Thank you for sharing your time, talent and treasure with Catholic Charities of South Carolina!
We are always in need of volunteers!
Contact your local office today.

3 ways to donate:

- Visit www.charities.org/donate
- Use the enclosed envelope to mail your check to Catholic Charities of South Carolina, 901 Orange Grove Road, Charleston, SC 29407
- Call your local office for a detailed list of needed items
Dear Brothers and Sisters,
We feel change around us. Winter becomes Spring and Lent turns to Easter. We feel God’s gentle urge for us to change. He calls us to be more compassionate, more giving, and more loving. He wants us to love our neighbors and to help those who need us.

For the poor and vulnerable among us change is a necessity. We see people living out on the street, the elderly suffering alone, the undocumented living in fear of the knock on the door, the poor living in housing made unsafe or unhealthy by disasters, men and women returning from incarceration with no one to guide them, children going to bed hungry, and families trying to cope with mental illness. The need is everywhere. They look to us for help.

Catholic Charities of South Carolina has heard their cries. With your help, we too, have been changing to serve the needs of those in pain. In the past year, we have opened three new locations in the state. In 2018, we expect to provide hope to more new locations. Not just help—but love.

Our newsletter is entitled “Love Matters,” and love does matter. Jesus asks us to “love one another as I have loved you.” Your generosity to Catholic Charities has allowed us to love more and to help more.

The love you show to us through your gifts of time, talent, and treasure asks us to “love one another as I have loved you.” Your generosity to Catholic Charities of South Carolina has engaged us in an excellent program and I’d recommend it to anybody. Right now, I’m on top of the world.”

Deacon Dan
Deacon Dan

Pantry is One Way Catholic Charities Helps Families Feel Secure about Food Supply

By John C. Stevenson — Mariah Kowalkowski wears many hats as Wellness Program Manager for Catholic Charities of South Carolina. She even runs a grocery store, of sorts.

Kowalkowski oversees the client-choice food pantry, which allows clients to come in once a month and select the groceries they want—enough to last about three days, she said— at no charge. She said that allowing clients to come in and pick their own groceries, rather than picking up pre-packed boxes or bags of groceries, has valuable benefits.

"It gives them a sense of dignity to be able to come in here and choose the foods for their family, so they know they’re still helping their family rather than just being handed a box of food," she explained.

Kowalkowski said the pantry is one way that Catholic Charities of South Carolina is helping fight the problem of food insecurity for Palmetto State families. She said that “food insecurity” is based on a family’s access—or lack thereof—to an adequate food supply on a daily basis.

"In South Carolina, there are 746,810 families who are considered food-insecure," she said. "In order to make sure that there are no food deficits -- that every family is food-secure -- the annual budget shortfall in South Carolina alone is more than $378 million. In order for everyone in the state to be secure in their food, the state would need an almost $379 million extra." The pantry usually assists from 275 to 300 families monthly, Kowalkowski said.

Our Mission
Inspired by the Holy Scriptures, Catholic Charities of South Carolina promotes self-sufficiency and strives to break the cycle of poverty in South Carolina by serving our neighbors in need.

Our Vision
We provide a compassionate hand up approach to clients while respecting the dignity of each person.

Program Gives Clients Something to Smile About

By John C. Stevenson — Karl Rogozenski’s job is serious stuff, but his greatest reward might be the smiles of his clients.

Based in Greenville, Rogozenski is the regional director of Catholic Charities of South Carolina’s Save-a-Smile program, which has now helped more than 1,000 Palmetto State residents receive full dentures.

The opportunity to receive dentures at no cost can be a life-changing event, Rogozenski said.

“It’s a program that not only changes their smiles, but it changes their souls,” he explained. “You can see the difference. We take before-and-after pictures, and the transformations are incredible.”

Rogozenski said clients must attend a comprehensive dental-wellness workshop to learn the proper care and maintenance of dentures. Save-a-Smile partners with Affordable Dentures and relies on donations to pay for the labor involved in making the dentures.

The need cannot be underestimated for proper dental care in South Carolina. “The thing we face the most is the huge need,” Rogozenski said. “We can only put so many through the program in a year.”

Joe Parks was Save-a-Smile’s 1000th client. In a testimonial video, the Upstate resident talked about the opportunity to receive dentures at no cost can be a life-changing event, Rogozenski said.

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Catholic Charities Gives Woman Chance to Live Her Dream

By John C. Stevenson — Imagine the excitement of being a teenager and preparing to take so many important steps toward adulthood, such as receiving a driver’s license or being accepted to a college.

“Imagine” was all that Maria Garcia Riopedre could do until 2012, when she learned of the federal government’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program through Catholic Charities of South Carolina.

Riopedre had been brought into the U.S. without documentation when she was only 3 years old.

“I was in high school and it was pretty uncertain,” Riopedre recalled recently. “I had goals that I wanted to do, but there was just no way I was going to be able to do them without moving away completely by myself at 16 to a different country that I didn’t know.”

With the help of the staff at Catholic Charities in Hilton Head Island, Riopedre was able to successfully apply for legal status, and her life began to change for the better. Now 22, Riopedre is a senior at the University of South Carolina, is engaged and is the co-owner of a business with her fiancé.

“I was able to attend university, which was my initial dream. I’m also currently co-owner of Catitude Cat Café in West Columbia, so I’ve also been able to do that,” she said. “More basic things: I’ve been able to get a driver’s license and move around.”

