



Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of Hartford

Providing Help,
Creating Hope

2023 ANNUAL
REPORT



Our Mission

Reflecting God's love, we partner with all to strengthen families and inspire people to achieve their fullest potential.

Our Vision

We envision a future where all individuals and families achieve greater safety, stability, and independence in compassionate communities where people are valued, connected, and take care of one another.



Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of Hartford

Catholic Charities, Inc.
Archdiocese of Hartford

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At the heart of our nonprofit agency, our volunteers give generously of their time, talent, and support. Thank you to our Board of Trustees for their commitment to providing help and creating hope.

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Dear Friends and Supporters of Catholic Charities,

There are certain values and ethical standards that shape our work as a human service agency and the foundation of it all is a deep respect for human sanctity and dignity. From the nature of our services to even where we locate our offices — all of it is done in ways that offer the most service to the poor and disadvantaged of any faith and background.

Our agency operates 29 service locations throughout Hartford, New Haven, and Litchfield counties that provide help and create hope for approximately 10,000 people just last year alone. Unfortunately, there are even more people in need of our charity and mercy.

Our staff and social workers help our clients cope and overcome a number of complex social problems – a lack of adequate education, a lack of suitable housing, even people battling trauma that comes with being the victim of abuse, crime or neglect.

I want to share with you one story that illustrates the impact our agency can make:

A single mother with a special needs son visited our Waterbury Family Center after her friend, who had been helped at the center, told her we could make her life better. This mother's job wasn't working out and she was falling behind. A case manager at the family center helped her find a better job with benefits and hours that fit her schedule so she could take her son to school in the morning, pick him up in the afternoon, and catch up on her bills. With our help, she was able to become self-sufficient, gain peace of mind, and create a drastically improved life for her and her son.

This isn't a unique story though. Stories of hope like this blossom each day in our programs, which are all possible only because of our generous supporters. I express to all of you my sincere appreciation for your commitment to the Catholic Charities mission of Providing Help and Creating Hope.

With heartfelt thanks,

Marek Kukulka

Marek Kukulka
Chief Executive Officer

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: **Senior Programs**

Catholic Charities operates programs for senior citizens at two locations in Hartford:

The **Hispanic Senior Center** (45 Wadsworth St.) and the **South End Wellness Senior Center** (830 Maple Ave.).

Both sites offer enriching and rewarding programs and services, including opportunities to socialize, engage in recreational activities, develop new learning experiences, and emphasize health and wellness. A fitness instructor visits both sites for classes and frequent celebrations always include plenty of time for dancing.

The combined Seniors Programs were named the agency's Program of the Year at the Staff Appreciation event over the summer.





PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Behavioral Health (New Haven)

There's a photo of Frankie MacNear holding a brand new laptop and a sign that says "CONGRATULATIONS!" He's got a big, beaming smile on his face and he looks like he's laughing. His pride is bursting out from the image. Next to him on a table is a box with "You're in!" printed on the inside of the lid.

The photo of Frankie, taken in the spring at the Catholic Charities Behavioral Health Clinic in New Haven, can tell you a lot of things — he's proud, he's happy, he's succeeding — but what the photo can't tell you is how different that moment was from his life just a little more than a year before.

In that darker time Frankie was on parole after being in prison and living at a residential placement home in New Haven. He was unable to find work, had no cell phone to keep him connected, and his outlook was dismal, until he was referred to the Catholic Charities' Behavioral Health program in New Haven in May 2022. Because he had been the victim of a crime during his incarceration, he also qualified for the VOCA program, which provides victims of a number of various crimes with free holistic support through case management and clinical assistance to encourage their healing, growth and resiliency.

Rikkia Ben Yehudah, Frankie's VOCA clinical case manager at the Catholic Charities' Behavioral Health Clinic at 501

Lombard St. in New Haven, started closely working with him to get his life back on track. She helped him obtain a cell phone and helped him revise a resume and essay when he successfully applied for a scholarship from the APT Foundation's Vocational Services program. The \$600 award he received was used to purchase a laptop computer and obtain a driver's license. He eventually was hired at Amazon.

But Frankie's story doesn't end here. That photo of him holding the congratulations sign shows him opening the acceptance package sent by the University of Advancing Technology, an online school that will teach him about cybersecurity, a field that offers him job security.

