

# Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

**Altoona Office:** Blair, Bedford, Fulton and Huntington Counties • **Bellefonte Office:** Centre and Clinton Counties • **Johnstown Office:** Cambria & Somerset Counties

## Chronicle

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TO LOVE AND SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES

## Shelter Opening Fall 2014

*Temporary shelter today offers hope for a better tomorrow*

In 2013 the Cambria County Shelter Committee, led by the United Way of the Laurel Highlands, chose Catholic Charities to take over the responsibility of running a homeless shelter in the area.

This fall, the shelter will become a reality.

Running a homeless shelter is not a money-making venture by any means. It takes a special organization with the mission, passion, leadership, and staff, to make it happen.

Jean Johnstone, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, says that the organization had been looking to expand when the opportunity to run the shelter came along.

It is a big job, but one that she feels fits in perfectly with Catholic Charities' mission to help those most in need in our community.

"The shelter meets a critical need in the community," says Johnstone.

Staffing costs, monthly utility bills and food are just a few of the new ongoing costs they will take on with the opening of the shelter.

In March of this year Catholic Charities hired Missy Kreutzberger to be the Director/Lead Case Manager for the shelter. Missy will be at the shelter on a daily basis and is currently sourcing furnishings that will resist wear and tear and are easy to care for.

While funding was in place to purchase the shelter and perform major renovations, Catholic Charities needs help to outfit and run the shelter. Contributions of funds

are now being accepted and once construction is complete, they will be able to accept donated items. Individuals or organizations interested in helping can contact Catholic Charities about the "Adopt A Room" program.

### How can you help?

You can have a direct impact on the homeless shelter. Donations, financial gifts and volunteers will help us acquire much-needed items and fulfill ongoing needs like:

- Linens
- Plates, cups, bowls
- Flatware
- Appliances
- Upkeep



The new homeless shelter at 899 Bedford St., Johnstown

### Thank You to Our Funders!

- CDBG, City of Johnstown
- CDBG, Cambria County
- Homeless Assistance Program
- Emergency Solutions Grant
- United Way of the Laurel Highlands
- Community Foundation for the Alleghenies
- Generous donors from our Diocesan community and the community at-large

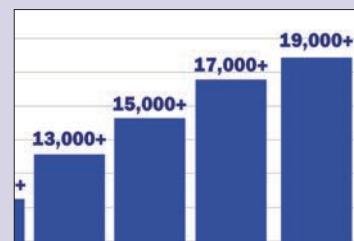
### Golf Outing To Support Catholic Charities



Thank You to H.F. Lenz Company who has graciously chosen Catholic Charities of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese to be the recipient of proceeds from their golf outing on August 25, 2014.

## In this issue...

Catholic Charities at work in your community



### Need Doubles

Helping more of your neighbors afford basic necessities.



### Breaking the cycle of poverty

What obstacles stand in the way of those trying to break the cycle of poverty? Find out inside.



### School kids helping Catholic Charities

Local high school and grade school children get involved to help Catholic Charities.



### 2014 Award Winners

Honoring those who help others.

# A Growing Need: Clients Served Doubles in Five Years

**I**n just five short years, the number of clients seeking help from Catholic Charities has doubled. As the graph shows, in 2007-2008 Catholic Charities served approximately 9,000 clients. By 2012-2013 that number had more than doubled to over 19,000 clients served.

Requests for Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) totaled more than \$1,000,000 in 2011-12—only \$149,778 in funding was available, **fulfilling only one in four requests.**

