

# Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

# Chronicle

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

VOLUME ONE • NUMBER THREE

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TO LOVE AND SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES



## Urgent Appeal for Heating Assistance Funds, Households in Need Continue to Rise

*Generosity Keeps Families Warm  
Through Winter Months*

**D**uring the peak of winter, up to 30% of a household's income may be needed to cover heating bills, especially for those who rely on deliverable fuels like oil, kerosene and propane.

Without help, many area households—especially those surviving on a fixed income—simply cannot afford to heat their homes and pay for essentials like housing, food and medicine.

### Record Assistance Recorded Last Year

Last year, between the three offices of Catholic Charities, a record \$170,867 in heating assistance was distributed to residents in need in our eight-county service area. Winter heating assistance accounts for more than 51% of the emergency financial assistance funds that we distribute and is the most expensive type of assistance that Catholic Charities provides.

### Who Needs Heating Assistance

It's widely known that for low-income households, PUC-regulated utilities like natural gas and electricity do not shut off service during the winter moratorium, which runs from December 1 through March 31; these households typically have a constant source of heat through the winter despite their ability to pay.

There is no moratorium available to households with deliverable fuel sources—when the oil, propane or kerosene are gone, so is the heat. In addition, households living just above the official low-income guidelines are

not covered by the moratorium and are therefore likely to struggle.

Being without heat when outside temperatures dip below freezing can be extremely dangerous, especially for sick and elderly individuals, and infants and children.

**Catholic Charities works hard throughout the winter season to help individuals and families in our service area who are truly in need to be able to heat their homes.** It's important to note that households must use all of their LIHEAP benefits before Catholic Charities provides assistance.

**It's likely you know someone like the people we meet every day:** an elderly neighbor getting by on a fixed income; a young family facing recent unemployment of one spouse, trying to make ends meet on a single income; a hard-working friend dealing with an unexpected illness or injury, or caring for an ill or elderly family member, losing hours and income at work. These are real stories and circumstances that bring people to our door, depending on the generosity of others and the mission of Catholic Charities to keep from freezing.

### Generosity Fuels Heating Assistance Program: How You Can Help

Private donations are critical to Catholic Charities' ability to provide heating assistance during the winter. Generous donations from parishioners within our Diocese and from people of all faiths in our community

keep neighbors in need warm during the cold winter months.

Grants from Lee Initiatives, the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, local United Ways, and FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program also support heating assistance.

Being blessed with support from individuals and organizations allows Catholic Charities to answer the call of Jesus to love and care for our neighbors as ourselves. You can be part of our mission to help our neighbors in need by making a tax-deductible gift to Catholic Charities this winter. A form is included on page 3 and online giving is available at [www.catholiccharitiesaj.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesaj.org).

Find more information on heating assistance on page 2.

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# The Facts on Heating Assistance: Individuals and Families At Risk

## Reducing Heating Costs

Catholic Charities encourages anyone seeking heating assistance to also look for ways to decrease their home heating bill. For example, finding places where air gets into your home also identifies where heat is escaping. Plugging holes, reducing drafts, and insulating as much as possible will keep more heat inside and help reduce costs.

## WHERE HELP IS AVAILABLE:

### LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) and LIHEAP Crisis Program

Catholic Charities encourages anyone who believes they may qualify for emergency heating assistance to first work through LIHEAP.

LIHEAP is a state-run program with eligibility based solely on gross household income. Households must be at or lower than 150% of the federal poverty level to qualify. LIHEAP opened November 3, and applications can be made by mail, in person through the Public Assistance Office (welfare office), or online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us). Benefits are determined by county, fuel type, and number of people in the household, averaging anywhere between \$100 to \$1,000 in assistance.

LIHEAP also maintains a crisis program for 1) households whose main heating source has been shut off, 2) those households that have received a termination notice, or 3) households whose deliverable fuel has been depleted, or will be depleted within 15 days. Crisis grants range from \$25 - \$500.

