To Lift
Lifting our neighbors back to the dignity of self-reliance.

Saturday, June 8th, 2019
Frank A. Theis Park

Register today for the summer’s most meaningful 5K.

Whether you want to walk, run or just enjoy a day of family fun, we’ll have a continental breakfast, music and live entertainment all morning, as well as, special visits from Sluggerrr and KC Wolf, balloon artists, face painting and much more.

Outpace Poverty generates funds to help Catholic Charities fulfill its mission – and you are an important part of that work. Together, we can strengthen families, put people to work and transform communities.

On-site registration begins at 7:00 a.m. See you at the park!

Go to outpacepoverty.org and register as an individual or create a team.

For more information call Nancy Butters at 816.659-8266 or email nbutters@ccharities.com
Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph completed our rebranding this past year, adopting the new tagline, “To Serve & To Lift”. In this issue, our staff will share stories of exactly how we lift people to the dignity of self-reliance.

While some of our clients have made poor decisions, which have spiraled them into poverty, others find themselves in difficult situations due to circumstances outside their control. A serious medical condition, a natural disaster like the floods in Northwest Missouri, a fire that destroys their home, or a major car repair bill that wreaks havoc on their finances, are all examples of trials people didn’t choose, but need help in overcoming.

The scriptures remind us of how we are to care for these individuals and not to become hardened to their needs.

In Leviticus it says, “When one of your kindred is reduced to poverty and becomes indebted to you, you shall support that person…” (Lv 25:35)

In Deuteronomy it says, “If one of your kindred is in need in any community in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor close your hand against your kin who is in need. Instead, you shall freely open your hand and generously lend what suffices to meet that need. (Dt 15:7-8)

These are just a few of the Old Testament quotes but probably the greatest example of lifting someone was given to us in the New Testament through Simon of Cyrene. Simon was trying to mind his own business, most likely returning home from work one day, when he found himself staring at the One for whom he was “to take up his cross and follow.” (Mark 8:34). At that encounter, Simon could not ignore Jesus’ gaze and was transformed to help lift and carry the cross that leads to his, and to our, salvation.

Our staff is “Simon of Cyrene” to the people we encounter every day. It is difficult to look our clients in the eye, see their suffering, and remain aloof or indifferent. Our staff has a choice to flee, be a bystander, or pretend they don’t see the person in need. Instead, they choose to see Christ in every person they meet, helping to lift their cross and ease their burden. They are the ones serving the poor and vulnerable on behalf of our generous benefactors. We ask you this Easter season to consider becoming a financial supporter of our work, so that the people we encounter can see the other side of their cross, the joy of Easter.

God bless you!

Chris Ice
CEO, Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph
The elderly couple paused as they exited the elevator. Looking up at the sign above our door they seemed affirmed, joined hands, and cautiously approached.

The distance from the elevator to our front door is only about 20 feet, but their hesitancy told our receptionist the couple was either lost or unsure Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph was where they wanted to be.

Coming within arms-length of our entrance, the couple suddenly withdrew, returned to the elevator and pushed the button to leave. When the elevator arrived, the couple turned and looked longingly back at our offices. This gave our receptionist just enough time to make it to the door, calling out to the couple, “Do you need help?” With heads bowed low, they reluctantly replied, “Yes.”

The receptionist invited them in and within a few minutes a member of our Welcome Center team was sitting down, listening to their story. The couple shared they had been struggling with life since retirement. Pension and retirement funds were depleted rapidly each month as they sought to meet unexpected, rising medical costs, along with rent, food, and transportation expenses. Although they had a son who lived in California, the couple was adamant they didn’t want to be a burden to him, so they kept their struggles private. Outside of this, there was no family or friend network to draw from.

The next step was to provide financial assistance with their rent. When we shared what we could do to lighten this load, the tension present from the moment we met in the lobby, began to dissolve. Their body language changed, their trust skyrocketed, and a youthful smile returned to their faces.

From there, we consulted with an onsite healthcare insurance provider who was able to review their current plan, switch them to a more affordable plan, one that actually covered their medications! We also referred them to a few partner agencies including AARP, who could aid with employment and increase their monthly revenues. After we finished providing our services, the couple shared why they hesitated outside our doors.