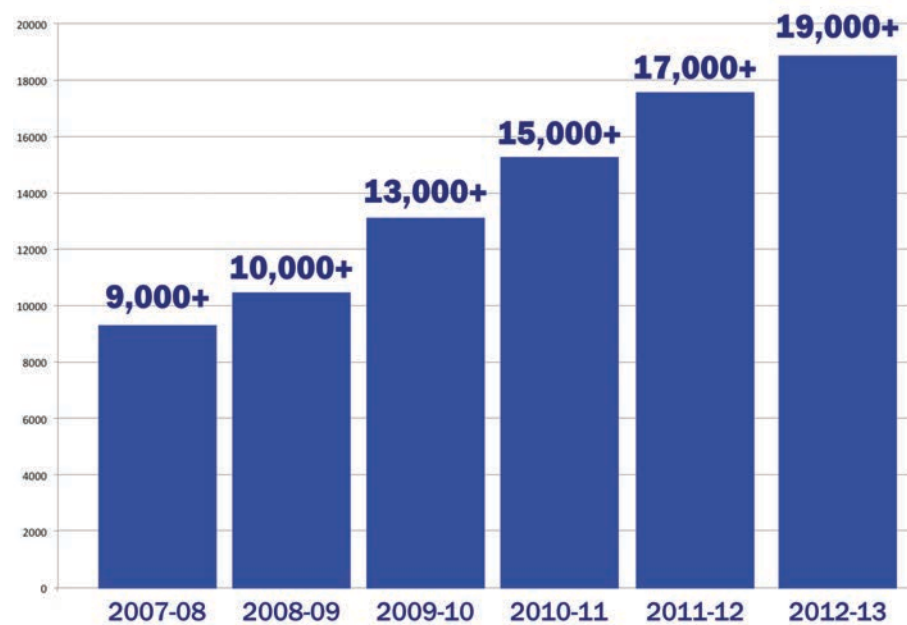
## Offering A Hand Up...With Your help

Catholic Charities provides help and creates hope for all. It is our privilege to journey with the poor of spirit, mind and body. We treat all who seek our support with dignity and respect.

We strive to provide safety and security and to lift the burden of suffering from those most in need. We rely on the generous support of funders and individual donors to fulfill this mission.

## Thank You to Our EFA Funders!

Blair County United Way, Centre County United Way, Clinton County United Way, Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Lee Initiatives, Nazareth Family Foundation, and United Way of the Laurel Highlands.



# The Reality Of Homelessness Within Our Diocesan Area

## High Housing Costs Combined with Low Incomes Increases Risk of Homelessness

**I**t's estimated that for an individual or family to afford monthly housing costs, no more than 30% of their income should be spent on rent or mortgage.

People who pay higher percentages than this are at risk of not being able to afford their payments, and potentially becoming homeless.

**In the eight-county region serviced by Catholic Charities the statistics tell the story that many of our neighbors and friends are in this precarious position.**

## Misconceptions about the poor

It's a misconception that people in this situation are living beyond their means, or that they are being careless with their money. The truth is, they often either don't have the knowledge to better manage their finances, or there just aren't viable options available.

As an example, the average cost of rent in Cambria County is \$551 per month. Someone with an income of less than \$20,000 might bring home \$15,000 after taxes. At \$551 per month they would be paying \$6,612 a year on rent, or 44% of their income.\*

A staggering 23% of the people living in Cambria County have an income of less than \$20,000 a year. If there were affordable housing options available, they would have a better chance of becoming financially stable. Unfortunately, this just isn't the case.

## Homeless are often employed

Surprisingly, many people who find themselves homeless are actually employed. After a job loss they may find themselves underemployed, meaning they can't find a work at the same

### Your neighbors at risk

#### Renters paying over 50% of their income on rent:

Bedford	21.7%
Blair	22.5%
Cambria	19.3%
Centre	38.9%
Clinton	27.4%
Fulton	16.2%
Huntingdon	20.9%
Somerset	19.7%

salary level they were used to. Underemployment can also mean they can only find part-time work.

Mortgage and rent payments don't wait a few months, or even a few weeks, for people to find a better job and get back on their feet.

## How We Help

Research shows that the most effective programs to help people in poverty are not those that serve the most people, and not those that just put a band-aid on the problem. The most effective programs are the ones that help people take care of basic necessities first, and then educate them about how to better their situation.\*\*

This is, and always has been, the goal of Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities is here to support and educate people who find themselves in this situation. Sometimes with a little help to pay a bill, people's basic needs can be taken care of. Our supportive and compassionate staff provides a safe place to turn and lifts their spirits. On this foundation, countless people can improve their situation.

