

“I am grateful for the help I received from Catholic Charities.”

— Rose

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Gave Rose a Chance to Create a Home

When Rose talks about the telephone call she received a year and a half ago from Rapid Re-Housing Case Manager Elizabeth Tomaszewski, her eyes well with tears. “She was my angel. She saved me.”

Seeing her mother about to cry, Rose’s five-year-old daughter Sparkle runs into their bedroom and returns with a pink stuffed bear to comfort her. Dabbing at her eyes, Rose smiles and reassures her child, “These are happy tears, baby. I’m okay.”

Elizabeth was new to her position when she made that call. “I was reviewing intake screenings and saw Rose’s file. She seemed like someone who would qualify for the program, so I checked with my supervisor and followed up.”

Rose said her call came at a time when she was desperately in need of help. She was homeless, moving from one friend’s house to another with her toddler in tow. “I felt like I was sinking — but my arms were raised high, and I was reaching...” she said. “When Elizabeth called, she caught my hand and saved me. She is an angel. When that call came, I thought, ‘God, is that you?’”

The Rapid Re-Housing program lifts families out of homelessness by eliminating some of the barriers they face acquiring permanent housing — like coming up with the first and last month’s rent or a security deposit. The program also includes rental assistance for up to a year. Additionally, it provides help finding housing, wraparound services like food and clothing, and referrals to other supportive services.

PINK WALLS WERE A SIGN

Residential Program Director Mosudi Idowu helped Rose secure an apartment right around the corner from Sparkle’s school and a five-minute drive from her job. “When I saw this place, I knew it was for me,” said Rose. “The walls were pink, my favorite color, so that was a sign this is our home.” It has a cozy vibe, and the living room is large enough for Sparkle to practice gymnastics. Rose said she feels blessed to be living this life. “I am grateful for the help I received from Catholic Charities,” said Rose. “Today, I can live my own life and pay my bills. I am thankful for the help I received.”



A Message from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

When I think about the work we do, from one-on-one interactions with people we are serving to partnerships with larger entities, I think of Paul's letter to the Romans, "...so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another." *Romans 12:5*. Joining with others helps make us whole.

At Catholic Charities, we know our connections save lives. We feed, clothe and house those in need. We walk beside individuals on their journeys to well-being. We welcome people fleeing domestic abuse with a place to stay and help them plan for a peaceful future.

It is important to celebrate relationships. They can lift us when we are low, strengthen the impact of our efforts and provide us with a sense of belonging. Please know, we are grateful for the connection we have with you.

May God Bless Us All,

Marlene Laó-Collins
Executive Director



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New Program Helps Youth Overcome Effects of Gun Violence

Individuals who experience, witness or know someone involved in a gun violence incident may face long-term mental health implications.



Catholic Charities' Gun Violence Intervention Program provides counseling and support to adolescents and young adults who have been exposed to or directly impacted by gun violence. Services are also available to parents and siblings of youth who have been impacted.

The program provides:

- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Case management and advocacy services tailored to a recipient's specific needs
- Trainings and workshops about the benefits of counseling

FOR MORE INFORMATION please call
(609) 394-5157.

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HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Gave Rose a Chance to Create a Home (continued)

Rose works at the Child Care Connection, a non-profit organization delivering programs to improve the quality of child care and early educational services in Mercer County. She enjoys her role in the accounts payable department and says she can relate to the families they serve as a single mom. Rose also supplements her income by working part-time jobs to make ends meet. She said she mostly does hotel housekeeping on weekends but hates that it takes her away from spending time with Sparkle.

“I am so impressed by Rose’s success,” said Elizabeth. “This was the perfect program for her. She works so hard and is such a good mom.” Even though Rose is no longer in the Rapid Re-Housing program, Elizabeth frequently checks in on her, calling to let her know things that may be helpful to her.

Rose put her name on Catholic Charities’ holiday gift list this past year to ensure her daughter would have a happy Christmas morning. “They provided presents for Sparkle, and there was even a gift for me. I don’t know when I last had a present at Christmas...”

Rose said she speaks for all the families who received holiday gifts from Catholic Charities. “We are crying for help, and you hear us. Thank you. We appreciate your donations.”

Rose, who works at Child Care Connection, was a perfect candidate for Rapid Re-Housing. She and her daughter love their apartment.



CARING IS A TWO-WAY STREET

“I check in on Elizabeth too sometimes,” said Rose. “She saved me. I love her, and maybe she might need my help one day.”

Rapid Re-Housing uses a combination of federal and county funds to help homeless individuals and families locate affordable permanent housing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about this program in Mercer County, call (609) 394-8847; in Ocean County call (732) 363-5322.



