Dear Friends,

As part of the CC family, your safety and well-being are in my prayers. There is much uncertainty in the world today due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and many find themselves in uncharted waters. Please know if you find yourself in need of help, your Catholic Charities is here for you.

In our last newsletter, we introduced you to the three key value drivers of our agency—we are faith-driven, service-centered, and community-focused. Catholic Charities’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic was formed with our service-centered focus in mind. Our leadership and staff worked hard to adjust our operations to ensure we continue to provide holistic services when they are needed most. Our programs are working collaboratively to serve the mind, body, and spirit of every client that comes to us for help.

In this newsletter, you will learn more about our service-centered initiatives through the COVID-19 crisis. From our distribution of RISE Funds to help underserved Central Texans in financial distress, to our offer for two free virtual counseling sessions to anyone dealing with mental health impacts from this pandemic—Catholic Charities’ services are designed to meet the unique needs of our Central Texas community, no matter the circumstance.

In spite of these unprecedented times, our CC family has remained steadfast. You have gone above and beyond to support our agency. Your generosity through our Coronavirus Challenge fundraiser allowed us to be at the forefront of organizations offering help in this time of great need.

We are blessed to witness the best of humanity through our work at Catholic Charities. I hope this newsletter brings you hope, and serves as a reminder that you are a light in the darkness for the families we serve. Thank you for being a part of the good news!

Blessings,

Sara Ramirez
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT
People of faith serving anyone in need by strengthening families and promoting respect for human dignity and life.
CATHOLIC CHARITIES CHAMPIONS AWARD WINNERS

This year, the Catholic Charities Parish Relations team has worked to increase our partnership with Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Austin. Parish Relations helped students and teachers learn about the impact of our services in the community, and provide them with opportunities to grow as servant leaders.

This year, Catholic Charities of Central Texas is pleased to announce their first-ever Catholic Charities Champions! These Champions are schools in the Diocese of Austin with outstanding participation in each of our four areas of engagement—Learn, Serve, Give, and Share. Read on to learn about the amazing efforts of our honorees for the 2019-2020 school year.

St. Austin's Catholic School. St. Austin's kicked off their school year strong with an in-service day for teachers on the Catholic Charities campus. Here, the staff learned about Catholic Charities and participated in a Disaster Training course. They also brought and wrapped diapers to benefit our Gabriel Project Life Center clients.

St. Michael's Catholic Academy. The St. Michael's football team hosted a hygiene item drive in the fall, and the sophomores hosted a diaper drive in the spring. They collected and processed thousands of diapers for Catholic Charities. At our last Creating Hope in Central Texas Luncheon, several St. Michael's students assisted in hosting our event. Our Parish Relations team also gave various presentations to the school throughout the year on poverty and Catholic Social Teaching as it relates to Catholic Charities and our community.

St. Theresa's Catholic School. This year's highlight for St. Theresa's was their diaper drive, led by the Kindergarten and 5th Grade partner teams. This drive brought in over 15,000 diapers in just three days—the largest diaper drive Catholic Charities has ever seen! It was an incredible feat and took the effort of the entire school community. Throughout the days of the drive, the students were able to learn about Catholic Charities and how their hard work would help others in their community.

Catholic Charities of Central Texas is grateful for the support of these and all of our school partners and humbled by servant hearts growing in these communities. Thank you!

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Catholic Charities is blessed with generous partner organizations who have gone above and beyond to support our community through the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to give special thanks to these partners for their gifts and grants to our agency to benefit our COVID-19 relief efforts.

Seton representatives donate hand sanitizer for CCCTX clients and staff.
CATHOLIC CHARITIES AWARDED $1.6 MILLION FROM AUSTIN PUBLIC HEALTH’S RISE FUND

In April, the Austin City Council approved a Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE) Fund to help Austin residents in financial distress due to COVID-19.

Catholic Charities was one of just four organizations initially tapped by the Austin Public Health Department to distribute RISE Funds. We were allocated $1.6 million to provide vital assistance with mortgages, rent, utilities and car payments for the most vulnerable Austin residents.

“Missing a bill payment for even one month can have long-term financial consequences for families in poverty,” said John Paci, Director of Financial Stability. “Thanks to our history providing financial assistance and education, we have the experience needed to distribute these funds effectively and with care.”

To handle the influx of requests to access this funding, Catholic Charities hired six dedicated case managers and set up a special call center for our RISE Fund cases in a matter of days. Since the launch of our RISE Fund program on April 27, case managers have logged thousands of calls. The need for this emergency financial assistance is unprecedented, but our staff is committed to responding to each request.

To access our RISE Funding, applicants must be an Austin/Travis County resident who was impacted by COVID-19 and is ineligible for CARES Act assistance. If you or someone you know is a candidate for our RISE Fund program, more information is available on our website at www.ccctx.org/rise-fund.

CARES ACT CREATES NEW CHARITABLE GIVING INCENTIVES

Did you know? There has never been a better time to make a charitable donation! The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides unique incentives for charitable giving.

New charitable deduction: A $300 above-the-line charitable deduction is available to individual taxpayers taking the standard deduction in 2020.

Cash contributions: For those who itemize their deductions, the deduction limit in 2020 for gifts of cash to public charities is now 100% of AGI. You could pay zero taxes for 2020 by giving extra to Catholic Charities of Central Texas!

Corporate gift deductions: The cap on 2020 corporate deductions for charitable gifts is increased to 25 percent of taxable income.

I am grateful to my case manager and other staff for assisting with rent, resources, and also utility assistance. It is reassuring to have someone to back you up.

—CCCTX Client
CORONAVIRUS CHALLENGE RAISES MORE THAN $1 MILLION!

When the COVID-19 crisis started, Catholic Charities immediately began preparing for an increased demand for our services. Many of the families we serve already live paycheck-to-paycheck, and we knew many more would find themselves under financial strain due to loss of income in the coming months.

To help us meet this increased demand, we put out the call for donations through our Coronavirus Challenge. Supporters like you responded quickly and generously—in just one month, you helped us raise more than $1 million!

Your donations allow us to provide stable housing, financial security, mental health support, parenting and pregnancy resources, and more for people whose livelihoods have been impacted by COVID-19.

Our clients and staff thank you for your support of our Coronavirus Challenge. With your help, Catholic Charities will continue to create hope across Central Texas in this unprecedented time of need.

CCCTX was able to offer me rental assistance, as well as provide some education on developing better spending/saving habits to help me from ending up in this same situation in the future. Thank you so much to the staff of CCCTX for all that you do.

—CCCTX Client

JOIN US

“Be You” Virtual Summer Camp: This summer, our Counseling Services program is offering a virtual camp for children in 5th-8th grades to promote confidence and develop skills to cope with pressures they face in a healthy way. Dates are available in June and July. To learn more, visit www.ccctx.org/counseling-services.

2nd Annual Catholic Charities Weekend: August 29 & 30, 2020
Catholic Charities Weekend is a campaign to spread awareness about our mission to parishes across the Diocese of Austin. Look to your parish for information about how to access our services or join us in helping our neighbors.

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