



The

Hopeliner

A PUBLICATION OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF

Shiawassee & Genesee Counties

February 2024



Child Welfare

Owosso Office



St. Michael's Conference Center



Mid-Michigan ReSource Warehouse



Sacred Heart Veteran Village

Scheduled to break ground early this summer!

St. Michael's Conference Center

We are excited about our beautifully remodeled Conference Center and are accepting bookings!

Women & Children Safe Haven Warming Center

We have been blessed to provide a second Warming Center to address the needs of women & children experiencing homelessness.





The Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Fifth Bishop of Lansing

Executive Staff

- Katie Baxter**
President/CEO
- Michelle Simpson**
Executive Assistant and HR Specialist
- Gerri Lajewski**
Director of Development
- Shelly Safi**
Director of Finance
- Joshua Stanton**
Director of Facilities
- Misty Bowers**
Director of Housing
- Rochelle Gasso**
Director of Prevention & Offender Success
- John Manse**
Director of Community Services
- Deborah Pettway**
Director of Child Welfare
- Mary Stevenson**
Director of Center for Hope

CONTACT US

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810.232.9950

Center for Hope
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North End Soup Kitchen
735 E. Stewart Ave., Flint, MI 48505
810.785.6911

Foster Care and Adoption
810.232.3418

Offender Success
810.484.2828

Mid- Michigan Resource Warehouse
6340 N. Genesee Rd. Unit 1
Flint, MI 48506
810.391.2509

Shiawassee County:
1480 N. M-52, Suite 1, Owosso, MI 48867
989.723.8239

www.ccsgc.org
email: GiveHope@ccsgc.org
810.232.9950

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As Lent approaches, we are reminded of the importance of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We focus on these areas as a way to grow closer to Jesus. As we anticipate the joyful celebration of Easter, we walk alongside Christ during His Passion and seek to be more closely united to God's will. My prayer for our wonderful board members, staff,

volunteers and community members is the joy and peace that surpasses all understanding in Christ Jesus. With God's providence and your help, we will have another year of service to those most in need in our community – those struggling emotionally, spiritually and physically.

In Christ,
Katie Baxter, President & CEO

2024 Board of Directors



Board Chair
Jesus Ortega
Retired, General Motors

I am extremely excited about 2024! Our St Michael's Conference Center, which was complete last October, is beautiful and getting more bookings all the time. Renovations to the lower level are well underway and we will soon be able to offer more programming and have office space for partner agencies. We are proceeding with the Sacred Heart Veteran Village and are set to break ground this summer. We look forward to welcoming our first resident and providing wrap-around services for veterans experiencing homelessness once construction is complete.

The pilot program, Safe Haven for Women and Children, is in full operation and has been a great addition! I continue to be humbled by the support the community gives to our organization. God is good.



Vice Chair
Sherrice Anderson
Co-Owner, When You Pray

Why I Serve...

As a child, we often depended on family, friends and social agencies to make it. I proudly serve at Catholic Charities because I see the work they do to make families better. They provide food, clothing, household items, warming centers, adoption, as well as counseling services, so families can be together and have their needs met. It's easy to overlook people with less, but the employees at Catholic Charities have a huge heart for the people they serve.



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Diocese of Lansing
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LENT

Fasting • Praying • Almsgiving

A Season of Renewal

It is the season of Lent! "That's great," you may be saying, "but what exactly is Lent?"

Believe it or not, "Lent" comes from a Latin word that means, "God wants you to stop eating candy until Easter."

JUST KIDDING! But it sometimes seems like that's what Lent has come to mean, and while there's nothing wrong with a 40-day sugar fast, devoting some time and energy to understanding and observing Lent can be profoundly good for our souls.



Fat Tuesday

Have you ever thought about why we eat paczki on Fat Tuesday? Also known as Shrove Tuesday, Shrovetide, or Mardi Gras, it marks the final day of Ordinary Time before the solemn season of Lent commences on Ash Wednesday.

Shrove is derived from the word shrive and means absolve. Catholics spend time examining their conscience as they prepare for the penitential season of Lent. It's a great time to reflect on areas where spiritual growth is needed. Catholic Churches burn the palms used during the previous year's Palm Sunday in preparation for the ashes distributed on Ash Wednesday the next day.

This day is synonymous with celebration, often seen as the last opportunity to indulge in rich and indulgent foods before the penitential period of fasting and abstinence during Lent. It serves as a joyful farewell to the carefree days of Ordinary Time, emphasizing the imminent spiritual journey of self-reflection and preparation for Easter.

Lenten Practices

There are different ways to observe the Lenten season! Many people make personal sacrifices and give something up for the entire forty-day period, symbolizing self-discipline and reliance on God's grace. Some engage in acts of service to emulate Jesus' love and compassion towards others.

Of course there are also many practices and traditions that take place at your local church! The Stations of the Cross is a revered tradition where Catholics pray and reflect on the journey of Jesus' Passion and death. Attending a Passion Play performance offers powerful visual depictions of Jesus' sacrifice. Some churches host a *Fish Fry*, a social tradition that brings the community together while observing the Church's practice of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent. These practices encourage spiritual growth, deepen faith, and prepare hearts for the celebration of Easter.

The Significance of Lenten Colors

The color purple holds significant symbolism throughout the Lenten season. It recalls the robe that Pontius Pilate placed on Jesus before His crucifixion, serving as a reminder of Christ's suffering and sacrifice. Purple is also traditionally associated with royalty, signifying Jesus as our eternal King.

On Palm Sunday, the color red is prominently featured in the vestments worn by priests. This foreshadows Jesus' death on the cross, emphasizing the solemnity and sacrifice of his journey. Red is also the color worn on Good Friday, further emphasizing the profound significance of the crucifixion.

In contrast, the color white takes center stage on Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday. White represents joy and purity, symbolizing the triumph of Jesus' resurrection and the new

life found in Him. It serves as a visual reminder of the hope and rejoicing that accompany these significant days.

The colors used during Lent enhance the spiritual experience, evoking emotions and providing visual reminders of the central themes of Jesus' suffering, sacrifice, and ultimate triumph over death.

What should I give up?

The point of fasting is to cultivate our inner life. When we fast, we open our hearts, our minds, and bodies to God's love in our lives. We consider how we can grow, and dedicate ourselves to becoming better people. When we make ourselves available to God, incredible things can happen. *That's what can make Lent so powerful.*

Give something away—every day.

