Education comes in many shapes and sizes. From learning the alphabet in kindergarten to filing taxes as an adult, educational challenges are encountered throughout one’s lifetime. For many newcomers to the United States, this challenge is learning to speak English. It can be difficult to seek out assistance as an adult, especially when resources are limited. This is how Matilde felt in 2004 when her family moved to Colorado where her husband found a good job.

With perseverance and a good attitude, Matilde was able to find work as a caretaker and a house cleaner. She and her husband learned enough English to get by with help from their children who learned to speak English fluently at school. However, she was frustrated with relying on her children to help communicate with doctors and their teachers. She wanted to take English as a Second Language classes (ESL), but wasn’t sure where to begin. In the past she had been embarrassed and discouraged when her English was misunderstood. “I would just become quiet and give up,” Matilde admitted. A friend mentioned she was taking ESL classes from Catholic Charities. Matilde’s husband was reluctant. He thought the classes were too far from their home and felt her English was good enough. However, she was eager to become independent, so she began to attend biweekly classes. “It wasn’t easy,” Matilde admits. She was overwhelmed with information in her first few classes, but worked hard in class and began to feel more confident and comfortable speaking English. “I know my English is not perfect,” Matilde said, “but I could talk to anyone and I wouldn’t feel nervous.”

While taking classes, Matilde encountered a situation where her ESL lessons became applicable to her daily life. Her family had been renting a home for nearly seven years and in early 2014, maintenance issues arose with several appliances. She mentioned them to her landlord, but felt that she was being ignored. Months passed and the issues began to pile up. She told her ESL teacher about the problem and she encouraged Matilde to write a formal letter to her landlord. In her letter, Matilde explained her frustration and warned the landlord that she would send the letter to the city if the problems were not resolved. Three days after the landlord received the letter, all of the maintenance issues were fixed. “It was incredible,” Matilde said, “I didn’t know a simple letter could do so much. Our relationship with the landlord is getting better.”

Matilde’s husband is very proud of her and now encourages her education. “He knows when my classes are,” she said, “and he says ‘you better hurry, you can’t miss class!’” She feels empowered to pursue bigger goals. “My next step is to get better at using the computer so I can take GED classes,” she said. “Before ESL classes, I was too afraid to do anything. Now I can do everything.”
We tend to think of poverty in terms of financial capital – the lack of money. While the lack of money is a unifying condition among the poor, there is another type of capital that is equally, if not more important: social capital. Social capital is generally defined as the collective or economic benefit that comes from the connection to other individuals or groups – our social networks. In short, our financial security is tied directly to our relationships. For those living in poverty or battling homelessness, the loss of key relationships among family, friends or communities like churches, is an essential missing link.

Supporting the poor and vulnerable through relationships is at the core of the Catholic Charities mission and you can see it throughout the work of the staff and volunteers. For the father from Honduras navigating the legal maze of naturalization for himself and his children, it is the trusted and compassionate guidance of an immigration counselor that brings a smile. For the pregnant teenage mother trying to determine how to give her unborn child the opportunities she never had, it is free pregnancy counseling that brings hope. Even those who come to the Marian House each day for a meal will say it is the warm greeting and the recognition from a volunteer server that provides the most profound nourishment. In these and so many other ways, Catholic Charities is serving the poor and vulnerable in the spirit of Jesus Christ; supporting humanity in a loving embrace.

Smaller groups and organizations are encouraged to collaborate with Catholic Charities to crowd-fund a Sponsor-A-Day with an internal campaign.

Contact Brandi Randle to Sponsor-A-Day! brandle@ccharitiescc.org  719-866-6427

PREVIOUS & UPCOMING SPONSORS
Thank you for participating in the Sponsor-A-Day Program!

April 2: Anonymous
   In Honor of Holy Thursday
April 24: Anonymous
May 13: US Bank
May 24: First United Methodist Church
May 28: Holy Trinity Catholic Church & Black Forest Lutheran Church
June 12: The Hersch Family
June 19: First Pres. Church - Amarillo, TX

For just $1,500 you can provide more than 600 meals to families and individuals who are hungry. Sponsorship benefits include:

- Name on the sign on front of the Marian House on Bijou Street at the I-25 entrance and exit to downtown Colorado Springs
- Recognition in Catholic Charities’ media
- Photo of the sign to be shared with business associates, employees, board, etc.
- Volunteer and tour opportunities
- Right of first refusal for the same date the following year

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“I came down on Tuesday and I was assigned buttering bread. And when I left at one o’clock, I knew this was where I belonged.”

Nod Mitchell, 27 year volunteer

For some, finding time to volunteer once a week is an accomplishment. For Nalda “Nod” Mitchell, it is simply a part of life. Nearly 30 years ago, Nod volunteered in the Marian House Soup Kitchen (MHSK) for the first time. Since then, every Tuesday morning, Nod can be found working hard in the kitchen to prepare meals for the nearly 600 guests who come for a meal everyday.

