Woman's Opportunity Workshops Empower Women

In May of 2016, Colorado Springs was shaken by the news of a homeless woman who was thrown from a bridge, paralyzed and sexually assaulted for multiple days until she was found by a passerby. The woman miraculously survived and her story left the community wondering how an incident like this could be prevented.

Conversations about safety and homelessness, particularly for women, took place throughout the region which concluded with a call for more services specifically for women during a time when only women would be present. Catholic Charities' response was to develop Woman’s Opportunity Workshops (WOW).

Workshops began in October 2016 and are held every other week at the Life Skills & Career Development Center at the Marian House, a safe and convenient location for women to meet. The workshops are led by Sherry Stulpin, Catholic Charities Life Skills Instructor, and Velda Baker, Penrose-St. Francis Faith Community of Care Nurse. A survey distributed to women at several social service agencies indicated they were most interested in topics regarding health, well-being, and career development.

As the workshops continue to evolve, workshop participants are encouraged to help guide the program to meet their needs. Several area professionals have participated in the workshops to share advice on career development, such as starting a small business. Additionally many of the participants share resources they have accessed successfully.

As the women access stability resources, such as job training, a new need has come to light: the availability of make-up. Sherry emphasizes that for women experiencing homelessness or financial insecurity, having a well-manicured appearance is a necessity to inspiring dignity and self-confidence, particularly when entering the workforce and transitioning into a new lifestyle. But for these women, who are struggling financially, make-up is a luxury they cannot afford to purchase.

Although the workshops arose from a devastating event, some of the most vulnerable women in the community now have a safe place to address their needs, build relationships with their peers, develop connections with successful women in the community, and become empowered for success.

If you are interested in participating with the Woman’s Opportunity Workshops to share skills, resources, provide guidance, or donate material goods, contact Sherry at 719-866-6290. Donations of unopened products such as makeup, nail polish, deodorant, hair products, and other beauty and hygiene essentials are greatly appreciated.
It is interesting how incremental shifts in perspective can have far reaching effects. In February of last year, we implemented a seemingly small change to one of our policies at the Marian House: we allowed our clients to volunteer with us. Previously our policy had explicitly prohibited this practice. The reason made sense: we did not want those who we served to feel there was an expectation of having to work for the services they were receiving. More than anything, like so many policies, it had been established at some point and never revisited.

The thought was that instead of preserving the dignity of those we served, we were actually missing an opportunity to enhance it. We were forgetting the dignity of work. Here was an opportunity to say to our brothers and sisters that we believed in them and be one of the few voices in their world that had great expectations of them.

This change did not suddenly displace the need for our regular volunteers; instead, it shifted a fundamental way of seeing our work. We went from working for our poor to working with our poor as our former clients stepped in to key roles. Sarah became a fixture in Client Services, helping to connect people with our Career Development Center where we provide help in getting jobs. David started helping in our basement warehouse, where he coordinated a backlog of clothing donations into the most efficient and organized inventory system we have ever had. Johnny started working at the podium in Client Services, an expert concierge who can get our guests connected with the right service.

It is no coincidence this change has taken place simultaneously with the growth in our employment program where 116+ people have found jobs. The ability to place our job seekers in volunteer positions gives our team an invaluable training tool to build experience, develop skills, work on common issues like timeliness and attendance on site before being placed with an outside employer. To this end, we were excited to host “Beer Dinners” with the help of Common Cause Catering and Local Relic Brewing Company. Our vision for these dinners, the first of which took place on October 26th, is to create a high-end dining event staffed by our job seekers (who get a stipend for their work). The “job” provides valuable experience in the hospitality industry – where workers are currently in high demand – while showcasing the Marian House Soup Kitchen in a brand new light. In this way, we are creating jobs to help reduce barriers for the people we serve.

Another change in perspective is how we can sustain and grow this work. Simply put, our financial support must grow alongside our innovation and impact. With over half of our operating support coming from contributions/bequests, we ask this holiday season for our partners to invest a little bit more or consider giving for the first time. As you might imagine, these new opportunities do not eliminate the immediate needs of those we serve. We are working harder than ever to respond to those who come to us in crisis; providing food, clothing, shelter or health services when needed. But as an investor in the work we do -- whether your time, your financial support, or your advocacy -- it is important to know that you support an agency that is working to end poverty and injustice.

