

FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

ATCHISON

502 Kansas Ave.
Atchison, KS 66002
913.367.5070

HOPE DISTRIBUTION CENTER

1708 Steele Rd.
Kansas City, KS 66106
913.432.3141

LAWRENCE

1525 West 6th St.
Lawrence, KS 66044
785.856.2694

LEAVENWORTH

716 North 5th St.
Leavenworth, KS 66048
913.651.8060

OLATHE

333 East Poplar
Olathe, KS 66061
913.782.4077

OVERLAND PARK

9806 West 87th St.
Overland Park, KS 66212
913.384.6608

TOPEKA

234 South Kansas Ave.
Topeka, KS 66603
785.233.6300

WYCO (KCK)

600 Minnesota Ave.
Kansas City, KS 66101
913.621.1504

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

9720 West 87th St.
Overland Park, KS 66212
913.433.2100



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Enriching Children's Learning Through School Serve Experiences

Catholic Charities developed a framework to create a meaningful connection between local Catholic schools and our agency's mission of serving those in need. This initiative has blossomed into what we proudly call the "School Serve Experience."

The main goal is to **equip** students with an understanding of Catholic Social teaching and its practical application in today's world; **empower** students to be socially aware of the needs of the poor and vulnerable; and **engage** them in our agency's work.

"These experiences provide students a unique chance to comprehend and incorporate the corporal works of mercy into their daily lives," said Annette Bentzinger, Parish, School and Community Outreach Coordinator.

The day begins with a prayer, an overview of our agency's mission and the importance of the Gospel of Matthew verses 25:35. Following an introduction to our 30+ programs, each grade takes on a service project tailored to assist a specific program. Each project is age appropriate for the students and directly benefits clients. All items collected find their purpose through donations to our various initiatives.

School Serve Experiences are now coordinated at 17 Catholic schools across our Archdiocese. They have inspired countless young hearts and minds to embrace our mission, and have had so much success in our agency that we had the privilege of presenting our model at the Catholic Charities USA Annual Gathering in 2022. This model has now been adapted for churches and businesses.

If you are eager to explore how Catholic Charities can introduce a Serve Experience to your school, church or business, we invite you to contact our Community Engagement Team at outreach@catholiccharitiesks.org. Together, we can foster a spirit of service, compassion and social awareness. ❖



BREAKING Bread

FALL 2023

catholic  charities
OF NORTHEAST KANSAS

St. Rita Workforce Program: Changing Lives for the Better

"I climbed the ladder!"

Donna diligently worked for many years as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Although she loved providing direct care to patients, the daily activities of the job were taking a toll on her physically. She dreamed of becoming a Certified Medication Technician (CMT), but her busy work schedule, financial worries and uneasiness about returning to a classroom prevented her from moving forward.

After her husband learned about a partnership between a training center and Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas' St. Rita Workforce Program, her outlook changed. Donna found the financial assistance and support necessary to help her successfully earn her CMT certification.

Donna is one of 78 St. Rita participants who earned credentials this past fiscal year. The program has changed significantly since its pilot launch in 2015. Initially, the focus was to remove all barriers preventing adult participants from achieving their educational and sustainable employment goals. "We set out to take care of everything including assistance with tuition, childcare, transportation, meals and more so that participants could solely focus on their education," explained Amelia Reyes, Chief Program Officer. "What we discovered was that approach was one-sided, and we needed a buy-in from the participants. Without accountability, the likelihood of success decreased."

The pandemic provided an opportunity to revamp the St. Rita model; build and strengthen relationships with trade schools, training centers and healthcare agencies; and identify resources for tuition assistance and online soft-skills training. "We



redefined what our role should be, which is to guide, support and empower people throughout the education and employment process," added Reyes.

Committed to making a greater impact, Catholic Charities placed a St. Rita Workforce Specialist in every Family Support Center. The program changed to a rolling enrollment, reducing the completion timeline from 18 months to 12 months or less. In addition, an application process was implemented to screen for potential engagement.

"We want participants who want to change their lives for the better," said Rachel Severt, Workforce Development Manager. "We recognize that some times more stability is needed before education goals can be pursued."

To qualify, clients must commit to monthly meetings with a St. Rita case manager. "We discuss budgeting, gauge how they are balancing school with other responsibilities and determine whether they need any other support," explained Severt, adding that participants can access Catholic Charities' other programs, including weekly food pantry visits.

