

WHEN LISTENING PROVIDES AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE

Dedicated employee responds to emerging needs.

Corine Spinola provides support for vulnerable Ocean County residents challenged by poverty and has worked for Community Services for more than 15 years, beginning as a volunteer. She was soon offered a position overseeing what she calls her “first love,” the program’s food pantry. While much of her job still involves pantry operations, Spinola spends time listening to clients and helping refer them for additional resources. “Over time, I began to see increasing numbers of people who reside in nearby boarding homes expressing a desire for ready-to-eat meals,” said Spinola, regarding one recent trend she noted.

CLIENT CHOICE PROJECT

She explained, “while many of these individuals have physical or mental health issues and receive government income, most just covers their room and three meals a day. Once meals are served in a communal dining area, the kitchen is closed. They told me they were still hungry and hoped for some simple snacks to consume that didn’t require preparation since they are not permitted heating devices in their rooms.”

Always seeking ways to better meet the needs of those who are struggling to afford the basic necessities of life, Spinola ordered nutritious low salt, low sugar snacks from the FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties and a local supermarket. She also added bottled water



▲ Corine Spinola organizes clothing donations at Community Services in Ocean County.

and juice to the snack bags as well.

She then created a separate area within the food pantry for organizing these supplies and always has several bags stuffed with snacks at the ready. But, she also encourages other clients to choose from among a selection of packaged foods. Called the “Client Choice Project,” it has reduced food waste since clients only select what they will use and it has also encouraged thinking about healthy eating habits.

She has kept a running list of comments this project has generated from clients, many of whom are visibly excited by the prospect of “going shopping” for food: “I have started reading ingredient labels and putting back items that aren’t good for me,” “This is like being a kid in a candy

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SHINE A LIGHT ON OUR NEW LOOK! We’ve updated the look of *The Spirit* and the articles too! You’ll find a refreshed design and content that further highlights our outstanding programs and success stories. Please take a minute to share your thoughts about our new direction and we’ll send you a token of our appreciation! **Email your comments to spirit@cctrenton.org — be sure to include your name and mailing address to receive a free gift!**



A Message From the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROOTS AND WINGS

The late journalist W. Hodding Carter II became best known for his oft-repeated observation that, “There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots; the other, wings.” This is also a fitting description of what Catholic Charities gives our clients and consumers: we fulfill basic needs to help individuals get anchored and then we provide the skills necessary to take flight on the path of self-sufficiency.

Achieving results and meaningful outcomes in the lives of individuals facing adversity is complex, but one common objective is offering hope. We work hard to create an environment that makes good on this promise: we offer hope to all who come to us for help, regardless

of their financial status, background, or religious affiliation. In today’s world, promising hope may seem impossible!

However, we do what is thought impossible every day and turn challenges to its ongoing funding support into opportunities by innovating new services. I invite you to learn more by reading this issue of *The Spirit* and checking out stories of inspiration at **CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org — Hope Starts Here.**

Warmly,

Marlene Laó-Collins
Executive Director



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store,” “Choosing is hard,” “This is so nice!”

Spincola is gradually adding other items — individual size personal care products, seasonal fresh fruit, and note pads and pens donated by local banks.

PROJECT HANDBAG

Another recent project Spincola developed resulted from listening to clients’ needs, “Project Handbag.” An enthusiastic volunteer, Catherine Dobbs, told Spincola that the program had received so many donated handbags that they risked running out of storage space. Both had also observed that female clients seemed uncomfortable carrying around used grocery bags for their necessities.

It was an “aha!” moment and the two began stuffing the handbags with necessities such as toothpaste, deodorant, even toilet paper when it fits. Spincola keeps a supply of the handbags and allows clients to pick out from an assortment of styles a bag that suits their needs. “The women were so excited to be given a choice of handbags,” said Spincola.

“WHY I COME TO WORK EVERYDAY”

While she has many responsibilities at Community Services in Lakewood, Spincola said that the one closest to her heart and perhaps the one that accomplishes the most is simply listening.

“When people walk through our door, they are usually in need. All of them seem to need someone to talk to,” she explained. “A woman recently came to our office on the verge of tears so I asked her what was wrong and spent time sitting with her, listening to her concerns. I offered assistance and put her in contact with appropriate community resources. But before she left, she thanked me for listening to her. This is why I come to work everyday, to listen and let people know they matter.”



FOR INFORMATION about Community Services in Ocean County call 732-901-3261.

Planned **GIVING**

“The greatest use of life: To spend it on something that will outlast it all.”

