

CATHOLIC CHARITIES TWIN CITIES



CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES

# VOICE

SPRING 2023

## *Building a beautiful life*

### Inside:

- Volunteer Spotlight: Margaret Wall
- Avoiding homelessness through Diversion
- An historic opportunity at the Capitol

*Steven Nelson: father, foster parent, advocate, addiction counselor...  
and Aging & Disability Services client*

## *Finding stability, looking to the future*

Steven Nelson is tall, with a calm voice and broad smile. It's not difficult to understand why children find him so reassuring. As a foster parent, it's a trait that helps Steven care for children who have experienced significant trauma—those most disinclined to trust.

And Steven has lived through traumatic experiences of his own—twenty years ago he was struggling with addiction, which led to homelessness. “I just didn’t care about nothing except keeping my high going. I got jobs, but I didn’t keep them,” he shares. It was then that Steven came to Catholic Charities—first staying in shelter, then finding permanent housing with the help of case managers.

For Steven, permanent housing led to stability. “In 2006, I finally got custody of my son after six years of trying. I went to college to become an addiction counselor, which was a way for me to stay sober. It changed my life,” he explains. While raising his son, Steven discovered a talent for caregiving and obtained his foster care license.

A few years ago, Steven was surprised to be referred to Catholic Charities Aging & Disability Services through his medical insurance—he remembered the help that he received many years

*Steven Nelson (left) with Case Manager Melissa Newton.*

*(continued on page 3)*

# A family tradition of giving back

For Margaret Wall, giving back is a family tradition. “When my dad retired, he was president of the local food shelf for 15 years,” she shares. “My mom still recycles cards for the senior center. I’ve got the example of my parents leading the way with volunteering.”

Margaret has been lending a hand at Catholic Charities for over a decade, and she was one of our most steadfast volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic. She showed up week after week to pack non-perishable items for housing residents, and she single-handedly sewed more than 1,000 high-quality cloth masks to help keep staff and clients safe.

“Volunteering made me really appreciate that I had a house that I could lock down in,” Margaret says. “I had a freezer where I could store food—I didn’t have to rely on somebody bringing me a

breakfast bag. As I was able to retire early, I wanted to make something good come of it.”

Today, Margaret continues to volunteer regularly in the kitchen at our Distribution Center, and she encourages others to join her. “It’s so flexible and it can be very social. I’ve invited a college friend to come with me, and I’ve got at least five people from my church who have come in on occasion. When we had holiday meal prep, we had a whole group of us here at once—we volunteered for a morning shift and then went out to lunch afterward! This is a fun thing you can do with your friends and feel like you’re doing something good.”

Start with one shift—like Margaret says, it’s easy to sign up, and there are flexible options to fit every schedule!



## *Homelessness Diversion program in Hennepin County expands*

Catholic Charities has launched “Hennepin Shelter Hotline”—a new Diversion program to help youth and single adults avoid homelessness.

The service builds upon successful family Diversion programs operated by Catholic Charities in both Hennepin and Ramsey counties. “Diversion is designed to solve homelessness rapidly—even in a day,” said Alanna Hinz-Sweeney, who directs the Diversion programs. “It’s effective because it’s client-led, preventative, and cost-effective. Last year alone, we diverted 206 families (625 individuals) from shelter in both counties.”

Callers speak with a Catholic Charities specialist who leads a “creative conversation to help them slow down the crisis and think about solutions—such as finding immediate housing, staying with friends or family, or a shelter. They tell us what they want to do, and we help them achieve their goal.”

The team is already seeing successes. Alanna shared that “a stay-at-home mom recently called seeking back rent for a month. Her partner had been laid off, but had just started a new job and would be able to pay future rent costs. We coordinated





# Catholic Charities at the Capitol

Minnesota legislators returned to the Capitol in January with a historic \$17.6 billion state surplus—and an opportunity to prevent and end homelessness.

Catholic Charities is at the Capitol, too, advocating for public investments in our direct service programs and for policies that advance housing justice. This includes advocacy to secure significant, ongoing public funding for the Emergency Services Program and Homeless Youth Act, which are the State's most flexible funding sources for shelter operations serving youth and adults experiencing homelessness.