He also plans to apply for a state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services program that trains participants to become Certified Recovery Support Specialists — counselors uniquely qualified to provide support because they have been down similar problematic paths.

"Frankie is feeling encouraged now that he is finally getting his life back on track," said Rikkia, the program supervisor at the New Haven office.



Catholic Charities operates Behavioral Health clinics in Hartford, New Haven, Torrington, and Waterbury. Through individual or group therapy, our clinicians are able to address problems associated with substance use, depression, anxiety, anger management, trauma, grief and loss, and other mental health issues.

For more information or to find a clinic near you, visit www.ccaoh.org/bh.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: **Limitless II** (Manchester)

The Limitless II program operated by Catholic Charities used to have a room that was known as “Bella’s Room.” It was where Bella always wanted to stay – alone – after she joined the program when it opened in March 2022.

When the day program for adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities opened at the former Assumption School in Manchester, Bella’s parents, Allison and Jim of Simsbury, brought her in along with a number of items she would need to get through the day.

“When she first came, she would just want to sit in the room, in a big, comfortable bean bag chair that was kind of her spot,” Day Program Manager Sue Noonan said. “She would go outside with staff and walk, but there was really no interaction.” Sue said Bella’s previous school had thought that she may need two staffers with her at all times, but the Limitless II team was confident a one-on-one setting would work and they started planning.

“What we did was come together and talk about how we could best support her,” Sue said, adding that part of the discussion was making sure they were all on the same page and doing the same things with Bella.

The team started slowly, bringing small groups of staff and individuals into the former classroom where Bella spent her days. She began tolerating visitors and eventually started interacting with them and playing games. She continued to open up and surprised staffers who had never heard her speak before.

Now, just a little more than a year after joining the Developmental Services program at Catholic Charities, Bella’s progress has been amazing and inspiring for everyone around her.

Quiet, withdrawn and disconnected in the beginning, she now walks the halls saying “Hi!” to people, is engaged in activities like arts and crafts, dances during group music therapy sessions, and enjoys trips to places like a bowling alley and the Connecticut Science Center.

“We have also seen growth in Bella’s social interactions and tolerance level,” her parents wrote. “It brings us comfort as parents to know that when she’s not with us, that she is happy and well, with staff that cares for her and keeps her safe. This allows her to enjoy her time there and we are so grateful!”



The effort by the Catholic Charities staff reflects the agency’s mission of helping and inspiring all people to reach their fullest potential. The goal with Bella and the other individuals in Limitless II is to have them become engaged and participate in activities, so people can see they are a vital part of the community and they can broaden their experiences.

To learn more, visit www.ccaoh.org/ds



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: **Community Schools**

Sometimes, the tangible benefits of a new program take years to materialize, but that's not the case with the GOALS program started in March by the Community Schools team at Catholic Charities. For Luis Castellano, a fourth-grader at Hartford's Parkville Community School, the positive changes quickly happened.

Earlier this school year, Luis was missing school often, a problem seen with many students across the country in the past few years, and he was placed on the Chronic Absenteeism list. He was also failing to complete homework on a consistent basis.

Then things started to change after the GOALS (Grades, Overcome, Attendance, Learning, and School) program launched at Parkville, one of the three Hartford schools where Catholic Charities has implemented the program. GOALS is a way to motivate scholars — the preferred term for students in the Community Schools program — to get on track toward a solid education and stay there.

One of the strategies is for the scholars to have lunch with Catholic Charities staff and talk about social skills, which aren't typically included in a school's curriculum but are undeniably vital to classroom success. John Rosario Jr., the Parent Service Coordinator at Parkville, says he has lunch with Luis and they talk about things like responsibility, empathy, and coping skills. Sometimes he incorporates an activity like drawing or writing so Luis has a chance to reflect on what he has learned or express himself in ways other than talking.

After just a few months in GOALS, Luis has become more motivated to attend school and more motivated to do well in the classroom.

"There has been a noticeable change in Luis's mindset both in and out of the classroom. He is much more positive and willing to rise to the challenges presented to him," said his teacher, Ms. Litke, who added that Luis was easily discouraged before he joined GOALS, but is now more independent and focused.