## How You Can Help

**If you are interested in helping your neighbors in the community who are struggling to afford life's necessities such as housing, please join us by making a donation to Catholic Charities today. You can mail your gift using the form on the opposite page, or donate securely online at [www.catholiccharitiesaj.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesaj.org).**

\*Center for Rural PA  
\*\*Pennsylvania House of Representatives Majority Policy Committee "Empowering Opportunities: Gateways Out of Poverty Initiative"



# Breaking the Cycle of Poverty



Overcoming poverty is an uphill battle for many. If a person is born into poverty, or falls into it at some point in their life, climbing back out can be more difficult than you might think.

A report published in April 2014 by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Majority Policy Committee attempts to study why this is the case, and what people can do to overcome obstacles.

The report, "Empowering Opportunities: Gateways Out of Poverty Initiative," highlights several obstacles that people encounter when faced with improving their situation.

Looking for employment can be a daunting task to begin with, but think about trying to do it on an empty stomach, with no home address and without a safe place to leave your child when you have a job interview.

Something as small as completing a job application can suddenly become a nearly impossible task.

Catholic Charities believes that with the right help and support, the cycle of poverty can be broken.

## Barriers to breaking the cycle of poverty:

- No family support
- Lack of affordable child care
- The high cost of health care
- Current economic conditions
- Criminal record
- Basic knowledge of how to manage finances
- Education
- Homelessness
- Addiction

## Emergency Financial Assistance— Short term relief, long term solutions

96% of clients helped by Catholic Charities between 2010 and 2014 required only one-time or episodic (two-time) assistance to get through a short-term financial crisis or personal economic transition. We are very proud of these numbers! They are a great reminder that the vast majority of the people we help learn to better manage their finances and only need one-time or episodic assistance.

**82% of the people served only came to us once**

**14% of the people served came to us twice within this period**

## From the Executive Director: Johnstown Shelter: A Stepping Stone To A Better Home



The face of poverty has really changed over the last decade. Hard-working and normally financially stable people are finding themselves struggling. After the economic crisis of 2008, there is the feeling of a new normal, one where some people can no longer make ends meet.

Things that might come to mind when we think about the stereotypes of a homeless person are no longer necessarily true. Many of today's homeless had been living modestly when unforeseen circumstances – a job loss, a serious illness, having to care for an elderly parent – suddenly changed their situation beyond their control.

As you may be aware, the Salvation Army closed its homeless shelter last year. That was the only shelter in the area. Catholic Charities has been filling in the gap with our emergency housing program, providing shelter and hotel rooms for homeless individuals and families.

Later this year we will be opening a new permanent shelter at 899 Bedford Street in Johnstown. We plan to run the shelter as an emergency shelter program, with the goal of getting those who stay there back up on their feet. People accepted into the shelter will be Cambria County residents. We will add this service while continuing to provide our other much-needed services, such as Emergency Funding Services (EFA).

### What this means for the community

For the community, the shelter will mean fewer people living on the streets. It will mean that those who do need a place to regroup will now have somewhere to go. In a caring and non-judgmental environment, we are confident that people who stay in the shelter will leave with the tools they need to get to a better place.

It is only with the help of our faithful supporters that we have been able to make the shelter a reality. Thank you for your continued support in helping us fulfill our mission to provide service to those in need and to advocate for justice. We encourage all Catholics and all people to live justly and care for the poor in our local communities.

In Sincere Gratitude,

Jean D. Johnstone, Executive Director

The official registration and financial information of Catholic Charities may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

### Yes, I want to make a donation that will make a difference.

I want to make a difference to people in our community who need it most.  
Please accept my contribution of:

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check enclosed, made payable to:  
Catholic Charities

- or -

Donate online: [www.catholiccharitiesajorg](http://www.catholiccharitiesajorg)

**Catholic Charities of the  
Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown**

1300 12th Avenue  
P.O. Box 1349  
Altoona, PA 16603

☐ Please add me to upcoming  
email communications:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Local Catholic Schools Support Catholic Charities

One of the unique aspects of Catholic education is the commitment to serving others and the community. Catholic Charities benefits every year from service projects at Catholic schools within the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese.