We are inspired, as we should be, by Jesus’ call to care for our poor and vulnerable. If we want to truly be like Christ, we might also remember that His ministry was equally about healing; about ending suffering not just in the here and now, but for the long term. Pope Francis, in his encyclical “The Joy of the Gospel” writes: “We need to grow in solidarity which ‘would allow all people to become artisans of their destiny,’ since ‘every person is called to self-fulfillment.” We are working hard at Catholic Charities to find new ways of lifting our brothers and sisters out of poverty, which keeps us rooted in Christ’s call. As we strive to always do more, I hope you will consider doing the same. No investment you can make has the potential to bring greater joy this holiday season.
Success to us is helping clients succeed

Success to us is: 116+ clients employed; over 200,000 hot meals served; 54 families transitioned out of homelessness; 130+ families served in the Family Day Center; nearly 300 students enrolled in English as a Second Language classes; 4,200+ books distributed through our Early Literacy program; and the tangible list goes on and on.

Success doesn’t happen all at once, rather it’s all the stepping stones along the way: finding food for the family; getting shelter on a cold night; enrolling the kids in school and getting them there. Success is making the decision to change your life for the better.

The Marian House Soup Kitchen is the foundation for a family to move out of crisis - to begin achieving success. When parents do not have to think about where the next meal is coming from, they can concentrate on becoming healthier, more employable, and stable: more successful. It is difficult to move out of crisis when every minute of every day is focused on finding food and shelter.

Catholic Charities’ programs are designed to strengthen the whole person. Not everyone is ready to move forward immediately, but through continued support with meals, many eventually get there. Currently there are over 75 programs and services that help people achieve stability and growth in their lives.

It has been a great year! Catholic Charities of Central Colorado is vibrant, growing and strong. Over the past 18 months, we have expanded, developed, and improved programs to more effectively serve families to make them more successful. Once known predominately for our charitable efforts in Feeding the Hungry through our Marian House Soup Kitchen, we are becoming known for helping families move from Crisis to Stability.

Please join us. Invest in success and make a difference, one life at a time.

In Memoriam.

Andre "Andy" Gambucci

Andy Gambucci passed away on September 24, 2016. Andy became very involved with Catholic Charities during the capital campaign to build the new Marian House. He devoted countless hours working with campaign staff to identify and contact friends, businesses associates, and family, to get them involved in the cause that had become dear to his heart. And, he made tremendous strides in securing funding for the project.

Along the way, Andy also became involved with Catholic Charities' premier fund-raising event, the St. Patrick’s Day Gala. Through his contacts, he brought signed sports memorabilia - particularly hockey collectables - for the auction and even donated his Mercedes Benz - all in the name of charity.

"Andy’s smiling face and humor will be missed,” said Rochelle Schlortt, a Catholic Charities staff member. "He always had a kind word and smile, and was relentless in sharing his passion for helping the poor. Many a round of golf was played while sharing the mission of Catholic Charities!"

The family has asked that memorial contributions be made to The Marian House in his name.

What Our Clients Say

“I’ve never experienced when people were so generous and just so giving.”
- Victoria, Castle Rock Client
Forty years ago, Life Support Services (LSS) began as an independent non-profit agency providing emergency services to vulnerable families in the Pikes Peak Region. The program became a part of Catholic Charities (CC) in 1999 and continues to provide emergency and basic supports to struggling families.

Gigi Boyle has volunteered as a Client Advocate at LSS since 1997. Retired from a career as a college business professor, Gigi is driven to volunteer by her love for children. “I just have always loved children,” she said. “I’m not a grandmother, which is just another reason why I like to come here. It’s my way of having grandchildren.”

As a Client Advocate, Gigi meets with new families and collects their information so they can begin receiving services. “It’s really opened my eyes,” she said as she reflected on what she has learned through her volunteer experience. “So many people just have no idea what a struggle it is for some families to get diapers or a piece of clothing.” She finds her work particularly rewarding when clients come for help and are surprised at CC’s expansive program offerings. “I always share with them what we do here and they’re always surprised.”

LSS is a vital part of CC’s Family Resource Campus (FRC), serving as an entry point for families who need emergency services. Families can become involved in Early Childhood Development through Jungle-Storytime reading circles and age-appropriate book distribution. They can also meet with case managers, and participate in resiliency and stability services such as parenting or financial literacy classes and much more.

