

  
**2025**  
Annual  
Report

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# The SPIRIT

SUMMER 2026

*With the Right Support,  
Joseph Is Finding His  
Way Forward*





## from the BISHOP OF TRENTON

In these trying times of governmental funding cuts, serving those in need has become more difficult.

That is why, as Bishop of the

Diocese of Trenton, I am so very grateful to the board, administration, staff, volunteers and benefactors who continually make the presence of Christ and the service of Catholic Charities possible for those most in need.

In contrast to what is happening all around us, at Catholic Charities, compassion continues to provide the foundation for care. Individuals needing a fresh start or a second chance, receive services with understanding and without judgement.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Providence House in Ocean County is celebrating a significant anniversary. Its cadre of dedicated professionals has enabled us to mark 40 years of protecting and

supporting survivors of domestic abuse. Since opening their doors in 1986, they have shepherded thousands of women, children and men through dark days toward brighter, safer futures.

I hope you recognize the significance of your part in this work. I certainly do and am exceedingly grateful. By supporting Catholic Charities, you are contributing to the well-being of families across the diocese. Through your support, Catholic Charities will never stop serving our brothers and sisters in need.

Thank you! May God bless you, Catholic Charities and all those we serve!

Gratefully yours in the Lord,

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



## from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In every age, we are called to respond to the needs of our neighbors with faith and compassion. Today, that call feels especially urgent. In the face of

uncertainty, I am reminded daily that the work of Catholic Charities is sustained by grace, and by people, like you, who answer the call with open hearts.

We transform lives. A person seeking a second chance is met with dignity. A family facing hardship finds stability. These moments are profound expressions of Christ's presence in our world, made possible through your generosity.

This year, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Providence House in Ocean County, where compassion has long been a refuge for those escaping violence and uncertainty. Our dedicated team walks alongside survivors, offering not only protection, but hope and renewal. Committed to mercy and justice, we become instruments of lasting change.

I invite you to see stories shared here not as individual journeys, but as part of something greater – a shared mission rooted in faith, guided by love. Together, we are strengthening the fabric of our communities and affirming the dignity of every person.

With deep gratitude and blessings,

Marlene Laó-Collins



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# PARISH SERVICES HELPS

## California Resident Lay Sister to Rest



▲ Francesca Valentin (left) with Brenda Rascher.

A Los Angeles resident, Kevin was nearly 2,800 miles away from his sister, Shelia, when he learned she had been transferred from her assisted living facility in Mount Laurel to a hospital. Unable to travel to New Jersey, he managed his 74-year-old sister's care from afar, doing everything he could to stay involved during her final days.

When Shelia passed away on April 25, Kevin began making funeral arrangements, hoping to have her buried with their family at St. Charles Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY. To proceed, he needed documentation confirming that Shelia was Catholic but locating the records proved unexpectedly difficult. Phone calls

went unanswered, messages weren't returned and every attempt to track down the necessary paperwork led to another dead end. Grieving and overwhelmed, Kevin felt his frustration growing.

That's when he reached out to Catholic Charities, where he connected with Francesca Valentin, Program Coordinator of Parish Services. "Thankfully, we were able to connect all the dots and make it work," Francesca said.

Working together with Brenda Rascher, Executive Director of the Office of Catholic Social Services for the Diocese of Trenton, Francesca helped Kevin locate Shelia's baptismal certificate from Our Lady of Cenacle Parish in Richmond Hill, NY. They also confirmed that Shelia had been a member of St. Joseph's Parish in Toms River while living with her mother.

With this documentation secured, Parish Services stepped in to cover the remaining funeral expenses not paid by Medicaid, ensuring Shelia could be laid to rest beside her parents and brother. "I was happy

to be able to help and support Kevin through this time so that he could bury his sister alongside their parents and another brother," Francesca said.

The Parish Services program provides compassionate, practical support to individuals and families referred by their parish.

Services include:

- Guidance & case management helps people navigate complex personal or financial challenges.
- Referrals to community resources connect individuals with local programs that can assist with housing, food, healthcare and more.
- Financial assistance up to \$500 offers a safety net during moments of crisis.

"Sometimes people just need a little help to keep things on track," Francesca explained. "It's a safety net for people, that they didn't know was there. It's also a reminder that you're never alone in your struggles."

