



A publication from Catholic Charities Community Services

CONNECT

FEBRUARY 2026

Transforming Lives by loving our neighbors



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A MESSAGE FROM

PAUL MULLIGAN



With Lent right around the corner, now is a great time to pause and reflect on how God is calling us to spiritual renewal.

There's no better way to do that than by loving our neighbors.

Your support of Catholic Charities brings God's love to those who need it most. As you'll see in this newsletter, your generosity is transforming lives.

You're not only meeting people's immediate needs, but also providing them the community and tools they need for a better, long-term future. This helps them build resilience and avoid future crises. What a blessing!

Christ is waiting for you in each of these neighbors, whether it's a homeless veteran, a struggling refugee, or a woman and child fleeing domestic violence. As Scripture tells us, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, a stranger, and you welcomed me..." (Matthew 25:35). By giving generously to meet your neighbors' needs, you are loving Him as well.

As always, I am deeply grateful for all you do to support our mission. I hope that the stories in this issue are an encouragement to you. Your generosity truly makes all the difference in the lives of our vulnerable brothers and sisters in Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul S. Mulligan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul S. Mulligan, MTS, MBA
President & CEO

IT TAKES A VILLAGE ...

People often say it takes a village to raise a child. Unfortunately, not every parent has this support. Catholic Charities' Westside Head Start program provides early childhood education that intentionally focuses on including the whole family in the process. Letitia, a mom of four, was so grateful to discover Westside Head Start. It changed her life and the lives of her kids. Here's her impactful story:

Growing up, I always wanted to be a teacher and work with children. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to finish my schooling and only graduated from middle school.

I wanted to have a big family like I did when I was a kid. But when it came to having my own kids, I realized that it wasn't that simple.

Children demand all your attention, especially at an early age. I always find ways to help my kids learn, so I went to enroll my son, Anthony, in Head Start when he turned 4.

Westside Head Start offered so much more than I expected. I made an appointment to place Anthony on the waiting list. The day of my appointment, they talked to me about their Home Base program, so I also enrolled Jazmin.

Soon, they called me saying they had a spot for Anthony, and I was so excited. A short time later, Jazmin started the Home Base program. Because I was pregnant with Damian at the time, he was also eligible for services.

I got involved with the program and became the chairperson of the parent committee. I also became the Home Base representative for the policy council.

I love the Family Support Specialist and teachers. Anthony has certain behavioral problems and because of his teacher, I got in contact with professionals to help him. They also helped me get information about how to get my GED. I'm currently enrolled in GED classes.

I'm so grateful to Catholic Charities for providing an awesome learning experience for both children and parents.



Your generous support of Catholic Charities encourages and aids parents just like Letitia to grow alongside their children. Thank you!



“We are now a happy family”

How your support helps parents navigate life’s challenges.

Every family has a story — a journey that reflects resilience, hope and the power of support. Catholic Charities is honored to walk alongside families as they navigate challenges and work toward brighter futures.

Thanks to generous donors like you, our Family Connections Program works with families through individualized sessions that teach problem-solving, build relationships and provide guidance on coping with stress and emotions. Staff support parents as they gain the knowledge and resources they need to create a safe environment for their children.

Family Connections is a lifeline for parents like Damian. *Damian was living a happy life with his two daughters, ages 6 and 7. But in the span of just one day, his family life was turned upside down.

After being wrongfully charged with domestic violence, Damian went to jail briefly. The case was soon closed, but his time spent in jail put a tough strain on him both emotionally and financially.

With the immediate aid of the Department of Child Safety (DCS), he was soon referred to our Family Connections program for assistance.

“ Family Connections supported my family with assistance which helped me pay for my rent, provide clothes for my children, get hygiene and cleaning products, and access back-to-school resources. ”

Damian began working closely with a Family Connections Consultant and together, they identified his urgent needs to create a roadmap to support and a brighter future.

“Family Connections supported my family with assistance [that helped me] pay for my rent, provide clothes for my children, get hygiene and cleaning products, and access back-to-school resources. This helped me save a little money in my account,” said Damian.

Once the family’s immediate needs were met, they could begin to build a new foundation of security and strong relationships to move forward. Slowly but surely, they worked on strengthening daily routines, communication and parenting skills.

“I’m now able to properly communicate with my children and other extended family members [as well as] organize and perform house chores,” Damian says. “Sometimes [we] go out to play, ride bikes, swim or watch movies at the theater. We are now a happy family!”

Thanks to compassionate donors like you, Damian’s family is thriving, finding joy in everyday activities, creating memories and building strong connections. Their story shows what’s possible when you generously give to provide families with resources, support and encouragement.

**Name changed to protect client privacy.*

The PATH

(Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) program serves those who have a serious mental illness and are either currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness in Coconino, Yavapai, or Mohave County. PATH case managers provide life-sustaining supplies to keep those experiencing homelessness hydrated in the summer and warm in the winter. The goal of the program is to help clients obtain housing and connections to treatment.

