



# Catholic Charities Connections

April 2026

A Quarterly Newsletter from Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo

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



The Bread of Life Food Program wants to thank Zhang Financial for committing to help combat food insecurity in local communities across the nine counties of the Diocese of Kalamazoo. Last year, this vital program provided food to over 40,000 individuals reflecting its crucial role in Southwest Michigan.

The generous contribution from Zhang Financial underscores its ongoing commitment to fostering community well-being and supporting those in need. The funds continue to enhance food distribution efforts, ensuring that more families have access to nutritious meals!

The Bread of Life food programs would not be possible without PlazaCorp who provides the distribution space in Portage, Michigan for volunteers to sort, pack and box our food. Last year, we distributed over 344,000 pounds of food. There is no income requirement, and food can be accessed without restrictions. Families can receive food monthly at one of our many partner distribution sites throughout the Diocese of home delivery when needed. Thank you PlazaCorp for your loyal commitment to feeding families in our community!



## 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](mailto:info@ccdok.org)**



## 2026 Catholic Charities Home Heating Assistance Program

The 2026 Home Heating Season concluded in March (completing its 44th year!), assisting 297 households with over \$80,000 in emergency utility assistance across the diocese.

The program is integral in helping struggling households in our community defray heating expenses and obtain heating resources to stay warm throughout the winter season. Thank you to the entire Diocese of Kalamazoo for your contribution to this fund during the 2<sup>nd</sup> collection in November. We would especially like to recognize all of the wonderful partner agencies we work with including various chapters of **Saint Vincent De Paul** groups and local partner organizations like **Salvation Army, Christian Neighbors, People Helping People, Catholic Community Center, and Integrated Services of Kalamazoo.**

Thank you to our partners and clients for sharing their thoughts (below) on the importance and impact of the Home Heating program:

*"There are often families and individuals who would fall through the cracks if not for programs like this. Having your heat source turned off in the middle of our coldest season is disheartening and dangerous. The Home Heating Assistance Program allows us to help ensure this doesn't happen. We know that in the end we can count on these funds to assist some of our most vulnerable populations – without a lot of bureaucratic red tape."*



*"The impact of the assistance for me helped me keep my consumers on for my family... it was a very quick process and very helpful in my time of need. Thanks to you all for the assistance."*

*"This winter, we assisted a single mother with two*

*"We see so many (families) each week with either large shut off amounts or they are shut off. Your funds allow us to help with these larger bills and give them more of a cushion...The shut off amounts have been so high this season that our monies alone usually can't pay off the full amount. There have been several young families that were able to get the heat turned back on with your assistance the same day! What a wonderful service you provide for so many. Thank you!"*

*"The Home Heating Assistance Program is vital because it helps families at the exact moment a crisis could leave them without heat. Through our partnership with Catholic Charities, we are able to protect the safety and dignity of those we serve. For families, this assistance means stability and peace of mind during a difficult time, and for us, it is a meaningful way to live out our mission of compassion and service."*

*children who faced an immediate gas shut-off after her work hours were unexpectedly reduced. With limited income, she had to prioritize rent and food, leaving her unable to pay her heating bill. Through the Home Heating Assistance Program, we helped her complete the application and secure emergency assistance before service was disconnected. The support kept heat in her home during the coldest months, ensured her children remained safe, and gave her the stability needed to focus on recovering financially. The assistance provided both practical relief and reassurance that her community was there to support her during a crisis."*

*"The impact that I got from the church helping me was a big relief as it's so hard for families in winter with heat cost. It was a blessing for me to be told I was approved and it helped me get more items my kids needed through the month and helped me with not being worried, "do I pay this bill or not" and "how am I going to make it to my doctor appointments for the month and make ends meet?" I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the help you have provided me."*

## Celebrate National Volunteer Week with us!!

### April 19 - 25



At Catholic Charities Diocese of Kalamazoo, we're deeply grateful for the more than 100 volunteers who gave 5,000 hours of support in 2025 across the nine-county Diocese of Kalamazoo to strengthen our mission, "We are God's hands providing housing, health, and hope to His children."

We have volunteers who help weekly, biweekly, monthly or whenever their schedule is open to make our mission come to life! We have opportunities for anyone – short term, long term, or special projects – we want your experience to be positive and meaningful!

A huge thank you to our student volunteers from local schools and universities for their enthusiasm, creativity and genuine desire to make a difference!



During National Volunteer Week, we ask you to join us in a prayer of thanksgiving for the compassionate and gifted volunteers that share their energy, time and talents to serve the communities we live in.

***"Serving life by caring for others is 'the supreme law' that comes before all of society's rules."***

*~Pope Leo XIV*

If you're interested in volunteering, contact Toni Newell or Vicki Matunas at (269) 381-9800, email [toninewell@ccdok.org](mailto:toninewell@ccdok.org) or [vickimatunas@ccdok.org](mailto:vickimatunas@ccdok.org), or visit [www.ccdok.org/volunteer/](http://www.ccdok.org/volunteer/)  
We look forward to hearing from you and having you join the CCDOK Volunteer Team!

# DISASTER RELIEF

Partnering with Catholic Charities USA, CCDOK has funding to help the vulnerable in our community through disaster relief. Because of this funding, we are able to provide monetary assistance.

If you or someone you know has suffered loss from recent natural disasters, please reach out today. Contact us at (269) 381-9800 or email [info@ccdok.org](mailto:info@ccdok.org)

If you would like to donate to this important cause, please go to [www.ccdok.org/donate](http://www.ccdok.org/donate) and click on “Disaster Relief”. We also welcome any in-kind (material items) donations. These can be dropped off at any of our locations. To see a list of “most needed items”, go to our website at [www.ccdok.org/material-donations](http://www.ccdok.org/material-donations).



We are excited to share that our Outreach Services have expanded. We now have case managers located in Benton Harbor, St. Joseph/Branch counties, Barry/Calhoun counties, and Kalamazoo.

Outreach provides prevention services to youth ages 10-24 who are precariously housed in their own community. Youth and families in crisis can access up to 90 days of prevention and outreach services. Staff travel to the youth’s home in any of the nine counties we serve to provide personalized and intensive services and help connect the family to long-term resources.

Weekly drop-in centers are currently held at the Catholic Community Center in Benton Harbor, the Van Domelen Center and Ministry with Community in Kalamazoo, and at various high schools during the school year.

Go to our website at [www.ccdok.org/ark-services-for-the-youth](http://www.ccdok.org/ark-services-for-the-youth) to see the schedule.