“We’ve approached others in the past but no one cared to listen. There just seems to be a growing disrespect and impatience for folks our age.”

For many, the aging process can be difficult. In 2016, the Social Security Administration reported 21% of married social security recipients, and 43% of single recipients aged 65+, depended on social security for 90% of their income. This makes seniors highly susceptible to adverse life events. At Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph we are committed to serving and lifting the elderly. We seek to restore any lost dignity or hope recalling Psalm 71:9: Cast me not off in my old age; as my strength fails forsake me not.

For more information on our Welcome Center, please contact Kisha Thomas at 816-659-8237 or kthomas@ccharities.com
DINE. DANCE. DRINK. DONATE.

Don’t miss your chance to join the Junior Board of Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph for the 7th annual Soirée Kansas City. You’ll enjoy a night of great food, drinks, live music and dancing all in support of a good cause.

FRIDAY MAY 10TH, 2019
6:30PM - 11:30PM
THE GRAND HALL AT POWER & LIGHT

For more information and to buy tickets visit www.kcsoiree2019.splashthat.com
Stress is a normal part of life. In the gospel of Luke, Jesus enters Martha’s house and she busies herself waiting on him while her sister Mary sits idly at Jesus’ feet listening to his teaching. Martha becomes irritated and asks the Lord to command Mary to help her. Jesus replies, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things…”

While stress is normal in an adult’s life and by adulthood we’re expected to have developed ways to offset it, to a child, exposure to prolonged stress or chronic trauma can have life altering effects. This is especially true for children from birth to six years of age when their brains are still developing. Examples of trauma are neglect, poverty, physical abuse, substance abuse in the home, parental unemployment or social isolation. However, there are steps we can all take to ensure children are protected and families are well-functioning. They are called Protective Factors, and they serve as safeguards helping parents who might be at risk of abusing their children, instead find resources, support, and coping strategies to parent effectively even under stress.

Five Protective Factors:

1. Knowledge of parenting and child development: Parents increase their knowledge and strengthen their social connections when they participate in group activities like the Parent Café’s offered through Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph. Increasing parental competency by learning about a child’s changing needs can instill positive techniques for managing behavior.

2. Parental resilience: Parents who manage stress serve as role models for their children, setting an example of self-regulation and problem-solving. By developing social connections parents can build their resilience over time, connecting with a social network that includes emotional, situational, and informational support needed when life becomes more turbulent.

3. Social and emotional competence of the children: A child’s ability to positively interact with others, to express themselves, and to manage their emotions, can reduce the risk of child abuse. When parents invest time spent around other families, they expose their children to a variety of experiences that can help hone social and emotional competence.

4. Concrete support in times of need: When households lack the basics such as food, clothing, housing or transportation, stress levels rise, thus increasing the likelihood of child mistreatment. This is why Children & Family Services exists, to support those parents who don’t have a supportive network to draw on in times of need.

5. Social connections: This could be the most important of the five Protective Factors due to the depth in which it interconnects with the other four. Research has shown that parents with few social connections are at a higher risk for child abuse and neglect. Instead of thinking you don’t have time for friends because you’re busy taking care of your child, convert your thinking to time with friends is taking care of your child.

For more information on our Parent Café’s or building your Protective Factors, call Alexandria Arrasmith at 816-659-8239 or email aarrasmith@ccharities.com
Join Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph on a Pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi

OCTOBER 6 - 13, 2019

Visit pilgrimages.com/catholiccharitiesskcsj/ for details

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
Our Four Pillars

Lifting to a Better Life

By Susan Walker
Executive Director, Outreach and Engagement

We’re approaching the end of the 40 days of the Lenten season—the few weeks we set aside every year to take a deep look at ourselves, our relationships and communities, and our strengths and weaknesses with the hope of becoming better. In the Catholic tradition, we hear vivid scripture stories at Mass that remind us of the need to care for others.

Among these include the book of Isaiah, in which the prophet paints a picture of God “making a way in the desert” for his people. In Exodus, God assures Moses in the burning bush, “I have witnessed the afflictions of my people,” and gives him specific direction to do something about it. In Corinthians, Paul instructs the people (and us) to get on board as old things pass away and God makes things new.