In a society which focuses on how much we stuff we have as an indicator of happiness, what if we spent some time thinning out our personal possessions and only bring in things that create true happiness?

Don't interrupt people.

We could probably all do well to spend more time listening, and less time interjecting.

Stop complaining.

Do you find yourself complaining far too much? What if, instead, you find constructive ways to express yourself or focus on what's going right instead of what's not? Replacing complaining with gratitude can have a huge impact on your sense of well being!

Don't waste downtime.

Whether it is social media, TV, games on your phone, perhaps be more intentional about not using it during specific times. Take that time instead to pray, to volunteer, or do something kind for someone.



Catholic Charities' Sacred Heart Veteran Village

The Catholic Charities Sacred Heart Veteran Village is a comprehensive transitional housing program for veterans that will be located at 719 E. Moore St. Flint, MI 48505. The goal is to serve as a *Promising Practice* for programming that can be replicated in the future to benefit other under-served and vulnerable populations.

The total project budget will take \$3.5 million to complete. The groundbreaking on Phase 1 is scheduled for summer 2024 and will complete the ground preparation, the Veteran Resource Center and the first 8-12 permanent single-person bungalows. The target date for phase 1 completion is early 2025. Phase 2 will include an additional 16-18 homes with a target completion date of Summer of 2025.

A Promising Practice to Serve Veterans

Catholic Charities is introducing a unique approach to address the needs of this specific vulnerable population in hopes that it will become a *Promising Practice* which can be implemented in other geographical areas to serve other under-served populations. The Village is part of a bigger Veteran Service Program, that Catholic Charities will be offering, which is unique because it focuses on treating each person as an individual, and the criteria for participation is not dictated by outside funding.

There is a committee made up of Veterans, Board Members, and professionals who will evaluate each applicant's circumstances and will not automatically disqualify an applicant based on discharge status or length and type of service. The same applies to homeless status. We recognize the need to promote autonomy and assistance to those who do not have access to suitable and safe housing. This definition changes based on the individual needs of the person being served.

Referrals will come from local shelters, court programs, the VA, Genesee County Veteran Services, Genesee Health System, the VA Navigation Program, the Veteran Coalition, etc. The program begins with an evaluation of the applicant's physical health, mental health, housing stability, employment, income, benefits and entitlements, substance use history, spiritual health, community inclusion and natural support. The evaluation will be completed by the Program Manager (PM).

The model is based on a community stability approach. It is designed to develop trust with the participants and provide a place of healing and security for the whole of the community. Participants with untreated active substance use, suicidal ideation, medical instability, and lack of income will be assisted in gaining stability in these areas before becoming eligible to live in the Village.

Participants in the program will not all live in the Village. Moving through the process and gaining stability will help them become eligible to move into the housing community when an opening is available.

Participants will be introduced to the

community in phases, participating in groups and activities and moved in by cohorts of 2-4. This limits disruptions to the community and increases the sense of camaraderie within the small cohort. The Village will have a facility manager who lives on-site and is a veteran. The participants will be linked to resources and outside agencies. Some participants will be able to move into a home faster than others due to individual stability and home availability. The Village is not designed for individuals who need a high level of care to become stabilized (i.e. intensive treatment for substance use disorder and/or mental health treatment for suicidal or homicidal ideation).

Program participants who live in the Village will be charged a nominal sliding scale fee to help with operating costs. The program is transitional in nature and participation is completely voluntary. There will be no time limits on participation because each individual is unique. The participant will be expected to fully engage in program offerings and be actively involved in bettering their life circumstances in the areas of mental, spiritual and physical health and well-being, substance abuse, financial

Overview of General Rules:

- Must have served in the United States Armed Forces- regardless of branch or discharge status.
- Must have some type of income and agree to pay program fee based on sliding scale.
- Living situation must be less supportive/appropriate than what is being provided by the program.
- Must agree to participate fully in the program to live on site.
- One individual per home.
- Individual must live in the home full time.
- No animals unless they are certified medical service animals allowed on property.
- No drugs or alcohol allowed on property.
- Must be approved by the eligibility committee.



literacy, education, community inclusion, increased natural supports, and employment, while preparing for permanent housing.

Most of the supportive services will be offered through cooperation and coordination with area agencies and organizations, and some may depend on eligibility and the availability of the outside programs and funding. They will include a multipurpose space for meetings, training, classes, worship services and basketball. A small fitness room, kitchen, private group meeting room and offices are provided to meet privately with program participants. Resources will be available for all Veterans in the area and will encourage support and collaboration with organizations and companies that serve those who have served their country.

Veteran Resource Center

The most unique piece of the program includes a large Veteran Resource Center that will serve all veterans in Genesee County. The Center will be approximately 5,000 square feet and include a multipurpose space for meetings, training, classes, worship services and basketball. The facility will also include a small fitness room, kitchen, private group meeting room and offices to meet privately with program participants. Resources will be available for all Veterans in the area and will encourage support and

collaboration with organizations and companies that serve those who have served their country.

Progression of the Program

Discussions of creating a small footprint home community emerged from the vast need Catholic Charities sees daily. Every time a military veteran is a guest at our Warming Center, it is met with shock and heartbreak. Staying in the Warming Center for a few nights and getting immediate, basic needs met is not enough.

Since 2017, Catholic Charities has expanded to include the Michigan Department of Corrections contract as the Offender Success Administrative Agency for Region 6. In addition to other responsibilities, the agency provides housing for Justice-involved individuals as they transition back into society. This transition is only 30-180 days and moves very quickly. Our small team handles everything from screening, intake, lease agreements, landlord negotiations, coordination with outside services, crisis calls, evictions, etc. This is being done in seven counties throughout Michigan. In 2022, we served 326 returning citizens with 175 individuals receiving transitional housing services.

The Need

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that 107,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. These statistics are from the VA and only include those who fit their definition of “Veteran” and “Homeless”. One of their requirements is being honorably discharged, which leaves an unknown number of people who faithfully served their country not included in the data presented. We have encountered those who have fallen through the gaps of bureaucracy.

- 15 - 40% of homeless are veterans.
- 97% of homeless vets are male.
- 67% served 3 or more years.
- 23,801 veterans in Genesee County.
- Genesee County has the fifth-largest veteran population in Michigan.
- There are an estimated 500 homeless veterans in Michigan.
- Veterans of Color are more likely to be homeless.
- In Flint 55 % of the Veterans are African-American.
- Approximately 10% of Veterans have substance use disorders.
- 20% suffer from PTSD.
- Veterans are 22 % more likely than non-veterans to commit suicide.

