

# CC WORKS

A Catholic Charities Quarterly Committed to Active Witness



SPRING 2022

## A Word From the CEO



Vincent W. Colonna

the people of our Diocese through the work of Catholic Charities.

In this issue, you will get a look at our Employee and Volunteer Appreciation Week – a week full of events to recognize, celebrate and honor our very own "CC HEROES." You'll also learn more about our Substance Abuse Prevention Programs, which help students throughout the region get and stay clean. And you'll meet Trustee Christine Cary, who joined the Board just last summer.

Greetings,

It is my pleasure to present one last edition of CC WORKS. As you may know, I will be retiring this July after 11 years as CEO. It has been an honor and a blessing to serve

As you can see, Catholic Charities is as busy as ever! Our staff remain hard at work providing services to our neighbors most in need, while our volunteers and supporters continue to step up to help – giving selflessly of their time and talents alike.

So today, I'd like to take a moment to say "thank you." I take great pride and comfort knowing these efforts will continue, even after I retire, because of you. Thanks to your support, hundreds of thousands of people in need continue to receive the life-changing support needed to get back on their feet.

And for that, I am grateful.

Stay safe and God Bless!

Vince

## In this issue...



Vince Colonna reflects on his career ahead of his retirement



Learn more about our Substance Abuse Prevention Program



We count down the days until Night at the Museum

# Board Member Profile

By Eileen Spath



Christine M. Cary

For Christine Cary, caring for others is second nature. One of seven children, Chris grew up in Guilderland and was raised in a home that valued family, community, and compassion. Even as a young kid, Chris remembers lending a hand to her neighbors, raking their leaves in the fall.

These values, instilled in her at a young age, led Chris to pursue a career in helping others. She completed her undergraduate studies at SUNY Albany before earning her Masters in Social Work from UAlbany's MSW program.

After earning her MSW, Chris spent 3 years serving the seniors in her hometown of Guilderland before joining the Senior Resources Department for the Town of Colonie as a Case Manager. There, she would build a decades-long career supporting older adults in the town. After 15 years as a case manager, Chris was promoted to head of the department, where she worked for another 12 years before retiring last December with the hope of spending more time giving back to the community.

Chris had long been familiar with Catholic Charities. She had served on the The Commission on the Aging with former CEO Sister Serena Branson, and her brother Ken currently serves at Catholic Charities' Board President. She has enjoyed her time on the Board thus far and has no plans of slowing down, saying it's been humbling to work alongside people who give so freely of their time and talents. A member of the Board's Housing Committee, Chris says she enjoys supporting Catholic Charities staff who are responsible for getting folks in to housing, and admires the way they treat people with respect and dignity.

She acknowledges that Catholic Charities has been affected by workforce shortages, but remains hopeful for the future, recognizing a continuing need for strong fundraising efforts and a strong commitment to clients. Chris sees Catholic Charities as a "beacon of light" for the people we serve, and she hopes to help carry that light as she helps Catholic Charities fulfill its mission of service to our communities.

# Employee and Volunteer Appreciation Week

This April, we celebrated Employee and Volunteer Appreciation Week with a week's worth of special days from T-Shirt Tuesday to Thankful Thursday and Fun Friday! It was a pleasure to recognize the people at the heart of what we do.

Day after day, our staff and volunteers step up and work hard to provide services to our neighbors most in need. The care and compassion they have for others is unmatched and we cannot thank them enough!





## Vincent W. Colonna reflects on a 48-year career

Vince Colonna remembers his tenure as Catholic Charities' CEO fondly.

"I got to meet a lot of good people," said Vince, who has led Catholic Charities since 2011. "It's been a privilege to work alongside our staff and volunteers as they help people to build safe, stable and healthy lives. I know I am leaving Catholic Charities in capable hands."

Vince is set to retire this July, after 11 years of service with Catholic Charities, capping off a 48-year career in human services.