.....  
**FOR INFORMATION** on Parish Services, please contact Francesca Valentin at 732-363-5322 x3232 or [fvalentin@cctrenton.org](mailto:fvalentin@cctrenton.org).

COMMUNITY  
SERVICES

## 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



100,082

Visits to our food pantries

120

Families received Supplemental Nutrition Program Assistance (SNAP)

512

Elderly residents received help with home repairs

1,056

People assisted in obtaining permanent housing

563

Rent and utility payments made

# WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT

## Joseph Is Finding His Way Forward



- ▲ Director of Burlington Community Services Taharqa Ramses (right) is glad to have Joseph on his team because he is willing to do whatever is necessary to get the job done.

Growing up, Joseph dreamed of serving in the U.S. Coast Guard. He enrolled at Maritime College in New York, majoring in International Transportation and Trade and was well on his way to achieving that goal. By his sophomore year, he had become the football team's

standout quarterback, leading the Privateers to an undefeated season and an Eastern Collegiate Football Conference Championship.

Everything changed during his junior year. As a First Class Cadet, Joseph began experiencing depression that steadily drained

his motivation and focus. He stopped attending classes and spent most days isolated in his dorm room. Eventually, the weight of his symptoms forced him to withdraw from school.

### NEEDING TO MAKE A NEW PLAN

After leaving college, Joseph joined the workforce as a carpenter in a local union. But new challenges emerged. He began experiencing hallucinations and delusions, including hearing voices. "Sometimes, I thought God was talking to me," he said. One night, the voices made him feel unsafe, leading to a serious altercation with a roommate. Following the incident, Joseph was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is a serious behavioral health condition that typically develops in young



- ▲ From stocking shelves, to shredding, there's always work to be done at the Burlington Food Pantry. Joseph is always ready to lend a hand.

adulthood. Individuals living with it often require lifelong treatment, which may include medication, therapy and ongoing support.

Because of his symptoms, Joseph was hospitalized several times. Following his 2021 release at age 28, he connected with

# INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



4,252

People served through counseling  
and mental health programs

13,737

Received care coordination through our  
Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

13,189

People received transportation assistance

5,300

Hours of employment related  
services provided

327

People served through residential services

1,676

Number of crisis services  
provided to individuals

3,039

People received specialty psychiatric  
and nursing services

909

Individuals received substance use treatment



▲ Joseph enjoys his role with the Community Services team in Burlington County. Several days a week, he's on the road picking up and delivering food donations.

Catholic Charities, where he found the stability and support he needed. For the past five years, he has lived in a group home operated by the Integrated Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) team. He shares a residence in Willingboro with five other men who have similar diagnoses. Residential counselors are on hand to support residents with whatever they need.

Joseph also participates in group therapy through the Partial Care Program in Westampton. "They teach things like coping strategies. Right now, they are helping me get over my anxiety," he said. Catholic Charities launched its Partial Care program in 1972 to provide psychiatric rehabilitation services to individuals with complex behavioral health needs.

## MOVING FORWARD AND HELPING OTHERS

Since moving into the group home and receiving services through IBHS, Joseph says he feels like he's on a better path. "I am on

the right medications now and not hearing voices anymore," he shared. "My counselors are great!"

Recently, Joseph accepted a position with our Community Services team. He works in the Burlington food pantry and drives

*"I like having a  
job where I get  
to help people.  
It makes me  
happy."*

the delivery truck, stocking shelves, picking up donations and helping people transition into their new homes. "I like having a job where I get to help people," he said. "It makes me happy."

Taharqa Ramses, director of Burlington Community Services, is grateful to have Joseph on the team. "He is a hard worker and you can tell he's committed to making a positive difference in the lives of others."

.....  
**FOR INFORMATION** on programs that support individuals with significant behavioral health diagnoses, call 800-360-7711.



# PROVIDENCE HOUSE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

in Ocean County Celebrates 40 Years

Getting out of an abusive relationship can be dangerous, even life-threatening. It may mean starting over somewhere new with nothing. For the past 40 years, Providence House Domestic Violence Services in Ocean County has stood as a beacon of hope, guiding individuals and families fleeing abuse to safety.