Veteran Resource Center





In 2022, we developed relationships with Innovative Tiny Homes, the Genesee Career Institute, and Jeff Ferweda of Sedgwick + Ferweda Architects to identify layouts for small footprint homes that would suit the

needs of the individuals we serve. We were able to secure initial funding through the Clara Lionel Foundation founded by Rihanna and the Community Foundation of Greater Flint and were able to purchase two property lots near our Flint campus on Root Street, through the Genesee County Land Bank.

We completed the foundations and placed our first two model homes. This process has allowed us to see the

process from start to finish and gain experience in maneuvering the various aspects of this unique building project.

The City of Flint has been wonderful, considering there is nothing like this project anywhere in the state. Both sides are committed to finding answers and solutions to get approvals and create policies that may not exist in an effort to make the project a reality.

The Zoning Board approved a change in the city's square footage requirements in 2022 which allowed the first two homes in Flint to be built under 600 sq. ft., opening up the opportunity for small, affordable homes to be used long-term to alleviate housing shortages for low income individuals, and thus making home ownership a possibility to many who otherwise couldn't afford it in Flint.



How is a single-person bungalow different from a shanty, temporary structure or a traditional 'tiny home'?

Each of the small homes are built according to the most current Building Code. This ensures safety compliance and compliance with the Underwriting Laboratories (UL) to be able to withstand 200 plus mile-per-hour winds. This offers more security and safety than the code would regulate modular and mobile homes. They include a personal bathroom, kitchen and private entrances to encourage autonomy. The architects are using literature from the International Code Council (ICC) to ensure that the ADA-compliant/barrier-free models will be fully functioning for someone in a wheelchair. The ICC/ANSI (American National Standard Institute) code A117.1 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities offers suggestions to go above and beyond meeting the minimum requirements to comply with the ADA. For example, removing the cabinet under the sink in the kitchen allows a person in a wheelchair to do their dishes without reaching and contorting their body.

In November 2023, the Flint City Council voted to approve \$400,000 worth of ARPA funding for Catholic Charities' Sacred Heart Veteran Village project. This was part of the Gap Funding grants that were available. The funds are designated to the excavation and groundwork needed to prepare the property. This property was acquired by the long-standing Agency after the Sacred Heart Catholic Church and School were closed and demolished. It is across the street from the North End Soup Kitchen run by Catholic Charities.

In January 2024, sponsorships from local companies and private donors were over \$300,000. The companies include Wolverine Fire Protection Systems, ELGA Credit Union, Dort Financial Credit Union, GECS (Genesee Education Consultant Services) and Innovative Tiny Homes. In February 2024, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation announced a grant award of \$500,000 towards the Sacred Heart Veteran Village Project.

What is next?

Catholic Charities of Shiawassee and Genesee Counties is encouraging individuals to complete a volunteer form to stay up to date on the latest information and to be invited to fundraising and other events throughout 2024. There will be a press release announcing the exact date for the ground breaking. Grants are currently being submitted and solicitations to private foundations and sponsorships are being requested to complete the funding needed for the entire project. Resources are being collected and relationships with organizations and agencies that serve veterans are being cultivated as well. The Program Manager and on-site Facilities position will be posted later in 2024 and referrals and services are expected to begin by October 2024. The target date for the Grand Opening of the Veteran Resource Center and the first participants to move in is early 2025.

Would you like to get involved? We'd love to have you! Whether it's a monetary donation, in-kind donation or volunteer, building a community is a community effort!



SacredHeartVillage@ccsgc.org



Thank You!
To Our Supporters



WOLVERINE
FIRE PROTECTION CO.



Community Foundation
Greater Flint

For good. Forever.
For everyone.



CHARLES STEWART
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SEDGEWICK
+ **FERWEDA**
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Good clients + Good design + Great architecture



GENESEE CAREER INSTITUTE
Explore. Experience. Excel.



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Navigating Trauma

On a Spiritual Journey



We are pleased to welcome Jeff Fulton to the counseling staff in our Flint office. Jeff has been a Catholic licensed therapist for

twenty-eight years and understands the connection between mental health and faith. Most importantly, if you are struggling mentally, he will understand how that might be impacting your relationship with God.

Counseling and spiritual life are not often thought of as going hand in hand but as Catholics, our

faith is foundational to our lives, giving it transcending purpose. It also gives meaning to the sufferings for which we seek therapy in the first place. Spiritual counseling involves exploring the connection between a person's beliefs, values, and experiences, and how these relate to their mental and emotional well-being.

Whether you want to create a more intimate and Godly marriage, resolve challenging issues with your children or family, or learn how to decrease anxiety and depression and instead experience joy and peace, Jeff can support you on your spiritual and emotional journey from a shared Catholic world view.

Call today if you are interested in faith-integrated, research-based approaches to therapy which help children, individuals, couples, and families.

- Marital Problems (couples or solo spouse)
- Parenting Struggles
- Depression/Anxiety
- Anger Management
- Understanding & Establishing Healthy Boundaries
- Family-of-Origin Issues
- Recovery from Trauma
- Sexual Problems (Individual and Marital)
- Behavioral Addictions/Compulsions
- Spiritual Crisis
- Personal Growth

If you are going through a tough time call 810-232-9950 to book an appointment. Help is waiting! We accept cash, check, most major credit cards, and most insurance plans. Ability to pay is assessed individually.

Safe Haven

for Women & Children

Could you turn away The next in line?

Last year, our Warming Center, experienced need that we have never seen before. The number of overnight guests was overwhelming the space, the staff, the security and safety of everyone. Ultimately, we had to limit the number of people who could stay. One staff member said NO... they could not bring themselves to do it,

because the next person in line was a woman carrying a small child. Standing behind her was an elderly man who did not have an adequate coat and the temperatures were dropping. There were many others in line too...

When someone is in line at Catholic Charities, they are not seeking a room at the Ritz Carlton... They are hoping for a spot on a hard mat on concrete floor, a simple meal, and hopefully a blanket- if there are enough.

We made it through without turning anyone away, but it took a toll on the staff and the community we serve. Our Warming Center was designed

to serve 40-65 people and we were serving over 100 every night.

This year, we have served more people in our Soup Kitchens than ever before, so we braced ourselves for another busy Warming Center season.

On December 1, 2023, we launched a pilot program called Safe Haven, located at Catholic Charities' North End Soup Kitchen, to increase safety and security of those we serve.

