



TO LOVE AND SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES

Your Generosity is Helping to Address the Most Pressing Local Needs, Especially for Working Individuals and Families

Catholic Charities offices in Johnstown, Altoona and State College have been busy all winter meeting with clients seeking emergency requests for assistance to help them overcome a short-term financial crisis. During the winter months, as you'd expect, many requests are related to heating.

Your support last fall and over the Christmas holiday helped to fulfill requests for heating assistance and for other areas of need, such as utility bills and housing costs.

Since last fall, three common areas for assistance top the list at each office:

- Winter heating assistance
- Water bills
- Evictions

Why Working Individuals and Families Need Help

High utility costs and lack of affordable housing impact working families the most as many of them do not qualify for other types of assistance. Their income disqualifies them for safety net programs, but leaves them vulnerable to late or missed payments or forces them to prioritize immediate-need expenses like food and medical care over monthly bills.

When these individuals and families visit Catholic Charities, they are on the verge of a major financial crisis. One missed payment or one utility shut off can lead struggling neighbors on a path to eviction and homelessness, or

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TOP THREE COMMON AREAS FOR ASSISTANCE



Winter heating assistance



Water bills



Evictions

What the COVID-19 Outbreak Means for Our Most Vulnerable Neighbors

Catholic Charities offices are anticipating a sharp increase in need among individuals and families as restaurant, retail and service industries severely impacted by the coronavirus crisis.

Find out what you can do help.

When we talk about the rapid spread of COVID-19 we hear about the populations that are most vulnerable to the virus—older individuals and those with underlying health conditions. Keeping these

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As of March 20, 2020, all three Catholic Charities offices are currently closed to help stop the spread of COVID-19. They will reopen as soon as possible. The Martha & Mary House Emergency Shelter remained open until March 27 when it closed due to a shortage of disinfectant and difficulty enforcing social distancing rules. Director Jesse Trentini continues to work with homeless individuals and families on a case-by-case basis.

Nominations Open for Annual Recognition Dinner

Do you know someone in our Diocese—an adult or young person—who lives out their faith regularly through acts of service, volunteerism and charity? Send your nomination for the Annual Recognition Dinner.

“Amen I say to you whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

-Matthew 25:40

It's a privilege for Catholic Charities to gather with loyal donors and friends every year to celebrate individuals in our Diocese who are living this Gospel teaching.

Do you know someone who is worthy of being honored with the Msgr. William M. Griffin Humanitarian Award and the Matthew 25 Youth Humanitarian Award? Submit your nomination to Catholic Charities by April 30 by emailing jharshberger@dioceseaj.org or by calling the office at (814) 944-9388 (a written nomination will be required).

Your Generosity

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insurmountable debt. For families especially, these issues have other consequences: like a domino-effect, financial instability at home can cause stress and anxiety for children and teens.

Together, we help our neighbors in need to avoid long-term financial insecurity by providing a solution that fulfills an immediate need and helps to alleviate future issues. Thanks to your generous support, your neighbors who visit Catholic Charities receive a hand-up to get through a tough time, and also receive help with budgeting to move them toward longer-term stability.

More importantly, they see and feel that they are part of a caring, compassionate community. They discover that they are not alone and that there is hope for a brighter future.

If you can help, support Catholic Charities with its emergency financial assistance program—make a gift today. Your donation will go directly to a neighbor in need in the county where you live. Monthly recurring giving is available to help your generosity go further.

When you live your faith, you change lives. Thank you.

Save the Date

Proceeds from Annual Recognition Dinner Provide Life-Changing Support for Neighbors in Need

Can You Make a Difference with a Sponsorship or Donation?

June 3, 2020 • 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m

The Casino at Lakemont

Mark your calendar for this year's Annual Recognition Dinner and the presentation of the Msgr. William M. Griffin Humanitarian Award and the Matthew 25 Youth Humanitarian Award.

This year's Annual Recognition Dinner 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at The Casino at Lakemont.

In addition to the deserving awardees, Catholic Charities loves to recognize the sponsors and donors who make this event possible and support our emergency financial assistance programming.

All proceeds from this wonderful event benefit the most vulnerable individuals and families in our eight-county area. If your business or family would like to sponsor portions of the evening or a table of awardees, contact event manager Ellen Konkle at 814-571-0576.

As always, highlights of the evening will be the Bishop's remarks and the presentation of the Msgr. William M. Griffin Humanitarian Award and the Mathew 25 Youth Humanitarian Award. We hope to see you there!

Watch for possible changes to the date of this event; sign up for email news at catholiccharitiesaj.org.

