

## A WORD FROM THE CEO...



Vincent W. Colonna

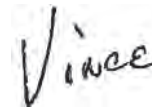
Welcome to another edition of CC Works! Summer has drawn to a close, and thankfully for many of the children who attended Camp Scully, or Sunnyside, or the summer lunch programs of Catholic Charities – it was a healthy and happy summer. Now that the school year has begun, our programs have gotten low-income children the supplies they need to be successful as well as the support and encouragement to stay committed to their education.

This issue of CC Works highlights one of our new initiatives, the FOCAS program in North Central Troy. You'll be reading about how FOCAS started with a premise to help middle school children achieve academic success, and resulted in a comprehensive program that works with the entire family through social workers and mentors. Our goal is to make sure material needs are being met at home so that the child can focus on school and making good choices. In this issue you'll also meet our new Executive Director

for Community Maternity Services, Anne Marie Couser; you'll read about the two local Catholic Charities employees who volunteered to go down to Houston, Texas, and help in the wake of disastrous flooding; and you'll get to know one of our dedicated board members, Din Cahill.

As always, thank you for your support of Catholic Charities. When we encounter people in need of our services, you are there with us as we work to help build better lives. Your financial and prayerful support is so important to our mission - if you know someone who would like to be a part of the good work we're doing please invite them to learn more about Catholic Charities by visiting our website at [ccrca.org](http://ccrca.org), and pass along this newsletter!

Take Care,

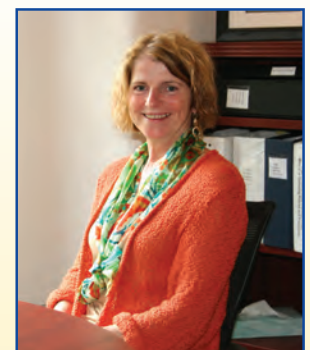


## HARVEST OF GIVING

Our Harvest of Giving Campaign helps us continue our life-changing work in the 14 county Albany Diocese. Your donation is critical, especially as we head into the Fall and Winter months. More information can be found with our Development Article on Page 4.



Shannon McLaughlin (Picture Far Right), Director of Support Services in the Housing Office, and Luther Herring (Second from Right), Case Manager at DePaul House, spent time in Texas providing assistance to residents affected by flooding in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. See their story on Page 3.



Anne Marie Couser, who has been with Catholic Charities Community Maternity Services (CMS) for 12 years, has become the 3rd Executive Director in the history of CMS on July 1st taking over for Sister Mary Ann LoGuidice. Ann Marie's story can be found on Page 5.

# BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

By Mary Pat Hickey



**Din Cahill**

Din Cahill always admired Catholic Charities from afar, but truly didn't understand the breadth and depth of its programs and services until he was recruited to join the board in 2014. Feeling very fortunate to have grown up in a close, loving family, to have had the opportunity of a Catholic Education at

LaSalle and then Siena (where he met his wife Carol), before heading to Albany Law School, which all led to a successful 33 year career at Ayco, Din wants to give back. He realizes "It can be easy to not allow ourselves to see or witness those in need, and that way we really won't know what they are going through." He believes that "If we don't do something to help the most vulnerable among us, they simply won't have a chance." Din has been excited and honored to get involved.

Din feels particularly passionate about programs for children and seniors, as the need continues to grow in both areas. He has been very impressed with the services offered for those dealing with domestic violence issues. When asked about the challenges currently facing Catholic Charities, Din felt that the misunderstanding that one has to be Catholic to receive services prevents some in need from asking for our help. The loss of government funding continues to add a financial burden so he is hoping that support will return at increased levels very soon. Din is amazed by the strong dedication and commitment of the staff of Catholic Charities as well as the quality of the people Catholic Charities has attracted to serve on the boards. "Many organizations want their boards to get involved, but Catholic Charities **truly gets them involved!**"

In addition to spending some of their retirement days in NYC with their two wonderful children, awesome daughter-in-law and beautiful granddaughter Ruby, both Din and Carol are delighted to be involved with Catholic Charities. While they plan to hang around for a while, their ultimate wish is that poverty is abolished and the need for Catholic Charities programs and services is totally eliminated.