In December and January we welcomed between 40-45 women per night, averaging 7 children among them. We are so grateful to everyone who has contributed to bringing this to fruition!

Neither can we.

Please consider making a donation to Safe Haven, a Warming Center overflow for women and children.





Holiday Giving

The Gift of Hope!

It is heartwarming to see the generosity of people during the holiday season. Your contributions have made a significant impact on the lives of those we serve. The smiles on the faces of the recipients were a testament to the joy and happiness that your gifts brought to them. Your kindness and compassion have demonstrated the true Spirit of Jesus, which is the most precious gift of all!



St. John Fenton Elementary
Christmas gifts for Adopt-A-Child



Holy Rosary Elementary
Christmas gifts for Warming Centers



Francisco Dionne
Shoes for the Community Closet



Marie Schultz
Hats, gloves, chap stick & snacks



Mother Fortner
Long time North End Soup Kitchen donor



Hamilton Health Network
150 Blankets for Warming Centers



Koegel Meats
Employees clothing and blanket drive



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Christmas gifts for 50 children



For 13 years Mid-Michigan NOW and Dort Financial have teamed up to donate to our Community Closets. This year they were able to collect **2,328 lbs.** of essential items!

- 928 lbs. of non-perishable food
- 880 lbs. of gently used clothes and towels
- 520 lbs. of personal care items



Local schools came to help weigh the items. We sorted between Food, Clothes, Toys, Personal Care items and Blankets.

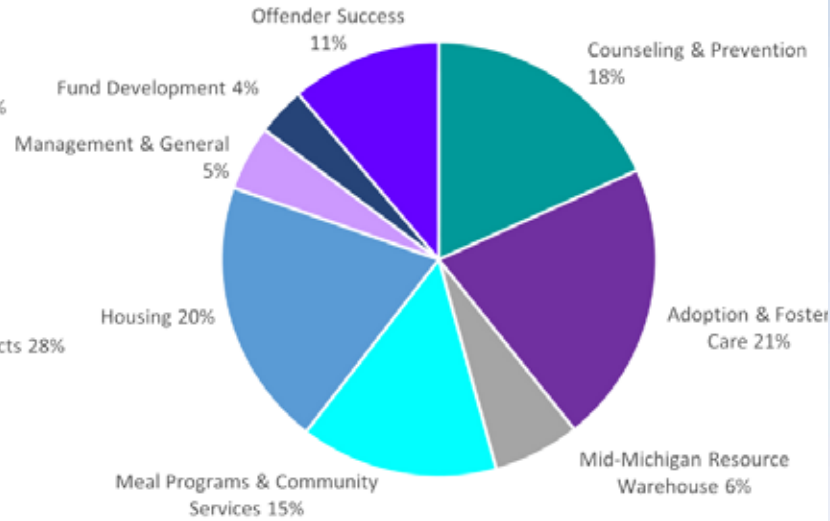
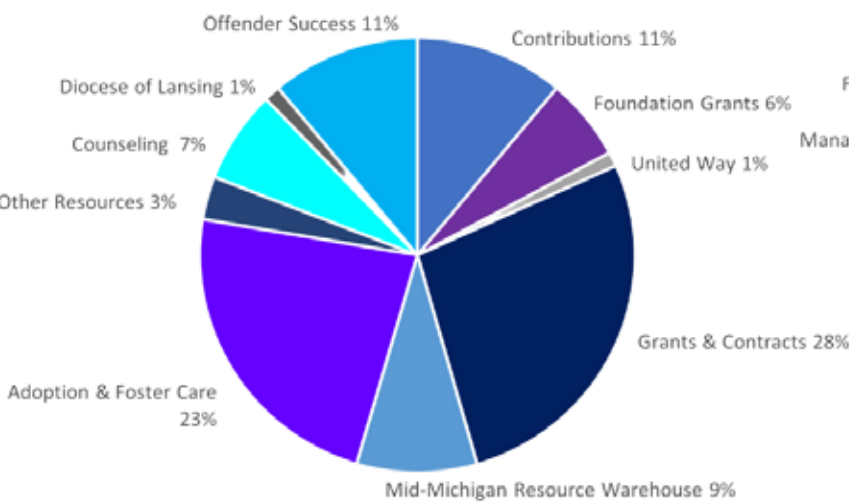


Thank You!

For spreading Christmas Cheer!

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2022-2023



Resources & Support

	Dollars	% of Total
Grants & Contracts	2,586,756	27%
Adoption & Foster Care	2,191,040	23%
Contributions	1,046,597	11%
Offender Success	1,046,137	11%
Mid-Michigan Resource Warehouse	847,189	8%
Counseling Fees & Contracts	653,687	7%
Foundation Grants	582,367	6%
Other Resources	303,677	3%
Diocese of Lansing	114,285	1%
United Way	100,684	1%
Total	9,472,419	100%

Expenses

	Dollars	% of Total
Adoption & Foster Care	1,966,141	21%
Housing	1,863,479	20%
Counseling & Prevention	1,709,815	18%
Meal Programs & Community Services	1,376,447	15%
Offender Success	1,046,882	11%
Mid-Michigan Resource Warehouse	604,050	6%
Management & General	453,108	5%
Fund Development	338,041	4%
Total	9,357,963	100%

North End & Center for Hope Soup Kitchens

Hot Meals	70,511
Sack Lunches	40,257
Warming Center	11,920
Food Pantry (Owosso)	131,889
Total Meals	254,577
Food Boxes (Owosso)	6,290

Holidays at our Soup Kitchens

Thanksgiving Day	
Center For Hope Soup Kitchen	34 meals
North End Soup Kitchen	135 meals
Christmas Day	
Center for Hope	77 meals
North End Soup Kitchen	195 meals
105 Kids toys distributed	
100 Adult Gifts distributed (towel rolls)	
Adopt-A-Child Christmas Gift	1250 children
Easter	
325 Meals	
930 Toys distributed at give-aways before Easter	
255 Easter Baskets including 765 toys	



Center for Hope

Work Ready Room Steel Toed Boots	210
Warming Center Overnight Stays	12,497
St. Christopher Medical Transport Clients	190
Number of Miles Driven	16,964

Community Closet

	Genesee	Shiawassee
Number of People Served	14,702	11,713
Personal Items Distributed	43,250	5,887
Clothes Distributed	385,745	20,702
Household Items Distributed	38,618	