*Catholic Charities encourages anyone who believes they may qualify for emergency heating assistance to first work through LIHEAP.*

## Centre County Fuel Bank

The Centre County Fuel Bank is run by Interfaith Human Services and brings together many agencies, businesses and organizations, to assist low-income households in need of emergency heating assistance. Catholic Charities donates annually to the Fuel Bank and serves as an application intake site for the program. It opens on January 15, 2015 and closes in March, or once funds have been depleted. The Fuel Bank also conducts classes to help people manage their expenses. Visit <http://www.ihs-centrecounty.org/centre-county-fuel-bank.html>.

## Customer Assistance Programs (CAPs)

Pennsylvania's major gas and electric utilities are required to provide Customer Assistance Programs (CAPs). These plans help low-income families afford their utilities through payment plans, discounts, and late payment forgiveness programs. Catholic Charities offices in Altoona and Johnstown are able to process Penelec and People's Natural Gas CAP applications. Call the offices for more information and an eligibility screening.

## Thorough Intake Process

Catholic Charities conducts extensive interviews, taking emergency or extenuating circumstances into consideration. Sometimes applicants are surprised at how thorough the intake procedures can be. The process is critical in order to assure that we are helping those in the most dire need, as each year the total need is greater than the funds available.

## Contact Your Local LIHEAP Office

Bedford	(814) 624-4072
Blair	(814) 946-7365
Cambria	(814) 533-2253
Centre	(814) 861-1955
Clinton	(570) 893-4409
Fulton	(717) 485-3151
Huntingdon	(814) 643-4098
Somerset	(814) 443-3683

## 2014-15 LIHEAP & CAPs Eligibility Guidelines (150% of Poverty)

Household Size	Annual Household Gross Income
1.....	\$17,505
2.....	\$23,595
3.....	\$29,685
4.....	\$35,775
5.....	\$41,865
6.....	\$47,955
7.....	\$54,045
8.....	\$60,135
9.....	\$66,225
10.....	\$72,315
<i>Each Additional Person Add \$6,090</i>	

# Faith In Action: Doing The Work Of The Church

**A** Catholic Charities Board Member for more than four years, Jan Andrews is truly passionate about the impact the organization has in the community.

**“Catholic Charities works to improve the community and the people in it,”** Jan says.

She first came to Catholic Charities through her friend and former board member, Mary Wiley.

“Mary and I have worked together on other boards and church youth events, and Mary thought Catholic Charities would be a good fit for me,” says Jan.

She met with Mary and Executive Director, Jean Johnstone, to learn more. They explained what Catholic



Jan Andrews, Catholic Charities Board Member

*“Catholic Charities does the work of the church. They help people find direction and become more self-sufficient.”*

Charities does. Jan was especially impressed with the fact that the organization serves all people, regardless of their religious affiliation. She also identified with the Catholic Charities' mission to alleviate poverty.

“Catholic Charities does the work of the church. They help people find direction and become more self-sufficient,” Jan says.

Jan is particularly proud of being part of an organization that offers Emergency Financial and Heating Assistance and counseling to help people. She says that through these programs people can live their lives with a sense of dignity. She also notes that if Catholic Charities is unable to help someone, they will work with other community organizations to find a solution that is right for the particular circumstances.

This year Jan served on the committee that helped choose the recipients of the humanitarian awards, which were presented at Catholic Charities Annual Dinner in May. There are two awards that are given to celebrate and honor the recipients.

**“It was so exciting to see kids and adults doing things within the Diocese and within their own parish to help others. In a time when there can be so much negative news, it is nice to know that there is good work and good news within our parish communities,”** Jan explains, **“To be a part of honoring their work was very rewarding.”**

Jan and the board meet up to six times a year to help guide Catholic Charities, support the staff and assist with fundraising. She lives in Hollidaysburg with her husband David. They have two children: Ashley, 27, and Scott, 23. Jan works as Firm Administrator at the law firm of Andrews & Beard.

The Andrews are members of St. John's Catholic Church in Lakemont where she plays handbells and has taught CCD. Jan is also passionate about her work for the American Cancer Society and is president of the Blair Volunteer Leadership Council.



## Parish Support Greatly Appreciated

### Remembering Those Facing Hardships This Christmas



**T**hank you to the faithful parishioners of our Diocese who supported Catholic Charities through our annual special collection in November. One hundred percent of the contributions collected go directly to supporting neighbors in need in your county of residence.