Over the years, Gigi has seen the program change and grow and looks forward to seeing Catholic Charities develop more family programing in the coming years. In the past, she would mostly work with single mothers who came alone to pick up items for their children. Today, Gigi says, “it’s fun to see families, as many parents now bring in their children to utilize the Family Day Center.” Gigi hopes to continue volunteering for years to come. She insists that the staff are like family. “I love what I do,” she said. “I think the people that have volunteered in the Client Advocacy area stay because it means so much to them.”

Questions? Call us!

Monetary Donations & Tax Credits: 719.866.6422 or 719.866.6440*
Material Goods: 719.866.6281**
Vehicles: 719.229.9924***

CCharitiesCC.org/Donate
The holidays are almost here and Catholic Charities has many ways to help you share your blessings and participate in the community.

COMMUNITY GIVING PROGRAMS

Catholic Charities receives funds from these community giving efforts:

- **Combined Federal Campaign #30738**
  RockyMountainCFC.org

- Empty Stocking Fund
  FillAnEmptyStocking.org

- Pikes Peak United Way
  PPUnitedWay.org

Special Tax Credits

Sharing your time, treasure, and talent is a reward in and of itself. But tax credits offer additional benefits for your generosity. For more information on these credits, call 719-866-6422 or consult your tax advisor.

**25% ENTERPRISE ZONE**

**COLORADO STATE INCOME TAX CREDIT**

This 25% state tax credit is a part of the community-wide effort to uplift economically distressed areas in El Paso County. Contributions of $250 or more to businesses that make improvements to this area qualify for this tax credit. This includes donations to Marian House programs - Soup Kitchen, Family Day Center, Family Mentor Alliance, Client Services, and Community Outreach. In a number of ways, these programs provide support for struggling individuals and families to help them reach a level of self-sufficiency.

To utilize this special credit, checks must be made payable to the "El Paso County Enterprise Zone" noting "Marian House" on the memo line. Checks are mailed to Catholic Charities, 228 N. Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903. Credit cards are not accepted for this tax credit. A Colorado Taxpayer ID or Social Security number must be included if this number has not been provided to us in the past.

**50% CHILDCARE CONTRIBUTION**

**COLORADO STATE INCOME TAX CREDIT**

The Child Care Contribution State Income Tax Credit was created to promote child care in Colorado. Your donation to Life Connections adoption/child placement program qualifies for this 50% credit. Life Connections provides adoption services, counseling, early literacy programs and many more opportunities for children in our community.
COFFEE & DONUTS WITH THE CEO

Every other month, Catholic Charities invites guests and clients to have coffee and donuts with CEO Andy Barton, at the Soup Kitchen. These discussions allow for Catholic Charities to share relevant information such as changes in current services or discussions on winter sheltering. Guests can ask questions and express concerns or offer suggestions to close service gaps. The meetings also serve as a social time to get to know each other better.

This month, coffee & donuts was held on Saint Nicholas’ Day where we gave our clients a St. Nicks gift of a small snack pack to get them through the day.

DOUGLAS COUNTY WINTER SHELTER NETWORK

The first Winter Shelter Network opened in Douglas County on November 1st, providing overnight shelter for up to 40 women and children during the coldest months of the year. Catholic Charities (CC) Castle Rock Regional Office played an important role in the development of the network, where eight local churches host the shelter on a rotating basis.

CC also serves as a Coordinated Point of Entry for mom’s entering into the shelter. This gives CC case managers, who have relied on limited funds for emergency hotel stays, another tool in providing emergency sheltering in Douglas County.

FLU SHOT CLINIC

The annual Flu Shot Clinic was held at Catholic Charities’ Marian House on Wednesday, October 12th. Volunteers from Penrose-St. Francis Health Services, the Colorado Springs Fire Department, and Walgreens provided 69 individuals with free flu shots. Penrose-St. Francis also distributed hygiene kits.

DIVINE REDEEMER SCHOOL PILGRIMAGE

As a part of the Year of Mercy, 177 Divine Redeemer Catholic School students, guided by 20+ staff and volunteers, made a pilgrimage from their school to St. Mary’s Cathedral to see the Holy Doors on October 27th. The students - ranging from Kindergarten to 8th grade - also carried donations of socks, winter gloves, hygiene items, or books for Catholic Charities’ clients. Thank you Divine Redeemer!

VOTER REGISTRATION

Catholic Charities’ (CC) Marian House hosted a nonpartisan voter registration event prior to the election. Recent legislative changes have allowed for individuals to register to vote without a permanent address, removing a significant barrier to voting. Fifty-three individuals registered at the event and over 160 ballots were mailed to CC’s Marian House which serves as a mailing address for hundreds of individuals and families. In addition to numerous programs and services, CC proudly provides resources to encourage the vulnerable populations served by our programs to exercise their right to vote.