Housing Programs

COVID Emergency Rental Assistance	586,431
Clients Served	131
Homelessness Prevention Program	219,023
Clients Served	274
Rapid Rehousing Program	24,873
Clients Served	25
Emergency Housing Voucher	800
Clients Served	1
Outreach- EFSP	20,637
Clients Served	89

Prevention

Genesee		Shiawassee	
Service Units	5,424	Service Units	4,886
Clients Served	1,073	Clients Served	1,381

Offender Success Program

Total Returning Citizens Served	309
New Enrollments for Housing	145
Total Days in Housing	19,897
Enrollment for Job Placement	109
Participants in Full Time Employment	64

Adoption & Foster Care

Number of Adoptions	23
Total Days in Care	23,040
Children in Foster Care	94
Total Home Visits	1,128

Counseling

Genesee		Shiawassee	
Service Hours	5,333	Service Hours	1,326
Clients Served	477	Clients Served	238

Volunteering

NESK Lunch	11,464
NESK Dinner	3,752
Center for Hope Lunch	3,868
Sand Programs	1,774
Center for Hope Closet	11,631
Owosso Pantry	4,288
Total Volunteers	8,740
Total Volunteer Hours	36,777

Thank You
for your continued prayers & support!



GECS
Genesee Education Consultant Services

GOYETTE
MECHANICAL

GOTTA GET GOYETTE!

ELGA Credit Union, Genesee Ceramic Tile, HAP, Huntington Bank, Meijer, Sims Chevrolet, INC Systems, CTI

St. Michael's Conference Center

609 E. Fifth Ave., Flint 48503

Our newly renovated St. Michael's Conference Center is up and running, with event bookings flowing in! The former site of St. Michael Catholic Church underwent renovations transforming it into a beautiful, state of the art facility with a capacity to hold up to 300 guests.

The renovations were completed just in time to host our 2023 Chair-ity Fundraising Event, on October 26th and with 280 guests in attendance, we raised over \$81,000 to help those in need!

In November, we hosted a Veterans Appreciation Luncheon to honor those who have served our country. We enjoyed a tasty meal catered by Bella's and the FIM set the tone with a four piece band for the National Anthem and a rendition of *When the Saints go Marching in!* We also welcomed First Sargent Eduardo Calzada from the GHS Veteran Navigator Services and Lieutenant Colonel Derrick Britton, of the Genesee County Veteran Services, both provided valuable resources to our veterans!

Since that time, interest in the conference center has grown and word has spread quickly! We have hosted events for Sloan Longway Museum, Genesee Health System hosted an Adverse Childhood Experiences Training, and Big Brothers Big Sisters Annual MLK Breakfast with great success, and everyone raved about how beautiful the venue is!

In January 2024, we held a press conference to highlight the Sacred Heart Veterans Village, with the mayor of Flint in attendance. With this facility now in full swing, we look forward to hosting events for community organizations in the region!

Soon, renovations to the lower level will be complete where we will have space for additional programming. We can't wait to see all the amazing things that will come out of this new space!

We would like to thank FUNchitecture and Lurvey Construction for all their hard work on the renovations to make St. Michael's Conference Center the venue of choice in Flint!

To book your event at St. Michaels Conference Center, please call 810-232-9950 ex.111, or email us at GiveHope@ccsgc.org



Scan the QR code to visit our website.



Tribute Gifts

Whatever you are doing keep it up!
Someone thinks you're pretty awesome
and has made a donation in your name!

Together you raised
\$17,150.56

Allen F. Turcke
Amber Chelladurai
Amelia Kuta
Bill Sleno
Bishop Earl Boyea
Brenton Boudreau
Carl & Genevieve Routhier
Caroline Goetz
Charles & Ruth Mosher
Corky Bohlen
David & Renee Dougherty
Dr. Rudolf Goetz
Dr. Venkat Rao
Drs. Greg & Leslie Trecha
Ella Gregoricka
Evangalina Murcia
Florence Collier
Fr. Mike Kuchar
Fr. Joe Krupp
Fr. Jerry Ploof
Gavin Wofford
Gloria Herrman
Jacob Clements
Janet Cotton
John Manse
Joseph & Evelyn DuCharme
Josephine & John Kekel
Karen Church
Kathleen Wilson
Ken Robbins
Kenneth & Dorothy West
Kimberly Santini
Patrick, Sean, Brendon & Kevin Kelly
Leo & Lorraine Meagher
Lupe Isaguirre
Mae Kuta
Margaret Story
Mary Lu Eve
Matthew Laskowski
Michael Rosencrantz
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Nederhood
My Birthday Club
Pablo Parra
Pat Taljonick
Paul Lazar
Peter Peacock
Robert & Marie Herstein
Robert Taljonick
Sigitas Viskantas
Sr. Ann Marie Petri
Sr. Claudia Burke
St. John Davison Quilt Guild
Steve & Vera Keim
Tereasa Calleja
Staff at Center for Hope
Tom Landry
Vernon Allen
Virginia (Mickey) Rhyne
William Potbury
Wise B. Joseph
Yahuha(God)

Would you like to show your
appreciation for someone
awesome in your life?

Visit www.ccsgec.org/donate to
make a donation in their name!

In Memory Of...

When you give a gift in memory of a loved one you are not only honoring your loved one but your contribution will carry their legacy forward and help us continue to provide vital help to those in need in our community. Thank you for this meaningful gift. We feel privileged to be able to honor the memory of so many wonderful people, and their commitment to helping others.

To those who have joined our heavenly
Father, we thank you for the blessings you
continue to bestow on those in need.

