



Catholic Charities Connections

JUNE 2022

A Quarterly Newsletter from Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo

We are God's hands providing housing, health, and hope to His children.

National Volunteer Week

April 24 - 30, 2022

Celebrating Our Amazing Volunteers!!

*"Volunteers help us with life changing work",
says Jeannine Boehm, Volunteer Coordinator*

- **CCDOK is blessed to have approximately 175 volunteers who support our mission!**
- **In 2021, CCDOK volunteers shared over 7,000 hours of their time and talent!**
- **Whether someone wants to volunteer long term, short term or on a special project, we want their experience to be positive and meaningful! [Click here to visit our volunteer page on our website.](#)**
- **We have volunteers who help weekly, biweekly, monthly or whenever their schedule is open in all areas of our agency.**
- **Individually and collectively, our volunteers make us a stronger organization!**



Photos Left to Right: St. Augustine Students; St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish Volunteers; Quality Assurance Volunteers

Our Locations:

Administration

1819 Gull Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Caring Network/Bridges

1441 S. Westnedge
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Ark Services

990 W. Kilgore
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Catholic Community Center

346 Catalpa
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Bread of Life Food Distribution Center

7105 S. Westnedge
Portage, MI 49002

Baraga Manor

301 Washington Street
Otsego, MI 49078

CONTACT US AT:

(269) 381-9800

or info@ccdok.org

DOMEDAY 2022

On March 2, Ark Services for Youth staff met with lawmakers and various department leaders in Lansing, sharing their experiences and how best to present solutions that both prevent homelessness and provide support for vulnerable youth populations in Michigan.

Christina Nickels, Social Services Supervisor, stated that "Sean McCann was a pleasure to speak with about our services and the impact COVID has had on our programs. He showed empathy for what we do and listened to our experiences."



"This is really cool. Definitely a once in a lifetime experience!" ~Ark resident



The Ark Services for Youth serves youth and families in the nine-county Diocese of Kalamazoo.

Call 1-800-873-8336 or visit www.ccdok.org for information on housing, support services for runaway, homeless and youth in crisis.

CARING NETWORK IN THE NEWS

Caring Network was featured in a recent article published in Michigan Catholic Conference's Spring Edition of FOCUS Magazine. The article titled, "**How Catholics Walk with Moms in Need**", featured a Caring Network mom, Tee'aira Adams, and her three daughters. *When Tee'aira became pregnant with her first child, she was lost. Her sister recommended her to Caring Network... and the journey began.*

The wonderful staff and volunteers helped Tee'aira along the way and today she is the mother of three, in cosmetology school and running her own business.

[You can read the entire article by following this link: https://www.micatholic.org/advocacy/focus/2022/how-catholics-walk-with-moms-in-need.pdf](https://www.micatholic.org/advocacy/focus/2022/how-catholics-walk-with-moms-in-need.pdf)



Bread of Life Food Program - Past, Present, and Future

Many of our neighbors are facing a difficult realization: for the first time, they won't be able to afford food for themselves or their family, as layoffs and business closures have interrupted the incomes of many people. There are many children who receive their meals from school every day and with summer break they may go without. The Bread of Life food program is crucial for the summer months and providing food to families in need. Please consider donating today at ccdok.org/donate.



The Bread of Life Food Program...

provides supplemental food to any family in need. The food we provide is pantry-stable items like cereal, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables, intended to augment other food from local food pantries, government programs and groceries purchased. Our goal is to provide these basic staples to enable families to stretch their grocery budget for fresh fruit, vegetables and protein. One grateful Bread of Life food client commented on how hard it is to shop these days on a fixed income, *"I hope you realize how much this helps us out and what you have done for us these past few months. Because of the money we save on what you give us, we are able to buy some meat."*

2020 – What a year...

- The COVID pandemic begins, many food pantries are forced to close, the number of people visiting food banks increases
- Catholic Charities responds to pandemic needs and launches “Emergency Food Distribution Program”
- 300 boxes of food are distributed each week to over 1,000 boxes per week (350 families) by the end of 2020
- 171 volunteers work close to 3,000 hours to pack and deliver food
- Catholic Charities receives \$97,800 in federal, state and local funding
- The USDA provides 2.2 billion pounds of food to emergency food providers, keeping food bank costs low

2021 – The impact of COVID continues....

- Food banks across the country served 55 percent more people in 2021, many are getting help for the first time
- Catholic Charities adopts the food program permanently based on community need
- Dedicated volunteers name our new program the “Bread of Life Food Program”
- Distribution reach increases to 607 families who receive food each week
- Available grant funding decreases significantly
- The USDA invests billions in the emergency food system, keeping Bread of Life food costs expenses lower than 2020
- Volunteers continue to be the backbone of the program - 195 volunteers give 4,738 hours

2022 and beyond...

- Food Banks across the nation are facing unprecedented supply chain interruptions, canceled USDA loads, and rising food costs - this is expected to continue the next 6 to 18 months
- Distribution is paused to some partner sites as we transitioned to a new program supervisor and reevaluated our costs in the first quarter
- The program secures additional grant funding and reduces transportation costs, however food costs continue to rise
- On average, 350 families receive food each week

Our Commitment: *To continue to be a leader in responding to hunger, partner with other community organizations, and assess ways we can be more efficient while reaching families most in need!*