Participation in GOALS and the lunch meetings have incentives — each time a scholar attends a lunch, they receive a prize based on their attendance, behavior in school, and progress reports.

Like many family programs that Catholic Charities operates, it doesn't just provide help in a bubble to only benefit an individual. The staff who run GOALS help the families find services to fill a need, whether that is providing food, finding housing or employment, enrolling in government programs, and more.

"We believe that if circumstances at home are alleviated, and the right support is in place, success will follow in school for the student," Rosario said. "We take that approach in our program and in our partnership with Hartford Public Schools to invest in the success of our scholars."

Rosario works along with Community Schools Program Director Katrice Stephens and clinician Tatiana Santana-Morin to help parents gain access and information to help them overcome hurdles. He also credits the program's



success to the teamwork mentality shared by the Catholic Charities team, the Hartford Public Schools staff at Parkville, and the parents.

"Mr. Rosario has helped me and my family out every time I called," said David Castellano, Luis's father. "He has been helping Luis a few times a week and I see that he is more motivated to go to school now and he's trying harder than before."

"GOALS was started to tackle chronic absenteeism at an individual level," Community Schools Director Nick Lebron said. "By providing one-on-one service it allows staff to take a deeper dive into the dynamics of the family. This way we can move away the barriers that prevent scholars from succeeding."

To learn more about our Community Schools programs and the three Hartford schools they operate, visit www.ccaoh.org/schools.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: **Boost**

Working 50 to 60 hours a week and spending little time with a young son was not the life Destiny Peele wanted. The work felt like a “job” instead of a career and it didn’t fulfill her passion to help others. Then she learned about the BOOST 2.0 program while receiving services from the SF2 program offered by Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford.

SF2 connects pregnant women and parents with young children to resources that can give them the opportunity to thrive, and BOOST was the resource that changed Destiny’s life.

BOOST, which is an innovative partnership between Catholic Charities and Capital Community College in Hartford, was created to help young families with low incomes and educations find work, food, housing and medical care.

The program offers them a chance to gain more solid economic mobility and, unlike many other career pathway programs, it offers more than just job training. Instead, it takes a holistic approach to removing barriers, breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty, and lifting up the whole family. Participants train in fields that lead to jobs like community health worker, administrative medical assistant, line worker, arborist, manufacturing, and IT. Destiny is one of two participants in the Community Health Worker training now working for Catholic Charities.

After joining the program, she met with a case manager who helped her obtain BOOST funding to cover childcare and tuition costs. And together, they identified a career path – Community Health Worker – that matched with her desire to help others. Destiny completed the course and was hired by Catholic Charities as a Family Support Provider in the SF2 program that

she first experienced as a client. Her son, meanwhile, enrolled in a Catholic Charities School Readiness program and they were able to spend more time together with Destiny on a drastically reduced work schedule.

Destiny’s achievements and new career have inspired her to reach for more. She is taking a Medical Assistant course to enhance her skills and learn more about the field, with plans to seek a Human Services degree.

Participation in BOOST (Boosting Opportunities for Social and Economic Mobility for Families) begins with meeting program Supervisor Ivelisse Acevedo or Case Manager Jennifer Ortiz, who assess the person’s needs and strengths. They also determine the participant’s career interests, the challenges they face, and what other supports and resources they currently receive so that goals can be set and a comprehensive plan for economic stability put into place.

The BOOST staff can also assist participants while they attend training with childcare, either at home or at an accredited care program operated by Catholic Charities.

Case management and support for participants is expected to last at least three years, which gives them time to train and adjust to a workplace’s culture after the job placement. It also gives them extra time to gain extra credentials for their career field while still receiving assistance.

In the end, the ideal outcomes for the participants include improved math and English skills, completing GED requirements, stabilized family finances, employment in the chosen field, and advanced training that can lead to job promotions and pay increases.



“Because of BOOST,” said Luis Santiago, Director of Programs at the Southside Family Center where the program is based, “Our case managers have been able to meet the students where they are and work with them to identify and eliminate barriers to ensure that they successfully complete their program.”

For children, the ideal outcomes are being prepared for preschool or kindergarten, being fully immunized, and being part of a functional, financially stable family. The ultimate goal is for the parents to find a job that pays wages that can support a family.