— William James

Many of the services provided by Catholic Charities rely almost entirely upon individual donations. For example, at Providence House Domestic Violence Services, clients are not charged a fee in order to prevent money from serving as a barrier to accessing these life-saving services.

Through strategic endeavors, Catholic Charities has focused on a planned giving initiative to build its program and insure the agency’s ability to sustain and continue these services. Since 2014, planned giving revenue has increased by nearly \$1 million.

Planned Giving Revenue:	
2016	\$155,000 <i>(to date)</i>
2015	\$477,646
2014	\$269,482



You can choose to make a caring gift to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton that will have a lasting impact for our most vulnerable children and adults.

Whether you would like your investment to work today, or benefit us after your lifetime, you can find a charitable plan that lets you provide for your family while helping the more than 100,000 individuals we assist every year.

By including a bequest to Catholic Charities in your Will, you are insuring that we can continue our mission for the next 100 years. Your gift also entitles your estate to an unlimited federal estate tax charitable deduction.

When you are looking for ways to support Catholic Charities’ mission, know that any gift is appreciated and together, you help us to make a lasting difference in others’ lives.

FOR INFORMATION contact Nancy Tompkins at 609-394-5181 x1161.

Announcing the 27th Annual **GUARDIAN ANGEL DINNER DANCE**

MAY 12 — 6 TO 8 PM
Kick-off Reception
Hyatt Regency Princeton

SEPTEMBER 24 — 5 TO 10 PM
Dinner Dance
Hyatt Regency Princeton

Congratulations to the following honorees who will be recognized at our event this fall:

DAVID AND PATRICIA WRIGHT
*Richard J. Hughes, Catholic Charities,
Diocese of Trenton Humanitarian Award*

ST. JOHN NEUMANN PARISH
Burlington County Light of Hope Award

PETER HAAS
Mercer County Light of Hope Award

CHURCH OF ST. ROBERT BELLARMINI
*Monmouth County Light of Hope
Award*

**COMPONENT HARDWARE
GROUP, INC.**
Ocean County Light of Hope Award

NJM INSURANCE GROUP
Corporate Citizen of the Year

SUSAN PARKER
Client Achievement Award



FOR INFORMATION on the event, to learn about sponsorships or donate an item for our gift auction, contact Jenn Leip at 609-394-5181 x1137.

ART THERAPIST DRAWS ON STRENGTHS

For the first time in 40 years, the Family Growth Program in Mercer County has a board-certified art therapist working with both children and adults to begin their recovery from trauma and abuse. Mary Ellen McAlevey, LPC, ACS, ATR-BC, ATCS, brings a unique perspective to working with individuals who have a history of abuse.

“I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way — things I had no words for.” — Georgia O’Keeffe

“We know that trauma, like images, is stored in the right hemisphere of the brain, while language is controlled by the left side,” explained McAlevey, who also teaches art therapy at Caldwell University, the state’s only art therapy graduate program. “So when someone tells me they cannot find the words to describe what happened to them, I understand part of the reason why. Using paintbrushes, crayons and other tools gives clients the opportunity to express what happened.”

Utilized when clinically appropriate, art reinforces the client’s treatment plan. McAlevey, who is trained in a trauma-recovery art therapy model (*also known as Gantt and Tinnin’s Instinctual Trauma Response*) and presently serves as the President of the Art Therapy Credentials Board, said art fulfills many other basic human needs helpful to meeting treatment goals. “Handing a child markers

and a sketch pad gives them full control to draw without any concern about being judged or graded. It offers an important opportunity to experiment in a safe, supportive environment.”

GENERATIONAL TRAUMA: BREAKING THE CYCLE

“There are many reasons to have a positive and hopeful outlook for the children and parents I work with, among them are the evidence-based and trauma-specific approaches now being utilized. Moreover, we are intervening with children at a much earlier age which means they are more likely to develop resilience and recover, as well as break the cycle of generational trauma.”

▼ Board-certified art therapist
Mary Ellen McAlevey



Healing Art Forms

Art is a powerful tool for those who survived abuse because it allows them to turn the traumatic experience into something new. McAlevey recalled working with an adolescent boy who had experienced sexual abuse as a young child.

“It was too painful to discuss, but he was able to get it down on paper,” said McAlevey. “Then, I asked him to turn that paper into something else, putting it in a blender and using the scraps to make an entirely new piece of paper. He was pretty happy to shred that old paper, turning a negative experience into something new.”

He also found McAlevey’s suggestion to draw “zentangles” helpful — giving him time to decompress after a rough day at school and find a better frame of mind.

