In the Kansas City-St. Joseph area, there are 1,881 people homeless on any given night.
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We provide resort-style senior living for all levels of independence and continuing care, including independent living, assisted living and memory care. Our spacious apartments are designed with you in mind, regardless of your level of independence or need.

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The holidays are a special time of gathering with family and friends, pausing to give thanks for the bounty God has blessed us with. This is often signified by large meals served in a warm, safe home. Unfortunately, for many people we serve at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph, a home accompanied by these descriptions is evasive, either because a person lacks the physical space to call their own, the food to fill their plate, the peace of mind to know their home is well within their means, or the spirit of love which should permeate all homes is simply vacant.

In this issue of our newsletter, we’ll focus on the multifaceted ways we’re helping people confronted with homelessness overcome, striving to not only ensure they have a roof over their head but a suitable place for the flourishing of life and love.

As we enter these holidays, I’ve been reflecting on the book of Exodus in my prayer time. I was thinking about Moses and his perpetual homelessness. From the beginning, Moses was a man on the move. Forced to flee from Pharaoh’s edict to kill all Hebrew male children, he wound up being adopted into the royal family. Then, when grown, he fled to Midian after killing an Egyptian, only to have God call him back to Egypt and lead his fellow Israelites out of the bondage of slavery. Then, Moses wandered in the wilderness 40 years, surrounded by ungrateful groanings and never himself entering the Promised Land!

In the New Testament, Jesus is presented as a new and greater Moses. Jesus too had to escape an imperial edict calling for the death of first-born males. Rather than come out of Egypt, the Holy Family fled to Egypt, avoiding the clutches of Herod. Once Herod dies, the Holy family uproots and returns, taking up residence in Nazareth. For a time, Jesus has a traditional home but once embarking on his earthly ministry, Jesus is perpetually in transit, sleeping in various places and often not in friendly territory. At one point, a would-be follower of Jesus pledges their commitment to go wherever Jesus goes, and Jesus responds by saying, “Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

There are many people in our 27-county diocesan area who echo Jesus’ statement this holiday season. They find themselves with no place to lay their head due to varying circumstances. Some are far from home because they are in prison or residing in a temporary shelter. Still others are estranged from family and feeling far from God. At Catholic Charities we need your help to make sure every person, every family has a home. As Pope Francis said, “A family and a home go together. It’s very difficult to keep a family going without a home to live in.”

God Bless,
Most families affected by homelessness have been thrust into it by a life-altering series of events that were unexpected…

Job loss, domestic violence, divorce, critical illness, unsafe living conditions. Any of these can be the moment that starts a family on the path to homelessness. Kara’s family had a good home where she shared her room with her toys and stuffed animals. When her parents divorced, however, life took a difficult turn. Her mom worked two jobs to make ends meet, but fell so far behind on bills they were evicted. A run down motel was the best available option – it’s a dangerous place for a single mom and her young daughter.

When they had to flee, their car was their only shelter.

That’s when Kara’s mom called Catholic Charities.

See Kara’s story at www.HelpKara.com
It’s the first cold day of winter and the Welcome Center is packed with families. Before being ushered into a private room to meet with a resource specialist the parents share their plight while their children play on the floor. Each parent’s story is different, however, they do share a common thread – housing instability.

One parent is behind on rent and has received a 30-day eviction notice. Another couple were evicted this morning and plan to live in their van. In October alone, 53% of those who sought services at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph were in need of housing, meaning they were already homeless, in need of emergency housing, or on a fast track to losing their home.

After a few minutes of hearing their stories, another mom enters the Welcome Center with her two young children in tow. She seemed shocked and bewildered. She had missed the cut-off time for the local shelter and the panic manifest in her eyes. She had no idea where they were going to sleep tonight. Her story lingered with me because it began with a seemingly common, innocuous event – a flat tire.

Living paycheck to paycheck she had no room for unexpected costs such as a new tire. She tried to make due relying on public transportation, but balancing the kids’ school, daycare, and her own work, caused her to be repeatedly late. This eventually led to her termination. Having no income, she fell further behind on bills and it began to engulf larger commitments such as rent and utilities. Missing rent and utility payments led to her eviction and thus the cycle dropped her at our door.

At Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph we seek to intervene when the first unexpected event occurs. Clients who visit our Welcome Center are escorted through a unique intake process where a resource specialist identifies potential bogeymen that might contribute to a situation going from bad to worse. In addition, the resource specialist leads clients to educational programming which goes beyond meeting immediate needs, and places clients back in control, back on the road to self-reliance. All of our activity is geared toward stabilization. And housing instability isn’t something happening elsewhere, it’s right here in our 27-county diocesan area where we experience 27 evictions per day! This means one family or one individual every single day in each county we serve faces homelessness.

On the facing page to this story is an advertisement promoting a short, powerful video we recently produced about a young girl’s journey to homelessness. Please view this video and consider helping us give others a stable home for the holidays. Go to www.HelpKara.com
If you're a parent, I bet you remember your child’s first Christmas. Was she a tiny baby who mainly slept on Jesus’s birthday? Was he a mobile toddler more amused by the wrapping and boxes than the gift inside? Like all the milestones in a child’s first year of life, their first Christmas is memorable.

Making room for one more at the dinner table or finding a place for a Pack-n-Play to fit in a quiet room at grandma’s house are not seen as hassles to parents who have anxiously awaited the arrival of their first child. Instead, they’re delighted to celebrate the holidays as a family, no longer just a couple.

This is especially true for families who have patiently endured and prayed for a child. Some families wait for years to be matched with a child, while others wait only months. The anticipation of welcoming a child might be compared to the anticipation of Christ our Savior. We have faith the day will come but the waiting can be trying. That “Gotcha Day” – the day a family welcomes their newest member to the family – is the answer to their prayers. Most holidays in the twelve months following Gotcha Day are special, filled with many firsts.

While adoptive families are ecstatic to have a little one to celebrate with, the feelings are very different for a birth mother who may still be grieving. Perhaps she’s wondering what holiday traditions her child is enjoying and working through these emotions can be overwhelming if not surrounded by the love and support of others. Please keep all birthparents in your prayers this holiday season.

If you have a story about your adoption or giving a child a “home for the holidays,” share them with us at adoptions@ccharities.com. Between now and Christmas we’ll publish these stories online and through our social media.
To culminate this series, we’re going to review disabilities and how those who suffer from disabilities, mental and physical, often face daunting barriers to adequate, affordable housing. Sharing her knowledge and experience of over 40 years in non-profit work is the director of Community Housing in our St. Joseph office, Jan Motl.

Q: Jan, can you first explain the depth of the term “disability?” What does this encompass?

A: A general definition of a disabled person is one who has a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that’s expected to be long term, and which substantially impedes their ability to live independently. Many of our clients have health conditions in two or three of these domains. Health and homelessness are intricately linked. Health problems can cause or exacerbate homelessness.

Physical disabilities can include conditions such as injuries, blindness, heart disease or HIV/AIDS. While many of our clients have physical disabilities such as these, a majority have mental health and/or addiction diagnoses co-occurring with their physical disability. Statistics indicate that around 6% of the general population suffers from a severe mental illness but the proportion is higher when talking about the homeless. Between 20% - 25% of those that are homeless struggle with mental illness.

Q: What barriers do those with disabilities face when accessing the housing market?

A: There are many. Our communities continue to experience an affordable housing crisis due to a lack of low-income housing. Then, there’s the income factor. In 2016, the National Alliance to End Homelessness found nearly half of all homeless people suffered from disabilities, rendering them unable to work.

If an individual with a disability can obtain an affordable, low-income home, the question remains, “Can they maintain that home?” Individuals with a disability who qualify and receive Social Security Disability, typically receive $700 - $900 a month which doesn’t cover housing and living expenses. Therefore, they often juggle paying for housing and other expenses such as food, utilities, clothing, and transportation. In addition to struggling to meet their basic living needs, individuals with disabilities need to ensure they are meeting their ongoing physical, mental, and emotional needs which are often the root of their original diagnosed disability.

By accessing social services they can obtain assistance with basic needs and receive support in accessing appropriate services such as substance abuse treatment or counseling which might help address some underlying or...
hidden barriers to stability. Lastly, cities are increasingly making homelessness a crime, which often leads to incarceration and a further downward spiraling, not to mention, a conviction on their record makes employment and thus home ownership, even harder.

Q: In general, what are the services available to help the disabled? And, how are they performing?

A: The housing options available for those facing homelessness include shelters, transitional housing, or permanent housing programs.

Shelters are intended to meet an immediate need for someone experiencing homelessness. They typically provide shelter for one night. Oftentimes these shelters operate at capacity and once filled, cannot accept any more individuals or families. As an agency who advocates for the homeless, Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph often experiences this frustration first hand, where shelters are full and we’re scrambling to find a safe/secure environment for our clients.