Over the course of her time volunteering at MHSK, Nod has done much more than prepare meals. Along with her First Presbyterian team of volunteers, she has led the meal production every Tuesday for 20 years. Nod and her assistants plan the menu, prepare the shopping lists, and coordinate a team of 25 volunteers each week. Many of these volunteers have returned to volunteer in the Soup Kitchen for 10-15 years because of Nod’s inspirational leadership and compassion. Over the years, she has introduced dozens of new volunteers to the soup kitchen ministry, setting an example of dedicated service to others. Nod volunteers a minimum of 24 hours per month because she knows the people served at the MHSK depend on her and her team.

After establishing herself as a hard-working and dependable volunteer in the Soup Kitchen, Nod donated even more of her time and energy to the organization by serving on the Catholic Charities’ Board of Directors in the late 1990s/early 2000s. She was a crucial advocate for the building of the new MHSK facility and was also influential in securing a $250,000 donation towards construction from her church, First Presbyterian. Today, that investment is paying off with nearly twice as many meals served each day to guests in a safe and dignified space.

The leadership and experience Nod brings to the table has a tremendous impact on the staff and managers of the MHSK, as well. “I would describe Nod as an inspirational, dedicated leader. Nod’s impact on the Marian House is over 50,000 meals served and a dedicated volunteer base. It’s really been an amazing thing to see and be a part of,” said Doug Rouse, the Volunteer Coordinator of Catholic Charities.

In March of 2015, Nod was nominated for the Catholic Charities USA Volunteer of the Year Award. While her application was not selected to win the award, she was selected as a top seven finalist from over 1,500 Catholic Charities agencies. Nod’s volunteer service does not stop at the Marian House. She is also very involved in the ministry of the First Presbyterian Church and served as a deacon there for many years while also serving as the president of her homeowner’s association. “I would describe her as a wonderful Christian woman who loves Jesus and wants to do work for Jesus,” said a volunteer on Nod’s team at the Soup Kitchen.

Nod has worked over 1,500 Tuesdays at the Soup Kitchen, and she wouldn’t have it any other way. When describing her first Tuesday at the Soup Kitchen, Nod said, “I came down on Tuesday and I was assigned buttering bread. And when I left at one o’clock, I knew this was where I belonged.”

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What Our Clients Say

From Charity A. McRorie:

I would like to say that all the volunteer groups are really doing a great job helping the people in need. The meals we would like to say thank you and may God bless you and showers his face upon you and give you his peace.

---
April was Volunteer Appreciation Month, which gives us a chance to say **THANK YOU** to our volunteers for their time and talents they so generously give us each and every day. With over 92,000 hours of volunteer work accounted for in Fiscal Year 2013/2014, it is clear the operations of Catholic Charities could not function without our vital volunteers!

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless."

- Sherry Anderson, Author

HEART VOLUNTEER, JUDE INTERVIEWS RANDY AT THE MARIAN HOUSE FOR THE PIKES PEAK UNITED WAY HOMELESSNESS SURVEY.

1ST SPACE BRIGADE SISTERS IN ARMS VOLUNTEER AT THE 2014 "STUFF THE BIRD" TURKEY DRIVE.

THE CAKE SERVED AT THE OCTOBER 2014 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PICNIC.

BRUCE STOCKS - THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL FOOD PANTRY IN CASTLE ROCK.

REBECCA READS TO CHILDREN FOR EARLY LITERACY READING CIRCLES.

ESL DIRECTOR JENIFFER SHULL AND VOLUNTEER ESL TEACHERS.
HEART: A UNIQUE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

HEART (Homeless Engagement and Response Team) is a unique opportunity for volunteers to play a vital role in addressing homelessness in Colorado Springs. HEART’s mission is to build relationships with homeless individuals to address their immediate needs and help them access services at Catholic Charities and other local agencies. Volunteers embark on HEART walks, carrying snacks, water bottles, socks and references to services to share with individuals they meet on the streets. For many volunteers, the experience has influenced them as much as it has the individuals with whom they interact. In a reflection about her experience, volunteer walker Aimee wrote, “HEART is a mission of the heart and soul. It requires the courage to look deeply into the eyes of the men, women, and children who believe themselves to be invisible and say, ‘It’s great to see you today.’ Never will I forget the time I experienced a man, taken aback and verbally stumbling- choking out the words, ‘and it’s nice to BE seen.’”

“I have a heart for the people,” volunteer Brendan states. He recognizes many of the individuals the HEART team encounters frequently, including John – pictured above. On a recent walk, Brendan greeted John with a handshake and asked if he needed anything. John respectfully declined, stating that he planned to have a meal at the Marian House later that afternoon.

Volunteer John (pictured above on the left) was drawn to the HEART program because in his past, he had gone from being a homeowner to living on the streets. He says his experience helps him better relate to the people he meets. “Those feelings never leave you,” he said.

Erika, a retired soldier studying social work in college, has learned how to carefully approach individuals and understand how to determine their needs and offer help. “They’re people just like everyone else,” she said.

