

## THE MINDSET OF A FLOURISHING WRITER

### THE PAIN AND HEALING PUT IN VERSE

Writing can be a wonderful outlet for self-discovery. Since high school, Megan has enjoyed expressing herself through writing—specifically, through poetry. One poem, “This Girl That I Know,” is one of the first she remembers writing. It describes her initial battles with herself, and her mental illness.

“I was suffering inside,” recalls Megan. By the age of 22 and living at home, she says she was cutting herself frequently. That was when she heard about Catholic Charities Delaware House.

#### BREAKING OUT OF ISOLATION

“I was told that Delaware House had groups where I could interact with more people,” Megan explains. “My first day was like walking into a world of groups and friends.” Friends, she says she didn’t have many of prior to joining the groups.

“One important aspect of treatment for many individuals who seek help for mental illness is group therapy,” says Megan’s Case Manager, Donna Futchko. “That’s where Megan found a place to put a voice to her struggles in addition to writing.”

“My first couple of years at Delaware House, I was in and out of the hospital,” remembers Megan. Catholic Charities stayed by her side during these highs and lows. “Recovery is a process,” explains Futchko. “Ideas and support ‘tools’ take time to put into action. Also, it can be challenging to find the right medication to get through daily routines and be a part of the community.”

#### ADVOCATING HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

After two years of treatment, Megan was beginning to thrive. “I got it together and was out of the hospital for years. Suicidal thoughts were once in a blue moon, and I



Megan and her Case Manager  
Donna Futchko at Delaware House

was actually happy,” she says. “Delaware House got me to open up and reach out.”

When she heard about the Residential Program at Delaware House—which provides semi-supervised housing—Megan thought it would be the perfect first step toward branching out on her own. “I started to advocate for myself.”

Within a year, she had moved into her own little apartment through the Residential Program.

“My mom can come over on weekends and sleep over, and I can have other family over, as well,” she says excitedly.

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**FOR INFORMATION** about Behavioral Health Services at Catholic Charities, call 800-360-7711.



## A Message From the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Over the last few months, we've heard stories from women around the world as they found their voices and used their strength to speak up in a collective roar. Last month, Pope Francis was quoted as saying, "Violence against women cannot be treated as 'normal', maintaining a culture of machismo blind to the leading role that women play in our communities."

Among the stories featured in these pages, you'll hear from women who experienced the care of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton with various life circumstances. Included among them is a young adult who copes with mental illness through writing; a kind-hearted elderly woman who was on the verge of becoming homeless; and a mother who survived domestic violence and turned her healing into helping. Each of these women came from different beginnings and had been thrown into unexpected circumstances. By finding help at Catholic Charities, they were able to get the personalized assistance they needed to step forward with the right foot.

I am thankful for the work we continue to do, and for the ability to serve our community with the trust that is granted to our staff and volunteers. There are so many voices with stories to tell—from the women, children and the men in our midst—and it is an honor to give an amplified voice to those who have previously been silent.

Your generous support to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton strengthens our unwavering commitment that all members of our community deserve access to the highest quality of social service programs – that yield extraordinary outcomes – regardless of their socio-economic status, religious background, heritage or prior traumatic life experiences.

I am grateful to acknowledge your generosity and kindness. Have a blessed Easter Season.

*Warm regards,*

**Marlene Laó-Collins,**  
Executive Director



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Sincere thank you to our donors – with your partnership, you help us write the enclosed success stories. Together, we make a difference in the lives of the people who come to us for services.

*Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, inspired by our Catholic faith and shared values, restores dignity and independence to individuals and families, especially the poor and vulnerable; through service, advocacy and community building.*

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# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Nancy is a kind, generous woman who enjoys simple things — she eats healthy meals, stays active by taking walks in the park in the Spring, volunteers to help children at Christmas, and feels it's important to have her family nearby. Four years ago, she was suffering from constant anxiety over how to afford her rent increase.

## CUTTING BACK ON EXPENSES

Being a naturally frugal person, Nancy is careful to stretch every bit of her income. Back then, she used to resort to separating two-ply toilet paper into one-ply for it to last longer. But no amount of frugality could compete with a rent increase while living on Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

In 2014, Nancy turned to Catholic Charities Community Services as she was facing eviction. Through the Rapid Rehousing program, she found a nice apartment to move into and receives a small amount of assistance to pay her monthly rent. This change allows Nancy to remain within walking distance of her sister, Peggy.

