

Sharing the Good News

Fall 2019

A Ministry of Presence...

>>> **Two decades ago**, our church, recognizing the powerful witness uniquely available through women religious, established an outreach in rural areas of our diocese.

Women religious responded “yes” to this call to be out among the people and are still serving to this day.

This fall marks the 20th anniversary of rural ministry throughout the Bradford Deanery of the Diocese of Erie. Known as Catholic Rural Ministry, Sisters Phyllis Schleicher, OSB, and Mary Hoffman, OSB, have been and continue to be a compassionate presence for the people.

Their presence consoles families who are grieving and comforts those who are sick or homebound. Sisters Phyllis and Mary support parish staff and ministries. With a total of 13 parishes and missions in McKean and Potter counties, their presence has a large impact. With assistance from Catholic Charities grant monies, they also aid those who are experiencing an emergency need and help them to obtain clothing, food, furniture or financial assistance. Spiritual guidance, faith sharing and prayer is offered for all in need. Sister Phyllis says, “just today we received a message on our phone from a family – wife, husband and son



SR. MARY HOFFMAN, OSB, AND SR. PHYLLIS SCHLEICHER, OSB, OF THE CRM OF THE BRADFORD DEANERY, JOINED SR. MARIAN WEHLER, OSB, AND SR. TINA GEIGER, RSM, OF THE CRM OF THE OIL CITY DEANERY IN 2017.

who rely on food stamps and have a limited income. The husband has an important surgery coming up in Pittsburgh and asked if we could help provide them with a gas card to help get them to this necessary surgery.”

The Sisters responded “yes.” They were able to meet this request with funding assistance from Catholic Charities, Inc.

Sister Mary says their work in this community is important because through them, people see the presence of women religious.

>>> **The Holy Spirit** guided Catholic Rural Ministry to the 16 parishes and mission churches of the Oil City Deanery in 2007. Today, Sister Marian Wehler, OSB, and Sister Tina Geiger, RSM, serve people in need in Venango, Clarion, and parts of Crawford and Forest counties.

Called to be women of hope and a presence to these regions, the sisters say, “we are in this area for you. If there is any need, you can come to us.” And the people do. Their activities include adult and youth faith enrichment such as retreats, bible studies and reflection days with various parish groups.

Some rural parishes never had a woman religious in their parish, so the sisters’ presence helps to witness to women’s call to leadership in the church. Education and engaging with youth are some of their greatest joys.

Being instruments of God’s compassionate care is vital in today’s world. Thus, sisters are also involved in Mustard Seed Ministries, serving Venango County. Ecumenical in nature, together church volunteers help to repair unsafe housing for people in need, and

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SR. PHYLLIS AND SR. MARY RECEIVE CALLS WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN NEED.

Focus on... Catholic Rural Ministry

Agencies and Services:

Good Samaritan Center

Shelter for Temporarily Homeless Men;
Food Referrals

St. Martin Center

Emergency Assistance; Early Learning Center; Financial Counseling; Housing Counseling

Prince of Peace Center

Soup Kitchen; Budget Counseling; Thrift Store; Food Distribution; Home Case Management & Life Skills

St. Elizabeth Center

Food Pantry; Thrift Store, Referral Services

Counseling & Adoption Services

Professional Counseling; Pregnancy Counseling; Problem Gambling Counseling; Anger Management Groups; Sexual Abstinence Program; Adoption Services

Christ the King Manor

Continuing Care Retirement Community; Skilled Nursing Care, Personal Care, Alzheimer Units, Rehabilitation Services, Home Support and Independent Living Cottages

Saint John XXIII Home

Assisted Living; Respite; Physical Therapy; Alzheimer Services; Long-Term Care; Occupational Therapy

Harborcreek Youth Services

Campus-Based Residential Facilities; Assessment/Diagnostic Services; Private Education; Drug and Alcohol Counseling; Community Service; Work Experience; Multi-systemic Therapy and Therapeutic Foster Care; Campus Ministry

