

Donors supporting Decatur church through One Church 8
 Long-term tornado recovery continues in Arkansas 8

CATHOLIC CHARITIES Connections

SUPPLEMENT TO ARKANSAS CATHOLIC • CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ARKANSAS • 2415 N. TYLER ST. • LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72207 • MARCH 9, 2024

AT A GLANCE

Catholic Charities of Arkansas serves

Services that offer hope and the light of Christ to people in need

■ **Adoption Services:** Offers post-adoption support for those who have worked with the agency with an emphasis on search and reunions.

■ **Immigration Services in Springdale and Little Rock:** Provides low-cost immigration assistance.

■ **Refugee resettlement:** Ecumenical effort with sponsor teams to resettle families seeking a new home in the U.S.

■ **Parish outreach:** Assists with developing parish-based ministries that respond to local needs.

■ **Prison ministry:** Responds to the spiritual needs of people who are incarcerated and their families.

■ **Family assistance:** Short-term rent and utilities assistance to families and individuals at risk of becoming homeless.

■ **Catholic Charities Medical Clinic:** Provides free health care services and prescriptions for people 18 years old and older who are unable to afford primary health care.

FOR INFORMATION

Catholic Charities of Arkansas
 2415 N. Tyler St.
 Little Rock, AR 72207
 (501) 664-0340
 dolr.org

CATHOLIC CHARITIES MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Catholic Charities of Arkansas of the Diocese of Little Rock is rooted in the challenge of the Gospel: To serve persons who are poor or marginalized; to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable; and to actively promote charity, justice and the sanctity of life in the Church and the community.

Resettlement program seeking refugee housing

Apartments, rentals that are affordable are in short supply

Since becoming an affiliate office of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services in January, the Refugee Resettlement Program has resettled four families with a total of nine refugees.

After vetting by the U.S. State Department, they received approval to relocate to central Arkansas from the countries where they had been waiting: Venezuela, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Colombia.

Malleson Emmerling, refugee resettlement case manager, said, "Up to 75 refugee arrivals are anticipated this year with more people expected to originate from Venezuela and Nicaragua."

The basic services provided to arriving refugees begin before they are met at the airport, according to Emmerling.

"Housing must be secured before their arrival, including providing bedding, some furniture, household items and food," she said, "Coming up with short-term housing has been a challenge because affordable, decent housing in low-crime neighborhoods is



Malleson Emmerling, refugee resettlement case manager, works with new refugees moving to central Arkansas from Venezuela, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Colombia.

hard to find."

Most refugee families start out in an apartment with rent that can run from \$800 to \$1,500 a month, depending on the number of bedrooms. The rent for a house is usually higher.

"The goal," Emmerling said, "is to move families from short-term housing to something more

permanent as soon as possible, hopefully within the first 90 days, so school-aged children can be enrolled in a neighborhood school while the adults work on employment to become financially independent."

Apartment complexes, particularly corporate-owned and managed, require a driver's license, so-

cial security number and a deposit — \$25 is an average — that can be applied to an application fee.

"It takes time for a newly arriving person to secure these documents so they can begin looking for a place for their family to live," Emmerling said. "We talk with landlords on their behalf, often in advance of their arrival, to see if we can facilitate a rental agreement."

Jennifer Verkamp-Ruthven, director of the Refugee Resettlement Program, said, "Ultimately the refugee families going through our resettlement process are expected to achieve self-sufficiency, which means covering all their expenses, including rent."

Anyone with rental property or an apartment who would like to help a refugee family through Catholic Charities of Arkansas can contact Emmerling at memmerling@dolr.org or (501) 664-0340. She can discuss short-term and longer-term housing needs of the Refugee Resettlement Program, as well as the need for other donated items, such as a kitchen table with chairs, new mattresses with bed frames, cleaning supplies, kitchen items, toiletries, seasonally appropriate clothing and shoes for work, school and everyday use.

Interpreters, medical volunteers needed for clinic

Volunteers provide free primary medical care each Wednesday

The Catholic Charities Medical Clinic is looking for volunteers as it continues to serve Arkansas as it has done for more than 53 years.

The clinic's medical professionals and volunteers advance the mission to provide free primary care medical and pharmacy services as well as patient education to the Spanish-speaking community.

The clinic provides free medical and pharmacy services to people 18 years of age and older unable to afford routine health-care for the uninsured and underserved. Currently the clinic is seeking volunteer medical professionals; physicians, nurses, pharmacists, nurses and bilingual medical interpreters to serve Wednesdays from 5-8 p.m.

The medical professionals provide a once-a-week clinic during evening hours as well as pharmacy and laboratory services. In February 2023, the clinic received certification for Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate of waiver. Having this waiver allows the clinic to obtain and closely monitor patients' blood glucose and A1C testing.

The Catholic Charities Medical Clinic is located at The McDonald Center at 2415 North Tyler Street, on the campus of St. John Center in Little Rock. To inquire about volunteering, contact director Janice Bohac at jbohac@dolr.org or (501) 664-0340.