Joking that she would be a bag lady now if it weren't for Community Services, Nancy is very appreciative of the assistance she receives. "I'm overwhelmed and grateful by the support of Catholic Charities. They have shown so much kindness to me," she says.



## FREEDOM FROM EVICTION ANXIETY

Being true to herself, Nancy is only willing to accept the exact amount of support she needs, and nothing more. When offered additional help— like a Thanksgiving Basket or holiday support—Nancy has selflessly declined, saying: "Please give it to people who need it more."

Her Catholic Charities Case Manager has seen a change in Nancy. "When I first met her, she was a scared and nervous woman—and very close to being evicted." But now, Mosudi Idowu says, without the stress of paying that rent increase on her own, she is stable and happy. "She's come a long way. She has a high spirit of commitment and even volunteers when she can."

Born on July 5th, Nancy grew up believing that the 4th of July fireworks were a celebration of her birthday. With her 80th birthday approaching this year, Nancy plans to celebrate her independence thanks to her own perseverance—and a little bit of help from Catholic Charities.

**FOR INFORMATION** about our Rapid Rehousing Program in Burlington County call 856-764-6940 and in Mercer County call 609-394-8847.



## Community Services Community Drives

Throughout the year, Community Services (CS) is supported by many wonderful donors providing our clients with basic needs – food and clothing.

Food drives help us keep our pantry shelves stocked and are a mainstay of our outreach efforts. CS also conducts themed drives that meet clients' other needs.

### MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- ✓ Canned meats: (hams, stews, chicken)
- ✓ Canned fish: (tuna, salmon, sardines)
- ✓ Peanut butter, nuts, beans, legumes
- ✓ Cereal (low-sugar)
- ✓ Breakfast bars

### FOR INFORMATION

about our Community Drives in Burlington County call 856-764-6940 x6128, in Mercer County call 609-394-8847 x2524, in Ocean County call 732-901-3261, in Monmouth County call 732-922-0400 x2702.



# HEALING THE WHOLE PERSON

Sitting at home alone with nothing to do seemed to make Cheryl's depression worse. "I wanted to get out more, make friends and receive support to continue my recovery," recalls Cheryl. She found all that and more at Catholic Charities Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT).

A client for more than 15 years, Cheryl most appreciates the compassionate support of her counselors. "The meetings are helpful because I always learn new ways of managing my symptoms and I enjoy the friendships that have developed," says Cheryl.

**"I love PACT, it has become my family."**

The PACT program has been highly effective in helping individuals living with a mental health or substance dependence diagnosis manage their symptoms while living on their own. The individual needs and strengths of each client are assessed and every effort is made to improve their overall wellness, explains PACT Program Director for Burlington County, Crystal Smith.

"Part of feeling good mentally and emotionally stems from physical well-being and looking one's best," says Smith. With this in mind, Smith established a partnership with a local hair styling academy to bring PACT clients once a month for services at no charge. Clients have their choice of haircuts, manicures, and pedicures.

Looking forward to the outing, Cheryl says, "I love PACT, it has become my family."

PACT counselors are available 24/7 to help promote the ongoing wellness and recovery of their clients, monitoring medication and encouraging them to achieve their highest level of functioning.

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**FOR INFORMATION** about the PACT program call 800-360-7711 or visit [CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org](http://CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org).



## Considering Leaving a Legacy Gift?

### YOUR GIFT BRINGS YOU CLOSER

You would like to leave money to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton in your will. You also want the flexibility to change your will in the event that life circumstances change. You can do both. In as little as one sentence, you can complete your gift. This type of donation to Catholic Charities in your will or living trust helps ensure that we continue our mission for years to come.



### AN EXAMPLE OF HOW IT WORKS

Meet Tom and Laurie, a young family with kids. When they got married and created a will, they included a \$75,000 gift to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton. As the family grew to include three children, Tom and Martha decided to revise their gift to ensure their children's future financial security.

They met with their attorney and revised the gift language so that Catholic Charities received a percentage of their estate, instead of a specific amount. Tom and Laurie now rest easy knowing their plans will provide for the people and charitable work they love.

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To discuss leaving a legacy gift, please contact Nancy Tompkins, Director of Development and Marketing, 609-394-5181 x1161 or [ntompkins@cctrenton.org](mailto:ntompkins@cctrenton.org).

# FINDING HELP AND GIVING HELP



“From the time you walk in the door, you’re greeted by somebody that you know is here to help you.” This was Michelle’s first impression of Catholic Charities Providence House Domestic Violence Services.