For the families who seek help at Catholic Charities, these scripture passages both resonate with their personal stories and provide hope. Living on the edge of hunger, homelessness, and hopelessness can feel a lot like trudging through the desert—buffeted by the wind and sand and beaten down by the heat and lack of water or respite. Our four pillars of service provide that all-important moment of hope that intervenes in those harsh circumstances and changes the trajectory of lives.

Here’s how.

The Welcome Center
— an initial encounter of service.

In the past five months, 2,273 individuals were aided by the Welcome Center, our program that provides emergency assistance. We tend to be the agency of last resort and families come to us when all other options are exhausted. Our specialists listen to them and address their immediate critical needs. The importance of being heard—of someone understanding—of a sense that God has “witnessed my affliction” and someone is making an effort to help—cannot be overestimated. Thanks to people like you, we have provided rental and utility assistance in the amount of $25,526, supplied 745 bus passes, and 5,285 hygiene items like soap and shampoo, and so much more this Lenten season. Emergencies happen, but the possibility of a better life is real.
Children and Family Services
– securing a future of solid relationships

It’s difficult enough to be an adult living in poverty, but the concerns of raising children while suffering a lack of finances and support can be overwhelming. We answer these cries for help, and our Children & Family Services case managers assist these mothers to ensure they have a healthy pregnancy, safe delivery, and successful start to caring for a newborn. Diapers, pack-and-plays, car seats, and other necessities are made available to keep children safe and parents confident that they are doing the best for their child. Your support makes it possible for our staff to act as guides and supports for parents.

Employment Services
– gaining dignity and self-sufficiency

Many of our clients, especially ex-offenders, find difficult challenges to overcome when seeking employment. However, these are precisely the men and women who find a way to “leave old things behind and make something new” by participating in our Employment Services program. Our ability to provide resume building, job search skills, practice interviews, and critical support along each step of the way has resulted in 43 people finding solid employment this Lent.

Your support has meant case workers are available to those who just walk-in, as well as those who are in formal case management. It also means that critical items like appropriate work attire, steel-toed shoes, and bus passes to get to and from work are also available for newly employed people who cannot afford these otherwise essential “startup” costs. Most of all, your support means participants in this program are infused with a sense of hope. Old thoughts of “no one will hire me – I’m too risky because of my record,” become new, filled with the confidence that comes from having someone help you identify and own your strengths and talents.

Housing Services
– finding shelter and safety

It’s frightening to approach the end of the day and not know where you can sleep in safety that night. The Welcome Center can refer a family to a shelter for an evening, but our real goal is a solution that lasts longer than 24 hours. Our Housing Services assists with the longer-term solution, and thanks to your support, more than 358 people have continuous, safe shelter. In addition, we’ve created a new housing model, through which families are set on a path of stable home ownership. It’s truly a “path out of the desert” that provides an enormous sense of safety and security.

While the 40 days of intense reflection comes to a close, we joyfully welcome these next 50 days of intense celebration this Easter season. For some, the new life of Christ’s resurrection can mean a home, a job, a break from financial crisis, and the knowledge to adequately care for your family. For others, it can mean the satisfaction of hearing God’s voice – as Moses did – and taking action to alleviate the immediate burdens of others while lifting them to the dignity of self-reliance.
The “set point for happiness” is a psychological term describing the general level of happiness each of us uniquely experiences.

Some people tend to have a high set point and can be seen as mostly happy, while others appear to have a low set point, and are considered mostly unhappy. Between those two polars is where most of us reside. The curious thing, is that despite the roller coaster of emotions we each experience, eventually our happiness finds its way back to our primary set point. This is called the Hedonic Treadmill. Each person pursuing greater happiness, yet never sustaining it, as if they were experiencing life on a treadmill.

The best way to examine the Hedonic Treadmill, is to look at your own life and those around you. We often think we could be happier if we had more money, got a new car, or entered a new relationship. Yet, as we achieve these goals, we experience greater happiness for a time, only to return to our previous level, in search of the next thing to make us happy.

One of the best known studies on happiness adaptation is entitled “Lottery Winners and Accident Victims: Is Happiness Relative?” It looked closely at lottery winners and compared them to people who had suffered debilitation injuries. In approximately five years most of the lottery winners and accident victims had returned to their previous level of happiness.