## THE STORY BEHIND THE PROGRAM

In 1986, when Ocean County Board of Commissioners wanted to create a program to support residents experiencing domestic abuse, they turned to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton. At the time, the agency had already spent eight years operating Providence House in Burlington County. What began in a small office in Toms River grew into a vital lifeline for survivors in Ocean County.

Over the past four decades, the program has developed into a comprehensive, countywide network of services. A spacious counseling center in Whiting, NJ,

designed with healing in mind, includes dedicated therapy rooms for children, complete with art and music spaces, as well as storage for donated food, clothing and essentials contributed by the community. It also houses offices for a team of skilled advocates, clinicians and administrative staff who keep the program running every day.

At a separate, confidential location, the program maintains a 27-bed safe house. Here, survivors enter a secure, peaceful environment free from threats and violence. They receive food, clothing, toiletries and other necessities at no cost. Clinicians and counselors are available around the clock to help calm the fear and uncertainty that often accompany crisis.

At the heart of the program is a remarkable team of compassionate professionals who have dedicated their careers to creating a nurturing space where survivors can breathe, recover and rebuild. Their work ensures that every person who walks through the door is met with



▲ The theme of the 40th Anniversary celebration was Planting Seeds of Hope – a fitting analogy to the healing and growth the team fosters every day in survivors.

dignity, safety and the support needed to begin again.

## DECADES OF DEDICATION AND WISDOM

Clinician Ellen D'Elia began as an intern at Providence House in 1989. She was a student at Stockton University working on her bachelor's degree in social work. "The entire program was run out of one small office," she said. "We had two folding tables and four phones. There were four of us. And back then, you did everything. You did intake, you'd go to court with the clients. If a kid needed clothes, you went shopping." The security

system consisted of a peephole in the front door.

In 1990, Mary Pettrow, now Service Area Director of Children and Family Services, first connected with the program through a serendipitous encounter. She had accompanied her mother, Carol Marks, to the newly constructed safe house to measure windows for curtains being donated by the Soroptimists International Club of Toms River. During that visit, Mary learned that Providence House was preparing to launch a legal advocacy program. By the time she left, she had been offered a job.

## CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



1,168

Families received crisis intervention and stabilization services

10,969

Children and adults received counseling and support services for trauma

1,215

Individuals received immigration support and counseling services

3,378

Individuals received domestic violence counseling, education and legal assistance

13,690

Nights of shelter provided

32,243

Individuals assisted by New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services in Mercer County

114,629

Individual contacts provided by Children and Family Services



▲ The women of Providence House know they can count on one another for support and guidance when the emotional weight of the work feels heavy.

“I had to promise to stay for at least a year,” she recalled. She stayed for three, eventually leaving to become a probation officer. Even after moving on, Mary remained closely connected as a volunteer, continuing to support a mission she had taken to heart. In 1999, she returned, this time as the Outreach Program Supervisor, rejoining the team with an unwavering commitment to the families the program serves.

Deborah Stellhorn joined Providence House in 1995, and like many of her colleagues, she has worn a number of hats over the years. “I started as a childcare worker,” she recalled. From there, her roles expanded to supervising case manager, children’s therapist and safe house coordinator, each position deepening her understanding of the program and the families it serves.

In 2003, she was asked to write a short description of the children’s program for a grant application. That small assignment opened the door to a new chapter in her career. Soon after, she transitioned

into grants and contract management, discovering a talent for securing the resources that keep the program strong.

Today, Debbie serves as the Director of Grants Administration for all of Children and Family Services, ensuring that Providence House and many other programs have the funding and the support needed to meet the needs of the families served.

Program Director Danielle Meyer began her journey with Providence House in 2000 while she was still in college. She worked part-time as a substitute case-aide in the safe house. A decade later she found herself leading the safe house during one of the most challenging moments in the program’s history: Superstorm Sandy. “We had no power for 12 days. The residents living in the house had to be

relocated to the Burlington safe house,” she recalled. Her steady leadership helped guide both staff and survivors through the crisis.

In 2019, Danielle stepped into the role of Program Director, just months before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Once again, she navigated unprecedented challenges, ensuring that services remained available to those who needed them most.