While the primary role of HEART is to offer help to people who are homeless, these valuable interactions help build trust and bridge the gap between the larger community and those we see – or pretend not to see – on the streets. This unique program is carried out by a dedicated group of volunteers. Thanks to them, Catholic Charities is able to reach out to those who otherwise might be lost.

“HEART is about seeing, but also about hearing, feeling, learning and embodying compassion for the homeless community from the inside out. HEART is about recognizing individuals, calling them by name and honoring their humanness.”

-Aimee, HEART Volunteer
What a wonderful night! The 14th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Gala raised over $200,000 to support Catholic Charities’ programs and services.

This year, live entertainment featured traditional Irish dancing by Celtic Steps, music by the Colorado Springs Conservatory - complete with an Irish fiddler, and dancing to close out the night with music from One More Shot.

A fine dining experience included an Irish themed duet entree followed by a dessert parade. Green beer, wine, and champagne flowed throughout the evening thanks to contributions from Barefoot Wine & Bubbly, Cheers Liquor Mart, and the DoubleTree Hotel.

To our surprise, the winners of the Pot O’ Gold raffle drawings donated all of their winnings back to Catholic Charities. Thank you to Paul & Diana Ceciliani, Fred & Angie Stattman, and Oscar & Rose Valdez for your generosity!

Attending his first Gala, Catholic Charities CEO Andy Barton spoke to the audience about the work of each program at the agency.

Travis and Vicki shared their heartwarming story about rising from the brink of hopelessness to self-sufficiency with the help of Catholic Charities Castle Rock and other local service agencies.

We are immensely grateful to have the support of our generous sponsors, donors, committee and attendees of the event. These caring community partners make it possible for Catholic Charities to Provide Help and Create Hope for our neighbors in need.

The 15th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Gala will take place on Saturday, March 12, 2016. See you next year!
KIDZ KLOZET OPENS

Life Connections opened its Kidz Klozet earlier this year to expectant and new moms. Kidz Klozet and Safe & Secure Kidz are initiatives that support, encourage, and assist women in carrying their pregnancy to term. New and soon-to-be moms can enroll in the program to earn Kidz Kash by attending prenatal nurturing or childbirth classes, infant massage sessions, counseling, prenatal appointments, and for engaging in healthy behaviors that benefit their babies and themselves. Kidz Klozet is stocked with baby clothing, toys, diaper bags, and more. Thanks to a partnership with Larry H. Miller Toyota of Colorado Springs, the Kidz Klozet will also be stocked with car seats and Pack ‘N Plays.

PIKES PEAK FOOD AND WINE EXPO

Congratulations to the Marian House for winning $500 for Best Booth at the 20th Annual Pikes Peak Food & Wine Expo! Presented by the Pikes Peak Chapter of the Colorado Restaurant Association (PPCRA), the expo showcases the best local restaurants and businesses. In addition to a plethora of delicious food samples and fine wines & spirits, attendees were entertained with exciting chef and bartender competitions.

For the third year in a row, PPCRA chose the Marian House (MH) as the recipient agency for donations. For every ticket sold to the expo that referenced MH, $5 was donated to the Marian House Soup Kitchen. All leftover food was also donated to the Soup Kitchen. A special thank you to Jeff & Mel from Common Cause Catering and all the volunteers who helped out!

KIDS IN NEED OF DENTISTRY (KIND) VISITS LIFE SUPPORT

KIND held two free dental screenings for children at Life Support Services this year, one in January and one in March. Over 100 years ago, KIND was established to offer dental services to children of railroad and mine workers in Denver and now has two clinics in Denver and one clinic in Colorado Springs. Volunteer dentists and staff members conduct quick screenings on site and refer the families to KIND clinics if further dental work is needed. KIND clinics accept Medicaid and offer a significant discount to families without insurance. Along with dental screenings, KIND offers educational material to parents to promote oral health care in the home. The nonprofit plans to hold quarterly screenings at Catholic Charities.

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

“Never forget to smile!”
-Elizabeth, 20 Year Volunteer at the Marian House Soup Kitchen
Mission Statement

In response to Jesus Christ’s call to affirm the value and dignity of each human life, to build solidarity within the community, and to advocate for justice for the poor and vulnerable, Catholic Charities of Central Colorado humbly engages in the ministry of charity for those in both economic and spiritual poverty so that all – staff, volunteers, and clients – may fully achieve their God-given potential.

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www.ccharitiescc.org
info@ccharitiescc.org

WARM 600 HEARTS IN A DAY.

What a difference a day makes.

Sponsor a day of meals at Marian House
MarianHouseSponsorADay.org

For only $1,500, you, your business, organization or church can sponsor a day at Marian House. In that one day, your support provides a homemade, nutritious meal to everyone who comes through our doors. They are families with children, veterans, seniors, the working poor, and people who are homeless. Most just need a little help to make ends meet, but for some, this is their only hot meal of the day.

Commit to a sponsorship today by calling 719-866-6427 or visit us online at MarianHouseSponsorADay.org

To Donate

Call (719) 866-6440
or visit www.ccharitiescc.org

Providing Help. Creating Hope.