Catholic Charities Pivots to Serve Most Vulnerable During COVID-19

At Catholic Charities of Central Colorado, we do everything we can to protect clients, volunteers and staff. These last few months, this meant keeping safe from contracting COVID-19 and trying to deal with the impact of the virus. As the community begins to recover from the economic impact of the pandemic, the families and individuals we serve will have more challenges recovering from closures and layoffs as they were already stretched thin, living paycheck to paycheck.

In accordance with the orders and guidelines of the Center for Disease Control & Prevention, Department of Housing and Urban Development, El Paso County Health Department and other authorities, Catholic Charities closed its facilities to visitors in mid-March. But services did not cease. Through technology, ingenuity and sheer will, services were kept open to serve those most in need.

We recommended that volunteers who were over 60 years of age, had underlying medical conditions or compromised immune systems, take a break from volunteering to protect everyone during the pandemic. That left management to determine how to continue to deliver services throughout our programs. We initially paused non-critical services, but had to determine how to deliver emergency infant needs and the daily meal with no congregant dining, limited volunteer assistance, and limited donations.

Staff pivoted to make it all happen. The community answered the call for donations, and a crew of volunteers who were now at home, showed up to help. We did not miss one day of serving meals at Marian House. We also added meal delivery to the Homeless Isolation shelter and to the west side of Colorado Springs to the mix. Getting critical infant needs to families was a focus for Family Connections, and with donations from the community, struggling families were able to get diapers, baby food, formula and wipes.

Case management continued in all programs via at-home technology. New clients were brought in as caseloads allowed, and everyone learned how to use ZOOM and Facebook Groups. English as a Second Language Classes were delivered online in eight different levels, Citizenship Classes continued, and Life Skills support was delivered.

Leadership staff alternated days in the office and met daily via ZOOM to assess the current situation. What we learned from the pandemic was our staff is agile. Some were educating children at home and working in the afternoons and into the evening to meet client needs. Others jumped in where needed in our larger programs, and our clients were flexible and grateful for the assistance.

We are grateful to everyone - our donors, volunteers, clients, staff, partner agencies, parishes, community, and local government who helped us continue to serve the most vulnerable members in our community. This is far from over, but we will continue to be here to meet the need.
What struck me most was how fast it all occurred. One day, the coronavirus seemed worlds away and the next, it among us. We decided to cancel the St. Patrick’s Day Gala on Wednesday, March 11, laboring over the decision. By Friday, March 13, it seemed unimaginable that we had ever considered proceeding with bringing 500 people together in one place. By March 18, Catholic Charities had completely changed its service delivery model, serving sack lunches at the Marian House and meeting with clients by phone or video conferencing.

In Colorado, we are familiar with the way natural disasters suddenly change the course of our lives. Fires, floods, and massive hail storms effect parts of the community, making vulnerable a certain population for a period of time, but leaving others strong enough to provide aid. This is different. The pandemic effects all of us in one way or another. You do not have to be diagnosed with the virus to feel its social and economic pain. We are all staying at home, wearing masks, and experiencing empty shelves at the grocery store. The worst part is that one of our best weapons against disaster -- coming together as community -- has been taken from us. Our extended families, friends, co-workers and faith communities have been fractured by this virus.

This is one of the rare moments that we are all feeling some degree of the same thing: vulnerable. There is solidarity in the difference between feeling and being vulnerable. Those who are experiencing poverty or those who are on the verge, have and will continue to be the hardest hit. The “stay at home” order has become the most practical and symbolic forms of protecting yourself and your community, but it unintentionally mocks those who do not have a home. Similarly, for those who are at risk of losing their housing if they miss one paycheck, staying at home is a punishment that will keep coming years after it has been administered.

These are the times when Catholic Charities has to do its best work. The speed and the unprecedented nature of this pandemic has made a joke of long-term planning. Instead it is flexibility, innovation, and collaboration that has and will continue to save the day. When the circumstances required us to close our doors, we figured out ways to transcend those barriers. From sack lunches to case management on “What’s App,” to coordinated emergency box pick up in our parking lots, our staff and volunteers have figured out how to keep serving. We have walked alongside our partner agencies and faith communities to support their efforts, from the isolation shelter to mass feeding for isolated populations. At every turn, Catholic Charities is there for those in need.

Between this writing and its delivery to you in our newsletter, things will almost certainly have changed. Hopefully for the better, but perhaps for the worse. One of the few things I can be certain of is that Catholic Charities will still be serving our poor and vulnerable. Whether you have supported this work with time, donations or prayer, you are a part of this stand. This is the purpose for which this God has always called us and nothing, not even a pandemic, can change that.