### ROCK STEADY, STEELY STRENGTH

The uncertainty of the early days of the pandemic tested the mettle of the entire team. “Within two weeks of the shutdown, one of our residents got sick. And we had to keep them in the safe house,” Mary recalled. “We felt like we were taking our lives into our hands to come in. But this job requires us to come to work.”

continued on page 8 ►

Even without natural disasters or national upheaval, domestic violence is demanding work. It carries an emotional weight, and staff are vulnerable to secondary or vicarious trauma. Every day, team members listen, without judgment, to survivors recounting some of the most painful experiences of their lives. They offer calm reassurance, steady guidance, helping each person move toward safety and stability.

"I've been doing this work my whole adult life, my entire career," Danielle said. "The team we have here are people who have been here a long time. We can do hard things because we have each other."

"Our bond goes so much deeper than simply co-workers," Mary added. "We show up for

each other. We remind each other, when things get hard, that this job can be really beautiful. We make people's lives so much better. It's exponential, there's a ripple effect."

And while the work can be heavy, the team has celebrated countless joyful moments with families staying in the safe house. There have been many graduation parties, Sweet 16s, baby showers and milestones that mark new beginnings. "We are lucky to have jobs that are meaningful," said Ellen. "It's a privilege to be here. It really is."

#### WHAT KEEPS THEM COMING BACK

"We've had clients who have lived through the worst physical violence. And two years later, they are living their best lives," Ellen said. "Lots of

people thrive once they are away from their abuser. And that's what we have to focus on. Things get better. Otherwise, I don't know how you could do this work."

"The social justice aspect of this work fuels us," Mary added. "People have a right to live in peace." While the team doesn't always hear from clients after they move on, the moments when they do reconnect can be profoundly affirming.

For Danielle, it's the camaraderie that keeps her grounded. "I look forward to coming in to the people I work with," she said. "We have good boundaries. When the work is hard, we are here for each other. I also appreciate the people out in the community who are always trying to spread the word and raise money to support us."

Providence House was built on the belief that safety is a right, healing is possible and every survivor deserves a chance to begin again. That belief has carried the team through four decades of change and challenge; it continues to guide them today. Their work is not easy, but it is essential. And as long as there are people in Ocean County who need refuge, advocacy and hope, Providence House will be here. Steadfast. Compassionate. Unshakeable. A haven for anyone ready to step out of fear and into a new life.

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**FOR INFORMATION** about how you can support Providence House in Ocean County, please contact Laurie Toole at 732-350-2120 x8419.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT



Cheers to Summer  
**CASINO**  
**NIGHT**

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# LINKAGES GIVES THIS FATHER

## a Safe Place to Begin Again

“I wasn’t a bad kid. I tried to get into sports, like basketball...”

Darryl shrugs as he remembers his childhood. Growing up in Plainsboro as the oldest of five, he started selling drugs as a teen to make money. Being surrounded by substance use, he eventually began using as well.

Now 58, Darryl has spent much of his life struggling with substance use.

About a year ago, everything changed. The mother of his six-year-old daughter passed away from complications related to sickle cell anemia. Darryl knew he needed to rebuild his life. To gain custody of his daughter, he had to complete a rehabilitation program and commit to staying substance-free.

“My daughter is really fragile,” he said. She has autism and gastrointestinal conditions. “The only thing she has on her side is her Daddy. I have to be here for her.”

### MAKING THE NECESSARY CHANGES

“In recovery, there’s a saying: ‘People, places, things,’” Darryl explained. “The people you hung out with, the places you go when

Darryl is grateful for the opportunities he’s found at Linkages. He is determined to make a fresh start for himself and for his daughter. ▶

you were using... you have to cut them all out to stay on track. That’s what I had to do.”

One of the biggest changes he needed was a safe, stable place to live. Through the Monmouth County Office of Social Services, Darryl learned about Catholic Charities’ emergency transitional housing program, Linkages, in Tinton Falls.

Linkages turned out to be exactly what he needed. The apartments have kitchens, laundry facilities on site and a large playground gives families space to breathe. Most importantly, the Linkages team provides support and case management to help residents access community resources and build toward independence.

“They have a really good staff here,” Darryl said. “They really listen to you. They want to make sure you can be successful when you leave. There’s no cutting corners.”

Case Manager, Kim Evlin connected Darryl with the Senior Community Service Employment

Program (SCSEP), a federally funded initiative that provides part-time employment and training for low-income, unemployed seniors. Participants gain skills through community service placements at nonprofit and public agencies.

