

Catholic Charities Connections

January 2026

A Quarterly Newsletter from Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo

We are God's hands providing housing, health, and hope to His children.

Wrapping Up 2025!

4th Annual St. Nicholas Raffle Fundraiser raised over \$62,000 which will benefit the thousands of clients served by Catholic Charities.

Thank you to **107.7FM WRKR Radio Station and Townsquare Media** for sponsoring the 2nd Annual Rocker to the Rescue! Once again, this brought so many community members, donors, and staff together to support Catholic Charities.

In partnership with the Diocese of Kalamazoo, **IGiveCatholic** raised \$1,300 to support Caring Network.

Community Impact & Gratitude Report

As we reflect on 2025, our hearts are filled with deep gratitude for the extraordinary generosity shown by parish communities, partner organizations, and individuals throughout the Diocese of Kalamazoo. Together, you made a profound difference in the lives of youth, families, and vulnerable neighbors served through Catholic Charities.

Caring for Youth at The Ark

This year, the Ark Shelter witnessed remarkable acts of kindness:

- **A new microwave** was provided through a significant discount and support from ABC Warehouse, helping ensure meals and daily life at the shelter are a little easier for our youth.
- **Westwood Church** donated 10 handmade fleece blankets, offering warmth and comfort during the winter months.
- **Several community members** stepped forward to volunteer at the Ark, assisting staff in organizing and improving the donation room.

Our Locations:

Administration

1819 Gull Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Caring Network/Bridges

1441 S. Westnedge
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Ark Services

990 W. Kilgore
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Catholic Community

Center
346 Catalpa
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Bread of Life Food Distribution Center

551 Romence Road
Portage, MI 49024

Baraga Manor

301 Washington Street
Otsego, MI 49078

CONTACT US AT:

(269) 381-9800
or info@ccdok.org

Supporting Young Adults in the YIL Program

Your generosity helped transform new living spaces into homes for young adults in our Youth Independent Living (YIL) program:

- **St. Monica, St. Augustine, and Blessed Sacrament parishes** (Allegan) donated furnishings, appliances, and essential household items to fully prepare four new YIL apartments for residents transitioning to independence.
- Parishioners across the diocese contributed **personal furniture and household donations** to furnish a newly acquired **five-bedroom YIL home**, creating a safe and welcoming environment for the young adults who will live there.



Holiday Basket Program: A Season of Abundance

Through the collective generosity of our parishes and donors, our Holiday Basket Program provided joy, stability, and hope to families in need during the Christmas season:

St. Ann's Giving Tree supported **11 families** with Christmas gifts and essential items.

St. Augustine's Giving Tree sponsored **5 families** and additionally **raised \$655** in Lowe's gift cards, which will directly support the purchase of a new stand-up freezer for the Ark Shelter.

Across the diocese, **46 client families** were sponsored by compassionate individuals, parish groups, and organizations who ensured each family received meaningful gifts, winter necessities, and household goods.

Supporters also contributed **\$3,200 in monetary donations**, helping fill gaps and extend our reach.

And on December 9th, **nine dedicated volunteers** gave their time to collect, organize, and distribute holiday baskets with care and joy.

Thank you to the many **Knights of Columbus Councils**, **St. Catherine's Right-to-Life group**, **St. Tom's Ladies group**, **St. A's youth**, and the many parishes that participated in the Caring Network Playpen Event in support of the hundreds of pregnant and parenting families that Caring Network supports throughout the year.



An abundance of food donations were received to benefit clients at the Catholic Community Center in Benton Harbor and the Bread of Life food program.



We also were extremely grateful to all those that gave through the 2nd Collection throughout the Diocese for their generous contributions amounting to over \$74,000 for Caring Network.

New Programming at the Caring Network

Caring Network kicked off new programming in June 2025 to include FREE classes for ALL. These included topics on Nutrition, Budgeting, Play Groups and Family Fun Time!



Celebrating 50 years of Service

Throughout 2025, we held Open Houses at each of our locations!

Volunteer Lunch at the Bread of Life warehouse



Caring Network/Bridges/Ark Services



A Heartfelt Thank You

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of our parish communities, donors, and volunteers. Your gifts have brought comfort, dignity, and hope to those we serve.

As we move into a new year of ministry, please know how grateful we are for your partnership. Together, we continue to be the hands and feet of Christ throughout our diocese, living out our mission to serve the poor and vulnerable with compassion and love.



Home Heating Assistance Program - 2026

The Catholic Charities Home Heating Assistance Program began on January 5th. Our program provides emergency heating assistance (up to \$300 per household), to anyone in need residing within the nine counties of the Diocese of Kalamazoo which includes: Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren Counties. Donations contributed to the Heating Assistance Fund are for "emergency" heating needs only. The program will run until March 30, 2025, or when our funds are gone.

For more information, including an application to apply to assistance and other utility resources, visit: www.ccdok.org/home-heating-assistance.

Did you know?

- Over 583,000 Michigan households were more than 30 days past due on utility bills last December.
- 40% of these were low-income or senior households.
- In 2025, the Home Heating Program aided 261 households.
- Since 1982, this program has aided 14,400 households with over \$2,485,000 in utility assistance.

Celebrate Catholic Schools Week January 25 - 31, 2026

Our Catholic Schools are amazing!



O Father, we gather in gratitude for our Catholic schools, where faith and knowledge intertwine. Bless our educators, students, and families during this special week, and inspire us to grow in love and wisdom. May our hearts be open to Your grace, guiding us in our mission of service and compassion.

Amen