After creating many zentangles, McAlevey asked him to combine them on a single sheet of paper. Then she asked, “If you didn’t already know this drawing was based upon individual zentangles, would you be able to tell just from looking at it?” He responded that he wouldn’t. She was able to assure him that like the single drawing, he was composed of many parts including a history of abuse that no one can see and that no one would be able to discern simply by looking at him.

Victim Assistance Grants BRING \$400K TO NEW INITIATIVE

Providence House Domestic Violence Services was awarded more than \$400,000 in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Victim Assistance Grant (VAG) program funding through the New Jersey State Office of Victim Witness Advocacy, Department of Criminal Justice to expand programming in Ocean and Burlington Counties for victims of domestic violence.

EXPANDING SERVICES TO SURVIVORS

These crucial funds will support the Legal Advocacy and Project Peaceful HOME programs of Providence House in both counties. The Legal Advocacy Program offers a broad range of services and support to victims of domestic violence navigating the court system. Its research-informed approach includes:

- Crisis counseling and restraining order counseling
- Information about victim compensation programs
- Supportive and technical assistance
- Court accompaniment and safety planning
- Disabled and non-English speaking accommodations
- Information about the Offender Release Notification System, the Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO), and the Victim Address Confidentiality Program
- Information regarding the referral process to Providence House programs and other services providers

All of these services are offered free of charge. Project Peaceful HOME (Housing, Outreach, Mobility, and Economic Empowerment), is a trauma-focused,

research-informed wrap around program with an emphasis on housing that bridges the gap between the Providence House Safe House and the Providence House Counseling Center.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT THROUGH CLIENT FEEDBACK

“At Providence House Domestic Violence Services, we are always asking survivors, ‘What help did you need that you didn’t get?’ to learn how we can improve,” said Mary Pettrow, Associate Director, Providence House. “Consistently, the responses brought two issues to light, housing and legal assistance. We worked tirelessly to find resources specific to survivors of domestic abuse and this revealed a huge gap. So, it is exciting to receive this funding, allowing us to address critical issues and fulfill these previously unmet needs. I think I can speak for all of my staff when I tell you that it feels like we won the lottery,” observed Pettrow.

FOR INFORMATION on Providence House in Burlington County, call 1-877-871-7551. In Ocean County, call 1-800-246-8910.



Making Survivors Truly Feel at Home

To help potential residents feel less anxious, Providence House recently videotaped the interiors of their Safe Houses in Burlington and Ocean counties, providing a virtual tour. “When donors and other funders ask about our Safe Houses and furnishings, I can tell that they are imagining military barrack-type housing,” said Mary Pettrow, Associate Director of Providence House Domestic Violence Services. “The virtual tour provides the opportunity to see firsthand that the Safe Houses are warm, comfortable and homelike. It is a great way to educate the community without compromising the confidentiality of the Safe House location,” she added.

TO WATCH either county virtual tour video, along with a short narrative that details the process of a woman’s journey upon arriving at the Safe House, visit CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org.



FROM HOMELESSNESS TO FINANCIAL STABILITY



At a time in life when most face retirement, Dolores faced homelessness. At 61, she was too young to qualify for senior housing but could no longer afford the \$900 per month rent for a modest apartment. She had exhausted the funds from the sale of her mother's house and did not want to ask friends for help. Instead, she lived for several months in her car, a 2008 Subaru. Despite this, Dolores found grace in even the direst of situations. "I would awake each morning to see deer walking past my car," recounted Dolores. "What a beautiful sight to start the day."

HOME: IT'S WHAT MAKES A SUBARU

Dolores found what she felt was a safe spot to park each evening, in an industrial parking lot between woods and a train station. It was also near a McDonalds, where she spent most mornings eating breakfast and

▼ Will Nance (left) and Kathleen Francois (right) of Community Services' Rapid Rehousing program with Dolores.



washing up in the rest room. Then it was on to a local library and any other safe, heated, public building where she could pass some time. "Sure, living in a car isn't great, but at least I had a comfortable one to live in!" recalled Dolores in her typical upbeat manner.

"During this time, when friends told me they were amazed by my strength, I would explain that I was simply too afraid to be weak," said Dolores. This went on until the weather turned bitterly cold and Dolores finally heeded the advice of a friend to seek assistance from Catholic Charities. "I was reluctant because I had worked all my life and never asked for help from anybody," said Dolores. She went to Community Services in Trenton for help to obtain housing.

MOVING TO STABLE HOUSING

"When I met Dolores, I found a woman who was, considering her circumstances, surprisingly happy and positive," recalled Rapid Rehousing manager Mosudi Idowu.