PASTORAL SERVICES

Disabilities: Deaf Ministry; Parish Advocacy; Spiritual Enrichment; Victorious Missionaries; J.O.Y. Ministries

Social Justice and Life:

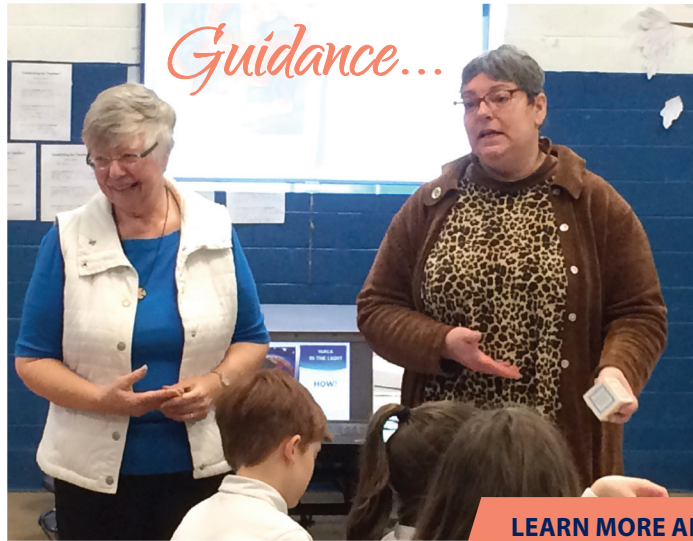
Justice & Peace Respect Life Advocacy

Mission: Mission of Friendship; Propagation of the Faith; Mission Education; Holy Childhood Association

Rural: Pastoral & Ecumenical Outreach; Spiritual Support; Parish Education; Retreats/Enrichment Day Programs; Faith Sharing Groups

provide furniture and transportation needs as well as spiritual support and guidance. It is hands-on evangelization at work.

In addition to the activities, Sisters Marian and Tina journey with people. They hear their stories and share in their joys and sorrows. This is what being present means. And as they are able, they also respond to requests for emergency assistance. They have a wonderful collaborative relationship with local social services to refer people in need and they put to good use the grants provided



SR. MARIAN AND SR. TINA GIVE A PRESENTATION TO STUDENTS AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL IN CLARION.

by Catholic Charities. Rural poverty is often hidden, but very real.

>>> **St. Francis of Assisi** is thought to have said, "Preach the Gospel at all times, when necessary, use words." The sisters serving in Catholic Rural Ministry do the work of God through their actions, words and presence. Thank you, Sisters.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CATHOLIC RURAL MINISTRY

www.ErieRCD.org/charities/crm-oilcity.html
www.ErieRCD.org/charities/crm-bradford.html



We
Give
Thanks
...

A letter to Sisters Marian and Tina:

Thank you for the prayer warriors you have been for me in my walk through these grief-stricken waters. Seeing you at my relative's funeral and your presence and prayers have meant the world to me. May you be richly blessed this coming year.

A participant of a retreat led by the sisters:

I feel like I am a better person because of you.

From a priest who has ministered with the sisters in the Bradford Deanery:

You've been out of the "limelight" but spreading the light of Christ with dedication and persistence. Keep up the good work.
- Former colleague in "God's country"

Focus on... Grants

Nearly **\$80,000** has been granted to Catholic Charities affiliates and agencies and in response to various emergency needs in the first half of 2019. The grants accomplished the following:

Assisted Catholic Rural Ministries in Bradford and Oil City deaneries to **respond to emergency needs** of the rural poor.

Helped Good Samaritan Center in Clearfield **provide 39 needy families** with emergency assistance.

