

CATHOLIC CHARITIES



CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES

# VOICE

SPRING 2021

## A new dawn

### Inside:

- Meet our new President and CEO, Michael Goar
- A year of COVID-19
- The need for sustainable shelter funding

*Q & A with our new President & CEO*

## Meet Michael Goar

In January, Michael Goar stepped into his new position of President and CEO of Catholic Charities. Since then, he has jumped in with both feet spending time with staff across the agency and learning about our work – all while managing virtual meetings and keeping his young daughter busy at home.

Michael is uniquely prepared to lead Catholic Charities through this period of change and disruption. Michael's professional journey has allowed him to serve in key leadership roles at foundational organizations that serve both clients and the larger community, often through challenging times. He brings a grounding in Catholic Social Teaching and a deep commitment to racial equity and social justice.

Michael's commitment to service is partly driven by his personal story. Born in South Korea, he came to the United States after being homeless as a young child, when he was adopted by a Minnesota family at age 12, an experience he describes as transformative. He now lives in Saint Paul with his wife and 5-year-old daughter, where they are always on the hunt for the best pizza in the metro.

We sat down with Michael to get to know him a little better and learn what drives him, what he hopes for our community and for Catholic Charities.

### Q: What has COVID been like for you?

*Like most Americans, COVID has impacted my world in almost every way, although, we've been pretty lucky. Both my wife Bethany and I have kept our jobs and have been able to primarily work from home. Homeschooling has had its challenging moments, but it's been a blessing to have extra time with my family.*

*It has been hard to see the physical and economic impact COVID has had on our community. I've seen friends lose businesses and have supported family members who are now facing the potential lingering effects of a COVID diagnosis. In my first few weeks at Catholic Charities, I've had an intimate look at the toll COVID is taking on those we serve. We have a lot of work to do to recover from this pandemic, and still I'm hopeful that together we can build back to better than ever.*

*(Continued on page 3.)*

# A year on the frontlines of COVID-19

When the pandemic first hit, our community sprang into action to serve those most in need. Catholic Charities staff created a labor pool to support frontline staff, helped move people experiencing homelessness into hotels, shifted congregate dining to individual meal delivery and adjusted to the “new normal” in different ways to keep each other and our clients safe. Now, a year later and as vaccines begin to roll out to our clients and frontline staff, we asked staff to reflect on the pandemic and look to the future – of challenges, resilience and hope.

*Here are some of their words:*

## Getting a wider scope.

*I appreciated my employment with Catholic Charities the most during this pandemic because I felt it gave me a wider scope on the virus. I felt I had a bit of a front seat due to dealing with the public daily.*

**LATEESE JETER**  
CLIENT ADVOCATE  
COORDINATOR,  
SAINT PAUL  
OPPORTUNITY CENTER



*We began working with new partners to get groceries to clients, and also expanded medical services to include telehealth, COVID-19 testing and vaccinations for our residents and staff. There is a ray of hope with the availability of vaccines that life can be getting back to normal soon.*

**AMIDE MUTABOYERWA**  
PROPERTY MANAGER,  
ST. PAUL & ST. ANTHONY  
RESIDENCE

## A ray of hope.

*It has been very emotionally stressful with all the negative news this past year as well as the overall adjustments in our lives, but with the vaccine out, there is a ray of hope that we may soon be getting back to a more quality way of life.*

**SEAN CONWAY**  
CASE MANAGER II,  
ST. PAUL & ST. ANTHONY  
RESIDENCE

## With challenge comes creativity.

*It was a year of enormous change, with daily or weekly updates initially. Challenging situations always bring about creativity and increase resilience. We managed thanks to the flexibility, resiliency and determination of our staff!*

**ELAINE WALSH**  
PROGRAM MANAGER II,  
AGING & DISABILITY  
SERVICES

Last year the Catholic Charities Board of Directors directed the agency to aim its focus on achieving housing stability outcomes. We've long been involved in providing stable, dignified housing and shelter to those most in need. **So what does it mean to achieve housing stability outcomes?**

## Achieving housing stability



## Meet Michael Goar (continued)

### Q: What drew you to Catholic Charities?

*I was fortunate enough to serve in key leadership positions for several youth and education organizations, including most recently Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities. These experiences taught me how critical the basic needs for dignity, stability and growth are in everyone's life.*

*I was driven to join Catholic Charities for many reasons, but there were two main motivating factors to join this work. 1.) An opportunity to make a difference for the most vulnerable among us with smart and compassionate community leaders, and 2.) I believe Catholic Charities is positioned to lead the community through the toughest issues facing us today.*

### Q: What does it mean to you to have a commitment to racial and social justice issues?

*COVID has forced us to confront racial and social justice issues we had been sweeping under the rug for far too long. Working toward racial equity and social justice is deeply personal to me. I experienced racism as a mixed-race child in South Korea and again as a young adoptee in South Minneapolis. In my professional life, I've seen the life-threatening impacts of racism across the country and in our own backyard. The death of George Floyd showed us that racial inequity is woven into our systems. In order to move forward in any meaningful way, we must confront the racism and equity issues we have been ignoring.*

### Q: What is your vision for Catholic Charities?

*Through pandemics, housing crises and civil unrest, the community has relied on Catholic Charities to be a power for good for more than 150 years. To overcome the challenges of today, we must support our incredible staff, provide quality services to those in need and build partnerships that foster solutions.*

### Q: Tell us something we might not know about you.

*My wife and I are big foodies. After spending a few years on the East Coast, we have been searching for the Twin Cities' best pizza. So far, our favorites are Big River Pizza and Cosetta's. I welcome all recommendations!*

### Stable housing means households have a choice over when and under what circumstances to move.

Too many in our community experience high frequencies of forced moves due to things like poor housing quality, unstable neighborhood conditions and high costs of housing in relation to income. These conditions create a vicious cycle that contribute to doubling up and overcrowding in housing units and chronic homelessness.

