

Faith in Action

APRIL is Global Volunteer Month. This give us an opportunity to focus on you, the volunteer, and celebrate all you do to help make things happen for others.

Catholic Social Services, like many non-profit organizations, relies heavily on volunteers. The programs offered would not be possible without your dedicated help and initiatives. You help us bring hope to so many, you have been the catalyst in helping us launch much needed programs, and the work you do truly has a HUGE impact on our communities and those we serve.

To truly help you understand the impact each of you has on our community, our clients and guests, and the agency itself, we would like to begin by sharing some unbelievable statistics.

In 2021, our volunteers had a direct impact on well over **80,000** individuals who knocked on our doors. Yet this number is not a complete picture of everyone we served and helped during the year, some received indirect services through parish connections, other organizations, as well as local community services throughout our Diocese. So the next time someone asks you if your volunteer service is worth it, you can direct them to 80,000 plus people you helped through your selfless service.

Speaking of worth—so what is the value of a volunteer? Catholic Charities USA has the answer to that one. The current hourly rate for volunteer services is **\$32.96** per hour. In 2021 alone, our volunteers across the agency racked up well over **11,400** hours. This total represents a dollar value of over **\$375,800**—yes, your reading that correctly. This solidifies the reality that volunteers are truly an invaluable resource, making a major difference for agencies, such as CSS, that rely heavily on both public and private funding to provide much needed programs and services. However, none of this is even remotely possible without your help and the generous donation of your time and talents. You are all more precious than gold to us at CSS.

Easter Prayer

Lord, as we gather together as family and friends;
we invite you once again into our lives. May the
hope of your resurrection color our days.

May the promise of your spirit working in us light
up our lives. May the love you revealed to us shape
our giving. May the truth in your word guide our
journeys and may the joy of your kingdom fill our
homes.

Amen.



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Volunteers:** Make sure we have your updated CORI forms. Email: rsarai-va@cssdioc.org or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.
- **Happy Birthday** to all our volunteers who celebrated a birthday in March and will be celebrating in April. We would love to honor and recognize YOU! Email your name and birthday to rsarai-va@cssdioc.org or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.



SOUPER SUNDAY

Individuals, organizations, groups, clubs and parishes are always looking for ways to make a difference. They look to local charitable organizations and focus their efforts to benefit them.

Holy Name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in New Bedford did just that. On April 3rd, they hosted a “Souper Sunday” which served eight different homemade soups. Asking only free will donations, the parish community focused their generosity to Sr. Rose House in New Bedford.



Sr. Rose House, along with Grace House, provides shelter for both men and women respectively. But Sr. Rose House is not merely a men’s shelter, it also houses our Meal Center (Soup Kitchen), serving a large number of guests each day, seven days per week. On any given day, more than 200-250 meals are served, and during harsher times, the numbers have exceeded 300 meals.



Understanding the full impact the Meal Center has on the community, the Ladies Guild, under the leadership of Jeanine Sasseville, Guild President, set out to raise funds for Sr. Rose—an endeavor Jeanine and her husband, Deacon Gene Sasseville, have been doing for nearly 30 years.

This fundraising activity began with homemade soups.

Members of the guild would make their favorite soups and serve it to the parishioners asking only for donations. Eventually, with health and safety concerns, the soups were prepared at the parish kitchen, with those ladies who had prepared the soups donating the monies to buy the needed ingredients.

For Jeanine, it is an opportunity to share age-old recipes that were handed down from her Grandmother and Mother, with some recipes she has come up with over the years. Since its humble beginnings, this tradition has grown—pausing only because of the pandemic. Originally the Souper Sunday served approximately 100 people, on April 3rd, they served well over 300 people.

In addition to the soups and the extras that generally are served with soups, they held a 50/50 Raffle and a themed basket raffle. Their efforts raised a total of **\$4,145** to benefit the Sr. Rose Meal Center.

Jeanine shared that all this was possible with the help of the members of the Ladies Guild and the parishioners. The Guild does all the planning and shopping and a team of volunteers help with the cooking. Fr. Michael Racine, Pastor, was on hand as well and provided us with the photos. Thank you for your generosity and hard work—your caring is what it takes to make a difference.



Celebrating an April Birthday:

Leslie A.—April 1

Yvonne S.—April 9

Emmet C.—April 12

Nina dS.—April 5

Edward R.—April 11

Latisha S.—April 16

Brianna P.—April 17



Reception Area coverage—answer and direct calls, general office duties—Fall River & New Bedford locations.

Administrative/Clerical help to assist staff in Legal Dept. in Fall River. This role requires basic computer skills. As well as Portuguese speaking interpreters/translators.

Volunteers to help with miscellaneous tasks at our shelters—Cape Cod & New Bedford locations.

Dedicated volunteers to serve at our Meal Center in New Bedford.

Food Pantry Volunteers to help assemble and prepare food items for our guests in New Bedford.

For more information about these or other opportunities contact
Rose Mary Saraiva,
Volunteer Coordinator
at 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111 or via
email at rsaraiva@cssdioc.org



The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers. ~ Terri Guillemets



We ♥ Our Volunteers

VOLUNTEER FOR ALL SEASONS

Catholic Charities USA recognizes volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their service to others. This annual Volunteer of the Year Award, spotlights an individual who exemplifies the mission of Catholic Charities. This year one of our own has been nominated for her extraordinary service and willingness to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Robin M. Muise has been chosen as a finalist in line for this year's recognition. Over the years, Robin has been instrumental in helping provide volunteers to man the over-flow shelter in the winter, and assisting with the care of our guests.