Through SCSEP, Darryl began working 20 hours a week at Linkages, helping with maintenance around the 29-unit complex.

“Darryl is very handy and a hard worker,” said Program Director, Stacey DePoe. “This is a good match for us and for him.”

His responsibilities include preparing apartments for new residents and keeping the grounds clean and welcoming.

### CARING FOR HIS DAUGHTER IS HIS MOTIVATION

Parenting a six-year-old with significant medical needs is demanding. She has been hospitalized several times this year, and doctor’s appointments are frequent.



“I’ve got a lot on my plate,” Darryl said. “But the people here are working with me. My case workers, like Rosanna, go above and beyond.”

His daughter uses a feeding tube to ensure she gets enough nutrients, and Darryl is working hard to help her eat more on her own. “I really want her to get healthier. So we’re always trying new things.”

He beams when he talks about her. “She really is smart. Right now she’s learning to read. When she sees me in the kitchen, she wants to help, stirring, adding ingredients. She loves being part of it.”

Darryl is setting goals and planning for the future. “I feel good that I’m doing things the right way now.”

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**FOR INFORMATION** about the Linkages Program, call Stacey DePoe at 732-922-0400 or [sdepoe@cctrenton.org](mailto:sdepoe@cctrenton.org)

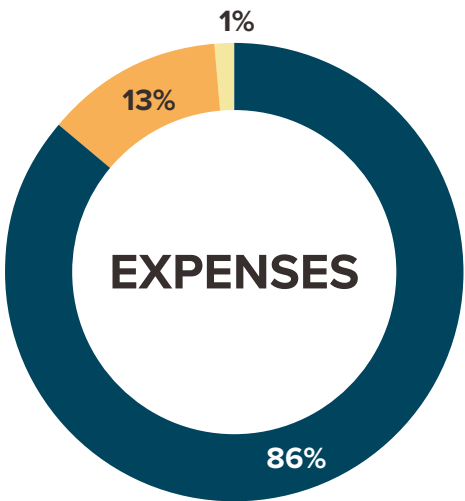
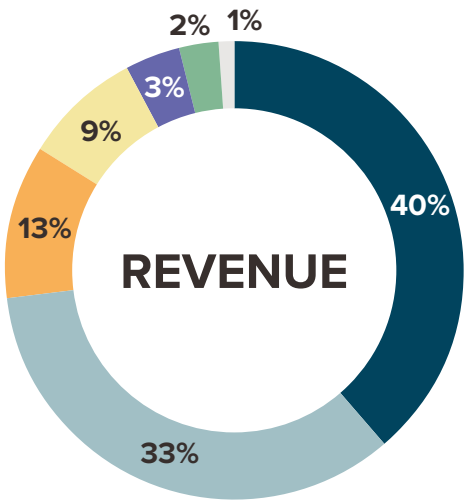
# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The following is a summary of revenues and expenses for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2025. Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton continues to be fiscally responsible, fulfilling the stewardship expected by our funders and donors. Approximately 14% of our budget is spent on centralized administrative costs.

| REVENUES BY MAJOR SOURCE                         | 2025                |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| State of New Jersey                              | \$24,795,878        |
| Medicaid and Medicare                            | \$20,764,421        |
| Contributions and Donations                      | \$8,100,407         |
| Other Federal, State, County and Municipal Funds | \$5,374,055         |
| Client and Third Party Fees                      | \$1,644,276         |
| Other                                            | \$1,304,899         |
| Diocese of Trenton                               | \$534,640           |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>                             | <b>\$62,518,577</b> |

| EXPENSES                   | 2025                |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Program Services           | \$53,102,224        |
| General and Administrative | \$8,304,676         |
| Development                | \$528,508           |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>      | <b>\$61,935,408</b> |

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.



## PROVIDING BASIC NECESSITIES

We distributed \$1,574,258 in medicine, clothing and household items to individuals and families in need.



## ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

We provided \$4,019,409 worth of food to individuals and families facing hunger.



## PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

We delivered \$2,198,266 in rent, mortgage, shelter and utility assistance to help individuals and families remain 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



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We are honored to recognize the generous supporters who make our mission possible. Your compassion and commitment strengthen our community and bring hope to countless lives. We could not do this lifesaving work without you.

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