Appointed CEO in 2011, he succeeded Sister Charla Commins, CSJ, who served as interim CEO for a year after the death of CEO Sister Maureen Joyce, RSM in 2010. An Albany native, Vince began his human services career in 1974 at the Albany County Department of Social Services. In 2000, he was appointed the Commissioner for the Albany County Department for Aging before moving back to the County's Social Services Department in 2007, where he served as the County Commissioner before leaving in 2011 for Catholic Charities.

"I wanted to do some business in the nonprofit world," Vince explained, "on the 'other side of the glass', so to speak."

Vince was no stranger to the work of Catholic Charities. In his work with Social Services and the Department of Aging alike, he would often refer people to Catholic Charities for additional supports or services.

He hit the ground running as CEO. Under his leadership, Catholic Charities expanded its services to address the needs of a region still recovering from the Great Recession. The organization established three new agencies: Catholic Charities Tri-County Services, Catholic Charities Senior & Caregiver Support Services and Catholic Charities Care Coordination Services, formerly Catholic Charities AIDS Services. Through this expansion, Vince led the charge to support Capital Region residents, provide care to the senior population across the Diocese, and to support people as they worked through chronic physical and behavioral health problems.

Most recently Vince headed up Catholic Charities' No Wrong Door initiative: a \$1.2 million project that better connects the vast programs of Catholic Charities and makes services more accessible across the Diocese.

"Whether you come to us from Schoharie or Schodack, you'll have access to the full breadth of services we offer at Catholic Charities," Vince said of No Wrong Door. "If you need food or housing or support through recovery, we will work with you to see those needs are met. At Catholic Charities we welcome people where they're at and I am immensely proud of that."

As a part of the project, Catholic Charities established CC MOVE, its first-ever Mobile Outreach Vehicle. CC MOVE became instrumental over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, partnering with the Regional Food Bank to provide millions of pounds of food to thousands of residents in the region.

As Vince now looks to retirement, he knows Catholic Charities will be in good hands. "They're the ones that do all the work," Vince said, referring to Catholic Charities' staff and volunteers. "I just drive the bus, they're the ones that make it go."

Catholic Charities has announced Vince's successor: Sister Betsy Van Deusen.



Catholic Charities Board of Trustees, following an extensive search, has named Sister Betsy as Catholic Charities' next CEO. For the last nine years, she has served as Catholic Charities' Director of Community Partnerships and will step into the role once Vince retires in July.

Vince said, "Sr. Betsy's efforts have been crucial to our ability to fulfill our mission and support people where they are with what they need. Her vocation is a blessing to our work and I'm confident she'll grow and strengthen our impact in the years to come."

# Night at the Museum

## Honoring St. Pius X Church and School



On Thursday, June 16th Catholic Charities will be hosting the tenth annual Night at the Museum event in person at the Pruyn House in Latham and virtually as we broadcast the "Home Edition" of our evening program online.

Our signature event will once again feature MCs Ashley Miller and Chris Onorato and live music by the Franklin Micare Duo. Guests will have a chance to participate in the cash raffle and silent auction or take a tour of the historic Pruyn House, Carriage House and School. Cuisine stations will be available, along with complimentary beer, wine and soda.

Every year, it is our pleasure to recognize a person or organization for the work they do in our diocese. This year's Night at the Museum will honor St. Pius X Church and School. Every month, members of the St. Pius X community step up to volunteer at Catholic Charities

Community Maternity Services, the Sister Maureen Joyce Soup Kitchen, DePaul House as well as our CC MOVE Food Distributions, among other programs.

"Our St. Pius parish and school works hard at living out our mission to love and serve others," said Rev. Jim Walsh, Pastor of St. Pius X Church, "Through our outreach, we strive to be the hands and feet of Christ."

Many of Catholic Charities' clients have benefitted from their generosity through the years. We are thrilled to recognize the St. Pius X Community this year for their commitment to serving our neighbors with compassion, care, and dignity.



