

Back to School

New beginnings founded in adult education

For Jerilyn Polee, a 38-year-old mother and grandmother who came to Catholic Charities to earn her diploma, a return to school had far greater challenges than the math tests. Two years ago, the onset of neuropathy and retinopathy, combined with existing diabetes, forced Jerilyn into early retirement and continued to hamper her studies.

In August she earned her high school diploma through Catholic Charities' External Diploma Program, one of the fastest students to complete the program, according to Lifelong Learning Coach Betsy Hallstrom. Jerilyn (pictured right) is getting her life back, though it has not been easy.

"I noticed early on that Jerilyn had a positive attitude. Even with all of her personal challenges, she never complained. She just wanted to work," said Hallstrom (pictured left), who worked one-on-one with Jerilyn.

In addition to her health problems, in April she took legal custody of her two-year-old grandson Taji. On her fixed income, she had to find daycare for Taji while she went to class. Through all of studies and surgeries, Jerilyn maintains a very close relationship with her children. Her two daughters are in college and her son is a rising senior in high school.

The External Diploma Program focuses on students 24 years of age and older, approaching education through a more practical lens to capitalize on students' experiences in the working world.

Jerilyn's next step is college. While she is not certain what she wants to study, family services appeals to her as a new career.

"I started and I finished by my time frame, I set and achieved my own goals and I am ready for what's next."



Catholic Charities
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Everyday Miracles

The Kennedy School

Operating on the belief that every person deserves the opportunity to lead a life of freedom, dignity and distinction, the Kennedy School has been providing specialized learning for students with developmental disabilities since 1959.



The Kennedy School focuses on meeting each student at their current learning level and focusing on their strengths to boost self-confidence as well as expand learning and knowledge, preparing each student to live independent and fulfilling lives.

For children and young adults with developmental disabilities, an education that meets each student's needs and develops his God-given talents is essential. The Kennedy School, a division of the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute of Catholic Charities, is a private day school educating children five- to 22-years-old with a focus on enhancing strengths and meeting challenges.

The school provides an education meeting academic, vocational, transitional and therapeutic needs. With small class sizes and a passionate staff, students are able to learn at their own pace in a comfortable setting. "We strive to create a classroom that brings out the best in each of our students, believing with the right foundation our students will lead

lives free of limits," said Twilah Anthony, director of the Kennedy School.

Students are referred from the D.C. Public School system when it is clear they require a more focused and specialized learning environment. Enrollment also is open to any students with a diagnosed developmental disability.

What's New

Catholic Charities to Bring Mental Health Relief to Children at Home in the Community

Starting Oct. 28, Catholic Charities will provide emergency community-based mental health services to children and adolescents. The program, Children & Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Service (ChAMPS), serves families with children who have a psychiatric crisis. There is no cost for this emergency service.

A major goal of the program is to relieve the demand placed on hospital emergency rooms, which in the past have been overly used, leading to a shortage in resources and long emergency room waits.

"Being able to treat a child's mental health crisis in the comfort of a familiar environment is critical to stabilizing the situation and ensuring the safety of the child and family," said Denise Capaci, director of Adult & Family Services.

Construction Training Program Graduates 43 Students

The Spanish Catholic Center's Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training program held its annual graduation ceremony in July for 43 graduates. The program lays the foundation for a construction apprenticeship by exposing students to several building disciplines and teaching basic employment skills. Students spent three days each week

in the classroom and one day working at a *Habitat for Humanity* worksite. Students also learn English and basic math.

The program enjoys strong success. Out of this year's class, 72 percent found employment, a smaller group of eight began their own small business and several younger students returned for their GED and moved on to college.



Photo by Elisa E. McConnell

Graduates of the Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Program celebrate at the conclusion of the ceremony. The program has an excellent record of helping students land jobs following graduation.

The **Building Partnership Program** draws on the strengths and capabilities of corporations to improve Catholic Charities' buildings, ensuring dignity and respect for every client.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

“Akin Gump is always looking for active, vibrant programs with which to be involved – opportunities where we can harness the full impact of the gifts of time and expertise our employees contribute to the community. I am proud of Akin Gump’s partnership with Mt. Carmel House, which is creating a better foundation for women in need of shelter and a new beginning.”

— Jorge Lopez, Jr., partner at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld and member of the Catholic Charities Board of Directors

Thanks to Akin Gump and its sponsorship of the Building Partnership Program, Mt. Carmel House residents are using the newly created business center (pictured left) to search job listings, polish resumes and prepare for interviews. The law firm also supports upkeep for the housing program’s beautiful garden (pictured right), which is enjoyed and maintained by the residents.



