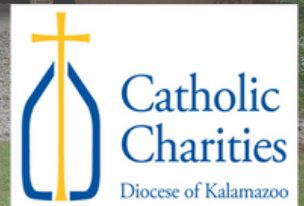


Catholic Charities Connections

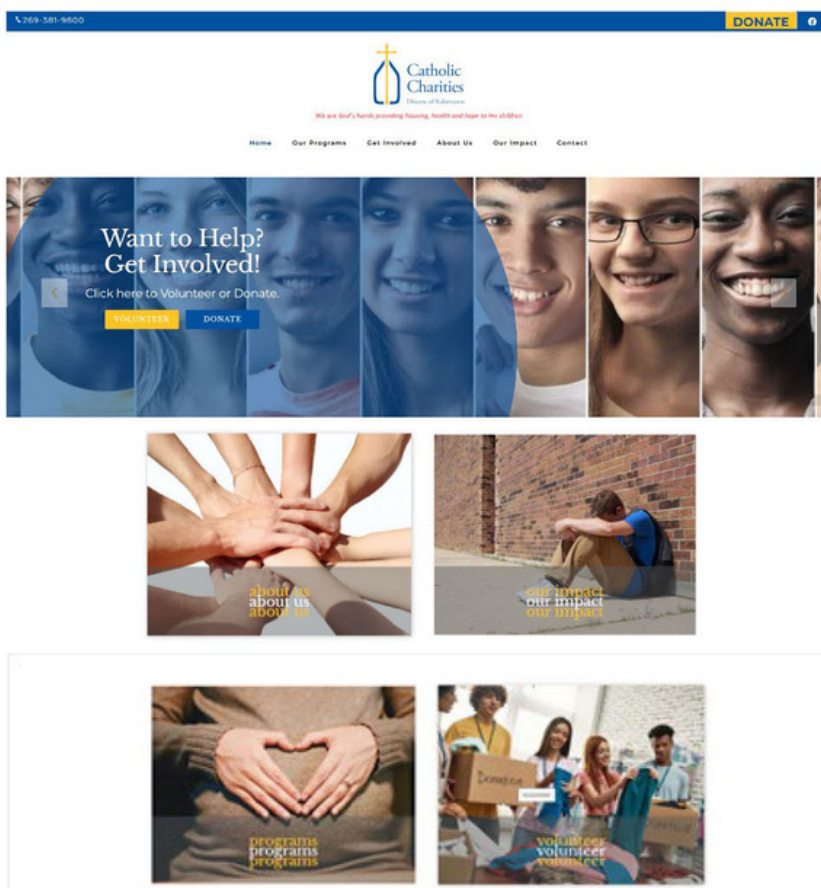
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAS A NEW LOOK!

Catholic Charities has launched a new and improved website!

Visit <https://www.ccdok.org/> to learn more about the programs we offer, view videos about our services, meet our team, become a volunteer and so much more!



Our Locations:

Administration
1819 Gull Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Caring Network/MIHP/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 Dist. 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



Meet Renee Toomey Director of the Catholic Community Center

CCDOK is excited to welcome and introduce Renee Toomey, the new Director of the Catholic Community Center in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Sister Maureen McGrath served as Director of the

Community Center for 13 years before retiring in the Fall 2021.

Renee's family moved to Benton Harbor when she was in the third grade. Her parents were teachers in the Benton Harbor and Lakeshore school districts.

After graduating high school, she went on to Central Michigan University, graduated with a degree in Business, married, had two daughters and lived in the East Lansing area before returning to Saint Joseph in 1992. Happy to be home, she began her retail career managing the Elder Beerman store located in the Orchards Mall. After 15 years, she made a career change to the banking industry as Assistant Branch Manager at Flagstar Bank. Working with the public in these two venues afforded her the opportunity to forge many wonderful and valuable relationships over the years within the Twin Cities area.

Currently her oldest daughter, Summer, lives in Tallahassee Florida with her sons Elijah and Ethan. Her daughter, Jamie, lives in Benton Harbor with her three sons, Jaylen, Christian and Caden.

Her husband, Lemont, is managing the Bed, Bath and Beyond store in Mishawaka, Indiana. He is also a Trustee for Benton Charter Township. They love the community and both want to be a part of helping Benton Harbor grow and flourish.

"I look forward to getting to know everyone at Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo and all the great things we can accomplish at the Catholic Community Center."