As we approach the Christmas season, we ask you to continue to remember those who are facing financial hardships, often feeling alone and without hope. For these individuals and families, sadly, the Christmas holiday can be the most difficult time of year.

**You, through your support for Catholic Charities, can be there to provide help and hope.**

Gifts to Catholic Charities provide help for emergency heating assistance, housing costs, medication, doctor visits, and other critical needs. The average request for assistance is just \$250, an indication we can truly provide a hand-up to an individual or family.

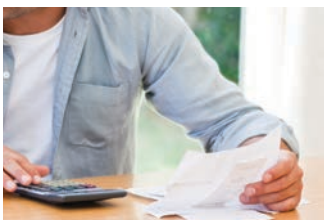
Every year, the need in our communities exceeds our capacity of funds. While we assisted nearly 6,000 households last year, there were many others who still needed financial assistance that wasn't available.

**As Catholics, we are called to fulfill the Gospel teachings through acts of kindness, selflessness, mercy and generosity. Through the mission of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown we have a powerful opportunity to answer this call.**

**If you missed the special November collection, you can still make an impact this winter and during the Christmas season. A form is provided here, or you can make a gift online at [www.catholiccharitiesaj.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesaj.org).**

Support from our faithful parishioners is a blessing to our staff, our volunteers and especially to the clients that we serve.

## Giving hope to young father in need



*In a matter of a few short weeks everything changed. One day a young father was working full-time, earning enough to put a roof over his family and food on their table. Then, unexpectedly, he became ill. Diagnosed with kidney disease, he faced doctor appointments, procedures, and recovery time. The decrease in work hours meant lost wages. His wife's part-time income wasn't enough. He needed help.*

Catholic Charities sent this young father home with a box of food, a box of books for his children, and a ray of hope that everything was going to be okay. When he recovers from his illness, we are confident he will get back on his feet. He will proudly take care of his family as he always intended. Every day at Catholic Charities we see people like this father. Helping people, thanks to your support, is the heart of what we do.

*From the Executive Director:*

## What Better Gift than the Gift of Hope?



As the cold winter months approach, your neighbors need your help more than ever. Elderly people on a fixed income, the person dealing with an unexpected illness or job loss, and countless other circumstances beyond people's control, leave them unable to afford the high cost of heating their homes.

Catholic Charities is one of several agencies that provide resources for those seeking emergency heating assistance. Others include the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Customer Assistance Programs (CAPs), and the Centre County Fuel Bank. Funds for these programs generally come from a combination of donations and government funding.

**Each year though, the need grows as the government funding and non-profit grants are cut more and more. Donations from individuals have become critical to us in helping individuals in need in our community.**

Winter months can be difficult for all of us. Weeks or months of cold, dark days will eventually dampen the spirits of almost anyone, much less someone who is already struggling, dealing with hardships, or perhaps suffering from depression or mental illness. Add to that a holiday season spent alone, and maybe you can begin to understand why this time of year is especially difficult for many of our clients.

### Every gift counts

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of our neighbors this winter and this holiday season. We can extend a helping hand to them that will get them through a tough time and give them hope for a better tomorrow. Every donation counts, no matter the amount.

Please give what you can to help our neighbors in need this year. Your donation can help keep someone warm during the cold winter months. More importantly, it can give them hope that things will get better and that there are people who care about them. What better gift to give this holiday season than the gift of hope?

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

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guild of Guardians Seeks To Increase Impact

As needs in our communities grow, it is our goal to grow to serve them. Catholic Charities doors are always open to people in need but the reality is that we cannot fulfill every request. In order to grow and impact more individuals and families, a new giving opportunity has been created for donors.

The Guild of Guardians has been created for donors interested in making a consistent annual gift at the \$1,000 level. Gifts can be made in installments or in one lump sum.

"Feedback from donors indicates that many are interested in making a bigger impact," said Jean Johnstone, Executive Director. "We wanted to create a formal opportunity for those

donors who can make this annual commitment."