“You have to be willing to trudge through the mud, walk through the deserts and forests, and crawl under bridges and in tunnels to find people in need.”

– RICK BRUST, PATH PROGRAM SUPERVISOR



Walking With Purpose: Pete and Cathy's Commitment to Caring



PETE & CATHY BERGMAN AT THE GRAND OPENING OF THE JOSHUA TREE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT IN KINGMAN, AZ

For longtime supporters Pete and Cathy Bergmann, giving to Catholic Charities is an expression of their faith and gratitude. Their first gift in 2010 followed a five-week financial counseling class they offered for Pathways clients, survivors of domestic violence. They were moved by the resilience they witnessed and felt called to stay involved.

Their desire to give back is rooted in early lessons about compassion. Pete remembers his father pointing to people experiencing homelessness and saying, "That's what Jesus would have looked like." The message stayed with him. "To those whom much has been given, much is expected," he said. Cathy shares that conviction. "We just want to help others who have not been blessed in the same way we have."

Over the years, they have admired programs across the agency - from foster care and refugee resettlement to MANA House for veterans. Today, they feel especially drawn to affordable housing. "People need stability and a roof over their heads," they said. "That stability creates a solid footing for people to build a path forward."

What brings them the most joy is personal encounter. "We don't just want to be a checkbook," Cathy said. Pete added, "We help many we will never know, but our greatest joy comes from the personal encounters we have with those we help."

The Bergmann's especially draw inspiration from Winston Churchill's reminder:

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”

Housing for Hope: By the Numbers

NUMBER OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTIES:

14

AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESIDENTS:

1,835

RAPID RE-HOUSING AND PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INDIVIDUALS SERVED:

555

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTIES OPENED IN 2025:

- 2**
- Joshua Tree in Kingman – 20 units
 - Acacia Heights II in central Phoenix – 66 units

An Unexpected Foster Journey

Danielle and Ryan Goold never dreamed that mountain biking would lead to their foster care journey. But God works in amazing ways!

The couple first started working with vulnerable populations through a nonprofit called the 88Bikes Foundation. They had a passion of traveling to various countries and distributing bikes to young girls who had been victims of trafficking.

As they developed a deeper understanding of the needs of vulnerable youth, they felt a calling to foster through Catholic Charities' Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program.

The program licenses and trains foster homes to care for unaccompanied minors or foreign-born teen youth in the U.S. without a legal guardian. It also supports unaccompanied minors with resources like English language classes, healthcare and legal aid.

After completing the process and training needed to get their foster care license, Danielle and Ryan eagerly waited a few more months to welcome Ruth, a teen girl from Honduras. They were nervous at first, but were soon excited to learn that Ruth settled in just perfectly.

"She wanted to learn piano—we had one. She liked cross country, and we are into endurance training. We saw that we could share common interests together," said Danielle.

Like Danielle and Ryan, Ruth values being active and enjoys hiking and fishing. They even had the privilege of taking her surfing and skiing for the very first time! They have camped all around Arizona, and of course, done plenty of mountain biking.



Danielle and Ryan have learned so much in their time as foster parents. They have realized the importance of being patient and understanding as they help Ruth achieve her goals and dreams.

They have also seen Ruth dream about her future for the first time, after being in survival mode for her whole life. She recalls the feeling that her foster parents were the first people ever to ask her what she wanted to do with her life.

Your generous support of Catholic Charities ensures that deserving children like Ruth find stable, loving homes and hopeful futures. Thank you!

Students put their Faith into Action

Each year, hundreds of Arizona Catholic school students are invited to participate in Catholic Charities' Miracle Projects—a journey to see the world through the eyes of the Good Samaritan and walk in faith and determination to make the world a better place.

Miracle Projects empower students to research issues that affect their community, raise money by creating items to sell at a marketplace, and then use those funds to help the most vulnerable individuals, children and families.

Catholic Charities recently partnered with St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School to conduct the Miracle Project and hold a Student Miracle Marketplace for their very first time.

Students in eighth grade set up booths, each one featuring a different Catholic Charities program. Highlighted programs included Community Re-Entry, DIGNITY Diversion, MANA House, Veterans Services, and our Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program.

Each student picked the program that they were most passionate about and raised funds for it, selling items such as snacks, bracelets, candles and blankets. All in all, 56 St. Thomas students raised a total of \$5,925.70 for neighbors in need!



DID YOU KNOW?

Your gift to Catholic Charities can qualify for the Arizona Foster Care Tax Credit. For credit on your 2025 taxes, you can give up to \$618 (single filer) or \$1,234 (joint filer).

Not only can you receive dollar-for-dollar AZ charitable tax credits for your donation to Catholic Charities, but you can re-direct \$1,234 as a gift to Catholic Charities (QFCO), AND also re-direct \$766 toward another Qualifying Charitable Organization (QCO).

This means that *all* your AZ state tax dollars can make a life-changing difference for those in need. Just remember to fill out the appropriate forms to claim this amazing opportunity. Thank you for being a tax credit champion!



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