



2024 Annual Report

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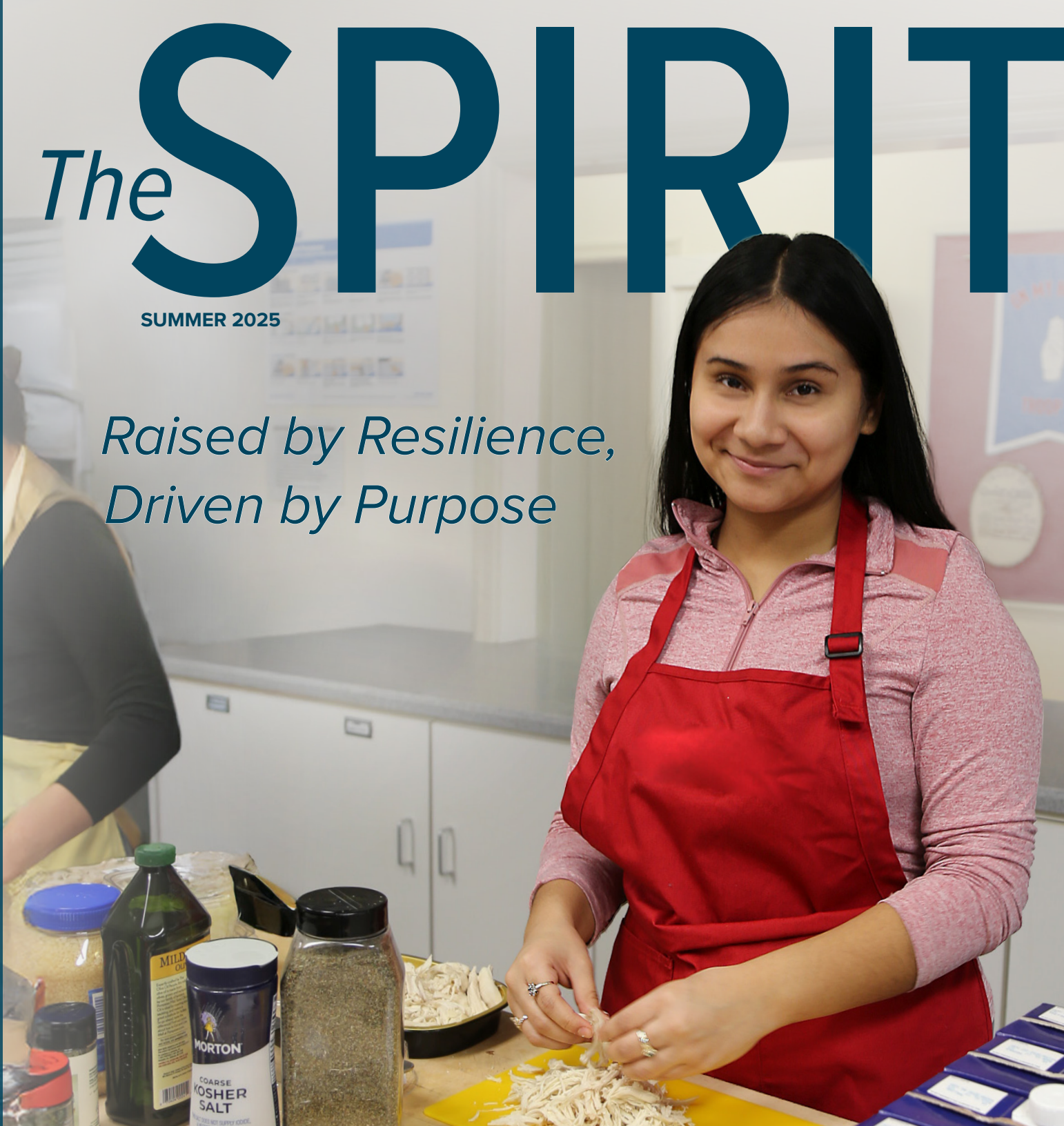
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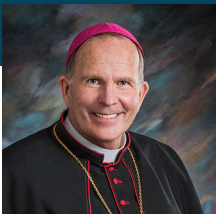
CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org