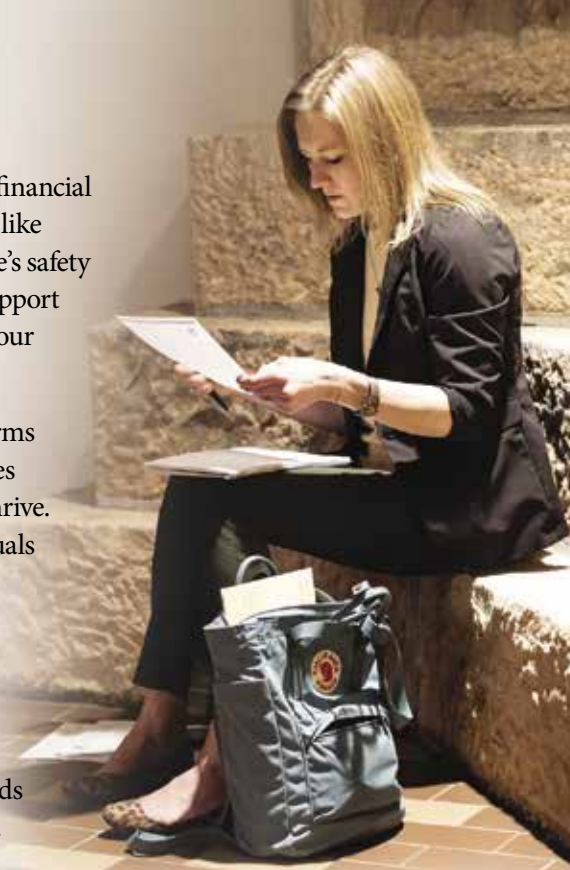
At Catholic Charities, we serve more than 10,000 individuals each year through our emergency shelter programs, but public funding pays for less than 5 percent of daytime shelter expenses.

This unsustainable trend threatens the financial stability of emergency shelter providers like Catholic Charities that serve as the State's safety net. We're asking the State to step up support so that we can continue to show up for our neighbors in crisis.

We're also leading critical housing reforms to ensure we're supporting opportunities for individuals to not just survive but thrive. Among them is a bill to ensure individuals with disabilities and veterans aren't forced to pay more than 30 percent of their monthly income toward supportive housing costs.

More than ever before, our state has an opportunity to disrupt concerning trends in homelessness, but it will require bold investments—and your support.

*Lorna Schmidt, Catholic Charities Director of Public Policy & Advocacy pauses between sessions to review legislation.*



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ADVOCACY PRIORITIES AT [CCTWINCITIES.ORG/ADVOCATE](https://cctwincities.org/advocate)

## Finding stability, looking to the future *(continued from page 1)*

ago and "didn't know that Catholic Charities did this kind of thing!" Today, he works with Case Manager Melissa Newton to connect with resources that will help him maintain independence as he ages.



"Melissa helped me get all my needs met and more. Getting me coordinated with a care plan, having someone help clean my house—I even got connected with the neighborhood organization, which helps me with shoveling and organizes senior citizen exercise programs," he says.

Steven is looking towards the future—he was recently appointed to a Ramsey County advisory committee, where he will use his lived expertise to advise

leaders on public health issues. He also plans to partner with Ramsey County to champion the needs of foster children. His ultimate goal is to "get a permanent place for foster children, where they can get training and achieve their dreams."

Steven's story is an example of how strengthening our shared safety net can have a ripple effect on the overall health of our community. Join us as we advocate this Legislative Session for investments in programs that help people like Steven—it's easier than you'd think to make a difference.



Scan this code to sign up for Action Alerts from Catholic Charities Twin Cities.

## We need your help.

**Inflation, an uncertain economy, and pandemic-related impacts have increased the need for our services and have made it more expensive for us to provide them.**

We depend on people like you for 95 percent of the expenses at our drop-in centers that provide meals, medical care, and supportive services. We're asking for more public investment during the current legislative session, as the need for support increases every day.