That coaching continues for 90 days post-hire to help ensure success. "Through St. Rita, we're creating a self-sustaining foundation for our clients," said Rick McKenna, Workforce Development Director, "so they not only meet the job requirements, but have the life-skills to be gainfully employed." ❖

St. Rita Workforce Program Stats (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)



165 individuals boosted their job skills and advanced their education



78 graduates attained their academic or certification credentials



Average **starting wage of \$21.08** for full-time employment



Program focus on **Skilled Trades, Healthcare, IT or Life Sciences field**

Lauren Solidum, President & CEO

“You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things.” – St. Teresa of Calcutta



This year marks a very special milestone for Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas. Not only are we closely nearing our 70th year serving the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of our beloved Snow Ball. Snow Ball is so much more than a party! Snow Ball brings people of all faiths together united for one great cause – putting love into action.

Snow Ball began because of the love and generosity a small group of friends had for each other and their community. Their forethought has inspired thousands of people to join in the work of Catholic Charities. It is because of those inspired to join the movement that Catholic Charities, now over 200 employees, 7,000+ annual volunteers and over 30 ministries, remains a steadfast and faithful messenger of the love that God has for every human person.

Catholic Charities continues to put love into action by feeding the hungry and clothing the naked through our eight Family Support Centers, Resource Bus, Mobile Food Distribution and TurnStyles Thrift stores; sheltering the homeless through our Shalom House Men's Transitional Living Program; welcoming the stranger through our refugee resettlement programs; teaching families “to fish” through our skills training, higher education and employment programs- freeing them from the chains of poverty for good.

My message is simple – **THANK YOU** and please join us. I personally invite you to celebrate our incredible milestone on January 20th, 2024. If you are unable to attend the event, please consider learning more about our programs through a bus tour, volunteer opportunity or by hosting a lunch and learn at your home, business or place of worship. For more information, visit our website: catholiccharitiesks.org

The doors of Catholic Charities are open, welcoming all, serving all. ❖

Nurturing Hope, One Meal at a Time

Food insecurity is a growing concern across the United States. According to statistics from Feeding America, one in seven children in Kansas are food insecure, meaning they lack consistent access to food that is required to live out a healthy lifestyle.

Our Kids Summer Food program bridges this nutritional gap by providing free meals to children throughout our 21-county service area. Meals are funded by the USDA and are designed to provide kids 18 and under the nutrients they need to grow and thrive.

This past summer, our program **served 38,326 meals at 27 sites** throughout Northeast Kansas. Of those meals distributed, **32,611** were served in rural counties. This large number points to a growing need in non-urban areas, where access to resources is limited and economic disparities are prevalent.

“These families tend to live where they can afford to. They often don’t have access to transportation or lack the money to travel, so that limits their ability to access resources,” said Deanna Lizzol, Community Member at Oneida Methodist Church and program volunteer. “Providing lunches that are readily available, with no need to travel, gives families some relief and lets them know that someone cares. They are grateful. We are blessed to be able to serve them,” she added.

The program extends beyond the distribution of meals. It encourages community engagement by involving volunteers, schools, churches and other partners. This collaborative effort creates a sense of unity and solidarity in rural communities.

“Our volunteers know everyone in town. They have built relationships with families who access our services and there is a sense of trust,” said Chanel Griffin, Food and Nutrition Coordinator at Catholic Charities. “This program is more than free meals; it provides enrichment and makes a huge impact.” ❖



Shalom House: A Refuge for Men Experiencing Homelessness

Donald, who was homeless and unemployed, was among the first men welcomed into our new Shalom House Men's Transitional Living Program this past spring. Interview skills building and job coaching were provided through Shalom's onsite Employment Program. Donald also received a job referral – and a successful job placement!



Shalom House increased its capacity to serve up to **60 men experiencing homelessness.**

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann, who blessed the new space, said, “I look forward to seeing how many will be touched in a profound way by their experience here at Shalom House.” ❖

“We strive to empower men by providing a safe and dignified environment that allows for a successful transition to achieving financial stability and permanent housing,” said Tenesha Williams, Program Director, adding that four residents have already successfully achieved that goal.