Fr. Jim Walsh, Pastor

For more information on Night at the Museum on Thursday, June 16th at the Pruyn House, please visit [bit.ly/NAM2022](http://bit.ly/NAM2022) or text Charities22 to 41444.

## Giving Tree



Each year at Night at the Museum, the Giving Tree provides our guests with the opportunity to support their neighbors struggling to meet life's challenges. The "Giving Tree" is, in fact, a small giving forest: three trees adorned with stars, each representing one

of the needs we see every day in the people we support throughout the Albany Diocese. People like the Lopez family, who receive help to purchase diapers each month for their daughter. Or George, who began staying at the St. Charles Lwanga Center when he lost his housing. And Bryan, who needed support with his mental health and substance use and completed our peer recovery program. He is now living independently, substance-free for three years.

Want to help? This year, you can "purchase" a star, and know you are impacting the lives of real neighbors who are struggling every day.

It's easy to support families in the Diocese of Albany through our Giving Tree. Stars will be available during our Night at the Museum event and also on our website, at [bit.ly/NAM2022](http://bit.ly/NAM2022).

### Choose a star from one of our service areas:

- At Risk Adults, Children & Families
- Emergency Assistance
- Hunger and Food Insecurity
- Older Adults & their Caregivers
- Health & Care Management Services
- Housing & Shelters

Each star shares detailed needs and lists the donation amount you can give to help. Every contribution matters and your gift of any size will make a transformative impact in the communities in which we live and serve.

# A Beautiful Opportunity for Students

By Grit Carotenuto



## What do you remember about your childhood?

Celebrating special holidays? Reveling in the first spring outing to the local ice cream stand? Or maybe traveling for a long-awaited family vacation?

How about the anxiety around the first day of school? Painstaking attempts to navigate cliques and hormones and adolescence? Even with all the fun memories, growing up isn't always easy. Tack on the challenges all of us have faced over the last two years and it's not surprising that many of us – children and youth especially – are struggling with mental health issues. For some, substance use might be an appealing short-term "solution."

At Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, our Substance Abuse Prevention Program provides education and supports that strengthen youths' ability to address

challenges with means other than substance use. The program works within classrooms across seven different school districts in Fulton and Montgomery Counties from Pre-K to 12th grade. Using evidence-based curricula, staff work with youth on their emotional and social skills, and to build their self-esteem. The aim is to prevent or delay the use of substances including alcohol and tobacco.

The program also provides education to teachers and parents through training, newsletters, or information for school district websites, so they can better support children and identify potential red flags.

Catholic Charities also works with youth who are already actively using through the Teen Intervene Program for students ages 12–19. Schools can refer youth to the program after they've been caught vaping, drinking, or using in some way. Staff meet

with them one-on-one and provide further referrals for treatment and counseling as needed.

Substance abuse prevention work can be challenging, but Program Director Denise Benton knows it's needed: staff have seen children as young as 11 years old use. But they also see small and large victories of the program on a daily basis. Sometimes these successes are only visible years later.

In one such instance, Kayleigh\* was at risk of not graduating as drug use led to poor school performance and risky behavior. Through the Substance Abuse Prevention Program, Kayleigh worked with staff to address her substance use and successfully graduate among her peers. Nearly a year later, when she was home from break, Kayleigh returned to school, where she let us know that she is successfully attending college and remains clean.

\*Name has been changed out of respect for privacy.

**Catholic Charities operates three different substance abuse prevention programs.  
If you or someone you know is in need of support, help is available:**

Catholic Charities of  
Columbia & Greene Counties:  
**(518) 828-8660**

Catholic Charities of Fulton  
& Montgomery Counties:  
**(518) 842-4202**

Catholic Charities of  
Herkimer County:  
**(315) 894-9917**

NYS  
HOPEline:  
**1-877-8-HOPENY**



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