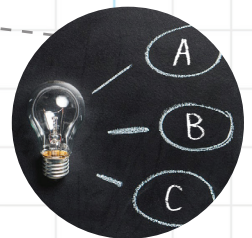
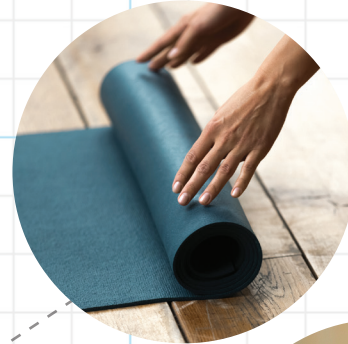
Aided Harborcreek Youth Services to **reduce distress-related trauma** for clients by improving health and easing stress through therapeutic yoga movement and self-esteem building techniques.

Subsidized the Family Supportive Services program at Prince of Peace Center in Farrell, allowing them to continue to **employ case manager life advocates** who help at-risk men and women to accomplish their goals and become self-sufficient.

Helped Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services to **conduct strategic planning** to strengthen and sustain services to meet the growing needs of the community.

Helped to **fund database technology** at St. Martin Center to better track outcomes and progress of individuals and families served.

Enabled St. Elizabeth Center in Oil City to **purchase food and hygiene items** for people in need.





CLUB CC NIGHT

Club CC Night Gives Hope to Neighbors in Need

May 11, 2019 was more than just a celebration. Catholic Charities' annual fundraiser, Club CC Night, raised funds that provide lifegiving services to neighbors in need every day. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported this event. Your generosity shows that you care about others in our community, and you believe in the work and the mission of Catholic Charities. Here are the evening's highlights:

MICHAEL BAILEY | HELPING HANDS AWARD HONOREE

Michael Bailey, a member of St. Luke Parish in Erie, was honored as the 2019 Catholic Charities' Helping Hands Award honoree, recognized for his outstanding commitment to church and community.

A master gardener, Michael has been instrumental in the development of local gardens that provide fresh produce, including Emmaus Grove, SBEC Garden and the gardens at St. Luke Parish and at Pfeiffer-Burleigh School.

A sixth-grade religious education teacher for 10 years at St. Luke, he coordinates service hours for students in the confirmation program. He oversees the parish's participation in St. Martin Center's Shining Star Christmas gift program and the gift distribution to all participating families. Michael, along with other St. Luke parishioners, offers a weekly Communion service at LECOM Senior Living Center.



THE IMPACT | CATHOLIC CHARITIES AFFILIATES AND AGENCIES

Club CC Night attendees learned that 25,723 persons received a total of 34,611 services through Catholic Charities' agencies and ministries in 13 counties in the Diocese of Erie last year alone. Bishop Lawrence Persico called out the important work of Catholic Charities in his opening remarks:

"The people who work in our agencies have first-hand experience helping parents who know what it's like to forego dinner so their child can have something to eat," he said. "They have had the privilege of helping a man find suitable clothing for a job interview he might not otherwise be able to accept. And they know what it's like to work with a single mom on the verge of homelessness, providing her not only with housing, but also with months of education that will help her get on her feet, grow in confidence and establish a better life for herself and her children."



BISHOP LAWRENCE PERSICO AND ANN BADACH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES, PRESENT THE AWARD TO MICHAEL AS HIS PROUD WIFE, LYNNEA, STANDS BY HIS SIDE.

LILIYA STEBLAK | PAST SHINING STAR RECIPIENT

Liliya shared her personal story of emigrating from the Ukraine with her family when she was seven. Owing little more than their green cards and a few bags of belongings, Liliya remembers how meaningful it was to receive Christmas gifts through the Shining Stars program. She says, “Thanks to Michael Bailey and the staff and volunteers at St. Martin Center, my siblings and I had a guaranteed gift on Christmas morning for over five years.”



“Today I stand before you as proof that things like this do make a difference.”

She also expressed gratitude to St. Martin Center and Catholic Charities by saying “Today I stand before you as proof that things like this do make a difference. It’s what gave me hope and the desire to move ahead, to grow and work hard, so that one day maybe, I can be just like all of you here tonight, and express my thanks by being able to give, and continue the ripple effect.”