From heaven you raised
\$64,061



Alexander & Evelyn Maul
Ann Klumpp
Art Tinetti
Ashley Family
Betty Jones
Beverly Cords
Bill Conroy
Bob Daunt
Bonna Conroy
Caitlin Boudreau
Calvin, Florence, Hazel, Jannette
Carole A. Jozwick
Catherine McGuire
Charles Kujawa
Charles Sommer
Cherry Joseph
Christine Simecek
Corey Peek
Dale R. LeBeau
Dale, Ray & Robert Owen
Daniel J. Kelly
Daniel Reddy
Daniel Rutkoski
David Rowe
Dennis Duehring
Doug Graham
Gage Elkins
Dennis J. Kirk
Don Ashley
Don M. Ashley
Donna M. Ward
Dorothy A. Kritlow
Dorothy Gale
Dr Rao
Dr. Venkat Kondragunta Rao
Dr. Venkat Rao
Dr. William Macksood
Drew Foster
Earl & Frances Lindgren
Ed & Monna Suess
Edward Goggins
Elizabeth Kalakay
Emma Atkinson
Erin Modrzynski
Fr. Bill Wegher
Fr. Fred Taggart
Fr. Paul Schwermer
Frank & Agnes Kropelnitski
Frank & Marie Manley Sr.
Garry Wilson
Gary Haggart
Gary Kuiper
Gavin Wofford
George R. Malenich
George Nesser & Family
Gerald J. Belanger
Gloria Wilderspin
Harold Schmidt
Jack & Judy Martin
Jack Donlan
Jack McCarthy
James K. Glynn
Jan & Bonnie

Janet Deford
Jarred Bird
Jenny Wagner
Jeremy Stearns
Jerome & Judith Wolbert
Jim Kozminski
Joanne Canning
Joe & Debbie Eggleston
Joe & Vicki Hartsoe
Joe Flewelling
Joe Forlenza
Joe Joyce
Joe Wright
John Coates Sr. & Family
John "Jack" Ennest
John & Bev Wilkerwicz
John & Isabelle Dombroski
John & Steven Greene
John & Catherine Runyan
John D. Miller
John Jena
John Michael Deal
John Phillip Voelker
Joseph & Mary Madras
Joseph & Rosalie Arnes
Joseph Green
Joseph H. Delaney
Joseph L. & Dorothy L. Murphy
Joseph Weibel
Judith A. Harris
Judy Sienko
Katherine & Raymond J. Kelly, Jr.
Katherine Gibson
Kathy Isaac
Katie Paul
Kenneth Aranjio
Keskes Family
Kevin Natrella
Lauretta Montini
Leon & Mary Spitzley
Lois Martin
Lou Campana
Margaret A. Berry
Margaret Hebekeuser
Margaret Howard
Maria Isaguirre
Marian Black
Marie
Marie & Steve
Marie Stein
Mark Kline
Mark Strawser
Marti Daunt Strong
Marti Strong
Marvin Crooks
Mary "Beth" Grohoski
Mary & Gary Peterson
Mary Alice Johnson
Mary Anibal
Mary Ellen & Vera Nyland
Mary Paradis
Mary Trebby
Maurice & Betty Ann Ruddy

Michael Rosencrantz
Michael William Viviano
Molina & Adams Family
Monsignor Richard J. Groshek
Nancy Schaezner
Neil Hamilton
Nora Crego
Paquette & Beard Family Members
Patricia Ann Bills
Patricia Ann Root
Patricia Bisson
Patrick & David McCarty
Paul Lazar
Pete & Margaret Haddix
Pocius Family
Private First Class Larry C. Smith
Ralph Grew
Raymond & Gloria Krupp
Raymond H. Peltier Jr. & Family
Raymond & Katherine Zbiciak
Renee O'Brien Goodall
Richard Antell
MD & Brian Doty
Richard Swanson
Richard Swanson
Rita Keyes
Robert & Helen Hutchins
Robert Dale Brown
Robert Daunt
Roberta and Jerome Sobieraj
Ron Tomasik
Rose Marie Feckovics
Rose McArthur
Russell & Joan Stevens
Ryszard Obreczarek
Salvador & Maria Isaguirre
Sheryl D. Lewis
Susan Tavakoli
Steve
Steven Payne
Sue Adkins
Takin Emile
Terlisner Family
Tom Echlin
Tony & Justin Kane
Tony Virgilio &
Venkat Rao MD
Walt Bartkowiak
William Brewer
William Potbury
William Wheeler
Wilmotine Cooper
Wilson-Doyle Families
Wm. & Lila Howard
Woffard Gavin Augustine Nicholas
Yalonda Mesler



We are currently in need individuals or couples who are interested in becoming foster parents! If you are ready to open your heart and your home to a child in need we would love to hear from you!

When asked, "If we could wave our magic wand and give you the foster parents you need, how many would you ask for?" Without missing a beat, Christine Gurzick, Catholic Charities Licensing Supervisor, said "At least 20, and they would need to be prepared to take teenagers!"

Whether biological, adopted, bonus or foster, parenting teenagers is notoriously challenging. While teenagers may seem like a tough age group to care for, the reality may surprise you. Fostering teens can offer unexpected rewards, and the need for your help is great.

Christine has a special place in her heart for teens in foster care, and loves to support parents considering fostering teens. "I hear people say, 'We want the babies,' and remind them that those babies do grow up and become teenagers," she says. "Teenage kids need love, just like babies. They're trying to find their place in the world. They need someone to show they care."

Many considering becoming foster parents, have a misconception that teenagers are more difficult, than babies or small children. But it's important to remember that challenging behaviors are... challenging... regardless of the age — and, furthermore, joyful moments are present at all ages. And remember, no

matter the age of a foster placement, you're never without help.

"Sometimes I see teenagers come into care and they have that attitude that everyone's against them," Christine notes. "It takes care and consistency to let a child know, regardless of their age, that you are not going anywhere and you are not giving up on them. When they know they're in a safe and caring place, that's when they really start to thrive." Nurturing foster homes provide teenagers with opportunities to improve grades, get involved in school activities and make new friends.

For some, a teenage child is the perfect fit. For foster parents who work full time, a kid who is old enough to come home from school and take care of themselves for a few hours is helpful. In addition to that independence, caregivers also get to enjoy helping with job hunting, shopping and other outings better fit for older children.

Christine is all for empowering teens in foster care. "The teen age years are often the make or break years for a child in foster care. They need guidance more than ever and the hope is that you can be the person they come to for advice," she says, "If the child is little, you're not really a friend in the same sense. With a teenager, you can potentially make a life long connection."

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent we invite you to join one of our Foster Parent Informational Sessions held every Wednesday, 5 - 7pm, 575 Louisa Street, Flint To register email GiveHope@ccsgc.org

Do you have

BIG Questions?

ARE CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE 'BAD' KIDS?

This is a common misconception but the truth is, these are good kids caught in bad situations. There are plenty of stories of kids in care exhibiting difficult behaviors and expressing difficult emotions. Once you begin developing trust and communication with a foster child, you'll often find something else is going on under the surface.

WHO WILL SUPPORT ME AS A FOSTER PARENT?

Catholic Charities will support you in any way we can and encourage you to take advantage of our services such as Counseling, Community Closet, Personal Needs Room and Food Pantries. The National Foster Parent Association, nfpaonline.org, is a wealth of information and the Foster Care Navigator, www.fcnp.org, can help connect you with support groups.