Dennis Lee

Volunteers Sister Mickey Espinoza, MCP, and Ines Mahfouz act as interpreters Feb. 28 for volunteer medical staff at Catholic Charities Medical Clinic.



One Church drive for small Decatur church at halfway mark

Blessed Stanley Rother Church in Decatur is halfway through its year as the designated One Church partner. Located about 20 miles west of Rogers in northwest Arkansas, the small mission is seeking a one-time boost from all the other parishes in the diocese.

The mostly Spanish-speaking Catholic congregation of more than 80 people hopes to receive enough support to make improvements to their sanctuary and parish hall, which are housed together in a plain, white cinder-block building.

The One Church: Unite in Faith and Mission appeal for Blessed Stanley Rother Church began last fall. To date, \$42,988 in donations have been received toward their estimated need of \$101,000.

The church roof is in poor condition and must be replaced. If sufficient funds are raised, other improvements will be made, including installing a new heating and air conditioning system. Their building also can use new flooring, plumbing, ceilings, insulation, windows, lighting and doors.

With six months to go before their One Church year is over, Dennis Lee, executive director for Catholic Charities of Arkansas, said, "We know there are more Catholics and parishes in our diocese who will want to support their brothers and sisters at Blessed Stanley Rother Church when they hear about their situation." Pastor Father Arokiasamy "Samy" Madhichetty Irudayaraj, who also oversees St. Joseph



Church in Tontitown, is available to speak at parishes about the Blessed Stanley Rother community and the needs it's seeking to meet with One Church support.

For more information or to donate online, visit dolr.org/one-church. Donation checks can be mailed to: Catholic Charities of Arkansas, 2500 North Tyler Street, Little Rock, AR 72207. Checks should be made payable to: "Diocese of Little Rock — One Church" with the notation "Blessed Stanley — Decatur."

File photo/Travis McAfee

Bishop Anthony B. Taylor distributes Communion to Issac Tirado during a confirmation Mass July 29, 2023, at Blessed Stanley Rother Church in Decatur.

Caseworkers continue long-term recovery

St. Vincent de Paul Society hires two managers for state

March 31 will be the one-year anniversary of the tornadoes that ripped through Pulaski, Lonoke and Cross counties.

In response, Catholic Charities of Arkansas has partnered with the Disaster Services Corporation (DSC) of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul - USA. Cathy Garcia, regional program manager overseeing disaster case management services in Arkansas, said, "There are still a lot of unmet needs, particularly with survivors needing their homes rebuilt or repaired."

Yasmin Basilio is the DSC case manager for Pulaski and Lonoke counties. Her office is in The McDonald Center at St. John Center in Little Rock. Terah Redman is the disaster case manager for Cross County, with her office at the Wynne Tornado Distribution Center.

Basilio said they know there are tornado survivors who have



Megan Moore

Case manager Yasmin Basilio meets with members of the Pulaski County Long-term Recovery Care Committee Feb. 28 in Little Rock.

yet to ask for help. She and Redman encourage anyone with unmet needs from that specific storm to contact them at Pulaski-CrossARTornado@svdpdisaster.org or by calling the disaster services hotline at (800) 668-0683.

The disaster case managers said survivors can expect to be interviewed and asked to complete an intake form. The information they obtain and verify is shared

confidentially at monthly long-term recovery care meetings in Little Rock and Wynne. Various nonprofits and churches, including Catholic Charities of Arkansas, collaborate at these meetings to respond to the unmet needs.

According to Basilio, "Each survivor has a recovery plan created for them that includes goals based on what they identify as their unmet needs."

LENTEN SACRIFICE



Dennis Lee

Catholic Charities office administrator Megan Moore (seated) and office assistant Andi Dunn serve as coordinators for the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Program in the diocese. CRS Rice Bowls and materials were sent to 81 parishes and 10 Catholic schools prior to Ash Wednesday. Catholic Relief Services receives 75 percent of participants' donations for its work in more than 120 countries around the world to help people experiencing hunger and poverty. Catholic Charities of Arkansas uses its 25 percent share for its Family Assistance Program that helps people with basic needs, including rent and utility assistance.



Immigration Specialist Little Rock

Catholic Immigration Services in Little Rock has a job opening for an Immigration Specialist. Qualifications include bachelor's degree, fluency in English and Spanish, and computer proficiency. This is a full-time position with competitive pay and benefits, including health insurance, paid time off and a 403(b) retirement plan.

To inquire, contact Ines Mahfouz, Human Resources Assistant for the Diocese of Little Rock, at imahfouz@dolr.org or call (501) 664-0340.

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ONLINE PRAYER INTENTIONS

are offered up at Masses celebrated by Bishop Anthony B. Taylor.

Submit your prayer intentions to the "Prayer Book of Intentions Online" at www.dolr.org/prayers