Michelle, a mother of two, was in an abusive relationship for 10 years without ever defining it in those terms. “The abuse happens so gradually that it takes a while to wake up and see it for what it is,” she says. When asked what made her realize she was being abused, Michelle answers that she told someone what her partner had done to her, and their response was enlightening: “They said, ‘You need to get help.’ And I said, ‘What am I getting help for?’”

## THE TURNING POINT

The harassment and abuse had reached a level of fear that Michelle didn’t know how to deal with. “I would flee from my home while my children were at school because I knew he would come back,” she says. “I was just afraid.” The turning point for Michelle was when, she says, “he decided I would be his punching bag.”

It was in a book of resources that she found the hotline number for Providence House. “I just called...

and I started from there.” Michelle explains that she was unaware not only that Catholic Charities offered domestic violence support services, but she barely knew they existed at all. But now, she refers everyone who confides in her to Providence House—whether they’re a former victim of domestic violence—or someone with an abusive partner because “that was where [her] healing began.”

## A TIME TO SPEAK OUT

In fact, Michelle has turned her healing into helping others. In addition to serving as a founding member of the STOP (Survivors, Testimonies, Outreach, Prevention) Committee, she also provides speaking engagements on domestic violence, and has led trainings for local police departments.

When describing her experience at Providence House, she likens it to a hospital: You go to a hospital and you expect a doctor to tell you what’s broken—and how you can take the steps to heal the hurt.

“Providence House not only saved my life, but empowered me to help others. They helped me believe in myself.”

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**FOR INFORMATION** about Catholic Charities Providence House Domestic Violence Services, call 877-871-7551 in Burlington County and 800-246-8910 in Ocean County.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Catholic Charities Providence House Domestic Violence Services or the Gift Auction, call **732-350-2120** or visit **CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org**.

**Come out for a night of fun, great prizes, refreshments and hope for those living with domestic violence!**

**WHEN: FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2018**

Doors open at 5 PM

Winners announced starting at 7:30 PM

**WHERE:** The Wellness Center at Georgian Court University  
900 Lakewood Avenue, Lakewood, NJ

**WHAT:** This “tricky-tray-style” Gift Auction with more than 400 baskets is our biggest fundraiser of the year and allows Providence House to continue offering free and confidential services to domestic violence survivors.

**COST:** Tickets are \$20 each

**PARKING:** Parking Lot A



## TEARS OF JOY AND GRATITUDE

Over time, the staff helped Ana get the pictures and forms she needed to apply for citizenship, and helped her submit her request. She was awarded citizenship three months later.

“There were tears, but this time they were of joy and gratitude.”

Ana had nothing to call her own and didn’t know where to turn. She found her way to Catholic Charities El Centro. There she met caring, culturally competent staff who listened attentively and offered tissues as she cried, sharing her story.

After 20 years working as a caregiver, Ana had retired. Unfortunately, due to some bad circumstances out of her control, everything she had worked for was lost. Things got even worse when her abusive husband destroyed all of her identification documents.

By coming to El Centro, Ana was immediately provided with food and some groceries, emotional support, and most importantly, hope.

“Our staff understand those seeking our help because many have had to overcome similar barriers,” said Ron Gering, Service Area Director, Catholic Charities Children and Family Services. “El Centro’s programs are designed to tap into a person’s resiliency and strengthen self-confidence.”

“When Ana was notified that she had received her citizenship, she was ecstatic. A door to a new future had opened for her,” said El Centro’s Director, Roberto Hernandez. “There were tears, but this time they were of joy and gratitude.” Now Ana has employment and is proudly renting a room in the community.

El Centro is a multi-service family focused center where the bi-lingual and bi-cultural staff help with providing basic needs, job training, English as a Second Language, parenting classes, and resettlement.

**FOR INFORMATION** about El Centro visit [CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org](http://CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org) or call 800-360-7711.

## THE MINDSET OF A FLOURISHING WRITER (continued from page 1)

### THE SPIRIT TO OVERCOME

Today, nine years after her first visit to Delaware House, Megan is proud she’s gone two and a half years without cutting herself, and that she hasn’t been to the hospital in more than two years. “I have many good friends and memories. I’ve come to love and appreciate the staff of caring people.”

“It’s been my pleasure to assist Megan along her journey,” says Futchko. “There’s a spirit about Megan that will never give up.”

Recently, Megan has written a follow-up poem to that early prose, titled “Life Lived,” which tells the tale of the things she has overcome.