Through her involvement with the Latino–founded Kappa Delta Chi Inc. sorority, Riopedre has even been able to help others enroll in the program, bringing her experience full circles.

Couple Credits Catholic Charities for Return of Normal Life

By John C. Stevenson — To Ruby Hayward, Catholic Charities of South Carolina is nothing short of a miracle.

Hayward and her husband Robert Miller were living in a home along the Black River in Andrews when the river overflowed its banks and flooded their home in 2015.

“(Catholic Charities was) a blessing to us — we had lost everything,” Hayward said recently. “They came in and they were a miracle. They gave 110 percent support to get us back in our home.”

The flood was devastating for the couple.

“We lost everything — I mean, cars, the house, furniture, clothes,” she recalled. “We lost everything.”

With nothing left and nowhere to live, the couple turned to friends for shelter, and eventually wound up living in a friend’s unoccupied trailer, where they stayed until their home was ready.

Now, approaching the third anniversary of the October, 2015 flood, Hayward said the couple is thankful that their lives have returned to normal.

“We’re back in the house and living a normal life. Everything is back to normal,” she said.

Recovering Addict Earns Opportunity for a Stable Life

By John C. Stevenson — Catholic Charities didn’t give Charles Mathis the first chance to turn around his life, but rather, maybe the last chance he’ll ever need.

The 52-year-old was trapped in a vicious cycle of drugs, jail and homelessness until he found the ReNEW program, which helped him find a way to escape his demons.

“I had been living on the streets of Greenville, South Carolina, off-and-on, going back-and-forth to the South Carolina Department of Corrections, since 2006,” Mathis said recently. “I would get out and I’d go back up to Greenville and I’d go back to the streets and get back on crack and go back to sleeping in abandoned houses and stuff like that.”

That cycle was interrupted in 2016, when Mathis said, he was arrested and charged with stealing a “malt–liquor beverage” from a store. Because of his prior record, he was found guilty of enhanced shoplifting; the single beer earned him a two-year sentence.

While serving his time in the Allendale Correctional Institution, Mathis discovered a flyer for the Charleston-based Turning Leaf program for repeat offenders. Graduates of the paid educational program have the opportunity for full-time employment with one of several Charleston-area municipal governments upon completion of the program’s eight-week first phase.

“I said, that is what I need to do. I don’t need to go back to Greenville,” Mathis recalled.

As he awaited release from prison, Mathis learned about the ReNEW program through a prison counselor and was introduced to Catholic Charities’ Nikki Grimball, who helped Mathis transition into his new life.

“Mr. Grimball was able to tell me about some services he was able to help me with,” Mathis said. “He helped me get glasses that I needed. Also, he said they would help with the first couple of weeks’ rent if I was going to go to a recovery house. So I admitted I did have a problem with alcohol and drugs and that I was committed and wanted to stay sober.”

Sober, Mathis was released June 1, 2017, and moved to Charleston.

“Mr. Grimball was able to get some clothes for me and several of the other guys in the class of guys that graduated and got out in June. He got us clothes, hygiene items; he paid for my first three weeks’ rent.”

With the assist from Catholic Charities, Mathis said his life has turned around.

“It was very instrumental in helping me get a start down in Charleston, a place I had never lived before,” he said. “I just went down there to relocate and get my life started over. And it’s worked out real well, but I really needed that help, that assistance.”

Mathis’ new life affords him the stability he lacked as a homeless addict.

“I’m working full-time with the city of Charleston; I work a second job,” he said.

“I have my own one-room efficiency apartment. I have a car; it’s paid for. I’ve only been out for nine months and I’ve got my own place to live — it’s just really amazing. It really is.”

Donate today to continue to support this life-changing ministry.

Prison Ministry Donations needed:
- Personal hygiene products, Towels, wash cloths, t-shirts, white socks, volunteers
The Mercy Mission Thrift Shop/Food Pantry
Former the Sisters of Mercy Outreach, the new Mercy Mission Thrift Shop is now open.
19869 Whyte Hardee Boulevard, Hardeeville, SC. Located conveniently off I-95, Exit 5. Plan to visit during your next road trip!

Clean of Heart Myrtle Beach
In the Myrtle Beach area, there are an average of 492 homeless who go without shelter each night. This new Clean of Heart facility will partner with New Directions in Myrtle Beach to provide laundry and showers to the local homeless population.

Clean of Heart Spartanburg
The Clean of Heart Opportunity Center is a multi-resource center in Spartanburg, South Carolina that will serve clients who are homeless or nearly homeless and provide services and referral of services to assist in recovery and transition.

Catholic Charities of South Carolina saw the need in the Gloverville area to continue the ministry started by Msgr. George Lewis Smith and Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine in the 1940’s. Today, their work is continued through education programs, Our Lady’s Pantry, and emergency assistance.

We were joined in ministry by the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy. The Congregation of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy was founded in Rome, Italy in 1812 by the servant of God, Princess Teresa Orsisi Doria Pamphilii, with specific charism of “Caring for the Sick” To assist Jesus in His suffering, membership is realized through their service in hospitals and nursing homes where they care for the sick. Please join us in prayer of Thanksgiving for the Hospitaller Sisters as they minister to the residents of Carter-May/St. Joseph’s Home.

Catholic Charities of South Carolina opened a new satellite office to better serve clients impacted by disasters in South Carolina. The Georgetown office is located at St. Cyprian Church in Georgetown.

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