Importantly, she added, gifts to the Guild of Guardians are unrestricted, so they can be allocated toward the most critical needs.

Jean also explained that accounting for annual gift commitments will allow Catholic Charities to plan ahead knowing that these funds will be available. Potentially, this may open new opportunities for Catholic Charities to make the most of its resources.

In addition to Catholic Charities emergency financial assistance program, the Guild of Guardians will help Catholic Charities provide its holistic combination of social services, which also includes life skills education and counseling. These

programs remove barriers to self-sufficiency and are tailored to the unique circumstances of the individuals we serve.

The Guild of Guardians will play a critically important role in the future of Catholic Charities: as needs in our communities grow, so we must grow to respond to these needs. A prime example of this effort is our homeless shelter, which is now set to open in 2015. Similarly, communities throughout our service area have unique needs that may match up with our strengths and skills. We must be ready to take on these new challenges.

Donors who are interested in learning more about the Guild of Guardians can request more information by calling the Altoona office at (814) 944-9388.

## Three Offices Provide Unique Help at Christmas



At Christmas, all three of our offices make an effort to support individuals and families in special ways.

Our Altoona office holds an Adopt a Family program, in which businesses, churches, schools, and individuals can support local families who have been selected by our staff as recipients of the program. Sponsors are paired anonymously with a family and asked to provide:

- Gifts for children, such as toys, clothes, school supplies and other items
- Grocery store gift card for the family
- A financial donation to assist with home heating costs (delivered by Catholic Charities directly to the family's utility company or fuel vendor)

Families chosen as recipients of the program have all undergone a thorough financial review, are experiencing a financial emergency and have been recommended by our staff.

To adopt a family this Christmas, contact Catholic Charities office at (814) 944-9388. Information will be provided to you on your matched family or families.

All three Catholic Charities offices rely on gas cards to help people visit loved ones in hospitals or nursing homes, and to travel for their own doctor appointments, which are sometimes out of the area at major medical centers.

Similarly, gift cards for grocery stores and Walmart can help families purchase groceries, clothes, and items not covered by other programs. For example, when clients are hired for jobs, they sometimes need special uniforms or shoes, like steel-toed boots or non-slip shoes. Gift cards can help purchase these items, ultimately helping clients on the road to success.

We are most grateful for your support and wish you and your family a blessed Christmas.

### Need Help?

Call or visit a Catholic Charities location near you

#### Main Office Locations

##### Altoona Office:

Blair, Bedford & Huntingdon 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



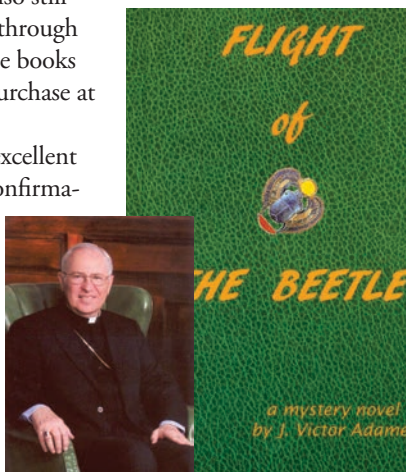
## Novels Benefit Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities is blessed to be the beneficiary of proceeds from the sale of two mystery novels written by Bishop Joseph V. Adamec.

The second novel, *Heir Non-Apparent*, is now available for purchase for \$25, plus \$3 shipping and handling, through the form available here, or by calling Catholic Charities at (814) 944-9388. The first novel, *Flight of the Beetle*, is also still available for purchase through Catholic Charities. The books are also available for purchase at the Altoona office.

Both books make excellent gifts, for Christmas, confirmations, birthdays and other special events.

All of us at Catholic Charities extend our sincere thanks to Bishop Joseph for his ongoing and enthusiastic support.



### RESERVE YOUR COPIES TODAY!

YES! Please reserve for me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the mystery novel *Heir Non-Apparent* at \$25.00 each (if to be picked up) or \$28.00 each (if to be mailed).

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
**CATHOLIC CHARITIES**  
1300 Twelfth Avenue  
P. O. Box 1349  
Altoona PA 16603

(814) 944-9388