of our work, and we invite you to join us in our state and local advocacy work! Sign up at cctwincities.org/advocate or reach out to **Lorna Schmidt** at Lorna.Schmidt@cctwincities.org or 651-647-2582.

Opening new doors

When COVID-19 hit, **Destinee Egan's** work was thrown into disarray. A social worker with Catholic Charities' Aging and Disability Services, Destinee relies on clients' willingness to welcome her in and share personal information with her to identify what they need to thrive in their own home. "Our job is to offer support in areas of challenge and difficulty, where people may not even realize other options exist," she says.

Trust built through face-to-face visits is critical to her work, yet due to COVID-19, Destinee had to cancel in-person appointments. As the pandemic brought new challenges for clients, Destinee had to constantly pivot to stay in contact—while trying to build relationships with new clients, too.

Flexibilities approved by the State of Minnesota ultimately allowed Destinee

to connect by phone with clients—many of whom already face social isolation—but the interactions were different. Visits took longer, newer clients were hesitant to talk to a stranger by phone, and without visual cues—not just hearing someone describe how they struggle to walk, for example, but actually seeing their movements—her assessments lacked details she was able to obtain previously that helped her support clients in meeting their unique needs and goals.

With COVID-19 restrictions easing, Destinee has started transitioning back to in-person visits for now, knowing that things could change again. She's hopeful for better communication with clients, building trust, she says, so she can address smaller struggles before they become bigger emergencies.



"Sometimes we can't get what we want over the phone. We all need that someone who can help you." —Shirley Porter

The return to in-person visits also means putting a face with the voice that's been on the other side of the phone for over a year. Such is the case with **Shirley Porter**, who began working with Destinee in late 2019. Destinee spoke to Shirley regularly by phone, helping her get a new chair lift and walker that needed repair. She was the "mover and shaker," Shirley said, who was there to help anytime she needed her. Destinee and Shirley met in person for the first time in July, offering a new beginning to an already trusting relationship. "Sometimes we can't get what we want over the phone," Shirley says. "We all need that someone who can help you."

Lost to found (continued from page 1)

that story, allow it to be what it is and find what support is needed." Karyna added that "Homelessness is isolating. I made a family here; it's not just helping families, it's building families."

KaTina Cummings, Program Manager for Coordinated Access to Housing and Shelter, also helped Karyna find stability. KaTina connected Karyna with Solid Ground, which helps mothers who have struggled



KaTina Cummings
Program Manager for Coordinated Access to Housing and Shelter

with mental illness or substance abuse disorders. KaTina made sure everything was in place; just two months later, Karyna had a home for her children with ongoing supportive services.

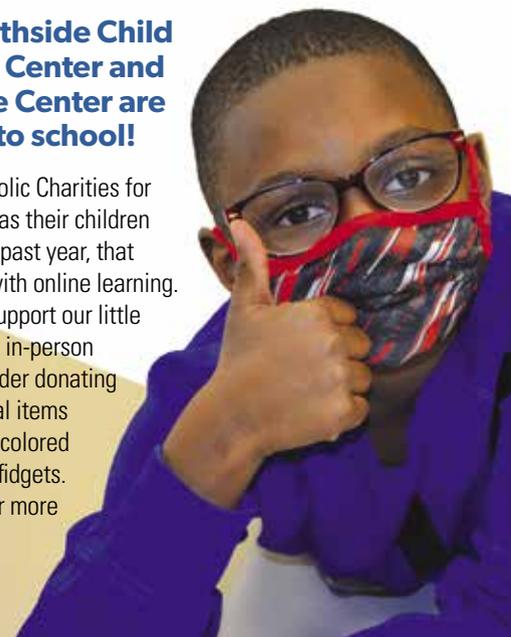
Donations to Catholic Charities have also made a big difference. "Having a crib and diapers—things that were all donated—provide such a relief. I'm still mentally getting better every day; I'm not so stressed out wondering how I am going to get things I need for my children. Having these necessities lets me get on my feet and helps me feel ready."

Karyna's gratitude is heartfelt. "Being here and finding the support ... will let me go to college and get a better job so I can help my kids. I'm not done here yet. I'm going to keep going."



Kids from Northside Child Development Center and Family Service Center are headed back to school!

Families rely on Catholic Charities for support and stability as their children grow, and during the past year, that included extra help with online learning. If you would like to support our little learners as they start in-person classes, please consider donating high-need educational items such as sketch pads, colored pencils, and sensory fidgets. Call 612-204-8295 for more information.