Look for Us on the Road! New Branded Community Services Truck also Functions as a Rolling Billboard

In-kind Donation Coordinator Darius Teel (behind the wheel) and Director of Community Services Arnold Valentin are excited about the new vehicle they were able to purchase with funds from the Restoring Dignity, Giving Hope Campaign. From picking up donations to distributing food – the new truck is having a huge, positive impact for our neighbors in need all over the diocese.

BEHAVIORAL HOME HEALTH SUPPORTS

Help Donald Stay Focused

Growing up in Pahokee, Florida was challenging for Donald. His parents were constantly arguing, and his father could be abusive. “I felt like the black sheep in my family. My father would wake me up in the middle of the night and kick me out of the house, telling me to go and look for work.” He said sleep deprivation took a toll, and his schooling suffered.

So, when Donald’s girlfriend was moving to New Jersey, he joined her. He came with high hopes for a better life. But Donald, who has behavioral health issues, had trouble finding a job. He also got into a few fights, leading to trouble with the police.

“Catholic Charities saved me,” said Donald. “Mentally and emotionally, I feel better now. I attend counseling and group sessions and am learning how to deal with my issues.”

Behavioral Health Home Wellness Case Manager Eudora Klee has worked with Donald for three years. He admits he was skeptical at first. “She was real strict with me in the beginning. Always making me follow the rules. But I love Miss Eudora; she has helped me through many things.”

For starters, Nurse Klee helped Donald resolve some of his legal issues. “I’ve written letters to the court on his behalf, explaining his mental health issues. And I have communicated with the probation office and helped ensure Donald knew what was expected of him.”

She has also helped him manage his medications. “I had to convince Donald he needed to take his medication as prescribed.” Working with Nurse Klee, Donald said he realized that he didn’t function well when he deviated from the regimen doctors ordered.

ENROLLED IN COLLEGE AND PURSUING HIS DREAM

Going to school gives Donald a place to focus his energy. He is attending Mercer County Community College, learning about filmmaking and digital arts. His latest project is turning his small portfolio of comic characters into a film. He posts his work to a YouTube channel.



▲ Donald receives ongoing encouragement and assistance from the Behavioral Home Health team. Nurse Klee helps keep him on track and makes sure he knows about all of the different types of programs and supports that are available to him.

His main character is Lady Joker, who grew up without her father. During an intergalactic space war, she fights masked demons and has unique abilities. “My dream is to turn my drawings into something real, like a movie.”

He has also learned it’s important to stay busy and keep connected. “I know I have to get out of the house. When I stay in the house, that’s when the depression and anxiety kick in.” When he’s not at Catholic Charities or at school, Donald has a business selling incense and oils. “Every day, I try to be up and out of the house. I need to be busy and stay occupied.”

Donald also appreciates the other types of help he has received from Catholic Charities. “I get nutritious meals at the program — breakfast and lunch, and I can visit the food pantry to get the other things I need. Catholic Charities also provided me with an air conditioner for my apartment and a computer.”

“I feel so much better now than when I started here.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Behavioral Health Home on-site primary care services, please contact (800) 360-7711.

COLLABORATION REDUCES BARRIERS

to Mental Health Services

Catholic Charities is proud to announce a new partnership with the Municipality of Princeton that provides residents rapid access to mental health services. The program, Princeton Integrated Behavioral Health (PIBH) began this January.

“We’re excited to be offering same day access to mental health and crisis services at PIBH,” said Chief Nurse Executive Dr. Lisa Merritt. “We also provide individual and group counseling, medication management and substance use treatment.” The office also features a virtual exam room, allowing telehealth access to primary and specialty care medical services.

“Because we are operating under the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model, we can provide these vital services to anyone who comes to us, regardless of whether or not they have insurance.” she said. “We also coordinate additional services if they are needed by connecting individuals to comprehensive outpatient mental health services or



▲ Community Ambassador Dale Young welcomes visitors to Princeton Integrated Behavioral Health and helps them access all of the services they require.

helping them secure basic needs like food, clothing and housing,” she said.

Princeton Integrated Behavioral Health office is located at 1 Monument Place, Princeton, NJ. Services are available on a walk-in basis weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesday evenings until 8 p.m.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, call (800) 360-7711.

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To learn more, please contact Hollis Painting at hpainting@ccrenton.org, (609) 394-5181 x1159



<https://www.catholiccharitiestrenton.org/careers/>



One person, one family at a time – we help people overcome adversity and trauma.