THANK YOU SAFEWAY/ALBERTSONS & HORMEL FOODS

Once again, Safeway/Albertsons and Hormel Foods have provided a substantial holiday meal donation. Over the weeks leading up to the holidays, Safeway and Albertsons stores collect donations from patrons through their Turkey Bucks program. The grocery chain delivered nearly 1,000 turkey breasts and side combinations to Catholic Charities just before Thanksgiving with an additional donation to be delivered in December.

As part of their Hormel Hams for Hunger program, Hormel Hams donated nearly 1,000 whole, boneless hams to Catholic Charities in early December. Thanks to these generous community partners, Catholic Charities is able to help local families and our rural partners with holiday food. These donations will also add much need protein to meals at the Marian House Soup Kitchen throughout the year.
FIRST CATHOLIC CHARITIES JOB FAIR

Catholic Charities held its first Job Fair on Wednesday, November 9th at the Marian House. Six employers presented a variety of work opportunities to 25 clients who attended the event. Eight of our clients received interviews and, to date, three have been offered employment. These annual job fairs are part of the Life Skills & Career Development Center which has, to date, helped over 120 individuals find jobs through personalized coaching and partnerships with local businesses.

SAVE THE DATE - ST PATRICK’S DAY GALA MARCH 11, 2017

The 16th annual St. Patrick’s Day Gala will take place at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort on March 11, 2017! Guests will enjoy a fun evening featuring fine dining, live entertainment, and exciting live and silent auctions. Proceeds benefit Catholic Charities programs and services. We expect to sell out the event, so reserve your seat today by calling 719-866-6422.

Interested in becoming a sponsor? Sponsorships range from green to gold and come with a range of recognition and benefits such as a table for 10 at the event as well as print and digital recognition before, during, and after the event. Contact Sarah Tremmel at 719-866-6440 to become a sponsor.

The St. Patrick’s Day Gala has been voted Best Auction by The Gazette Best of the Springs since 2014. This success is due to the generous participation of community members and business owners who donate unique items, such as vacation packages, jewelry, or gift certificates, to the silent and live auctions. Call 719-866-6523 for information on donating or to arrange a pick-up.

COATS FOR KIDS WITH THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Thank you to the Colorado Springs Councils of the Knights of Columbus for providing over 500 coats to children this year. For the third year in a row, new coats donated by the Knights were distributed at a giveaway event. The remaining coats are distributed to our rural partners and will be available to families in the Family Day Center.

Grateful to our Grantors

Catholic Charities USA Disaster Relief
Colorado Health Foundation
The Joseph Henry Edmondson Foundation
Inasmuch Foundation
The William and Betty Osborne Trust (2 awards)
T. Rowe Price Foundation
USAA Foundation
Walmart Community Giving (awards from 8 local stores!)

Material Needs:

Food: Ground beef, non-dairy coffee creamer, hot chocolate, sugar, salt, non-perishable food items

Infants & Children: Size 4 & 5 diapers, parents’ choice baby formula, baby food, new baby clothes

Home & Transportation: Dishes, pots & pans, working vehicles, grocery store and gas gift cards

Clothing: Coats, hoodies, sweatpants, men’s pants, blankets, men’s/women’s underwear

Drop donations at the Marian House West Dock
14 West Bijou Street
Monday - Saturday, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Volunteer Needs:

Family Day Center Lead, Client Services Navigator, Clothing Closet Volunteers, Family Mentor Alliance Mentors

Call 719-866-6559 to get involved!
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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Don’t be fooled by the quality look of this newsletter. We are committed to using our funds in the most cost-efficient way possible so we can forward our work to reduce poverty in our community.

This newsletter is designed in-house by our Communications Team, printed on economical, recycled paper stock with vegetable based inks, and sized and organized to get maximum use of the press sheet paper we purchase.

At Catholic Charities, we are more than a soup kitchen - we are here to help people succeed. Success to some people is finding a warm, safe place to get a meal. Or getting help to transition out of homelessness. Or learning the skills needed to get a job and change the direction of their lives. Success to us is making a difference, one life at a time.

SUCCESS to us is teaching Sarah the skills needed to find a job.

Invest in Success.
Donate today by calling 719-866-6422 or online at CCharitiesCC.org