LEGACY of HOPE

On August 18, we honored our Legacy Society members at a virtual gathering. We are amazed and gratified by the kindness and generosity of people who include Catholic Charities in their wills and estate plans to help us serve those most in need. Our mission is brighter and made secure by people who wish to see the work of Catholic Charities continue for years to come. These gifts help sustain our programs into the future.

To learn more about **Catholic Charities Legacy Society**, or about how to include us in your estate plans, contact **Paul Deakins** at 612-204-8472 or email Paul.Deakins@cctwincities.org.



"The Power of Home is not just having a place to lay your head, but to also have a place where you can feel connected to the community around you."

—Doug Mackbee, Program Manager

This past year we were reminded of the Power of Home as many were asked to stay at home for the safety of others. Our staff continued to show up daily, providing services and community for the people we serve. Show your support for the Power of Home by displaying a lawn sign! Learn more by emailing info@cctwincities.org.

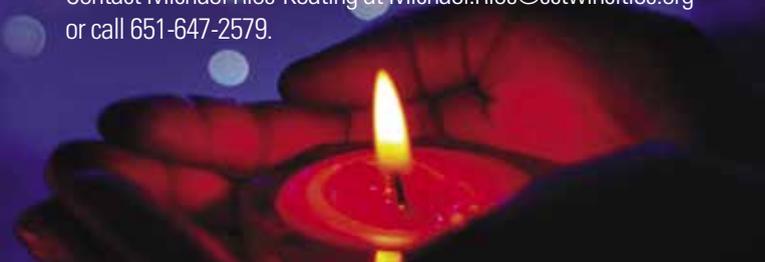


VISIT CCTWINCITIES.ORG/POWER-OF-HOME

The vital role of faith communities

Throughout our 150-year history, parish and faith communities have played a pivotal role in supporting – and in many ways, developing – our work to help our neighbors in need. From the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and the start of St. Joseph's Home for Children, to the thousands of postcards signed in parishes to help see Dorothy Day Place over the finish line, Catholic Charities and faith communities have been connected by a common thread of compassion and social justice. Though those roles have looked different over the years, our advocacy, volunteer, and donor engagement with parish and faith communities in the Twin Cities region remains a critical piece of our mission.

Catholic Charities depends on all communities of faith to bring our mission to life, and we invite you to engage with us through learning about our work and the challenges facing our community. Contact Michael Rios-Keating at Michael.Rios@cctwincities.org or call 651-647-2579.



GET CONNECTED AT CCTWINCITIES.ORG/ENGAGE



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of St. Paul and Minneapolis

VOICE

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES SERVES THOSE MOST IN NEED.

New beginnings are all around us



For Catholic Charities, new beginnings are a daily occurrence. From a new client coming to one of our sites for the first time, to a family walking into their new home after spending time in our Family Service Center, new beginnings are everywhere at Catholic Charities. Thank you for making countless new beginnings possible for the men, women, children and families we serve each day.

This is a season of new beginnings for me as I add the Family Service Center and Hope Street for Homeless Youth services to my program portfolio. As I celebrate my 14th year at Catholic Charities, I continue to learn new things, and I am so excited to continue to lead our Children and Family Services programs—programs you bring to life through your generous support.

While we are not out of the woods yet, the future remains hopeful because of you. With your help, Catholic Charities continues to tackle our community's most difficult challenges, and we are excited for the hope of many new beginnings to come.

Keith Kozerski
Senior Director of Children and Family Services



CATHOLIC CHARITIES WARMING HOUSE



See you at the Mall on December 10-11

Join us at Mall of America on Friday, December 10 and Saturday, December 11 from 4:00–8:00 p.m. for the Catholic Charities Warming House, presented by Luther Automotive.

Located at the Mall's north parking lot, this free outdoor holiday event brings together the entire Twin Cities community for a fun, festive holiday experience.

Enjoy food trucks, hot drinks, winter crafts and activities, holiday displays and more, all while learning about Catholic Charities and the men, women, children and families we serve every day.

The Giving Tree returns to Mall of America!

This year, the Giving Tree will be based at the Warming House. Bring a donated item for those in need, and help with a simple volunteer activity. We look forward to seeing you at the Mall during this holiday season of family, friends and hope.



Your health and safety are a priority

We are monitoring COVID-19 updates from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and are following their recommendations.

FOR UP-TO-THE-MINUTE DETAILS AND A SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, VISIT CCTWINCITIES.ORG/WARMING-HOUSE