SPECIAL THANKS | SPONSORS AND HOST CIRCLE

Dr. Benjamin and Atty. Colleen Stumpf served as our Host Circle Chaircouple and were joined by 40 Host Circle members at this year’s Club CC Night. This generous group believes in Catholic Charities’ mission to serve people in need, regardless of faith and helps to lead to the overall success of the event.

Catholic Charities, Inc. thanks all corporate sponsors for the evening, including Platinum Circle sponsors Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and Allegheny Health Network’s Saint Vincent Hospital.

PNC was the Diamond Sponsor of our 2019 Club CC Night. PNC regional president for Erie, Jim Stevenson, says, “For over 160 years, Catholic Charities has helped many of our friends and neighbors in their time of need, from providing a meal to helping them get back on their feet after a traumatic event in their lives. PNC is honored to support the Club CC Night fundraiser to help fund the many necessary services Catholic Charities provides to help Greater Erie thrive.”



Club CC Night is more than a celebration—it allows you to personally impact all our programs and services in concrete ways. Hope to see you at next year’s event!



**HOST CIRCLE CHAIRCOUPLE
DR. BENJAMIN AND
ATTY. COLLEEN STUMPF**

BELOW: THE CROWD THOROUGHLY ENJOYED ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED BY DJ BRENT SCHMIDT OF CLEVELAND.



LEFT: ANN BADACH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOR THE DIOCESE OF ERIE, ADDRESSES THE CROWD AT CLUB CC 2019, THE ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR THE ORGANIZATION.

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MISSION STATEMENT

As Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie, we are witnesses and servants of Jesus Christ. Consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church, we provide health care, social and pastoral services for those in need, regardless of faith. Catholic Charities is committed to the sacredness of human life and the betterment of society.



We are grateful for you



Ann M. Badach
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The network of Catholic Charities agencies and ministries covers a footprint of more than 10,000 miles in the Diocese of Erie. We rely heavily on the generosity of our volunteers and donors to help us help others. We're deeply grateful to people like Mike Bailey, our 2019 Helping Hands honoree, for his efforts, and for inspiring others to volunteer and make a difference.

However, your donations to Catholic Charities are equally needed. While it takes many hands to run a food pantry, or serve at a soup kitchen, without your generosity, they could not exist. And, like the many opportunities there are to volunteer, there are many ways that you can donate.

Be assured that every gift you give is both needed and appreciated. For this, we thank you and keep you always in our prayers.

Yours in Charity,

WAYS TO GIVE

>>> DIRECTLY TO CATHOLIC CHARITIES IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

If you are 70½ years old or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to Catholic Charities as a qualified charity without having to pay income taxes on the money. This giving option allows you to support our mission and ministries.

You pay no income taxes on your gift. The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions. If you have not yet taken your required minimum distribution for the year, your IRA charitable rollover gift to Catholic Charities can satisfy all or part of that requirement.

MAKE A GIFT ONLINE

You can contribute to Catholic Charities with an online gift at www.ErieRCD.org/charities.

We appreciate all donors and all gift amounts. If you have donated to Catholic Charities, Inc. in 2019, please look for your name to be listed in our 2019 annual report published in spring 2020.

>>> TO THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION DESIGNATED FOR CATHOLIC CHARITIES

START OR GIVE TO AN ENDOWMENT

An endowment gift to Catholic Charities is a permanent legacy of faith and provides a permanent income stream that perpetuates our mission forever. The gifts you contribute to an endowment are invested so that the endowment will continue to grow. Each year, Catholic Charities receives a distribution to be used to advance our mission and ministries.

You may establish and name an endowment for a minimum of \$10,000 or give to an already existing Catholic Charities endowment. Anyone can add to an existing endowment at any time and in any amount.

The endowments that Catholic Charities has held at the Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania. To learn more about supporting a Catholic Charities endowment, contact Lisa Louis, executive director of the Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania, at **814-824-1237** or llouis@cfnwpa.org.