# FOCAS – HELPS NORTH CENTRAL TROY FAMILIES IN NEED

By Sister Betsy VanDeusen

**Family Opportunity Collaborative at Sunnyside (FOCAS)** was envisioned and initiated to be a transforming presence in North Central Troy, where Catholic Charities has been working since the 1920's. The objective of FOCAS is to provide skills, tools, and support for families and children presently or previously enrolled at Sunnyside Child Development Center to create a more stable home life. The goal is to have a more successful school experience, decreased opportunity to engage in risky behaviors, and dreams that will lead to a bright future. There are 78 families enrolled at Sunnyside. Families with children entering the fourth, fifth and sixth grade were invited to apply to FOCAS. The pilot group, consisting of 15 families, was selected at random.

FOCAS has three components. The first is a mentoring relationship for the children in partnership with Big Brothers/Big Sisters. The second is individual family assistance or case management to determine, with the family, their unmet needs and to assist them to connect with resources. Families also create goals with a plan to achieve them. The third is a cooperative with the families involved in FOCAS. Often organizations determine a solution without consultation and leadership from the people affected. The families will meet, assess their needs and work together to create their plan for change.

Sharmayne VanDyke began as the Case Manager on August 6 and has been networking and connecting the families with Big Brothers/Big Sisters to get the mentoring started. She's begun meeting with families to have a beginning place from which to demonstrate outcomes.

FOCAS began at the encouragement of Troy Savings Bank Foundation, who provided a two year grant to significantly fund the program. Our Development Department sought other resources to fully fund the program. SEFCU and the Seymour Fox Foundation have committed to the balance of the funding for this innovative pilot program. A number of community partners have expressed interest and are partnering with us to make this pilot a huge success. We have also been in dialogue with the Lab for Economic Opportunity (LEO) at Notre Dame to assist with design and creating data systems to be able to replicate this program and also demonstrate its effectiveness.

"New and exciting," is how Jenn Hyde, Executive Director of Catholic Charities Tri-County Services, speaks about the program. "Sunnyside has been an oasis for decades in North Central Troy and FOCAS gives us an opportunity to extend the reach and continue to be a positive influence in these families."

*As the program develops there will be ample opportunities for volunteers like you to be involved! Contact Sr. Betsy Van Deusen, Director of Community Partnerships, for more information at 453-6650.*



**Sharmayne VanDyke**

# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING CATHOLIC CHARITIES!

Summer Photographs from Camp Scully and Sunnyside Center.



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES – NO DISASTER TOO GREAT OR TOO FAR AWAY

By Ken Goldfarb

Another disaster: “Who you gonna call?” Why, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany of course!

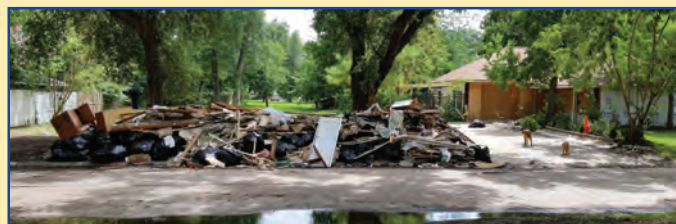
Following severe flooding in Texas, it took virtually no time at all that our own Catholic Charities and its experienced volunteers stepped to the plate to assist Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

“We were overwhelmed,” said Matt Johns, Director of Mission Integration Programs for Catholic Charities of Galveston - Houston. He said that his agency just didn’t have the capacity to handle the work load that resulted from the heavy flooding that had impacted thousands of local residents, many of whom found themselves waist deep in water in some locales.

It seems that area of Texas was hit with 11 inches of rain in just four hours in late May. Their drainage system was just incapable of carrying off that much water in that short a period of time. On top of that the previous week a tornado struck, and then more rain came about a week after the initial flash flood.