Our BOOST program is funded by the Kresge Foundation. Training is free for participants thanks to the work Capital Community College in downtown Hartford does to use multiple funding streams to cover the costs. Some training is covered by SNAP E&T, which is a work program to help recipients of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) gain skills.

For more info, contact Ivelisse Acevedo at 860-655-0895 or iacevedo@ccaoh.org.



Employee Recognition

Staff Appreciation

The dedicated employees are the foundation of Catholic Charities and give the agency the power to serve the communities. We are fortunate to host a Staff Appreciation Celebration in the summer to recognize a number of outstanding employees and thank them all for their wonderful service.

We cannot thank them enough for their imaginative, forward-thinking approach and care for those who serve.



The award winners for 2023:

MISSION AWARD winner **Juan Montañez** from Parent Support Services in Meriden

MISSION AWARD winner **Julie Colon** from the School Readiness program in New Haven

MISSION AWARD winner **Helen Bonano** of the Behavioral Health program in Waterbury.

LEADERSHIP AWARD winner **Rasheena Toney** from the School Readiness program in New Haven

LEADERSHIP AWARD winner **Sahar Abdul Hakim** from the Community Schools program in Hartford

LEADERSHIP AWARD winner **Shanakaye Edwards** from the Early Head Start program in Hartford

PROGRAM OF THE YEAR winners **South End Wellness Senior Center** and **Hispanic Senior Center**.

RISING STAR AWARD winner **John Rosario** from the Community Schools program in Hartford

EXCELLENCE IN EQUITY AWARD winner **Awilda Rodriguez**, director of the South End Wellness Senior Center in Hartford

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR **Marangely Burgos** from the El Centro Family Center at IHF

5 YEARS OF SERVICE:

Ada Casso
Roxanne Chukwurah
Kalill Deplet
Suzanne DeRosa
Freda Grant
Christina Jiménez-Colón
Nick Lebron
Sheryl McLeod
Christina Paolillo
Ginairee Rivera
Patrick Williams

10 YEARS OF SERVICE:

Damarys Colón
Stephany DeLeón
Octavia Hall-Haye
Marek Kukulka
Catalina Londoño
Juan Montañez
Maria Nuñez
Frank Peralli

15 YEARS OF SERVICE:

Ki-Young Burby
Houria Chelai
Elizabeth Di Turi
Carol Harrison
Lisa Jainchill
Rosalie Rivera
Awilda Rodriguez
Mark Wiles

20 YEARS OF SERVICE:

Alyson Karpiej
Tara Keefe
Sharon Todd
Lemonia White

25 YEARS OF SERVICE:

Lois Catalde
Rocio Cuadros
Maria Rios-Moscoso

30 YEARS OF SERVICE:

Robert Erwin

Financial Statement

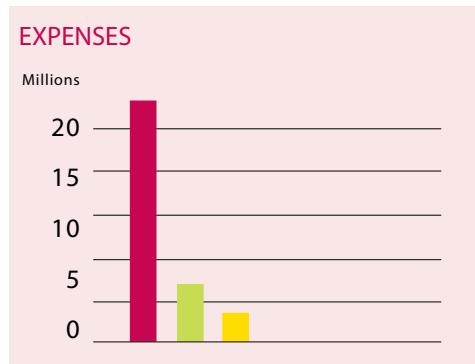
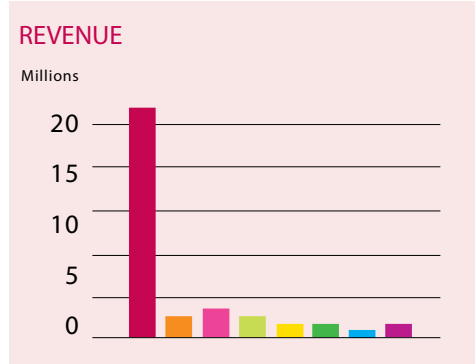
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Operating Revenue

■ Grants from Government Agencies	21,099,731
■ Program Service Fees	2,060,427
■ Archdiocese of Hartford	2,409,640
■ Contributions and private grants	1,983,417
■ Hartford Bishops' Foundation	100,000
■ Interest and dividends	224,338
■ Special events	80,300
■ Other	146,947
Total Operating Revenue	28,104,800

Operating Expenses

■ Program Services	24,485,927
■ Management and general	4,332,892
■ Fundraising and development	417,542
Total Operating Expenses	29,236,361



Fiscal 2023 saw continued growth in revenues in a year-over-year basis, including state and federal grant funding, despite the challenges of increased costs in areas such as utilities and staffing. In the year ahead, the agency will continue to seek increased revenue sources from private donations and foundation funding to overcome similar challenges and uncertain economic times.





