

# Catholic Charities

Spring News 2016

## 2015 Year in Review



As in past years, 2015 was full of challenges and celebrations. The challenges are presented to us daily as we strive to help those most in need in our communities. The harsh reality of winter always brings us to a place of gratefulness and hope. The rebirth and reemergence of spring presents a new start as we celebrate nature with renewed hearts. The saying goes “In the spring a young man’s heart turns to love”; but our hearts overflow with compassion for those in need partnered with the giving hearts of our generous donors. The heat of summer presents its own unique challenges in the Ohio River valley. Autumn returns to a time of taking stock of where all of us are in our lives as we prepare to enter the next cycle of nature. Throughout all of 2015, Catholic Charities was busy providing help and creating hope for the most vulnerable among us. We would like to use this report to let you know of our activities during 2015; activities made possible by your support and encouragement. We know that we would be unable to accomplish much of what we do with the continued support and prayers of our faithful donors.

**MARTIN’S CLOAK FOOD PANTRY:** The food pantry is open on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month, and is housed in the basement of St. Martin of Tours Church in Siberia. During the calendar year 2015, food was distributed to 927 families (2,939 individuals). Of these, 751 were 18-years-old or younger; 1,637 were between the ages of 19 to 64; and 551 were 65 years or older. Martin’s Cloak Food Pantry and Catholic Charities are members of the Perry County Food Coalition, comprised of 5 food pantries in Perry County. Catholic Charities hosts the coalition meetings and is the drop-off site for canned good/non-perishable food drives conducted in the county, and the food is then shared by the five pantries. Catholic Charities also serves as the fiscal agent for the Food Coalition, and all monetary donations are routed through Catholic Charities on behalf of the five pantries. Monies received through the food coalition are deposited with the Tri-State Food Bank and the pantries use that credit for food purchases.

**LIFELINE FOR FAMILIES:** Lifeline for Families serves as a resource for low-income pregnant women and families with small children. Assistance is given to these young families via diapers and formula as well as connecting them to other resources within our area. The Early Years Store, which is supplied by donations from the community, allows families to shop free-of-charge for maternity clothing, baby clothing (NB to size 2T), baby furniture and other baby items. 137 families were assisted in 2015 through this program. In November

2015, we again conducted some Adoption Awareness activities. The 3rd Annual Adoption Awareness gatherings was held with high school religious education students of the deanery. Speakers for the evening included an adult who is an adoptee, and two different adoptive parents. The personal experiences shared by our speakers seemed to really touch the young people in attendance. Additionally, we attended another high school religious ed class and talked to the students about our programs and how we can all work together to make adoption a loving option. Last spring, presentations were also held in all the health classes of one of our area high schools, an effort to educate and try to dispel some of the myths that surround adoption.

**SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE:** As we seek ways to help people with their basic needs – food, clothing, and shelter – the Specific Assistance Program helps those in need with utility and rent payments, prescription medications and gasoline for out-of-town medical appointments. We are also responsible for distribution of funds for the Salvation Army and the Ohio Valley Gas Corporation Gas Help Fund.

In 2015, many families were assisted through these three funds. Through Catholic Charities, we provided help to 200 families (578 individuals). The Salvation Army assisted 259 families (685 individuals) and the Gas Help Fund assisted 32 families (92 individuals). With Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army, help is given only once every 6 months and the Gas Help Fund assists those needing help once annually.

We continue to serve as a resource for many people as we post job openings, encourage education, provide training opportunities and help to guide individuals through the maze of governmental and social service agencies to get the help they need.

**TABLE OF BLESSINGS:** We are now in our 7th year of this ministry, which is a collaboration between Catholic Charities and EUCC Church. Many area organizations, civic groups, church groups, prayer groups, businesses and individuals come together to provide a meal for those in need in our community. In 2015, 5,612 meals were served to individuals seeking nourishment and companionship at our meal table.

Part of the blessing of this ministry is becoming friends with many of those who choose to eat their Thursday evening meal with us on a regular basis. We have watched children grow up, families reconnect and smiles grow ever broader with the fellowship.

During the growing season, we receive fresh produce from many area individuals sharing from their home gardens. Table of Blessings is truly an ecumenical and community-wide effort.

Last winter,  
we distributed  
a total of  
**407** coats  
and  
**83** blankets  
to those needing  
warmth.



**BUDGET BASICS:** In 2015, we expanded Budget Basics by working with the Holiday Helpers Program through United Way. Four different classes were conducted this past year and plans are to continue to expand this ministry. Class participants are given many helpful tips and incentives for attending and completing their homework. We added a component on nutrition and grocery shopping while on a budget. Graduates of the class have been able to improve their life circumstances with the knowledge gained. Thanks to a gift from United Way, this program has not needed any additional funding.

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS:** With gratitude to our generous and faithful donors, Catholic Charities is able to continue to provide help and create hope in the lives of many who struggle on a daily basis in our area. Through our 5th Sunday collections, we received \$10,203.26 in 2015. Some parishes donated directly to Martin's Cloak Food Pantry in the amount of \$770. Noble's receipts brought in another \$888.70. Continued support through our appeals and donations has been essential to our work. We strive to use all of our resources that have been entrusted to us as wisely as possible.

Last winter, we distributed a total of 407 coats and 83 blankets to those needing warmth, along with dozens of gloves, hats and scarves. A special thank you to Hilger's Laundry in Tell City for cleaning these donated coats for us free of charge.

Catholic Charities continues to serve on the Transportation Advisory Council for Perry and Spencer counties, working on improving public transportation in our area. In 2015, we continued to work with Branchville Correctional Facility to provide clothing to released offenders. We are also involved with the College Success Coalition, an effort to help all students reach their potential by accessing post-secondary education.

We continue to be involved in a state-wide effort to reduce poverty in Indiana. This effort, spearheaded by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is seeking to find ways to address the poverty issue across our state. A pastoral letter, from all 5 of Indiana's bishops, was published last year and is being used as a framework to move forward with these efforts.

We continue to find ways to educate ourselves to be better stewards of your donations and make effective strides in our mission's work. During 2015, a group was formed to address issues surrounding children (in particular, foster children) in our community. This group is called Strong Families, Strong Community. Catholic Charities, along with United Way, is helping to spearhead

this group, which includes representatives from schools, law enforcement, the court system, Division of Child Services, Lincoln Hills Development Corp and Southern Hills Counseling Center. We will be expanding this group and moving forward in our efforts.

*Catholic Charities will continue to serve as your agency to provide help, create hope and serve all in need in our communities. Without your support, none of these efforts and ministries would be possible, and we are deeply grateful for your commitment to our mission. May God bless all of you for your support through donations, volunteerism and prayers.*

***We look forward to a great 2016!***



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**CatholicCharitiesTellCity.org.**