For those who suffer tragedies, the Hedonic Treadmill really speaks to the resilience of the human spirit. The mind finds ways to incorporate negative experiences.
and return to a perspective of normalcy and homeostasis. When we achieve goals, eventually our mind sees the achievement as normal, and returns to seeking and striving for more. Still, there are certain situations that tend to reduce happiness permanently.

Unemployment, loss of a spouse, and divorce are situations that make for a long term decrease in happiness. When it comes to unemployment, the negative impact is worsened when the loss of a job is long-term and the person blames themselves for their unemployment, feeling like a failure. The graph below from *Hedonic Treadmill: What It Is and How to Overcome It*, indicates that as time goes by, those faced with unemployment approach previous happiness levels, but do not fully return.

All of these are proven to affect a person’s self-esteem, thus increasing their happiness set-point. An example of research to this point is a powerful psychological experiment conducted by Seligman, Stern, Park and Peterson (2004). In this experiment, participants of a control group were asked to journal three things that went well each day for one week. They also made notations of their contributions to the causation of these three things.

After one week the participants were 2% happier. The researchers followed the study participants and checked their happiness levels over time. Interestingly, they were getting happier by the week. Their happiness levels rose to 5% at one month, and to 9% by six months. The placebo group did nothing of significance and appeared happier at first. Over time however, they maintained their original level of happiness.

So, what can be done? Obviously, helping someone get a job makes a huge impact on immediate happiness. But, to have a lasting effect on the spirit of the individual, other measures are essential. In Employment Services at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph, affecting the self-esteem of an individual is of paramount importance. This is done in both classroom and one-on-one sessions, where we teach:

- Gratitude and appreciation
- Savoring the moment and mindfulness
- Setting obtainable goals
- Focusing on positive skills and abilities
- Coping skills
- Unique worth and value
- How to laugh at ourselves
- Being good to others

Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph’s Employment Services provides a 100% guarantee that people who attend our employment workshops will walk away feeling better about who they are, their skills, and what they have to offer. Most of those who come to our workshops have been beaten down by life through abuse, incarceration, and poor choices. Our emphasis is to lift that person to achieve new levels of self-esteem, challenging the mindset that impacts their overall happiness setpoint and helping them step off the Hedonic Treadmill.

If you need help seeing how a job can affect your set point of happiness, contact our Employment Services Director, Kathy Ficcadenti, at 816-659-8269 or email kficcadenti@ccharities.com

www.catholiccharities-kcsj.org
Please remember Catholic Charities in your will or estate plan.

[Image of graph showing adaptation to good and bad events]

[Image of graph showing three good things over time]
They say people judge and humiliate you exacerbating feelings of hopelessness.

Children under the age of 18 comprise one quarter of the homeless population and they share feelings of being sad and embarrassed. While most homeless children live “doubled up,” that is, with another family, in a shelter or in a car, they too, feel judged and are often taunted and easily distracted in school.

What we know about homelessness is there are long and short term social, economic, legal and health ramifications. The causes of homelessness are as individualized as the person experiencing the problem and include negative life occurrences, such as the loss of employment, loss of a loved one, domestic violence, divorce, or family disputes. Impairments such as physical illness, mental illness and addiction can also lead to homelessness. For those living in poverty or close to the poverty line, an everyday life occurrence which may be manageable for individuals with a higher income, can be the final factor in placing a person or family on the streets (i.e. medical bills, automotive costs, etc.)

For children, the multi-faceted issues relating to homelessness often impact their learning and cognitive skills and may provoke behavioral issues.

Have you ever thought what it would be like to be homeless? People who have experienced homelessness tell us it’s frightening, depressing, lonely, exhausting, and traumatic.

Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph works tirelessly to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness with services supporting the concepts of dignity and self-reliance. Through our Community Housing Program, we help the disabled and homeless (over 40% of the homeless population suffers from disabilities) by providing rental assistance, supportive case management, and assistance with meeting basic needs.
Here are just a few real-life examples:

1. Jane is 30 years old and had a solid, well-paying job until her mental illness surfaced. She woke up in a hospital one day after being found wandering in a farmer’s field by the local sheriff. She was subsequently diagnosed with a mental health disorder and put on medication. She missed a significant amount of work and had to start over with a new job and career. Still struggling, she lost her housing and ended up in a homeless shelter. Two years after becoming homeless, she entered the Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph Community Housing Program. The program enabled her to become stable, and she now has a solid, good paying job with benefits, helping her maintain stability.