Word got out through Catholic Charities USA of their need for case management assistance. “Two agencies stepped forward right away,” said Kathleen Oldaker, Director of Disaster Operations with CCUSA. Naturally, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany responded. “How can we help,” asked Mary Olsen, Disaster Assistance Coordinator, taking direction from Catholic Charities CEO Vincent W. Colonno. The other responding agency was Catholic Charities of Camden, NJ.

In June, two volunteers from Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany were flown down as a team to provide case management assistance. One member of that team was Shannon P. McLaughlin, Director of Support Services in the Catholic Charities Housing Office. The other was Luther Herring, Case Manager at DePaul Residence. “The two who came down were just fantastic,” said Mr. Johns. “They brought an experience and expertise that we needed,” he said, and that included their ability to help coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Both volunteers acquired their knowledge from disaster experience, both local and distant. Mr. Herring had volunteered in Baton Rouge, LA following Hurricane Katrina. Ms. McLaughlin had done similar work in the Rotterdam area after Hurricane Irene hit.

That experience was invaluable once they were put to work in Texas. Shannon and Luther focused mostly on one-on-one contact with those residents who were dealing with the aftermath of the flooding. “Shannon did a great job in connecting with people on an emotional level,” said Mr. Herring. They probably canvassed as many as 400-500 homes.

Much of their time was spent going door-to-door just getting needed information to those directly impacted by the high water. Their role in Houston also included directing people to a community center set up for disaster relief.

The Albany volunteers also spent time with people doing a formal personal and property condition assessment to determine their needs. In some cases, the emotional impact of this event resulted in their extending the time they spent with individual flood-impacted residents to as much as two hours, said Mr. Herring.

Overall, “we really felt like we helped,” said Ms. McLaughlin.

## GOLF FOR GOOD

Golfers from far and wide descended on Schuyler Meadows Golf Course in Loudonville for the 2015 Golf For Good Tournament, which benefitted both Unity House in Troy and Catholic Charities. The photos below show the great time that everyone had at the event!



# HARVEST OF GIVING

As the fall arrives and the daylight gets shorter, many of us are busy with the changes that the season brings. For parents and grandparents, summer vacations are over and back-to-school and children's sports start to ramp up again. For workers, whether in the farm field or in business, this season marks a final push and last chance to bring in the harvest (or sales, or important deals) before the end of the year.

For the people who turn to Catholic Charities for help, this season means something entirely different.

For many, it means back-to-school expenses they can't afford; meals they have a difficult time providing for their children; a fast approaching winter and not enough money to pay for heat; the continual struggle for daily necessities, hoping that another setback (car trouble, job loss, an illness) isn't around the corner...

Fortunately, this time of year is also the **Harvest of Giving** for Catholic Charities. This is the time we reach out and ask for financial contributions to maintain our important work. Catholic Charities serves and assists over 81,000 people each year in our area – these are mothers, children, seniors, those suffering from poor health, and the developmentally disabled. Each situation is different, but one thing that remains consistent is the way that Catholic Charities helps – with compassion and care for each individual. The funds we raise from Harvest of Giving go directly to help the poor and vulnerable in the 14-county Albany Diocese. All are assisted regardless of race, creed, ethnicity or lifestyle.

Many of you have given generously in the past, and for this we are truly grateful. This year, in addition to your valued financial contribution, please consider inviting a friend or co-worker to make a gift. We know that Catholic Charities is a worthy cause that you care about, and you can help us connect even more people with the assistance they need if we have the support of a wider community.

When we make a difference in someone's life we also touch the lives of those around them. Your gift makes this possible. **That is why each gift is so important and why we need others to get involved.** With your help, this life-changing work can happen. Without your help, we cannot do it. Thank you for your generosity!

## MOLLY NICOL



We bid a fond farewell to Molly Nicol, who has served as Catholic Charities' Director of Development for the last three years. Molly has taken a position with Albany Medical Center, overseeing their development and communications. We'll miss her infectious energy and enthusiasm – best of luck, Molly!

As of this publication a new Director has not been named. Any questions regarding fundraising, development, or donations can be made to Interim Director of Development Paul McAvoy, at paul.mcavoy@rcda.org or 453-6650.