“We are so blessed by the extraordinary efforts of the young people at our local Catholic schools,” said Executive Director Jean Johnstone. “We count on these students every year and they come through to support Catholic Charities with food and donation drives and other projects.”

All four of the Catholic high schools—Bishop McCort in Johnstown, Bishop Carroll in Ebensburg, Bishop Guilfoyle in Altoona and St. Joseph’s Catholic Academy in State College—undertake projects annually at key times of the year to support the mission of Catholic Charities.

Grade schools also offer their support through fundraisers, such as paid dress down days at St. John the Evangelist Catholic School in Bellefonte.

“Every Friday during the month of May our students each donated 50 cents to be able to dress down for the day,” said Principal Kristina Tice. “At the end of the month, donations were given to our local office of Catholic Charities.”

“Having an opportunity to directly support our community gives our students a chance to practice the Gospel values they are learning in class and at mass,” said Mrs. Tice. “They are learning their responsibility to care for others according to Christ’s teachings.”



Students at St. John the Evangelist Catholic School in Bellefonte participated in \$0.50 dress down days on Fridays during the month of May to support their local office of Catholic Charities.

## Celebrating Commitment to Helping Others

Each year, the Catholic Charities Recognition Dinner honors those who have shown exceptional commitment to serving the poor and most vulnerable people in our diocesan community.

We are blessed to award adults and youth who have demonstrated outstanding caring, generosity and humbleness in giving to others in need.

This year’s Catholic Charities Recognition Dinner was held on June 4 at the Blairmont Club in Hollidaysburg.

There are two awards that are given to celebrate and honor the recipients. First is the Msgr. William M. Griffin Humanitarian Award, which is given to adults. Second is the Matthew 25

Youth Humanitarian Award that is awarded to school-aged children.

Clergy and community members nominate potential honorees based on specific criteria, such as the type of work they do and how long they have been doing it. The Catholic Charities Advisory Board then chooses who will be honored based on the nominees.

“We are really honoring people who inspire us in the work they do,” says Jean Johnstone, Executive Director of Catholic Charities. “Our honorees have been helping those in need for many years, and in many capacities. Through their work they fulfill the call of the Gospel.”



Pictured: Matthew 25 Youth Humanitarian Award Winners—Paul Enderle, Aubrey Vena, Teresa Smith, Bishop Mark Bartchak, Rachel Kwisnek, and Matthew Poorman, with Jean Johnstone

### Need Help?

*Call or visit a Catholic Charities location near you*

#### Main Office Locations

##### Altoona Office:

Blair, Bedford & Huntington Counties  
1300 Twelfth Avenue  
Altoona, PA 16601  
Phone: (814) 944-9388

##### Bellefonte Office:

Centre and Clinton Counties  
213 East Bishop Street  
Bellefonte, PA 16823  
Phone: (814) 353-0502

##### Johnstown Office:

Cambria & Somerset Counties  
321 Main Street, Suite 5G  
Johnstown, PA 15901  
Phone: (814) 535-6538

#### Satellite Locations

##### Fulton Cty Catholic Mission

110 South Third Street  
McConnellsburg, PA 17233  
Phone: (717) 485-5917

##### Holy Spirit Parish

3 East Walnut Street  
Lock Haven, PA 17745  
Phone: (814) 472-3359

##### Dorothy Day Ctr

Saint Francis University  
117 Evergreen Drive, P.O. Box 600  
Loretto, PA 15940  
Phone: (570) 748-4594

##### Family Life Office

5379 Portage Street  
Lilly, PA 15938  
Phone: (814) 886-5551

### Visit us online

[www.catholiccharitiesaj.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesaj.org)

Catholic Charities recently launched our new website to better reach those in need in our eight-county service area.

The website includes detailed information regarding Catholic Charities services:

- Emergency financial assistance (heat, housing, food)
- Foster care
- Adoption services
- Assistance to women in crisis pregnancies
- Individual, family, marital, and group counseling