Transitional housing is also time limited but, paired with supportive services, designed to lift the client to self-sufficiency. By providing transitional housing, a person can begin to focus on other stability actions such as obtaining/maintaining employment, address health issues such as substance abuse or mental health functioning.

Permanent housing allows for an individual to permanently reside in their home thus establishing the highest level of stability. Individuals and families begin the work of connecting to their community, providing educational stability for their children and a suitable place for the development of life.

While these are the current services available, Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph focuses on permanent housing and keeping people in their homes if possible. We achieve this by providing rent assistance ongoingly to those in need. In fiscal year 2017-2018 this amounted to $823,443! Yet, for all our success, the need goes on. In just the last two months (September and October), the amount requested we were forced to turn away exceeded $136,000.

Q: What does Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph do differently to help those with disabilities overcome these obstacles?

A: We have four permanent housing programs specifically for those with disabilities located in both urban and rural setting throughout our diocesan area.

1. Home Plus – St. Joseph/Buchanan County
2. St. Joseph Permanent Housing – St. Joseph/Buchanan County
3. Northwest Permanent Housing – Maryville/Nodaway County
4. Northeast Metro Permanent Housing – Clay/Platte/Ray/Lafayette Counties

Catholic Charities is also part of a community wide initiative to end homelessness. To this end, we operate in multiple communities, working together, sharing data, and measuring results.

Q: How successful are these efforts?

A: Very! In fiscal year 2017-2018, Catholic Charities provided permanent housing to 235 individuals. With the goal of stability in mind, 99% of clients remained in permanent housing at the end of the operating year and 100% were provided uninterrupted case management services.

The combination of permanent housing coupled with supportive services helps people live more stable, productive lives. Not to mention, the enormous savings on tax dollars because individuals are not using emergency health care or experiencing jail stays.

*This 4-part series on the obstacles to housing stability can be found at www.catholiccharities-kcsj.org. It will feature new content not previously published.*
In 2016, I shared the concept of Neighborhoods of Hope at our annual Gala. Neighborhoods of Hope provides housing to those often screened out of the traditional market due to past circumstances in their lives. We’ve detailed these circumstances in our 4-part series on housing stability - evictions, low-income, convictions or disabilities (see center spread). Any one of these can debilitate a person’s access to permanent housing.

However, through Neighborhoods of Hope we revive this opportunity because we’ve walked with these people and helped restore them to the dignity of self-reliance.

The single-family living homes are highly efficient due to their concrete form base and will be uniquely affordable due to Neighborhoods of Hope’s funding strategy of blending private donations with traditional financing. If you’re out during the holidays, please drive by and take a look for yourself at these wonderful homes located at 401 Cypress & 501 Cypress in northeast Kansas City. Our target finish date is Christmas, delivering on the theme for this issue – A Home for the Holidays!
As you’ll read throughout this newsletter, unemployment or households unable to make enough money to pay for housing, continually flirt with homelessness. While the good news pours in that the United States unemployment rate is at a 50-year all-time low of 3.7%, it might help to flesh out exactly who is on the under side of this good news. First, 3.7% unemployment equals 6.1 million people. Add to this number 1.5 million people who were marginally attached to the labor force because they hadn’t searched for a job in the four weeks leading up to the survey conducted on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Also, add 500,000 people who are considered “discouraged workers.” These individuals don’t believe the job market holds a place for them.

While Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph works with people from all kinds of situations, three vulnerable audiences tend to surface in this unemployed sector – veterans, seniors and ex-offenders.

Veterans
In 2017, there were 370,000 unemployed veterans in the United States. Thirty-seven percent of these veterans were 55 years of age and older. In addition, over 1 million veterans were projected to leave the armed forces between 2012-2017. This is significant because veterans transitioning to civilian life often face the challenge of ensuring their military training and certifications are on par and can translate to civilian jobs.

Seniors
The older population in the United States has grown exponentially. In 1900, we had 3 million people in the 65+ age category. Today, that number is 49 million! Because of improved health care and either by choice, or by need, seniors are staying in the work force longer.

Ex-Offenders
The number of Americans with a criminal record has increased dramatically in the last 30 years. Today there are more people with a criminal record (70 million) than there are 4-year college graduates. The re-entry of ex-offenders back into civilian life can be troublesome. As one of our Employment Services participants recently said, “How do I account for a 10-year gap on my resume?”