## WEBSITE

Catholic Charities has a new look! Our web address is the same, but check out our new page at: [www.ccrda.org](http://www.ccrda.org)



Here you'll find easier ways to give help, through donating or volunteering, or get help by getting connected with our programs and services.

Special thanks to Spiral Design Studios in Cohoes, NY, for their excellent work designing the page.

Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties has provided services to our most vulnerable populations since 1976. Those we serve include: children, the mentally ill, the economically disadvantaged, chemical abusers, the abused and the homeless. We've continued to expand our services to meet the growing needs of our communities and our services are available to everyone without regard to race, creed or lifestyle.

## SUGGESTED WISH LIST ITEMS INCLUDE:

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|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oatmeal</li> <li>• Peanut Butter</li> <li>• Rice</li> <li>• Stuffing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasta (All kinds - elbow, egg noodles, etc.)</li> <li>• Mac &amp; Cheese</li> <li>• Canned Tuna or Chicken</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned beef stew, chili, ravioli</li> <li>• Canned beans or pork &amp; beans</li> <li>• Canned Vegetables</li> <li>• Instant Mashed Potatoes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned Fruit</li> <li>• Canned Soup (chicken, tomato, vegetables)</li> <li>• Also, volunteers, shopping bags</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|--|

Emergency Assistance, Community Residences, Domestic Violence Safe Dwelling:  
Gift cards for Hannaford, Price Chopper, Gas and Walmart

For more information please contact: [john.nasso@cc-fmc.org](mailto:john.nasso@cc-fmc.org) or call 518-762-8313

## THERE COULDN'T BE A BETTER PLACE TO BE

by Grit Carotenuto



**Anne Marie Couser**

“There couldn't be a better place to be” – these are the words of Anne Marie Couser, who became the new Executive Director of Community Maternity Services (CMS) on July 1st, 2015.

She knows that her new role means having big shoes to fill as only the third Executive Director of an agency that has been in existence for 44 years. With her new position she follows in the footsteps of two beloved Sisters of Mercy, Sister Maureen Joyce and Sister Mary Ann LoGiudice, who have dedicated their lives to serving the vulnerable.

CMS is an agency of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany that is committed to providing a continuum of services for children, families and pregnant and parenting adolescents. The agency operates residential and non-residential programs for pregnant and parenting teens. Anne Marie began her career with the agency in 2000 in a part-time position to help with grant writing for CMS after her daughter entered kindergarten. It quickly turned into a full-time commitment to the agency. Over the years Anne Marie has been responsible for facilities management (which included one of her favorite tasks of outfitting girls' rooms at the residences), being the agency liaison to the agency Board of Directors and its committees, coordinating many of

the CMS fundraising events, and working with a variety of donors and parishes.

Today, she is grateful to have the support of staff members who live the mission of CMS on a daily basis, are knowledgeable and smart, and are willing to go the extra mile. She knows that she can count on her committed agency Board of Directors. What many people might not know about Anne Marie is that she is also an attorney and worked at Breslin, Breslin & Breslin for twelve years in general practice dealing with family law, estate planning, landlord tenant issues, and much more. Being an attorney allowed her to constantly learn new things and work with a diverse group of people.

Those skills will come in handy as CMS is preparing for a very different environment influenced by the new Medicaid managed care initiatives. While Anne Marie admits that funding changes can be daunting at times, she is confident that it will position CMS to provide more integrative and comprehensive services to their clients and it will open the door for CMS to grow.



**Anne Marie with Client**

## CC WORKS

*A Catholic Charities Quarterly  
Committed to active witness*

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## DID YOU KNOW?

**1552 individuals representing 617 households were helped with heating and energy assistance through the Emergency Assistance Fund during this past fiscal year. A total of \$119,180 was distributed throughout the 14 county region of the Albany Diocese.**

## CONGRATULATIONS, SR. BETSY!



Congratulations to Sr. Betsy Van Deusen, CSJ, Catholic Charities' Director of Community Partnerships, on celebrating her 25th Jubilee with the Sisters of the St. Joseph of Carondelet!