To learn more about the Building Partnership Program, contact Shannon Reavis at 202.772.4304 or Shannon.Reavis@CatholicCharitiesDC.org

Your Treasure Is Where Your Heart Is

Good Samaritan Society Provides Legacy Gift Opportunities

Henry M. Rivera and Bernadette McGuire-Rivera have supported and guided the works of Catholic Charities since 1989 through volunteerism and financial contributions. Recently, they took steps to ensure their support for Catholic Charities would continue for many years by granting a bequest. In doing so, they became founding members of the Good Samaritan Society. “We wanted to do something that, after we are gone, will continue this relationship,” said Mr. Rivera, a member and former chair of the Catholic Charities Board of Directors. A lawyer by trade, Mr. Rivera connected closely with the Archdiocesan Legal Network when it was founded in 1989. Henry and Bernadette have since been involved with the Catholic Charities Foundation Gala, the Spanish Catholic Center and the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute.

“Catholic Charities is filling an enormous need, and through this gift we hope to help individuals and their loved ones put their lives back together.”

The Good Samaritan Society seeks to recognize and honor those who have included Catholic Charities in their estate plans. These gifts allow Catholic Charities to plan soundly for the future and expand its services to meet greater demands.



Bernadette McGuire-Rivera and Henry M. Rivera

To learn more about legacy gift planning, contact Alicia Figueiredo at (202) 772-4397 or Alicia.Figueiredo@CatholicCharitiesDC.org. Or visit CatholicCharities.org and click on Give Your Support.

President's Message



Dear Friends of Catholic Charities,

Education is the brush that will paint the future for so many who come to Catholic Charities. It's that invaluable tool that not only carries a dream from concept to reality, but, more importantly, opens doors to further opportunities and possibilities. Everyday, students of all ages, races and backgrounds further their skills and education here at Catholic Charities and, in doing so, build their capacity for future success.

The inspiration that comes from new skills and knowledge is evident in the graduates of the Spanish Catholic Center's Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Program. Some of these graduates refused to be intimidated by the slow job market, pooled their collective talents and resources and are preparing to launch a small business. Last I heard, they are doing well. The story of Jerilyn Polee (cover) gives me great hope, knowing she overcame debilitating health issues to earn her high school diploma—only the first step in her journey to a new career. And a mother of two, facing eviction after struggling to pay unexpected bills, came to the Montgomery County Regional Center. With our help she was able to pay her rent and stay enrolled in school.

At the heart of each of these stories is the remarkable “good news” from our walking a journey with those who come to us for help, and seeing them achieve and succeed. Many who need our help did not finish high school, had no access to higher education or means to continue their learning in any number of ways. Catholic Charities empowers those most in need by providing opportunities to those who have had so few. Catholic Charities is leveling the playing field, operating on the belief that everyone can achieve his God-given potential.

I would invite you to further your own education by volunteering in one of our many services, visiting any of our programs or even checking out our web site. It's an opportunity to learn how change takes place at the grassroots level—one lesson at a time.

Sincerely,

Ed Orzechowski, President and CEO

To support Catholic Charities by donating or volunteering, visit CatholicCharitiesDC.org or call 202-772-4394.

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Catholic Charities Event Calendar

October

SHARE Food Network Distribution Day

Friday, Oct. 22 – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 23 – 8 a.m. to noon

Location: 5170 Lawrence Place

Hyattsville, MD 20781

Contact: Chris Byrd (301) 864-3115 ext. 19

Chris.Byrd@CatholicCharitiesDC.org

ShareDC.org

November

Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walkathon

Saturday, Nov. 22 – 8 a.m.

Location: The National Mall

Contact: Kanika Lyon (202)772-4306

Kanika.Lyon@CatholicCharitiesDC.org

Donate or sign-up at CatholicCharitiesDC.org

SHARE Food Network Distribution Day

Friday, Nov. 21 – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 22 – 8 a.m. to noon

Location: 5170 Lawrence Place

Hyattsville, MD 20781

Contact: Chris Byrd (301) 864-3115 ext. 19

Chris.Byrd@CatholicCharitiesDC.org

ShareDC.org

Catholic Charities' Impact Magazine is a quarterly publication sent to all donors, volunteers and other stakeholders who support Catholic Charities and its programs, clients and services in the Archdiocese of Washington. The publication seeks to keep all stakeholders informed of recent news, share inspiring stories of personal and institutional success, discuss challenges and needs, and invite the greater community to join us in our mission to strengthen the lives of those in need by providing help that empowers and hope that lasts.