(“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28))
The Family Solutions Collaborative

A big step was recently taken to expand family sheltering in Colorado Springs. Family Promise opened Colorado Springs’ first stand-alone family-dedicated shelter in March. The former Stage Coach Motel on South Nevada is now the New Promise Family Shelter and boasts 17 rooms of varying sizes. This shelter has doubled the number of beds available for families experiencing homelessness.

The Homeless Isolation Shelter

After several starts and stops, the Homeless Isolation Shelter opened April 5, just in time to receive several people who were exhibiting coronavirus symptoms. It can house 70 individuals with the capacity to expand to 100 if needed. It is located at the City Auditorium in downtown Colorado Springs.

While the shelter is not a medical facility, it features nursing care, telehealth services and meals. The shelter is possible through a collaboration of government and nonprofit agencies who are members of the Continuum of Care:

- Catholic Charities is providing two sack meals daily to include breakfast and lunch.
- Centura Health and UCHealth will screen and refer individuals to the isolation center.
- CU School of Medicine medical students are providing telehealth capabilities at the isolation shelter 24/7, daily.

responding to questions from isolation shelter staff, Springs Rescue Mission, RJ Montgomery, and The Place.

- Community Health Partnership coordinates the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care and is providing coordination of the isolation shelter.
- El Paso County Public Health developed homeless isolation shelter recommendations and isolation plan and helped secure PPE.
- Envida is providing transportation from hospitals and shelters and will support EMS-requested transports.
- Goodwill Industries donated clean clothing for shelter residents.
- Pikes Peak Library District provided books, DVDs and Chromebooks for shelter residents.
- Pikes Peak Office of Emergency Management/City of Colorado Springs provides access to the city auditorium for the isolation shelter.
- Springs Rescue Mission is providing staff to manage and monitor the isolation shelter, as well as evening meals as needed.
- Zactly Employment Solutions is providing certified nursing assistants 24/7 and a licensed practical nurse 12 hours per day at the isolation shelter.

“We are so fortunate to have an extremely dedicated group of nonprofit agencies and professionals who bring expertise and a dedication to meeting the needs of the homeless,” said Mayor John Suthers. “This was a huge lift involving multiple organizations and I want to thank them for collaborating so quickly to get this vital shelter operational.”

2/6 Today’s Meal is in Memory of Jim DeMoor
2/7 Today’s Meal is Sponsored by O’Brien’s Carpet One, Faithfully Serving Colorado Springs Since 1966
2/8 Today’s Meal is Sponsored by Friends of the Marian House
2/12 Today’s Meal is Sponsored by the Martin Smith Family
2/18 Today’s Meal is in Memory of John & Clara Donatucci
3/4 Today’s Meal is Sponsored by Story Coffee Company
3/17 Today’s Meal is in Memory of Mom, Dad, Kerry & Pat
3/27 Today’s Meal is Sponsored by Friends of the Marian House
4/1 Happy 30th Birthday Colin!
4/6 Today’s Meal is Sponsored by Scholl Home Rentals
4/9 Holy Thursday - A Day to Share a Meal
4/24 Today’s Meal is Sponsored by Friends of the Marian House

Call 719-866-6529 to Sponsor-A-Day at Marian House
Donate Your Vehicle
Catholic Charities’ Castle Rock and Family Connections programs are in need of vehicles in good working condition. Your donation will help move families and individuals toward stability and financial security.

Call 720-215-4521
https://www.ccharitiescc.org/donate/donate-material-goods/

Donate Your Vehicle

FEMA Delivers Baby Items
Family Connections (FC) continues to help families with emergency baby needs. Through FEMA, FRCA, and the Colorado Office of Early Childhood, FC received a large shipment of diapers, wipes and formula to serve struggling families throughout El Paso & Douglas Counties.

Call 719-578-1222
CCharitiesCC.org/family-connections to fill out an emergency request form

Interested in Sponsoring a Day of Meals at the Marian House?
For just $1,500 you can support all the meals served in one day and get marketing and publicity benefits!

For more info, go to MarianHouseSponsorADay.org or call 719-866-6529

CASTLE ROCK OFFICE PROVIDING CURBSIDE SERVICE
The Castle Rock office is providing critical items for families and individuals through a curbside delivery program. Clients phone in their orders with their case manager and set an appointment time for pickup. Food items for the food pantry are always needed.

Call 720-215-4521 for assistance

JOBS SKILLS HELP CONTINUES!
Closing facilities to visitors does not mean stopping services. Our Hanifen Employment Center staff is working with clients online, via email and phone to offer skills assistance and job search. Jobs continue to be filled even through COVID-19.

