



## A St. Paul mother seeks help after her baby dies of SIDS

# A Parent's Worst Fear Realized

▼ Davina lived through one of the worst nightmares of any parent. The lifelong St. Paul resident's 5-month-old daughter died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome four years ago.

Her daughter's death caused major depression. For days at a time, Davina couldn't get out of bed or leave the house. She feared her three other children, age 11, 9 and 5, would die.

"That was my biggest fear, that I'd wake up and another one would be dead," Davina says.

When the grief became unbearable, she sought help.

"I didn't know what to do," Davina says. "And that's when I called to find somebody to talk to about it. I called First Call for Help, and they sent me to Catholic Charities Counseling Services. That's how I met Tim."

Davina meets regularly with Tim Eiesland, senior manager of Counseling Services, as she copes with her depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"It's helping me cope. It's helping me to where I can leave the house," she says. "I'm not always in bed any more. It helps me to not be scared of others dying."

"I can talk about it without crying," she says. "I'm going to grieve forever, but I can deal with the stress of it and the emotions of it and express my feelings about it without crying. Tim has really helped me learn how to tell people my feelings. Because I'd hold that all in. I think if anybody loses a baby, they should go to counseling."

### SUPPORT DURING LIFE DISRUPTIONS

Counseling helps people dealing with distress or disruption in their lives caused by job loss, a separation or divorce, anxiety, stress or interpersonal relationships.

"The first step is to reach out to someone who is caring and compassionate, has a lot of empathy, is objective and open and honest with you," Eiesland says. "Having a mental health diagnosis can be difficult to accept and understand. People may not want to admit that they have a problem or mental health disorder. We work with people to diminish the stigma often attached to mental illness."

Catholic Charities offers individual, couples, family and group counseling throughout the 12 counties of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and has sites in multiple cities, including Red Wing, Faribault and Monticello. Couples counseling can help relationships get back

on track and build positive communication skills. A Couples Communication five-week program helps adult couples communicate effectively to enrich their relationships. The next session begins Tuesday, May 11.

Insurance often covers the cost of therapy. Catholic Charities offers a sliding-fee scale so no one is turned away due to inability to pay. ♦

*To protect Davina's privacy, Catholic Charities agreed not to use her last name. For more information about confidential counseling with a licensed mental health professional, call 651-647-3186 or visit [cctwincities.org/counseling\\_services](http://cctwincities.org/counseling_services).*

## Food Shelves Stay Busy during Summer

Although children usually look forward to summer vacation, the time off can put an extra strain on families. Because children no longer receive free and reduced breakfasts and lunches at school, the added meal costs can strain budgets.

Many families turn to food shelves for extra help during the summer months. In July 2009 Catholic Charities' food shelves served 557 households, a 25-percent increase from June, when kids spent part of the month in school.

"Without question, summer food shelf demand increases when kids don't receive school lunch," says Food Shelf Director Jim Durdle. The families Catholic Charities serves "are already teetering on the edge, and when you're below that line, having kids out of school can make things that much harder," he says.

Catholic Charities Branch I Food Shelf helps ease the burden on parents by offering a children's play area as well as birthday gifts, cake mix and party accessories for a child's birthday.

*Learn how your parish can make a difference for families at the food shelves. Visit [cctwincities.org/parish](http://cctwincities.org/parish).*



## Make the Most of Summer Vacation

Summer's a great time for children to give back to the community. Families can volunteer and share the experience of serving people in need. Family volunteer opportunities include:

- Completing yard work for an older adult or at a Catholic Charities program site. This hands-on activity is great for a family, youth group, Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop.
- Restocking our food shelves.

Younger children can participate in service projects in their neighborhoods, parishes or as part of a child's birthday party. Guests can bring food, personal hygiene items or items to include in a donation. Guests can bring these items in addition to or instead of a gift. Service project opportunities include:

- Holding a neighborhood or parish food drive to benefit Catholic Charities' food shelves.
- Collecting personal toiletry items such as shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, lotion, bar soap and shaving products to create hygiene kits for men, women, teens and children.
- Holding a baby shower drive to collect supplies such as diapers and clothing for new parents and babies served through Catholic Charities' Family Services.

Catholic Charities will distribute your donations to people in need in the Twin Cities. For more information, call 612-604-8435 or visit [cctwincities.org/donationdrive](http://cctwincities.org/donationdrive).

## Parish Volunteer Opportunities

1. Group of three to five people to serve dinner at the Family Service Center in Maplewood once a month from 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
2. Groups of four to eight people to do yard work such as raking at Catholic Charities sites around the Twin Cities.
3. Person with handyman skills to help with facility projects such as landscaping and light repair work. This position may involve travel.

## From the CEO

▼ My earliest memories of parish life in my hometown of Perham, MN center around Sunday Masses, said in Latin, and my parents visiting with friends and neighbors after Mass. Our parish didn't have organized social ministries, so neighbors connected to help organize and provide support for people in need.

Social outreach in today's parishes has become more complex and formalized. We reach out to those often isolated, suffering from the many consequences of poverty, mental illness and challenges of family life in today's society.

Speaking about living Christ's *missio*—the mission of the Church—in parish life, Archbishop John Nienstedt explained that includes "social concerns for the poor, the homeless, the sick, the stranger and the marginalized ... (and) finances as they relate to sharing time, talent and treasure with the less fortunate."

Catholic Charities is blessed with a history of working with parishes to live Christ's *missio*, and we share some of those stories here. As the number of those in need increases, our shared *missio* requires renewed efforts. To that end, I have appointed a team to develop a vision and strategy to connect with parishes.

We look forward to working closely with parish leaders to learn how we can better work together. I look forward to the journey. ♦

Peace and Blessings,



▶ ▶ ▶ Paul Martodam, CEO



## Parishes Make a Difference

### St. John the Baptist Continues Consistent Meal Service

Parishioners from St. John the Baptist in New Brighton serve lunch at Catholic Charities' Branch III twice a month. After 14 years of leading their parish group, Ed and Claudette Casey will retire from their volunteer positions. The St. John the Baptist group will continue to prepare and serve lunch for as many as 250 adults experiencing homelessness and poverty.

### St. Peter's School Students Fast while Feeding People in Need

The students in Pre-K through sixth grades at St. Peter's School in Forest Lake practiced prayer, fasting and almsgiving during Lent by collecting money to benefit Catholic Charities. Students tracked their donations by adding colored paper to a rainbow displayed on the wall. They used the money to purchase food gift cards for families served by Catholic Charities' Family Homeless Prevention Program, which helps families facing eviction.

### Collect Food Shelf Donations with a Reusable Bag

Make collecting food for food shelves easier and increase donations by using reusable grocery bags supplied by Catholic Charities. The Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis received reusable grocery bags from Catholic Charities last year to encourage parishioner donations to the food shelf. The bags were so popular the parish requested 100 more bags to expand the program.

Learn how your parish can make a difference. Visit [cctwincities.org/parish](http://cctwincities.org/parish).