Become a CCDOK "PAL"

WE LOVE
OUR VOLUNTEERS

Good things happen when Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo and diocesan parishes work together. At CCDOK, we're grateful for our Pastors, their dedicated parish staffs, and our generous parishioners for breathing life into our Mission. In February 2021, CCDOK staff and Parish Ambassador Liaison (PAL) Volunteers from 11 parishes began meeting monthly, via Zoom, to communicate more regularly about CCDOK programs, services, and events while learning about parish happenings. "I look forward to the monthly meetings," says Jeannine Boehm, CCDOK Volunteer Coordinator. "The PALs are people who have a desire to learn more about CCDOK and help us learn about their parish community. Our goal is to share information, collaborate on projects, and create ways to serve neighbors in need."

It's been wonderful to learn more in depth about CCDOK and what they have to offer the Diocese of Kalamazoo. One thing that has become clear to us as co-PALs is that we see how much CCDOK serves the parishes and how the parishes can in turn support their efforts. The main way we do this is by taking the information we discuss and learn in our monthly meetings and promote it throughout our parish community. It's a great and simple way to be involved in both our parishes and with CCDOK."

~Stephanie Flach and Bailey Sutkowi

We're blessed to have the following PAL volunteers representing their parishes and would like to have participation from every parish!

St. Augustine Cathedral,
Emberina Betzle

St. Ann's Catholic Church,
Augusta,
Stephanie Flach and
Bailey Sutkowi

St. Catherine of Siena,
Portage,
Colette Gushurst, M.D.

St. Mary's, Kalamazoo,
Pat Westrick

St. Mary's, Paw Paw,
Jennifer Dobbins

St. Mary's, New Buffalo,
Becky Borglin

St. Monica, Kalamazoo,
Juliana Kulpa

St. Thomas More,
Kalamazoo,
Tony Dugal

Immaculate Conception,
Three Rivers,
Cathy Doering

**North Allegan Parish
Collaborative: St. Mary's
Visitation, St. Stanislaus
and St. Therese,**
Laurie Schulte

PALs meet monthly via Zoom for one hour (Third Tuesday of the month). Please contact Jeannine Boehm at jeannineboehm@ccdok.org if you'd like to learn more about becoming a PAL or visit www.ccdok.org

Be God's Hands this Lent with Catholic Charities!

Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday (March 2). Lent is a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. What is almsgiving? Almsgiving is the act of donating money or goods to the poor or performing other acts of charity. The giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents.



This Lenten season, consider choosing Catholic Charities as your charity for almsgiving. Our mission is "We are Gods' hands providing housing, health, and hope to His children." To learn more about our services and programs visit cedok.org. Here are a few ways you can be God's hands and share your gifts:

SACRIFICE JAR – choose any vessel and place your dollars and cents in the jar each time you make a sacrifice (giving up a fancy coffee, a dinner out, completing a chore for someone, etc.). Gather up your sacrifice jar collection and donate to Catholic Charities. Look at what your small sacrifices could do for someone in need:

- Just \$10 could provide up to 5 boxes of food to families in need
- Just \$25 can provide a box of diapers to a young mother
- Just \$100 can pay for meals for homeless youth at the Ark Shelter for 2 days



Imagine if all 100,000 Catholics in our Diocese saved just \$10 in their sacrifice jar for Lent....just the cost of a few cups of coffee or pizza.....the effect would be life changing for so many in need!

DONATE - gently used toys and books and baby clothes to Caring Network. We will provide our pregnant and parenting moms and babies with these much needed material items!

SERVE – sign up to volunteer at www.ccdok.org/volunteer/ ! We have many different opportunities; come and share your time and talents to help others!

Supporting Our Mission

Caring Network is the Diocese of Kalamazoo's Pro-Life Agency, helping women feel supported, cared for, championed as they choose life for their babies. We couldn't do the work we do without the support of every single person, family, parish, school, business and volunteer that says "yes, I'm going to help make a difference for the women you serve." One such example of this support came from Battle Creek's Tri-Parish Pro-Life Ministry Spiritual Adoption (St. Philip, St. Joseph, and St. Jerome Parishes) that had over 175 people sign up to spiritually adopt babies at the three parishes. Cathy Hirzel, Tri-Parish Pro Life member, explains the Spiritual Adoption begins at the Annunciation and concludes with a "baby shower" in January. "Participants sign up by choosing and writing their name on a heart with a baby's name and this information is displayed on a trifold board at each parish. Daily prayers are said for the parents and baby, and physical and monetary donations are donated in January", says Cathy. The Tri-Parishes collected **\$1860** for Caring Network and filled the Caring Closet with needed material items for the families we serve. Thank you to all who participated and shared their love of Life!