Call 719-866-6445
or email Jobs@CCharitiesCC.org

CCharitiesCC.org/HEC/

Current Volunteer Needs
Volunteers are always needed for Marian House Soup Kitchen shifts. With COVID-19, in-mass meals are suspended. Help is needed to prepare sack lunches:

Mon. - Sat. - 7 a.m. - Noon
Sunday - 10 a.m. - Noon
Isolation Shelter Daily Delivery -
Mon. - Sun. - 10:50 report time

Call 719-866-6281
or email Volunteeroffice@CCharitiesCC.org

To Get Involved
CCharitiesCC.org/Volunteer

Baby Food Needed
We need baby food - jars and cereal - for our families at the Helen Hunt Campus. Donations can be dropped off at 14 W. Bijou St. M-Sat from 8 am - 12 pm.

To help, please call 719-578-1222

Lunch Items Needed
The Marian House Soup Kitchen has moved to serving sack lunches to our clients. We need items and/ or donations to purchase sack lunch makings. Donation drop-off is at the Marian House dock from 8 am – noon.

- Paper Sandwich bags
- Plastic Grocery bags
- Plastic spoons
- Granola bars
- Single serve chips
- Peanut Butter & Jelly
- Sliced Bread
- Whole fruit (apples, oranges)
- Lunch meat
- Canned tuna & chicken
- Mustard & Mayo
- Sandwich bags
- Nitrile food service gloves
- Canned fruit
- small Styrofoam cups with lids
- Bottled Water
- Carrot sticks & celery sticks

Want a career helping people at a trusted non-profit in Colorado Springs? Check us out!

CCharitiesCC.org/Employment

Take a “Touch the Need” Tour
First Friday of the Month at Catholic Charities
Family Connections: 9 a.m.
917 E. Moreno Avenue.
Marian House Services: 10 a.m.
14 W. Bijou Street.

Temporarily Suspended due to Social Distancing

FEMA Delivers Baby Items
NICU Delivered Baby Items

Lunch Items Needed

ESL and Citizenship Classes
Move Online
Due to COVID-19, in person ESL & Citizenship classes were put on hold. As of April 6, eight classrooms are open with am and pm classes available online! The Spring series of Citizenship Classes are also available online.

To learn more or to register,
Call Michelle at 719-866-6516

Donate Online @ CCharitiesCC.Org/Donate

Donate Online @ CCharitiesCC.Org/Donate

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.

Catholic Charities of Central Colorado
Providing Help. Creating Hope.
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.

HELPING HANDS is published in Feb., May, Sept., & Dec. No article in this publication may be reprinted in whole or in part without permission of the editor. © 2020 Catholic Charities of Central Colorado. Postmaster: send address changes to Catholic Charities, 228 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

PUBLISHER
Catholic Charities of Central Colorado, Inc.
President & CEO - Andy Barton

EDITORIAL STAFF
Editor, Writer, Layout, Photography - Rochelle Schlortt
Circulation - Betsy Finley

At Catholic Charities, we respect everyone who comes to us for help. Many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, client names and images may have changed to protect their privacy.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY MAKING A GIFT

SPECIAL STATE INCOME TAX CREDITS
Enterprise Zone 25%
Check donations to Marian House and Family Connections of $250 or more
Child Care Contribution 50%
Donations to Child Care Contribution or Life Connections

GIFT SOCIETIES
• Caritas Society ($10,000/year)
• 1968 Founders Society ($1,968+/year)

OTHER WAYS
• IRA Distributions, Stocks/Securities
• Sponsor-A-Day at Marian House
• Tribute Gifts – In Honor or Memory
• Planned Giving or Estate Planning
• Employer Matching Gifts

MONETARY DONATIONS & TAX CREDITS:
719-866-6422 or 719-866-6440

MATERIAL DONATIONS
Food: Spoons, snack bars, ground beef, hot chocolate, spices, canned vegetables, nondairy (powdered) coffee creamer
Infants & Children: Size 1-4 diapers; baby food, NEW children’s shoes; maternity & baby clothes and new baby bottles.
Home & Transportation: Dishes, pots & pans, working vehicles, grocery store, bus pass and gas gift cards
Clothing & Essentials: NEW XL+ sweatshirts & hoodies, Men’s/women’s underwear, gloves, beanie caps, blankets, toiletries, chemical handwarmers, socks.

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

MATERIAL GOODS: 719-866-6550
Vehicles: 720-215-4521

THANK YOU GRANTORS!
The Anschutz Foundation
Catholic Charities USA
Colorado Office of Children, Youth and Families (SYDP Mini Grant)
Colorado Springs Health Foundation
Mabel Horrigan Foundation
Legacy Institute of Colorado Springs
Pikes Peak Community Foundation - Emergency Response Fund
Virginia Hill Charitable Foundation

At Catholic Charities, we respect everyone who comes to us for help. Many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, client names and images may have changed to protect their privacy.