The SPIRIT

SUMMER 2025

*Raised by Resilience,
Driven by Purpose*





from the BISHOP OF TRENTON

We live in a time when the importance of charity has become increasingly recognized in American society — essential, even, for those

in need. In this Jubilee Year, as the theme of "hope" shapes our celebrations within the Catholic Church, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, embodies that spirit by reaching out in hope to our neighbors across the four counties of the Diocese.

I am always impressed by these Highlights, which show the number of people Catholic Charities has served over the past year, as published in this report. For every individual assisted, we know that others benefit as well — family members, neighbors,

coworkers and friends. Supporting the work of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, has a profound, positive and lasting impact on the local community and beyond.

May God bless Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton and all who come to us in need.

Gratefully yours in the Lord,

Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., J.C.D.



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from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With hearts full of sorrow and reverence, we acknowledge the passing of Pope Francis. His legacy is one of compassion, justice and

profound faith, marked by his deep care for the poor, immigrants and the marginalized. Even in his absence, his words continue to illuminate our path.

As we journey together through these uncertain times, I find comfort in Pope Francis' message for this Jubilee Year: a call to renew ourselves as Pilgrims of Hope. *Spes Non Confudit* — Hope Does Not Disappoint. This is the promise we carry in our hearts as we walk in faith toward a better world.

At Catholic Charities, your support breathes life into this hope. Each meal served, each family housed,

each person embraced in love is a testament to God's unwavering presence through us. Now more than ever, we are called to renew ourselves — to deepen our compassion and strengthen our commitment to walk with courage and grace alongside the most vulnerable.

Together, let us move forward with steadfast hope transforming lives and building bridges of compassion, healing and unity.

With gratitude and blessings,

Marlene Laó-Collins

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COMMUNITY SERVICES

Feeding Families, Fueling Hope

Every week, Jeannie – a devoted single mother of four sons makes the familiar trip to Catholic Charities' food pantry in Trenton. For her, it's not just about groceries. It's about belonging, respect and finding the strength to carry on.

When Jeannie arrives, she sends a text to Marion Friedman, Director of the Community Support Program. Moments later, someone from the team, often a volunteer, carries bags of food out to her car. It's a simple act of kindness, but for Jeannie, it means everything.

Living with a physical disability that limits her mobility and aphonia, a speech disorder, Jeannie faces daily challenges that can make even routine tasks feel overwhelming. But at our food pantry, she's never made to feel less than. "They understand my situation and accommodate my disability," she shared. "They enable me to take care of my boys, who eat like men."

The pantry provides more than just food; it offers dignity. Sometimes the bags include recipe cards, inspiring Jeannie to cook alongside her sons. "It's nice to

have the ingredients and an idea of what to make. I'm trying to teach my boys to be more independent, so we cook together. It brings us closer as a family. I know my sons will remember those meals and the time we spent making them."

MORE THAN JUST FOOD

Jeannie's life took a difficult turn after her divorce in 2020. As financial hardships mounted, she found herself needing more than just groceries. Time and again, Catholic Charities has been there to help.

"Catholic Charities has never turned me away," Jeannie said. "They take the time to find out what I need. They text me. They speak to me like I'm a human being."

Over the years, the Community Services team has supported Jeannie in many ways: with a much-needed air conditioner through our MediCool program, help with utility bills through the Parish Services program and clothing from the Clothing Closet for her ever-growing boys. But it's during the holidays, Jeannie says, that their support touches her heart the most.



"My boys have autism," she said softly. "They still believe in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. Because of Catholic Charities, I've been able to give them Easter baskets and Christmas presents. You've helped me preserve their sense of innocence. Some people might call that trivial, but to me and my boys, it's everything."