PARTNERS IN RECOVERY

Provides the Encouragement Troy Needs to Move Forward

Born 14 weeks premature, Troy arrived as a sunny blessing to his family on the first day of summer in 1989. As an infant, he had hydrocephalus, an accumulation of too much fluid in the brain and spinal cord. He underwent surgery to implant a shunt that drains fluid from his head into his abdomen.

Growing up with the shunt, he recalls being unable to play contact sports and worrying that he wouldn't be accepted for his difference. Troy said his family has always been supportive and encouraging. "I appreciate the help I had growing up," he said, "because I know many people don't have it."

When Troy was 30, he had a seizure in his sleep. It was a full two weeks before he woke up in the hospital. The experience changed him. Afterward, he said he felt constant anxiety. "I was always afraid I was going to have another seizure," he said. "I was afraid to go to sleep. I was down on myself." Troy's mother tried to help her son stay positive during that time. "She told me to be happy that I am still alive and I should wake up daily with a smile," he said. "She said I could still love my life." She also encouraged him to attend counseling.

FINDING A WELCOMING PLACE TO GROW

"Coming to Catholic Charities was one of the best decisions I've ever made." For the past four years, Troy has been participating in programs through the Partners in Recovery program. "I started talking to the counselors and listening to what others were sharing, which made me feel better. When I walked into the program, everyone greeted me. Everyone has a smile on their face. No one judges anyone else."

Nurse Care Manager Janese Scarlett has followed Troy's progress and is helping him stay on track. "I am so proud of Troy. He works very hard and has come a long way." Troy appreciates how Janese checks in. "She calls me all the time to ensure I am okay. It makes me feel good that someone is watching out for me."



▲ By sharing his experiences, Peer Health Coach Robert Brooks (left) helped Troy recognize the importance of using the tools he was discovering through counseling to help achieve a positive outlook.

Troy said Peer Counselor Robert Brooks is another person in the program who has supported him. "He is a walking testament in my eyes. He shared the things that he went through. After that, I learned you never know what anyone else is going through." He said his interactions with Robert changed the way he reacted to things.

Another thing that helps Troy stay positive and smile is his four-year-old daughter Riley. He loves spending time with her and watching her play. "She makes me feel like a superhero. She keeps me going and makes me want to keep doing better."

Troy said he is thankful for all the support he has received at Partners in Recovery and for the help he gets from the medical team. "My peers and counselors encourage me to keep the faith, keep working and go higher. I did the work, and things got better."

Catholic Charities Behavioral Health team offers a wide range of psychiatric rehabilitation groups and activities for those needing an intensive environment to achieve their goals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Partners in Recovery, please call (609) 396-4557.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OPEN HOUSES

Celebrating New Spaces By Connecting in Person

Last quarter was a busy one for our Children and Family Services team! During 2023, several of the programs moved to new locations. When everyone was settled, programs celebrated with open houses and welcomed partners and funders for tours and a chance to reconnect in person.

Additionally, renovations to Providence House's Burlington County safe house were complete. Funders and government representatives were invited to tour the facility and learn how the changes will improve the experience for the families seeking shelter there.



On October 31, Providence House Domestic Violence Services held an open house at its Burlington County safe house after renovations were completed. U.S. Congressman Andy Kim (from left to right), Associate Executive Director Susan Loughery and Commissioner of the NJ Division of Children and Families Christine Norbut Beyer discussed how reconfiguring the rooms created more trauma-informed living space for survivors of domestic abuse.



On November 2, Director of Children and Family Services Mary Pettrow greeted Dr. Pamela Pruitt, Manager of Community Connections for Capital Health Institute for Urban Care in Trenton at the CFS Open House at 1670 Whitehorse Hamilton Square Road in Hamilton, NJ. The programs that are located there are Mercer County's Family Growth Program, Milepost, and the Student Support Services Hub for Mercer County.



On December 6th, Executive Director Marlene Laó-Collins and Kaye Gorrell of the Mobile Response Stabilization Services (MRSS) team welcomed Kruti Shah of Hampton Behavioral Health during the Open House at MRSS's new location at 3840 Quakerbridge Road, suite 100 in Hamilton, NJ.



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Because of your support:

- We provided secure housing at alternative locations to hundreds of survivors fleeing domestic abuse because our safe houses were full.
- We are feeding more people than ever before. In 2022, the number of visits to our food pantries increased by nearly 30%.
- We are reducing homelessness. Last year, we made over 50% more rental assistance and utility payments to help keep families in their homes.
- We hired an immigration attorney who can fully support people on the path to becoming a U.S. citizen.

www.CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org/restore