2. Tom is 60 years old, and had lost everything due to his drinking, including his family. He is on probation due to a Drinking While Intoxicated charge and is looking at four years in prison if he violates his probation. Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph assisted Tom with finding and maintaining stable housing. He has struggled but continues to be compliant with probation guidelines and is now 90 days sober. He attributes his sobriety to the stability of having his own place, the support of case management which he receives through our housing program, being connected with other agencies in the community, and attending daily Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

3. James is 24, deaf, and on Disability. Two years ago, James received full custody of his two children, then a seven-year-old boy and 10-month-old girl. His wife had been incarcerated due to drug related charges. James found himself a single father, and was short on funding for food, medical expenses, diapers, formula, clothing, and shoes. He was consistently falling behind on rent, and his electric service was getting shut off. James entered the Community Housing Program and was immediately stably housed. The above noted needs of food, medical expenses, etc. were met either through our program, other community assistance programs, or, James’ disability income. James’ wife was released from prison and the couple worked diligently to become independent. They have since graduated from the housing program and are now living independently.

If you know someone suffering from a disability who needs housing, please call Jan Motl at 816-232-2885 or email jmotl@ccharities.com

www.catholiccharities-kcsj.org Please remember Catholic Charities in your will or estate plan.
Lifting Employees

By Melissa Watson
Human Resources Specialist

In my 15 years of Human Resources, I’ve heard many buzz words trend in and out surrounding employee engagement. They ebb and flow as resource forums, networking events, and the newest speakers take the scene, and human resource specialists eat them up, desperate to prevent the dreaded employee turnover.

When you look up “employee turnover” in Google, a myriad of articles pop up, with titles such as “The High Cost of Employee Turnover” and “How High Employee Turnover Hurts Your Company.” While each article provides useful tips there is always something missing.

This missing concept reminds me of a quote attributed to President Theodore Roosevelt that reads: “Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” Its simplicity is both timeless and true. It embodies the way I see my fellow employees at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph as they give both care and support to our clients on a daily basis.

About five years ago, we recognized the same care and support that is given to our clients should also be given to our employees. As with our clients, our employees may experience the same unexpected circumstances that can affect their daily lives.

In turn, our Chief Human Resources Officer, Tara McGranaghan, and several employees at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph created the Employee Emergency Assistance Fund. The Employee Emergency Assistance Fund (EEAF) is a voluntary contribution made by employees from their paychecks. The contributions range anywhere from one dollar to whatever the employee desires to give. These funds have been used for items such as gas cards, medical co-payments, and assistance with a utility bill. While all requests for the EEAF are fully confidential, it is an honor for each Catholic Charities employee to know that we are able to help one another.

The creation of the EEAF shows our employees we value their knowledge and contributions to our agency, but most importantly, we value them as human persons made in the image and likeness of God.
Navigating the Next Chapter of Your Life

April 23, 2019 | Lunch at 11:30 AM

When it comes time to look at the next chapter of life, navigating the logistics involved can be challenging. Join St. Anthony’s, and our experienced guest speakers, for helpful tips and tools to take the stress out of the process.

Guest Speakers:

Brandi Murphy
Owner/Operator, Murphy Group KC
*How to get the most out of your home sale in 2019*

Kristen Christian
CoFounder, Bee Organized
*Simplify your move from downsizing to unpacking at the new home*

H & J Youth and Community Center
6425 Wornall Rd, KC, MO 64113
RSVP 816-768-8770  SPACE IS LIMITED

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- Assisted Living and Memory Care opening in 2020

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Your donation will provide food, water, cleaning supplies and assistance to families who have lost nearly everything. Thank you for being generous.

TEXT “MOFLOOD” TO 41444 TO DONATE

When natural disaster strikes, entire towns can be damaged, or may have to be evacuated due to swift-moving flood waters. This means families are displaced, homes are lost, and even those once thought to be on firm ground can lack life’s basic necessities. After the storm, those affected face a long, tedious road to recovery, attempting to rebuild their lives.

Your donation will provide food, water, cleaning supplies and assistance to families who have lost nearly everything. Thank you for being generous.

TEXT “MOFLOOD” TO 41444 TO DONATE