### Frequent forced moves have damaging financial and health impacts on our residents and neighborhoods.

Stable housing provides people with an opportunity to put down roots in their community and make critical connections we all deserve. Our communities are made up of the people who live there, and we all have the inherent right to participate fully in society.

### Working to achieve housing stability outcomes means adding more deeply affordable housing units,

operating emergency services programs that meet people where they are and provide wrap around services that move people forward on the path to stability. It also means advocating for an equitable community where everyone has the opportunity for stability and is treated with dignity.

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- 3 Under Account and Lists, **select Your AmazonSmile** to see your impact, change your charity, or donate items from our Charity List (*on a mobile device, this link appears under Settings*).
- 4 **Shop!**

For more information about the AmazonSmile program, go to [smile.amazon.com/about](https://smile.amazon.com/about).



# Thank you!

**Thanks to a \$300,000 challenge grant from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation**, donors like you gave over \$350,000 to support our food service through the holiday season. That is over \$650,000 to give the gift of a warm meal to our most vulnerable neighbors!

In the early days of the pandemic, we partnered with a couple who wanted to support our food service and a local bakery facing the challenges of COVID. Thanks to their generous support, our clients and frontline staff enjoyed fresh donuts and baked goods for the majority of 2020. This same couple also stepped in with a gift to make sure our clients' Thanksgiving and Christmas meals were a bit more cheerful with fresh rolls and special holiday cookies.

*It's the little things that bring a spark of joy in these hard times.*



# Five tips for taxes and charitable giving

- 1 **Review your beneficiaries** on assets such as retirement plans.
- 2 **Donate appreciated assets** to get a “double deduction.”
- 3 **Utilize retirement assets** by making a qualified charitable distribution.
- 4 **Consider giving and itemizing** 2-3 years of charitable gifts in a single tax year, then take the standard deduction on other years.
- 5 **Deduct up to \$300 in charitable gifts** made in 2020 and 2021 even if you take the standard deduction.



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Contact Paul Deakins for more information on how giving can be part of your financial health at 612-204-8472 or paul.deakins@cctwincities.org.



CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES  
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

## VOICE

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**Michael Goar**

*President & Chief Executive Officer*

**Kathleen Erickson DiGiorno**

*Chair, Board of Directors*



CATHOLIC CHARITIES SERVES THOSE MOST IN NEED.

## Now, our work is more important than ever



My early months at Catholic Charities have been nothing if not eventful. In my first few weeks, I spent time at all of our sites and met hundreds of our dedicated staff, volunteers and donors. I've also had the pleasure of meeting many of the people we serve and hearing more about the hopes, dreams and the challenges they face every day. My admiration for the impact of this incredible organization and people like you who make it possible has only grown.

Catholic Charities has brought people together to solve the community's most pressing concerns for more than 150 years. I'm joining this work at a very tumultuous time for our community – a year of COVID-19 has shined a bright light on systemic errors and injustices. It will not be easy, but together we can do great things. Our work is more important than ever, and it will take every one of us to build a community with opportunity for everyone.

In this edition of Voice, staff reflect on a full year of COVID, we dive into our commitment to achieving housing stability outcomes, and I share a little bit more about myself.

Gratefully,

Michael Goar  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*

For those who are alone,  
**we will be their family.**

For those without a house,  
**we will be their home.**

We all deserve the power that comes from a safe, stable home. You can help empower those experiencing homelessness by giving your time, voice and support. Stay tuned for opportunities all year to connect with Catholic Charities and make a difference through **The Power of Home**.



## Strengthening our public/private partnership

Every night, Catholic Charities provides shelter and critical services to hundreds who might otherwise be outside, hungry and alone. Thanks to the tireless work, care and compassion of our frontline staff, those experiencing housing instability have a safe, dignified place to rest.

More than 80 percent of these emergency services are funded by private donors like you. Public investments in emergency shelters have been inadequate for years, while challenges and costs continue to rise, forcing providers like Catholic Charities to rely on private funding and emergency reserves at an unsustainable rate.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency shelters have worked tirelessly on the frontlines to continue serving individuals experiencing homelessness safely and without interruption. This has come with significant

costs as we strive to meet COVID-19 protocols and prevent the spread of the virus, and as the economic impact of the pandemic drives more people to seek support.

Emergency shelters reduce strains on our public safety and emergency healthcare services. We are the first responders who call the first responders. The need for these services will exist and likely get more complex after the pandemic ends.

Emergency shelters save lives, but they require sustainable public funding to do so. Please join us in advocating for state investments in the Emergency Services Program. With your help, we can ensure Minnesotans continue to have a safe place to shelter from the cold and the pandemic while continuing to support paths toward stable housing.



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