IS IT OK TO ASK FOR HELP?

If you are nervous that you will need help and don't want to make your Foster Care Specialist think you can't handle being a foster parent, **DON'T BE!** Our staff can help determine what is age appropriate behavior, what behavior is the result of abuse and neglect, and help you de-escalate a situation if the child is struggling.

WILL I BECOME ATTACHED TO THE KIDS?

Yes. Foster Parents do become attached to children in their homes - but that's a good thing. When a child leaves, it's normal to grieve. Whether that means waiting between your next placement or welcoming another child quickly, do what's right for you. Foster care is a tangible way to minister to children in a time of significant need. If you are called to do it, God will help you through it.



Flint Catholic Life

Get Involved & Stay Connected!

Introducing the Flint Catholic Life Calendar *Your Guide to Faith & Fellowship!*

Are you looking for a way to stay connected and engaged with the Catholic community in Flint more than just on Sundays? Filled with a wide range of activities, events, and celebrations, this calendar is your go-to resource for everything happening in our Catholic community. Whether it's bible studies, prayer groups, game nights, a holiday party or a school fundraiser, we will publish events to help you embrace the joy of fellowship designed to bring people together and deepen your faith journey.

Look for weekly updates on our Facebook and Instagram!

Not seeing your event on the calendar? Scan the QR code to have it published.



www.CatholicCharitiesFlint.org/catholiccalendar

explore life faith meaning

FREE
Everyone
Welcome!

Alpha

Every Thursday
Until April 11, 2024, 6-8 pm

St. Michael's Conference Center
609 E. 5th Avenue, Flint

Alpha is a series of sessions that provide space where people can explore life, faith and meaning, and the Christian response to those questions. Alpha gives people the opportunity to find out who Jesus is and why he matters. Each session looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is run all around the globe, and everyone is welcome. Come expecting good food, a talk and conversation.

To RSVP visit

www.CatholicCharitiesFlint.org/flintcatholic

Genesee County Housing Assessment Resource Agency

Catholic Charities is the Housing Assessment Resource Agency (HARA) in Genesee County, known as One Stop Housing, that provides comprehensive housing placement services for people who are experiencing homelessness, at risk of becoming homeless, or have special needs in Genesee County. We strive to eliminate barriers for those we serve by providing services that meet the needs of the individual and family and enhances the community safety-net by placing homeless service programs in one, easily accessible location.

We offer many opportunities for individuals and families to receive vital services that meet their varying needs: central intake and assessment; referrals; screenings and inspections; resources and direct client assistance.

Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP)

EFSP funds can be used for a broad range of services, including temporary shelter, food insecurities, utility bill payments to prevent cut-offs, rent/mortgage payments to prevent evictions/foreclosures, and transition assistance from shelters to stable living conditions.

Homeless Prevention

This service targets low-income households currently experiencing homelessness or are at serious risk of homelessness. Assistance is provided with a possible short-term motel stay, rental arrearage, utilities, and water bills to regain stability in their current permanent housing or move into other permanent housing and achieve stability.

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) - Homeless Preference

Assists families & individuals experiencing homelessness by adding them to the HCV waiting list. The ability to add households to the HCV - Homeless Preference waiting list is secured via the completion of the Key Person Security Agreement and can only be completed by HARA staff.

Rapid Rehousing Program

Rapid Rehousing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families that don't need intensive and ongoing support to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Rapid re-housing assistance is offered without preconditions — like employment, income, absence of a criminal record, or sobriety — and the resources and services provided are tailored to the unique needs of the household.

OneStopHousing@ccsgc.org

To learn more visit www.ccsge.org/onestophousing



Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

Matthew 25:40

Overcoming Challenges: Offender Success

Offender Success is a public safety program based on 20 years of research of what works to help prisoners succeed when they return home. It strives to provide seamless services to prisoners from the first day of their sentence until they are released from prison and complete parole.

Coming out of prison can be an overwhelming experience. Leaving the structured prison environment and returning to the outside world often triggers anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Adjusting to the sudden freedom and rebuilding their lives is challenging for returning citizens.

People who have been incarcerated face social stigma and prejudice, isolation and limited support networks. Reconnecting with family, friends, and the community may be difficult if relationships were strained during incarceration.

Finding employment is a significant hurdle and lack of financial resources can hinder transportation, and even obtaining identification documents. Suitable housing can also be a struggle with limited financial resources, rental application rejections based on criminal records, and restrictions on living in certain areas due to parole or probation conditions.

Imagine what it would feel like to be standing at the bottom of that mountain of obstacles. The reality is that more than 90% of prisoners eventually return home. Before the Offender Success Program was implemented, far too many prisoners had little support in their transition back into their communities, and almost half returned to prison within two years. This revolving door resulted in more victims and added costs to a prison system, diverting precious tax dollars from other priorities like higher

education, public schools, and health care.

By providing the needed resources and tools for post incarcerated individuals, we have fewer victims and safer communities which ripples out into every aspect of our lives.

This is why Catholic Charities is committed to the Offender Success Program. Last year we helped 309 returning citizens in some capacity, providing housing for 145 of them and helping 64 find full time employment.

But we can't do it alone... and that's where Karen Eichorn has stepped in. She has been a donor and volunteer at Catholic Charities for years, but had to stop during COVID-19. After the pandemic she called to find out how she could help and by accident got transferred to Allison in our Offender Success Department.

She has a friend who spent some time in prison and now works with her and her husband doing carpentry work and building so this population is close to her heart. She started donating every other week and tries to coordinate with the team when someone is placed in housing, so she can provide as much as possible, whether it's second-hand furniture or pillows and blankets.

Karen doesn't want recognition, she just wants to help people who have paid their debt to society get back on their feet. "There was a lady who came in and was very quiet. She told me that she got help to find a place to live, but she literally had nothing," she

said, "I gave her a pillow, a back pack with some personal hygiene supplies, snacks. When she came in she was feeling down but when she left she was filled with joy."

"When I'm in there, stacking the shelves and I run into some of them they look at the floor when they talk... they are downtrodden... they just need to know that someone cares."

Karen is partly retired and wants to let people know that when they are getting rid of things or remodeling, to considering donating them to the Offender Success Program.

"There was one gentleman who got placed in housing and had nothing to sit on but a milk crate, and that just broke my heart," she said, "I don't think people even know that these folks need help. They've been given a second change and just need a little extra help to get over the hump. Sometimes it's that one little thing that you can give that could change the whole trajectory of someone's life."