Partnerships Extend the Reach of Your Support

“Working with other agencies and organizations is a big part of how we achieve our mission,” said Executive Director Jean Johnstone. “While every organization has its own specific goals, collaboration helps us to help more individuals and families and really expand the reach into our communities.”

These partnerships include corporations, other faith-based organizations and faith communities, government agencies and non-profit organizations. They all share a desire to support the most vulnerable members of our communities and to ease financial burdens for neighbors in need.



In Centre County, Catholic Charities partners with Interfaith Human Services to help people heat their homes through

the Centre County Fuel Bank. Catholic Charities is a founding member of the Fuel Bank, which provides free heating oil, wood, coal and propane to qualified, low-income Centre County residents from January through March. This partnership allows Catholic Charities to coordinate its heating assistance program in Centre County. This year, thanks to donor support, Catholic Charities contributed \$10,000 to the Fuel Bank when it exhausted its existing funds.

Outside of this partnership, Catholic Charities also provides fuel assistance to those who do not qualify for assistance from the Fuel Bank, such as working individuals and families who earn too much in income but are still struggling to make ends meet.

Catholic Charities works with similar organizations and with the People’s Natural Gas Community Advisory Committee on heating assistance in other counties.

In addition to heating assistance, Catholic Charities engages in partnerships for other pressing issues such as



affordable housing. Staff members participate in various initiatives like the Bridges Out of Poverty Workgroup, the Local Housing Options Team and Emergency Food & Shelter programs.

“Most importantly, these tactical partnerships assure that together, we can help as many people as possible across the eight counties we serve,” said Johnstone. “When donors support Catholic Charities, they should know we are not re-inventing the wheel to create solutions in our local communities. We are working with others to make sure help is delivered in the most efficient and effective way to those who need it the most.”

What the COVID-19 Outbreak Means

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individuals healthy and slowing the spread in an effort to aid our healthcare workers, is of utmost importance.

In addition to the health impact of this situation, many individuals and families are already and will continue to face a major economic impact. Working families and seniors who are barely getting by from paycheck to paycheck will be hit hard during the next several months and could be set back years financially.

As people follow social distancing guidelines and events are cancelled, the restaurant, service, retail and event industries will feel the effects.

Jobs in these industries are filled by some of our most financially vulnerable neighbors—many of whom are already struggling to make ends meet. They do not have savings to get them through tough times and simply can’t afford to lose paid time, especially for an extended period.

Catholic Charities is committed to being here for those who will undoubtedly need help. We expect a sharp increase in requests for assistance. Please keep our staff members in your prayers as they work tirelessly to provide compassion and support to our neighbors in need.

Please also prayerfully consider a donation, if you are able. Every gift makes a difference during these uncertain times. I am so grateful for you and our many loyal donors and friends for driving the important mission of caring for those in need in our communities.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean Johnstone".

Jean Johnstone,
Executive Director





Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

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895-316 FN

Helping Our Neighbors During the COVID-19 Crisis

Support Catholic Charities in Centre Gives 2020

May 12-13, 2020 • centregives.org

Centre Foundation's 36-hour online giving event is set to begin on May 12 at 9 a.m. and conclude on May 13 at 9 p.m. This event is designed to support the work of non-profits serving Centre County.



OPEN TO ALL DONORS

It's important to note that donors from outside of Centre County can still participate to support Catholic Charities' mission. The giving event is online at centregives.org where you can select Catholic Charities from a list of participating non-profits to make your gift.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Your donations through Centre Gives qualify Catholic Charities for a share of its \$200,000 stretch pool, and help Catholic Charities qualify for additional prize money.

That said, direct contributions to Catholic Charities are always welcome and greatly appreciated, using the enclosed envelope or by giving online at catholiccharitiesaj.org.

Giving A Lot, A Little at a Time

Another Way to Put Your Faith into Action

Catholic Charities is blessed with support from more than 1,000 individual donors every year, many of whom donate less than \$100. This broad support is a testimony to the strong commitment of our faith communities to the Gospel teachings that command us to follow Christ's example by loving and serving our neighbors, especially those in need.

A portion of our faithful supporters take advantage of an easy and convenient way to support Catholic Charities year-round and to give more than a one-time gift may allow:

Recurring monthly giving is available online at catholiccharitiesaj.org through the DONATE page.

A monthly gift of just \$10/month adds up to an annual gift of \$120—

enough to help a family catch up on a utility payment or afford a repair for a furnace or a vehicle that gets them to work.

Check out the recurring giving option online at catholiccharitiesaj.org. If you aren't sure how to set it up, simply contact our office for help at (814) 944-9388.