The Shalom House team provides daily, on-site support to all residents. These services include guidance counseling, mentorship, employment support, nutrition education, restoration groups and more. In addition to collaborating with Catholic Charities' programs and services, Shalom partners with other community social services agencies.

New Roots Announces Name Change

In 2005, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas and Cultivate KC began a collaboration to support and train a group of Somali Bantu women about how to use their community garden plots to generate income through sales at farmers' markets. Over time, our organizations began to develop a framework for supporting refugee farmers interested in managing larger plots of land and launching small farm businesses. In 2008, we broke ground at the Juniper Gardens Training Farm in Kansas City, Kansas, and the New Roots for Refugees four-year farmer training program had officially begun!



A Catholic Charities of NEKS & Cultivate KC Collaboration

45 farming families have graduated from New Roots, and are able to sustain their families and contribute to the community

In celebration of the program's 15-year anniversary, we are excited to announce an expansion and name change from New Roots for Refugees to simply “New Roots.” The program's initial goal was to support refugees with agricultural backgrounds and help them start local farm businesses. However, many current participants of the program are no longer refugees—they have become US citizens and do not have refugee status. Also, the longer former refugees live in their resettled country, they may cease to consider themselves refugees at all. Additionally, rather than label participants by their immigration status, we want to emphasize their skills and talents as farmers.

Many key components of the founding program will remain. “We will continue to build on offering language access and helping new American families overcome cultural barriers,” adds Kristin Selby, New Roots Program Manager. “But we will support not only refugees, but immigrants and English language learners.”

New Roots also plans to expand services and build relationships in the surrounding and outlying communities. “We will keep offering community garden plots to anyone in the neighborhood. In addition, we will offer workshops and events to more of our neighbors in Northeast Kansas City, Kansas and beyond,” she said. ❖

Happy Birthday, TurnStyles!

In February, TurnStyles Thrift Store will celebrate a remarkable milestone - its 20th anniversary. A ministry of Catholic Charities, TurnStyles was born out of a growing desire among donors to provide household items to those in need. As the number of benevolent offers exceeded the demand from our neighbors, an idea took shape. On February 14, 2004, TurnStyles opened its inaugural store.

Over the last two decades, TurnStyles has flourished beyond expectations. Revenue annually exceeds \$1 million and all funds continue to be channeled directly into Catholic Charities' extensive array of programs. Today, the social enterprise now operates four locations: two in Overland Park, one in Mission and an antique booth at Glenwood Antique Mall.

We are proud that TurnStyles has become a beloved community institution. We continue to be thankful for the unwavering dedication of our donors and volunteers who generously contribute their time and effort to our mission. ❖



Supporters contributed nearly **661,000 pounds of new or gently used items** generating over **\$2.8 million in sales**

Visit catholiccharitiesks.org to learn more about our programs and how you can engage with our mission!

We serve our neighbors, of all faiths, through *Help, Hope, and Hospitality.*



A Legacy of Love. A Future of Hope.

On a cold winter's night in 1974, a group of inspired friends gathered over a potluck dinner with a single goal in mind – to help families served by Catholic Charities Foundation of Northeast Kansas. That night snowballed and became a spectacular annual fundraising event to provide for the most vulnerable in our community. On January 20, 2024, we will celebrate an incredible milestone – **the 50th anniversary of Snow Ball**, a true legacy of love built over decades – and the future of hope that lies ahead.

Peter and Veronica Mallouk are serving as the Snow Ball Presidents for this historic year. They will be joined by Honorary Presidents, Jack and Kathy Newman. The black-tie gala will be held at the Overland Park Convention Center and will feature a cocktail reception, sit-down dinner and dancing to an acclaimed band. “It will truly be an epic celebration of gratitude, love and life-changing hope,” says Lauren Solidum, President and CEO, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas.

Over the last 50 years, Snow Ball has greatly impacted Catholic Charities' mission of stabilizing and ultimately strengthening generations of individuals and families through its 30+ programs. The annual event will keep transforming lives for years to come.

Adds Solidum, “Generous donations to Snow Ball will continue to have an immeasurable effect on our ability to grow the programs and services that are so desperately needed in our community to walk our neighbors out of poverty.”

Celebrate with Us!

Learn more about Snow Ball. Scan the QR code or visit: snowballgala.org

- Make a meaningful Patron Gift
- Purchase a table or tickets to the event
- Give a special major gift in honor of the 50th Snow Ball ❖