A LOOK BACK... **Fiscal Year 2022-2023 at a glance**

- 3,885** Individuals of all ages received culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health services in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, and Torrington, including individual, group, and family therapy to address such mental health issues as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, trauma, anger management, and counseling for victims of crime
-
- 4,318** Individuals and families were provided with basic human needs, family strengthening and literacy services, parenting support, food pantry, diaper bank, employment training and placement, and other services at centers in Hartford, Meriden, Newington, New Haven, and Waterbury
-
- 443** Infants, toddlers, and pre-K children (3 to 5 years) received nurturing care, including Early Head Start and School Readiness programs, with families benefiting from nationally accredited, affordable, and year-round early childhood education programs in Hartford, Meriden, New Haven, and Waterbury
-
- 378** Seniors received supportive services through the Hispanic Senior Center, South End Wellness Senior Center in Hartford, and home-based programs that provide enrichment activities, health and nutrition, and a strong sense of community for individuals ages 55 and older
-
- 1,044** Hartford Public Schools elementary and middle school students and their families participated in our Community Schools programs, focusing on the whole child and family by providing extended-day programming, summer programming, and trauma-informed services that support academic, health, and social development
-
- 108** Adult adoptees, biological siblings, birthparents, and adoptive parents were assisted with searches for records on adoptions
-
- 51** Individuals received supportive housing services at Cathedral Green in Hartford and Francis Xavier Plaza in Waterbury
-
- 80** Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities received safe and nurturing care in our 24/7 group residences across Hartford County and our Limitless Adult Day Programs in Manchester and Newington, accommodating the special needs of each person and supporting their self-sufficiency, self-confidence, and independence



PROVIDING HELP... **Emergency Assistance Grants Distributed 2022-2023**

\$74,733.32

HFGP Covid grant 5029
helped 88 people

\$11,170.26

HFGP 5637
helped 14 people

\$20,244.25

McDermott Family Trust
helped 16 people

\$65,393.79

Archdiocese EAF grant 6111
helped 40 people

\$70,431.18

**Hartford Bishops Foundation
grant 7500**
helped 60 people

\$34,000.00

4CT
helped 35 people

Total amount of people
helped = **253**

Total funds spent
\$276,000





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Archdiocese of Hartford
839-841 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105-2801

The **Fatherhood Program** facilitated by Catholic Charities was created to help men become that important force in their children's lives. With the resources the program provides, fathers can gain the tools to ensure their children are more likely to achieve social, emotional, mental, physical and developmental success, and overall well-being.

Norris is one of the success stories from the Fatherhood program, which is based at the Asylum Hill Family Center in Hartford. Norris initially visited the center looking for help understanding and navigating the court system while he was seeking to gain custody of his young daughter. He then joined the Fatherhood program and shared his experiences with the group, which educated other men in similar circumstances and helped Norris cope with the stress and emotions he was dealing with throughout his traumatic experience.

Months after completing the Fatherhood program, Norris is still involved with the group, attending group sessions as an alumni to share his story and recruiting other fathers to join. He is also a regular volunteer at the Asylum Hill Family Center, where he continues to receive support with childcare and basic goods after being awarded custody of his daughter.

The curriculum-based program is part of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative and takes 8 weeks to complete with in-person and virtual meetings, home visiting services, and case management. It is offered in English and Spanish. The mission is promoting positive, responsible engagements between fathers and their children, while also offering support with issues like employment, housing, the legal system, mental health, and more.

Each group has a celebration when the program is completed and the participants receive a certificate. Completing the program also makes them eligible for a 10 percent adjustment to any child support arrears owed to the state.

To learn more about the program and how to join, call the Asylum Hill Family Center at 860-244-9944.



Visit our website www.ccaoh.org
to see more examples of how Catholic Charities
engages in the community