These are some of the vulnerable we serve daily. Through our evidence-based service delivery model we take their barriers head-on, thus increasing their probability of securing long-term employment. This includes:

• Personalized employment coaching
• Computer assistance and job seeking skills
• Framing transferrable skills for both resume and in-person interviews
• Emergency assistance such as bus passes to and from work, acquiring work attire, funds for work tools, assistance in obtaining industry permits and certification

In 2018, we helped 186 people secure employment, of which, 55 were veterans. Our results show that if a person engages in our Employment Services their monthly income increases from $704 to $1,849 – that’s 162 percent higher! That’s not only the way to secure a home but to secure a future.
Thanks to all who made our 2018 Gala a huge success!
Join a Company with a Real Mission

By Tara McGranaghan
Chief Human Resources Officer

Benefits including 4-day work week, paid holidays, extended Christmas break, vacation & sick time, health, dental, vision, 401(k) and more.

Workforce Development Specialist (Full-Time)
Work toward assisting individuals and families to achieve economic stability and security through achieving gainful employment. The ideal candidate should:

• Must demonstrate excellent verbal, written, and presentation skills
• Must have ability to interact positively with peers, referral sources, other agencies and community partners
• Must be able to work with diverse populations including those with a criminal record
• Bachelor’s Degree in human services, criminal justice, business or a related field with three to five years’ experience or Master’s Degree in human services, criminal justice, business, or a related field

IT Specialist (Part-Time)
Provide entry-level information support under the leadership of Director of Information Technology. The ideal candidate should:

• Working knowledge of Windows operating systems
• Working knowledge of TCP/IP Networking
• Working knowledge of internal PC components
• Ability to multi-task and adapt to changes quickly
• Certification (A+) preferred or equivalent experience
• Must have a High School Degree or GED

AmeriCorps Veteran Peer Navigator (Contract)
To serve Veterans in the Kansas City area. Applicants must either be a Veteran or related to a Veteran. This position would receive an education award and a small living allowance for a contract of one-year.

• A Veteran of the Armed Forces or related in immediate family to a Veteran or active military personnel
• A legal resident of the United States
• Knowledge of community resources
• Ability to assess emergency situations and respond effectively
• Excellent written and verbal skills in the English language
• Must have a High School Degree or GED

Deaf & Disabilities Ministries (Part-Time)
Provide support by supporting an array of services and support to the Deaf and those with disabilities. Services focus on full inclusion and are designed to enable active engagement in the community. The ideal candidate should:

• Must have thorough knowledge of the population they are designated to serve, as well as resources available to provide that service
• Must have a demonstrated work, volunteer experience or other training, a thorough knowledge of the population they are designated to serve or must have a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work or a related Human Service Discipline

To apply and to view all opportunities: https://careers.hireology.com/catholiccharities-kansascityandstjoseph

www.catholiccharities-kcsj.org Please remember Catholic Charities in your will or estate plan.
Catholic Charities of Kansas City Saint Joseph honored with a 2018 Philly Award

Non-Profit Connect honored Catholic Charities of Kansas City Saint Joseph with a 2018 Philly Award recognizing Catholic Charities new logo as excellence in marketing and communications in the category of Identity Campaign. Accepting the award (from left to right) Victor Ammons, chair of the board, Chris Ice, chief executive officer and Kevin Murphy, executive director of marketing & communications.

Thank You!

Serving immediate needs & helping lift to the dignity of self-reliance.
OCTOBER 6 - 13, 2019

Join Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph on a

Pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi

Starting at $2,659 per person without airfare (Land Only option)
With Airfare - starting at $3,859 per person

Spiritual Director: Bishop James V. Johnston Jr.
Group Leader: Chris Ice, CEO Catholic Charities of Kansas City - St. Joseph & Mary Ice

*Optional Post Tour to Florence & Venice: October 13 - 17, 2019 | $1,399 per person

Visit pilgrimages.com/catholiccharitiesskcsj/ for details
Extending the Welcome

Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph serves over 1.5 million people in 27 counties. In 2019, we want to go mobile, extending our unique Welcome Center process to all families in need from Tarkio to Nevada, St. Joseph to Carrollton. We have highly vulnerable counties within our service area but due to the distance from our physical locations, families can be left unaided. Help us extend the welcome by donating to a mobile unit and reaching those most in need.