A true "volunteer for all seasons" as Susan Mazzarella coined it, Robin initiated and maintains the raised bed gardens at Sr. Rose House. Carefully tending the crops, as she does with our guests, she ensures that they receive the proper "nutrients" and care to help them thrive. As the sign that hangs in the garden

boldly states: "Planting a seed is believing in *Tomorrow*."

The garden, in addition to providing fresh produce for the Meal Center, is also a source of plantings for neighbors wishing to grow their own food. Her actions are reminiscent of the old Chinese proverb: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Congratulations! Robin on your nomination and making it into the finalist round.

"Situations can change; people can change. Be the first to seek to bring good. Do not grow accustomed to evil, but defeat it with good. — Pope Francis"



FACTS ABOUT APRIL—

- ◇ April 1 - April Fools' Day—April 1st - Look out for those Huntiegowks!
- ◇ April 2 - Ramadan begins at sundown
- ◇ April 10 - Palm Sunday
- ◇ April 15 - Good Friday
- ◇ April 15 - Passover begins at sundown
- ◇ April 17 - Easter Sunday
- ◇ April 22 -Earth Day
- ◇ April 24 -National Arbor Day

- National Poetry Month
- National Arab American Heritage Month
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Jazz Appreciation Month
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Cancer Control Month

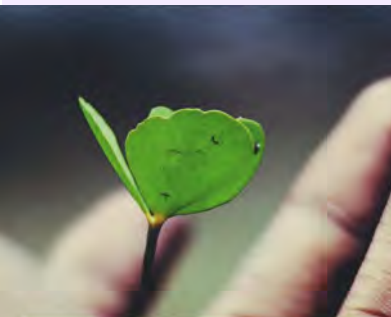
"Just for Fun" Days:

- ◆ April 1 - Sweet Potato Day
- ◆ April 6 - International Pillow Fight Day
- ◆ April 7 - National No Housework Day (count me in!)
- ◆ April 10 - Gopher Tortoise Day (This one belongs to Florida)
- ◆ April 17 - Blah, Blah, Blah Day (Who knew!)
- ◆ April 21 - Go Fly a Kite Day (I'm on it.)
- ◆ April 26 - National Richter Scale Day
- ◆ April 27 - National Sense of Smell Day (time to stop and smell the flowers.)



*Oh, how fresh the wind is blowing!
See! The sky is bright an clear,
Oh, how green the grass is growing!
April! April! Are you here?
—Dora R. Goodale (1866–1953)*





TO GIVE WITHOUT
ANY REWARD,
OR ANY NOTICE,
HAS A SPECIAL
QUALITY OF ITS OWN.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Community in Action -

Easter Baskets:

Our Housing and Shelter program has been on the hunt for Easter Baskets. We currently have 164 children in our program that will be waiting for the elusive bunny. When the cry went out for baskets, the community began to respond. The Pimentel Family quickly went out and bought four baskets. The Polish Women's Club sent in a check, and the Catholic schools responded with pleas of their own.

We have students collecting items, teachers making baskets, and parishes spreading the word from their pulpits. This is the power of community at its best, rallying behind an effort to brighten a child's Easter.

We are truly blessed at Catholic Social Services to have individuals, parishes, organizations, clubs and so much more, who recognize the need and do their best to fill the void. It may seem trivial to ask for something as silly as an Easter basket or candy, but the joy it brings is not in the least bit trivial. I remember as a child waiting for the Easter bunny to bring me a chocolate bunny (baskets were rare back then—the Easter bunny hadn't bought into that concept yet), and the thrill of getting the hollow bunny was pure joy.

Just like Christmas, Easter is a time of rejoicing and recognizing the hope in the Resurrection. It is hope that we cultivate at Catholic Social Services, and if it comes in the form of an Easter basket, so be it. Often the greatest gift we can give to others is the ability to hope for a better tomorrow. There are many Easter promises, but one that resonates with what CSS provides is that God wants good things for us, as we are reminded in Romans (8:28), "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"

We all have a purpose and if at the moment it is to put a smile on a child's face, we not only brighten their day, but those of their family as well. Happy Easter!

ACROSS OUR AGENCY

During National Volunteer Month, we would like to recognize volunteers who are making a difference. When asked if we had volunteers who have served for a long time, and have been an asset at CSS, the following names were provided.

Reception Area: **Dennis Canulla**—volunteering 100% since 2018.

Sr. Rose House: **James Costa**—who served before the pandemic and has returned to help out again & **Luis Rodriguez**—who comes in every day to help serve the guests.

Food Pantry: **Cynthia Baillargeon**—who has been serving since 1997, **Charlotte Smith**—who starting serving in 2003 & **Elizabeth Nichols**—who has been serving since the early 2000's.

Immigration/Legal Department: **Schuyler Pisha** has served faithfully for years.

Donation Room (Gift of Giving): **Nina Amaral**, **Christine Arabasz**, and **Beverly Therrien** have served for many years organizing and preparing donations for distribution at the holidays and throughout the year.

St. Joseph House: **Philip Koch**, **Michael Mecnas**, **Michelle Fitzgerald**, and **Paul Siekman** have served for years.

Santo Christo Senior Group: **Vidalia Medeiros**, **Judith Medeiros**, **Maria J. Franca**, and **Judy Pavao** who have shared over 20 years as leaders and volunteers.

St. Clare's: **Josephine Deegan**—who has selflessly served for over 20 years.

To **ALL of YOU—YOU are all superstars!** Even if your name is not listed—you know who you are. **THANK YOU for being YOU and giving of yourself selflessly.**