Jeannie is especially grateful to those who give. "What you donate is not being wasted," she said. "Because of you, I'm teaching my boys about nutrition. I'm feeding them. And more than that, I'm showing them what kindness looks like. Actions that improve people's lives are the things that create real, lasting change. It matters."

FOR INFORMATION about our food pantry locations, call 800-360-7711.

COMMUNITY
SERVICES

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



131,047

Visits to our food pantries

220

Families received Supplemental Nutrition Program Assistance (SNAP)

438

Elderly residents received help with home repairs

1,396

People assisted in obtaining permanent housing

585

Households received financial assistance and/or counseling through Parish Services

RAISED BY RESILIENCE, DRIVEN BY PURPOSE

A Local Student Gives Back



▲ In addition to her work at the food pantry, Zuri also volunteers making soup for seniors.

A first-generation American whose parents immigrated from Guatemala, Zuri graduated this June from Mercer County Technical School for Health Sciences. This fall, she will begin her studies at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ),

where she plans to prepare for a career as a cardiac nurse.

Zuri vividly recalls shopping with her parents as a young girl and spotting a Barbie doll dressed in a nurse's uniform. "Knowing that nurses help people, I really

wanted that doll," she says. "But my parents couldn't get it for me. Still, I held on to the dream." She smiles at the memory.

It wasn't until later that Zuri came to understand how difficult it must have been for her parents to say no — not just to that doll, but to many things. Now 18, Zuri shared this story in her college entrance essay, written during a weekly NJ Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) Mercer Hub writing workshop. In the essay, she reflected on how her father, who was told "no" so often as a child, eventually stopped asking for things. As she grew older, Zuri began to understand the emotional weight behind her father's ability to say "yes" to his children. "...'Yes' was an affirmation of his strength and success," she wrote.

The NJ4S Mercer Hub team makes sure students in Mercer County have the mental health services they need to succeed and grow. The team educates students and their families about

the importance of taking care of their mental health. It also provides evidence-based prevention programs for middle and high school students, as well as clinical interventions when necessary.

FINDING WAYS TO HELP IN THE COMMUNITY

Zuri is not only a participant in the NJ4S Mercer Hub programs — she also serves as a volunteer on its Advisory Board. Motivated by a desire to better understand her community and play an active role in shaping services, Zuri embraced the opportunity to serve.

"Being on the Advisory Board opened my eyes to the challenges children and teens in the county face," she said. "I was shocked to learn that even fifth graders are being exposed to drugs. It made me appreciate my family situation even more."

Born and raised in Trenton, Zuri lives with her parents and younger sister. She cherishes her roots in the city's Hispanic community.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



1,057

Families received crisis intervention and stabilization services

11,692

Children and adults received counseling and support services for trauma

1,191

Individuals received immigration support and counseling services

3,676

Individuals received domestic violence counseling, education and legal assistance

17,101

Nights of shelter provided

41,163

Individuals assisted by NJ4S Mercer

58,000

Individuals educated about childhood and family trauma



“When I’m in a place where everyone is speaking Spanish, it makes me feel connected to where my parents came from,” she said. Her family is very close — she and her father are passionate soccer fans and never miss a match in the rivalry between Barcelona and Real Madrid.

“I appreciate the sacrifices my parents made so I could be here. I know I’m blessed and lucky. I want my parents to be proud of me,” Zuri said. “I give to others what I can.”

A YOUNG WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT

In April, Zuri was honored by the Mercer County Commission on the Status of Women with its Young Woman of Achievement Award in recognition of her volunteer service. She was nominated by Michael Lovaglio, Director of the NJ4S Mercer Hub.

“Zuri is thoughtful and kind, always willing to collaborate with her peers,” Lovaglio said. “She doesn’t seek the spotlight or praise for her service — she simply

volunteers because she believes it makes a difference.”