**FOR INFORMATION** about Behavioral Health Services at Catholic Charities, call 800-360-7711.



# Catholic Charities Opened NEW AMBULATORY DETOX CLINIC IN TRENTON

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton has opened a new ambulatory detox clinic to round out a full complement of addiction and mental health recovery treatment services. "The addition of this new clinic, offering safe and cost-effective treatment for individuals seeking recovery from opioid and other substance dependence, is very much needed," said Executive Director, Marlene Laó-Collins.

Offered at their Trenton campus located on North Clinton Avenue and Southard Street, this new program opened its doors in December 2017. "The Ambulatory Detox Clinic offers an alternative to hospitalization as an out-patient detox program. The value of the ambulatory detox to the community is that it provides a vital, comprehensive life-saving service, that is available to all in need," observed Director of Operations, Susan Loughery.

The Ambulatory Detox Clinic is the final component of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). This federally sponsored initiative integrates behavioral health services, substance abuse treatment, and primary care on the Trenton campus. Launched on July 1st 2017, the CCBHC has already produced measurable improvements in treatment outcomes.



▲ (from left to right) Robert Tanzola, Chair of Board of Trustees; John Cimino; Anthony Verrelli; Dennis Gonzalez, Acting Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region II; Marlene Laó-Collins, Executive Director; Carolyn Daniels, Deputy Commissioner for Integrated Health Services, NJ Department of Health; Susan Loughery, Director of Operations.

**FOR INFORMATION** about services offered by Catholic Charities visit [CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org](http://CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org) or call 800-360-7711.

SAVE THE DATE

## 29th Annual Guardian Angel Dinner Dance

**Kick-off Reception**  
**Thursday, May 24, 2018**  
6 to 8 PM  
Hyatt Regency Princeton

**Dinner Dance**  
**Saturday, September 22, 2018**  
5 to 10 PM  
Hyatt Regency Princeton

The 29th Annual Guardian Angel Dinner Dance is our signature fundraising event, attracting over 350 attendees and generating approximately \$300,000 to help 100,000 individuals annually, regardless of religious affiliation.

Each year we honor individuals, parishes and corporations from our community who have positively impacted our ability to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

### 2018 HONOREES

**RICHARD J. HUGHES,  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES,  
DIOCESE OF TRENTON  
HUMANITARIAN AWARD**  
Paul J. and Margo Hooker

**CORPORATE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**  
J. Knipper and Company, Inc.

**CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
Guy G. Pue

### LIGHT OF HOPE AWARDS

*Burlington County:*  
Church of the Sacred Heart — Riverton

*Mercer County:*  
St. Paul Parish — Princeton

*Monmouth County:*  
Mary Lee

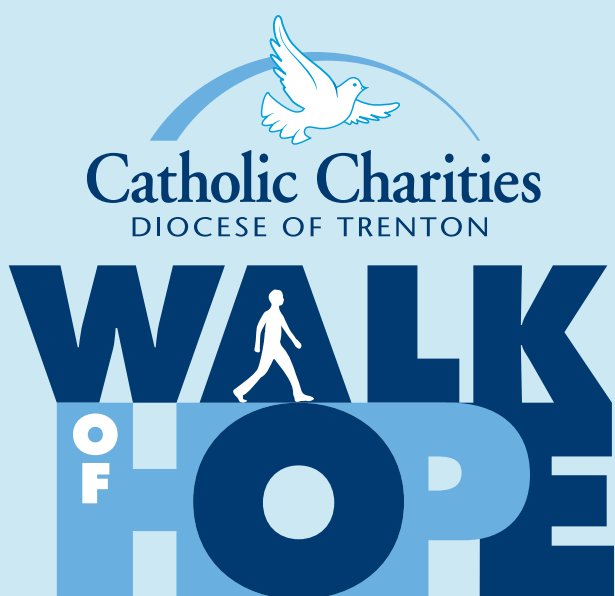
*Ocean County:*  
Opdyke's Furniture Inc.

For tickets, event sponsorship or to donate to the auction, please contact Charissa Buskirk, Development Events Coordinator, 609-394-5181 x1159.



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**SATURDAY MAY 19 2018**  
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Run  
Registration  
7 AM

  
Run  
8 AM

Walk  
Registration  
8 AM

  
Walk  
9 AM

Refreshments  
and Giveaways  
9 AM – 11 AM

**Register today at [WalkofHopeNJ.org](http://WalkofHopeNJ.org)**

**QUESTIONS?**

Contact **Jenn Leip**, Development and Marketing Manager  
at **609-394-5181, ext. 1137**, or **[jleip@cctrenton.org](mailto:jleip@cctrenton.org)**.