If you would like to know how you can get involved call Offender Success at 810- 484-2828 or email GiveHope@ccsgc.org

Shiawassee County

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

You may not know this, but our office in Shiawassee County offers many of the same programs offered in Flint! The biggest difference is the home town feel and personalized attention you will receive from our dedicated team when you visit! From educational programs offered by our Prevention Team to counseling to our One-Stop Housing program, we strive to create a welcoming atmosphere so everyone who walks through our doors is given the help they need to thrive. Our goal is to empower individuals and families to reach their full potential and make a positive impact in our local community. Whether you are seeking support, resources, or just a little help getting by, we are here to support you!

Need Help?

Visit our Community Closet & Food Pantry

Mondays 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Wednesdays & Fridays 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Want to Help?

Donations accepted Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-4:30pm



Dennis Weinand
Job Development Specialist



Julie Braeutigan
Offender Success



Robert Botke
Prevention Specialist



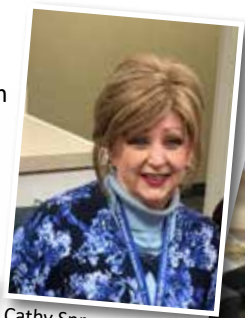
Barbara Botke
Prevention Specialist



Glen Griffin
Lead Housing Resource Specialist



Ali Safi
Housing Resource Specialist



Cathy Sprague-Emans
Site Coordinator



Marcy Kolodica
Customer Service



Kim Mashburn
Housing Resource Specialist



Phillip Zezulak
Therapist



Patrick Sherman
Clinical Supervisor



Catholic Charities



Interested in volunteering?



Office Hours

Mon. & Tues. 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Tues. & Thurs. 8:30 AM - 7:00 PM

Fri. 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

1480 N. M- 52, STE. 1, OWOSSO, MI 48867 • (989) 723-8239

TEEN VAPING

It's not just a bunch of smoke.

According to a 2022 study by the National Institute of Health, tobacco product use is established primarily during adolescence, and vaping has been the most used tobacco product in this age group since 2014. Studies suggest that adolescents who vape are more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future, creating a perpetual cycle of nicotine addiction. An alarming 4.7% of middle school students and 19.6% of high school students report e-cigarette use in the past 30 days. There is also a strong relationship between mental health issues (anxiety, depression, and stress) and youth smoking.

Our prevention team in Shiawassee County does a lot of amazing work in the community! From Parenting Classes to Anger Management for youth and adults, they are actively engaged in making peoples lives better! In the last few months Catholic Charities' Robert Botke has been visiting schools all over Shiawassee County to educate kids on the dangers of vaping!

"As Prevention Specialists our goal is to prevent initiation of tobacco use among youth and young adults," says Robert, "We collaborate with local school nurses and principals to provide free prevention education, awareness and to empower students with facts."

One important concern is the threat that vaping nicotine poses not only middle and high school students but elementary students as well.

Kids often don't realize that they are harming their lungs by using e-cigarettes. They may not realize that the products they are using contain nicotine and can harm brain development. Vaping can put students at risk for nicotine addiction and influence their performance at school.

Commercial tobacco use continues to be the largest contributor to preventable deaths in Michigan, despite a steady decline in usage over the last 20 years. However, since the beginning of the use of e-cigarettes and portable vaporizer devices in 2013, commercial tobacco usage among youth has increased.

Because e-cigarettes and portable vaporizer devices are relatively new, policies to limit their usage have been slow in development. In addition, aggressive marketing campaigns and flavored products geared towards a younger market have created a new generation of commercial tobacco users.

You may be wondering, this is all very interesting but how did Catholic Charities get involved in teaching about the dangers of vaping?

"Catholic Social Teaching tells us that the family is the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined," says Katie Baxter, Catholic Charities CEO, "We have a duty to families and promote the common good and well-being of everyone and our Prevention programs are one of the ways we do that."

Michigan currently has a highest youth commercial tobacco usage rate in the country. While it is a daunting problem, in January, Robert educated approximately 700 youth in Shiawassee County and intends to do his best to make sure kids in our community stay away from vaping products! Kids are savvy these days and we believe that by providing the facts about the dangers of vaping, we can save the lives of Shiawassee County youth and encourage them to spread the word to their peers.

To learn more about our Prevention programs visit www.ccsge.org/prevention-education



V♥LUNTEER Appreciation Awards

We cannot express how much we appreciate all that our volunteers do for us. Your selfless dedication and commitment have made a tremendous difference in the lives of so many people in our community!

April 17, 2024, 2-4 pm

St. Michael's Conference Center, 609 E 5th Ave., Flint

We would not be the thriving organization we are today without the dedication of our volunteers!

In 2023



To RSVP please scan the QR code or email GiveHope@ccsgc.org.



5th Annual



Save the Date!

Co-air-ity
Event 2024

September 19, 2024

St. Michael's Conference Center
609 E. 5th Avenue, Flint

Join us for food, fun and all the feels!

Thank You **Impact Partners**



Genesee Education Consultant Services



WOLVERINE
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GOTTA GET GOYETTE!



Simms Chevrolet,
Genesee Ceramic Tile,
HAP, Meijer

As an Impact Partner, you receive benefits such as recognition in our annual report, website, social media and opportunities to collaborate on projects. In addition, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your support is helping us to provide vital services to those in our community who need it most. Whether you are a small business, a large corporation, or an individual, there is a way for you to get involved and make a difference. Contact us today to learn more about how you can become an Impact Partner and join us in our mission to create a brighter future for all.

To learn more or become a Impact Partner please Contact the Development Office at GiveHope@ccsgc.org or 810-232-9950 ext. 111

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Boxed Lunch Sale

In 2023 Catholic Charities served 254,577 meals through our Soup Kitchens, Sack Lunch Program and Warming Center. By Purchasing your lunch with us this St. Patrick's Day, you are literally putting food on the table for someone in need.

Order 15 or more and get FREE Delivery in Genesee County

For only **\$12** you can get a great lunch and help someone in need!

PICK UP YOUR LUNCH ON:
Thursday, March 14, 2024
DRIVE-THRU 11 A.M. - 1 P.M.
LOCATED AT 901 CHIPPEWA STREET, FLINT

Lunches include a corned beef on rye, chips, coleslaw, pickle and a treat!



Order Today!

CatholicCharitiesFlint.org/stpatricksday



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