In addition to her role on the NJ4S Advisory Board, Zuri is a dedicated member of the Cranbury Presbyterian Church Youth Group. She leads the Skeet’s Pantry team, arriving at 7 a.m. on Saturdays to accept produce deliveries.

“Being on the Advisory Board opened my eyes to the challenges children and teens in the county face.”

She helps sort and bag items for Sunday distribution, manages dry goods inventory and translates for Spanish-speaking pantry patrons.

Zuri is a member of the National Honor Society and a Helene Cody Scholar. She was recently named a Bonner Scholar at TCNJ in recognition of her leadership and advocacy. As a Bonner Scholar, she will be expected to continue creating positive changes throughout her college career. She also served as a Summer STEM instructor with Urban Promise in Trenton.

FOR INFORMATION about NJ4S and its programs, visit CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org/nj4s or call 609-394-5157, x3601 or x3602.

MAURICE'S JOURNEY

From Instability to Independence

Maurice's childhood was anything but easy. The youngest of seven siblings, he grew up in Bridgeton, New Jersey, in a home marked by instability. By the time he turned 18, he had lived with five different foster families. Each move chipped away at his sense of safety and belonging.

Just months after aging out of the Department of Children and Families system, Maurice found himself homeless — living in a shelter in Atlantic City, alone and adrift. Although he eventually secured an apartment, years of upheaval had taken their toll. He began struggling with substance use and mental health challenges, which ultimately led to a year-long stay at Ancora Psychiatric Hospital in his mid-20s. After his release, he moved into a group home in Toms River.

A STEP CLOSER TO FAMILY AND HEALING

Three years ago, at age 34, Maurice found something he hadn't felt in a long time: stability. He

moved into a home through the Intensive Residential Program in Hammonton — just a short drive from his father in Bridgeton. The two have since reconnected and now make a point to see each other regularly.

Maurice also participates in the Partial Care program at Delaware House in Westampton five days a week. The program provides a wide range of psychiatric rehabilitation groups for adults with severe behavioral health diagnoses who need

“He adjusted very well to being here. He's always respectful and has truly become a role model for others. He's done a fantastic job staying focused on his goals.”



▲ Maurice shares a home in Hammonton with four housemates. He is looking forward to moving into an apartment on his own through the Medically Enhanced Supportive Housing program.

intensive support managing their mental illness. “Our groups are instrumental in helping individuals achieve and maintain psychiatric stability,” said program director Heather Alexander Mark. “The Delaware House Partial Care program offers our consumers a space to form and participate in a community with other adults who experience severe and persistent

mental illnesses, along with staff members who are dedicated to being a part of their journey.”

Through group counseling, Maurice is learning essential life skills, such as how to set boundaries and express his creativity in healthy, productive ways. “It's good here,” Maurice said. “I get along with everyone.”

INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



4,317

People served through counseling
and mental health programs

10,778

Received care coordination through our
Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

23,775

People received transportation assistance

5,491

Hours of employment related
services provided

334

People served through residential services

1,696

Number of crisis services
provided to individuals

3,155

People received specialty psychiatric
and nursing services

557

Received substance use treatment



▲ Maurice likes to help Residential Counselor Tiliya Reid prepare dinner. He enjoys working in the kitchen, cooking meals and cleaning up.

At home, Maurice has household responsibilities — something he embraces. He especially enjoys helping in the kitchen, where one of his favorite meals to prepare is spaghetti. Outside of the kitchen, he enjoys playing basketball or unwinding with his PlayStation. A fan of hip-hop, Maurice listens to artists like Chief Keef, Aaliyah and Alicia Keys — music that resonates with his soul and story.

MAKING STRIDES, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Maurice's progress hasn't gone unnoticed. Tiliya Reid, a residential counselor who works closely with him, has witnessed his transformation firsthand. "I enjoy watching the residents evolve," Reid shared. "It's inspiring to see them learn and grow. Maurice has made excellent progress in setting healthy boundaries since he arrived."

