



## Faith communities respond to increased need

# Parishes Donate More Food as Hunger Grows

▼ The number of hungry Minnesotans seeking help at food shelves continues to grow. In July, one of Catholic Charities' food shelves served more than 550 families. The same food shelf distributed about 250,000 pounds of food last year. Nearly one million people in Minnesota live in households that struggle to put food on the table.

Parishioners throughout the archdiocese responded to the increased need with more support for Catholic Charities' three food shelves. Many parishes encourage members to

donate food year-round.

Our Lady of Grace in Edina collected more than 2,500 pounds of food from August 2008 to July 2009. The Church of the Annunciation in Minneapolis donated nearly 3,000 pounds of food – 18 percent more than the year before. St. Albert the Great and the Church of the Visitation,

both in Minneapolis, increased donations by 45 percent and 62 percent, respectively.

“During these challenging times where we are seeing donations decrease in some areas, the faith community has responded by increasing food donations,” says Jim Durdle, director of Catholic Charities' food shelves. “This shows a clear commitment to support their neighbors in need.”



### REUSABLE BAGS FUEL FOOD DONATIONS

To make donating food easier, Catholic Charities offers reusable bags for churches to distribute to parishioners for food shelf donations. Parishioners can take the bags to the grocery store, fill them with much-needed groceries and then return the

full bags to their churches, which arrange delivery to Catholic Charities' food shelves. Annunciation recently began using the bags for their year-round food drive.

The Basilica of St. Mary supplies much more than food to Branch II Food Shelf, located just blocks from the church. The church partners with Catholic Charities to pay the food shelf's rent and buy food from a food bank.

“Branch II Food Shelf was started by the Basilica about 30 years ago,” says the Basilica's Director of Christian Life Janice Anderson. “That food shelf has been a really fundamental ministry for the Basilica for decades.”

The Basilica will distribute the reusable bags throughout the parish this fall.

“They'll take them home and fill them up and bring them back, I hope,” Anderson says. “We are eager to use the bags.” ♦

*Parishes interested in receiving reusable bags should contact Bob Elfstrand at 612-664-8623.*

## Parishes Make a Difference

### All Saints Supports Children at St. Joe's

Parishioners from All Saints Catholic Church in Lakeville collected hygiene kits for children at St. Joseph's Home for Children who often arrive with very few possessions. Keith Kozerski, director of St. Joe's, spoke to the All Saints Bible School class June 23 and encouraged the kids to collect items such as toothpaste, shampoo, soap, toothbrushes and washcloths for the kits.

### St. Ambrose Holds Collection for Parenting Services

St. Ambrose Catholic Church of Woodbury learned about Catholic Charities' Parenting Services this spring. Program Manager Nate Rauschendorfer talked about Parenting Services' success in helping young mothers and fathers learn how to parent. The program offers education, parent support groups and counseling. After Rauschendorfer spoke, the church held a second collection to benefit Parenting Services.

### Join the Walk to End Hunger

What better way to celebrate your blessings on Thanksgiving Day than by helping ensure everyone has enough to eat? Walk or volunteer at the Walk to End Hunger from 7 a.m. – 10 a.m. Nov. 26 at the Mall of America. You can designate the pledges you collect to Catholic Charities' food shelves. Learn more about this family-friendly event at [walktoendhunger.org](http://walktoendhunger.org) or call 612-807-2228.

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

## Birth Mothers Share Adoption Experiences

Birth mothers ranging in age from 25 to 75 came together in July to share their stories at an event co-sponsored by Catholic Charities and the Archdiocesan Office for Marriage, Family and Life.

At the daylong event held at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Minneapolis, two birth mothers shared their stories, and the women had a chance to talk in small groups. An archdiocesan priest presided over a healing mass. During a candle ceremony, the birth mothers had an opportunity to name the child they placed. Participants could connect with one another and with local resources.

Catholic Charities' Family Services Director Mary Ann Sullivan moderated the event, and therapist Jean Gregg from Catholic Charities' Counseling Services spoke during the event.

"Participants represented the range of adoption experiences from secrecy and shame to openness and contact," says Connie Roller, Adoption Services program manager. "The event was definitely a positive experience for me."

## Parish Volunteer Opportunities

For more information or other opportunities, call the Volunteer Line at 612-664-8600 or visit [cctwincities.org/volunteer](http://cctwincities.org/volunteer).

### Help a recently arrived refugee family

become acquainted to the community by serving as a guide and friend. Meet the family at the airport and help with transportation. Great for a congregation.

### Holiday Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Catholic Charities' Volunteer Resources at 612-664-8600 to learn about volunteering at the Giving Tree and with Sponsor A Family.

### Support Branch II Food Shelf in

Minneapolis by greeting and checking in clients, stocking and cleaning the food shelf. Lifting up to 50 lbs may be required.

## From the Interim CEO

▼ Cool nights and omnipresent school buses remind us that change inevitably comes, regardless of how desperately we squeeze out every possible minute of daylight from the ever-shortening days.

Change comes, too, to organizations, businesses and the church's work. Fr. John Estrem's resignation as CEO triggered a series of conversations with the archdiocese and within Catholic Charities about how best to continue the agency's work and sustain its relationship with the archdiocese.

For almost 40 years, priests served as CEO of Catholic Charities, and we benefitted greatly from their spiritual leadership. The priest shortage in the archdiocese and around the country led us, and the archbishop, to decide that a lay person would be the next CEO of Catholic Charities. Fifteen parishes in the diocese don't have a pastor. Only 10 Catholic Charities around the country have a priest as their CEO.

We recognize and honor the important role Catholic Social Teaching and the Catholic tradition have in our agency. We will work with the archbishop to determine what role a priest will have in the agency. Fr. Paul Sirba, the archdiocesan vicar general, joined our board.



Our relationship with and commitment to the church and archdiocese remain as strong today as they've been.

We are grateful for your continued financial and spiritual support. ♦

▶ ▶ ▶ Robert K. Spinner  
Interim CEO

## Sowers of Justice Fight Health Care Cuts

▼ Catholic Charities' Sowers of Justice remain determined to reverse the governor's decision to eliminate a state-funded insurance program for single adults.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty's May veto of funding for General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) will leave 33,000 Minnesotans without health care coverage.

The Sowers group, a faith-based network of Twin Cities Catholics organized by Catholic Charities' Office for Social Justice, held a town-hall-style meeting June 30 at St. Patrick's Church in Edina. About 170 Edina residents of all denominations joined several elected officials, including state representatives Keith Downey and Paul Rosenthal, Edina Mayor James Hovland and County Commissioner Jan Callison. The forum was organized for residents to voice their concerns about the impending elimination of GAMC.

The meeting focused on what the impact of GAMC cuts will mean to the families of

those attending the meeting. Cappy Moore, social justice coordinator at St. Patrick's, says people discussed varying views about the cuts and what to do about them. Though the state representatives had varying opinions, the conversation remained respectful because "we all believed that people shouldn't be without health care," Moore said.

People need to work hard to put public pressure on lawmakers, especially when the legislature isn't in session, so they can act immediately when the session reconvenes in February, says Patrick Ness, public policy manager for the Office for Social Justice.

"Catholics have a call to stand in solidarity with this often-forgotten population," Ness says. "We need to save this program." ♦

*Become a member of the Sowers of Justice and learn more about advocacy by visiting [cctwincities.org/advocacy](http://cctwincities.org/advocacy) or by calling Patrick Ness at 651-291-4484.*