A True Success Story

Dolores (pictured above) is one of many success stories, owing to the efficacy of the Rapid Rehousing program and its dedicated staff. According to Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes, "Rapid Rehousing has transformed the way in which we house families and individuals in Mercer County. Because of the exceptional work of the Catholic Charities Rapid Rehousing staff, families and individuals are moved rapidly from shelter into homes of their own, communities of their choosing and with supports to insure their continued success."

Dolores was assisted in obtaining fair income housing and moved into a multiple family home in Trenton. She recalled a solemn promise, "Mosudi told me that if I followed through on the program requirements, I would never go hungry or homeless again and he has kept his word."

Nearly a year later, Dolores qualified for senior housing and Idowu helped her obtain an apartment with affordable rent. She is in stable housing and is financially secure.

"Since I lost my mother, Mosudi and everyone at Catholic Charities really became my family and I will never forget what they did to help me," said Dolores.

FOR INFORMATION about Rapid Rehousing, contact Mosudi Idowu at 609-394-8847.

RECOVERING STRENGTHS and Opportunities

“Work is love, made visible,” observed Khalil Gibran. Sadly, many who desire work are denied the opportunity.

A high percentage of the unemployed are individuals challenged with serious mental illness who are highly motivated to work but face barriers in obtaining a job. Approximately 70 percent of adults with serious mental illness seek work, according to numerous studies conducted by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

At Catholic Charities, Supported Employment helps individuals obtain jobs and also provides the support necessary to ensuring workplace success.

JANET’S STORY

Among the many successes resulting from Supported Employment is Janet. Like many, she had achieved career success prior to participating in Supported Employment. But following a series of psychiatric hospitalizations for suicidal behavior and major depression, she felt unable to continue working and entered the Partial Care program in 2009.

By this time, Janet had been hospitalized three separate times within a year and had also been treated with 36 sessions of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). “When I started in Partial Care, I was in denial and thought I didn’t belong there,” recalled Janet. “Then I reminded myself that I did nothing but think about suicide every day and got to work. I quickly found kinship and direction from my counselor, Diana Pasca. Without her and the support of the entire behavioral health services staff, who knows if I would still be on this planet.”

THE ART OF RECOVERY

To encourage Janet to reconnect with what she enjoyed about her previous teaching career, Pasca tapped her to teach a guided imagery class at the Riverbank Self-Help Center. “This allowed me to bring the creative arts into the recovery process,” said Janet, an accomplished actor, mime and dancer. Not long afterwards, Janet, along with her partner Phil, started Burlington County’s first Suicide Anonymous group and established a business, Creative Communication Builders with help from Supported Employment.

She brings educational, thought-provoking workshops on an array of subjects to schools, corporations, civic and church groups. “*Wizard of Is*” comprises a theatrical, dance and mime presentation on the journey into madness and out again. “I prefer the term madness to mental illness because it more aptly describes the experience,” observed Janet.

Supported Employment has helped many individuals move on with their lives and achieve self-sufficiency. For Janet, Supported Employment made it possible for her to create an endeavor that now helps others, through creative instruction and education.



▲ Janet (left) meets with Supported Employment Program Supervisor Arlene Campbell.

What is Supported Employment?

“Each year, Supported Employment provides services to approximately 60 individuals,” said Arlene Campbell, program supervisor. “Each consumer meets with a job coach who helps to assess strengths, identify barriers and develop achievable goals in an area of interest. In a typical year, 30 job-seekers obtain work and several are accepted into educational or training programs.”

“One of our strengths is coordination of care and integrated services,” added Campbell. For example, consumers working with a job coach in Supported Employment may also be referred to other services if it would benefit their well-being and enhance their ability to be successful in a job placement. “In addition, we offer a full continuum of care, including primary medical and medication management services under one roof.”



FOR INFORMATION about partnering with Supported Employment as an employer, contact Arlene Campbell at 609-267-9339. For information on Janet’s presentations, call 856-324-0342.



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Marlene connects with mothers and daughters at one of our many community events — offering **HOPE** for strengthening families.



LEARN HOW HOPE STARTS HERE
CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org
1.800.360.7711

Hope Starts Here: Meet the Campaign

Throughout 2016, Catholic Charities will be sharing inspirational stories to show how we provide hope to those in need throughout our many services. The campaign message, "Hope starts here" will be accompanied by photos and stories of real people — agency employees including our executive director, volunteers, and clients.

Look for this campaign as it will be implemented on billboards, buses, radio, magazines, newspapers and cable television.