Nelda Williams, House Manager echoes that sentiment. "I am very proud of Maurice and the strides he's made," she said. "He adjusted very well to being here. He's always respectful and has truly

become a role model for others. He's done a fantastic job staying focused on his goals."

LOOKING TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Now, Maurice stands on the threshold of a new chapter. He has been approved for the Medically Enhanced Supportive Housing program — an opportunity that will allow him to live independently in his own apartment, with ongoing nursing support to help manage his physical health.

"Right now, I'm patiently waiting for my apartment," Maurice said.

Once he moves in, Maurice hopes to find part-time work in a restaurant or fast-food establishment. He recently joined Planet Fitness and looks forward to working out regularly. With each passing day, he is taking intentional steps toward independence, wellness and the life he's always deserved.

.....
FOR INFORMATION about Residential Support Services, call 800-360-7711. For details about the Partial Care program, call 609-396-4557.

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Guardian Angel Dinner Dance is more than a fundraiser — it's a night filled with purpose, hope and compassion. Together with our community partners, we stand with those in need and come together to lift lives.

Get ready for an unforgettable evening featuring a 50/50 raffle, silent auction, dinner, dancing and so much more!

OUR HONOREES

**RICHARD J. HUGHES
HUMANITARIAN AWARD**
Brenda Rascher

LIGHT OF HOPE
Rotary Club Of West Jersey

LIGHT OF HOPE
Gerard St-Cyr

CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT
Jason



Thursday,
September 18
6:00 PM

The Merion
US-130
Cinnaminson, NJ



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GUARDIAN ANGEL
Capital Health

DISCOVER THE IMPACT THAT UNFOLDS WHEN
LOVE INSPIRES ACTION.

THE FAMILY GROWTH PROGRAM

Helping Families Thrive for Half a Century

This year, we proudly celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Mercer Family Growth Program (FGP) — a beacon of hope, healing and resilience for thousands of children and families across New Jersey.

To appreciate the significance of this milestone, it helps to look back. In 1974, when the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) became law, the nation took a major step forward in acknowledging and addressing child abuse. Just months later, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, received a grant to pilot a bold new approach — one that centered on healing the whole family. Under the leadership of the founding director Ron Gering, FGP began what would become a legacy of restoring families and changing lives.

A LIFELINE FOR FAMILIES IN CRISIS

For 50 years, FGP has been a trusted partner to the NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), offering trauma-focused treatment to children and families affected by abuse and neglect.

The Mercer Family Growth team is a close-knit group ▶ of dedicated professionals.

“We work with the entire family to understand the issues and help them build healthier dynamics,” said Caryn Hirsch, Associate Service Area Director for Children and Family Services. “Almost every family we meet wants to stay together — they just need the right support.”

A PLACE OF COMPASSION, NOT JUDGMENT

Under the direction of Yesenia Perez, today’s Family Growth team includes dedicated clinicians, interns and support staff who provide a safe, welcoming space for children to process trauma — and for parents to grow in their caregiving.

“We do whatever we can to keep families together,” said Perez. “Parents come to us feeling scared or ashamed. We meet them with empathy, not judgment. We walk alongside them; help set their goals and give them the tools to heal.”

Many parents who walk through FGP’s doors today were once children in the program themselves.

“They remember the help they received, and now they bring their own children or grandchildren to us,” said Hirsch. “That’s the power of breaking the cycle — of creating lasting, generational change.”

EXPANDING OUR REACH

Originally restricted to DCP&P referrals, the program expanded in 2008 with the Children’s Outpatient Program, allowing families, courts and law enforcement to refer children directly.

“We work closely with the Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office,” Hirsch added. “They know we’re experts in trauma and mental health — and that we care deeply about every child who walks through our doors.”

BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Working with children who’ve experienced trauma is not easy — it is sacred work.



“Our team is deeply attuned to our clients,” said Hirsch. “It’s not just a job; it’s a calling. And the joy of seeing a child smile again, or a family reconnect — that’s what keeps us going.”

As Mary Pettrow, Director of Children and Family Services, puts it, “When families are given support, resources and strategies to cope, they model strength and hope for their children. Resilient children grow into resilient adults — and that changes everything.”

Here’s to 50 years of healing. Here’s to the thousands of families who found strength in our care. And here’s to the next generation of healing, hope and growth.

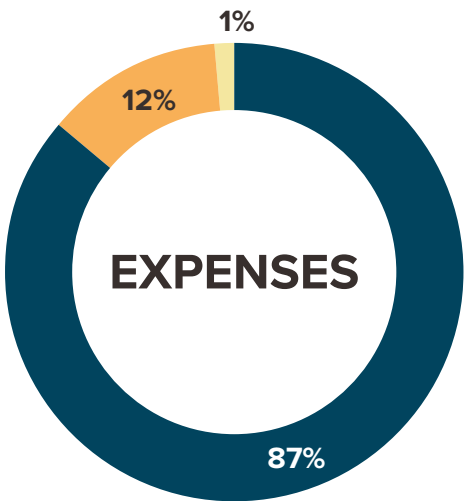
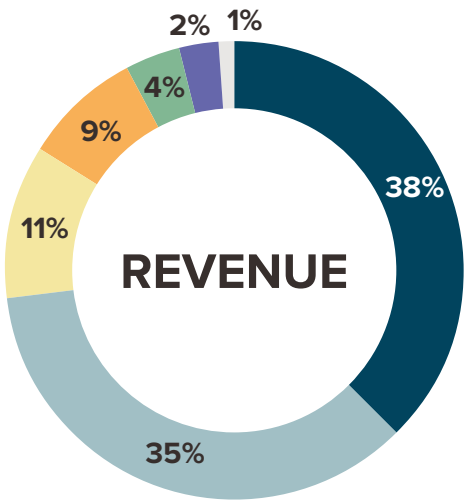
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FOR INFORMATION about the Mercer Family Growth Program, call 609-394-5157.

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The following is a summary of revenues and expenses for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2024. Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton continues to be fiscally responsible, fulfilling the stewardship expected by our funders and donors. Approximately 13% of our budget is spent on centralized administrative costs.

REVENUES BY MAJOR SOURCE	2024
New Jersey Department of Human Services	\$23,191,242
Medicaid and Medicare	\$20,938,233
Other Federal, State, County and Municipal Funds	\$6,216,695
Contributions and Donations	\$5,753,239
Client and Third Party Fees	\$1,372,449
Diocese of Trenton	\$513,192
Other	\$2,634,991
TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUE	\$60,620,042

EXPENSES	2024
Program Services	\$54,092,002
General and Administrative	\$7,661,580
Development	\$647,679
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$62,401,261



COVERING THE BASICS

We distributed \$2,490,545 in medicine, clothing and household items to individuals and families in need.



TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY

We distributed \$2,651,971 worth of food to individuals and families who did not have enough to eat.



PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

We administered \$2,204,259 in rent, mortgage, shelter and utility payments to keep people in their homes.

A full financial statement may be obtained by writing to: Debbra Elko, Associate Executive Director of Fiscal Affairs
383 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08618

2024 DONORS

We sincerely appreciate your continued support of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton. Thank you for believing in our mission and standing with us. Your generosity makes a real difference in the lives of those we serve. We are grateful for your partnership – this work is possible because of you.

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\$100,000+

Anonymous

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\$50,000-99,999

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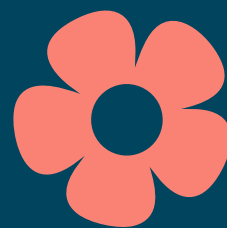
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