Please make a gift today using the enclosed envelope or visit [cctwincities.org/donate](https://cctwincities.org/donate). Thank you!



CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
Twin Cities



LEARN ABOUT AGING & DISABILITY SERVICES AT [CCTWINCITIES.ORG/AGING](https://cctwincities.org/aging)

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO THRIVE.



## Host a Giving Basket this Easter

### Christmas is not the only time to consider giving to your neighbors in need.

This year we are inviting you—whether a faith community, neighborhood group, family, or individual—to host your own Catholic Charities Giving Basket. Like the Giving Tree, it is a family-friendly opportunity to collect those highest-need items for the families and individuals we serve.

To find out the various ways you can participate, visit [cctwincities.org/givingbasket](https://cctwincities.org/givingbasket)



# LEGACY SOCIETY *Luncheon*

## The Legacy Luncheon returns after a three-year hiatus!

Members of our Legacy Society and those interested in putting Catholic Charities into estate plans are invited to join us to celebrate the impact of planned giving.

To register and learn more, contact Tricia Morrill, Director of Major and Planned Giving, at 612-756-2063 or [email tricia.morrill@cctwincities.org](mailto:tricia.morrill@cctwincities.org).

**SAVE  
THE DATE**

**Wednesday, May 24, at 11:30 a.m.**  
Midland Hills Country Club in Roseville



CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES  
*Twin Cities*

## VOICE

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**Michael Goar**

*President & Chief Executive Officer*

**Desirae Butler**

*Chair, Board of Directors*



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO THRIVE.

## A message from our board

Earlier this year, I became chair of the board of directors for Catholic Charities Twin Cities. For someone with a keen sense of personal duty, this is an incredible honor. I believe strongly in doing what is asked for the common good. So, it seemed appropriate to create an opportunity for my fellow board members to more fully experience the gift of service.

I can't take credit for this idea; a recently-retired board member, T. Mychael Rambo, had the inspiration. A respected community member, T. Mychael had experienced Catholic Charities' services as a former client. He saw the value for us to visit with staff and meet clients to see and experience what our guests do each day.

So, we rolled up our sleeves (literally) to clean at Higher Ground Saint Paul shelter, shadow staff, and visit with shelter guests. We often read stories that have happy endings, but this isn't always the case. Many of our neighbors face challenges and daily struggles to receive support—and you will read about some of these in this issue.

I want to thank you for your gift of service—whatever it may be. I look forward to working alongside you as we support the individuals receiving life-saving services from Catholic Charities.

Desirae Butler  
*Chair, Board of Directors*



## ENDOWING OUR FUTURE

*It's easier than you might think.*

### Help continue our work through a gift to our endowment.

The purpose of our endowment is to financially sustain the mission and work of Catholic Charities Twin Cities. You can make a significant contribution to endow our future—and it's easier than you might think. Several charitable gift and estate planning strategies can benefit you and build our endowment:

- Charitable bequests
- Beneficiary designations
- Charitable life estate
- Charitable life income plans

Learn more at [legacy.giving@cctwincities.org](mailto:legacy.giving@cctwincities.org).

We would be happy to talk with you and provide a free illustration of the benefits.

### 2023 Social Justice Assembly

## Locked Out: Concepts of Criminality and Housing Security in Our Community

What comes to mind when you hear the word “criminal”? How does that impact your understanding of crime? Who gets confronted—who gets caught—and who is convicted all have cascading effects on an individual livelihood, from securing employment, to finding an apartment, to building generational wealth.

Join us for our annual Social Justice Assembly as we explore “criminality,” how it impacts housing insecurity, and how we might shift the conversation to better untangle criminal justice and housing justice in our community.



**zoom**

Thursday, March 30

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on Zoom

Register at [cctwincities.org/assembly](http://cctwincities.org/assembly)

Credits: 1.5 CLE(s); 1.5 CEU(s)

THURSDAY, MARCH 30 FROM 11:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M. REGISTER TODAY AT [CCTWINCITIES.ORG/ASSEMBLY](http://CCTWINCITIES.ORG/ASSEMBLY)