

## Faith in Action

**MARCH** is a month of hope and a reminder that we have come through the harsh months of winter. It is the beginning of Spring and regrowth, it also reminds us that we are not totally out of the woods yet.

We have all heard the expression, “in like a lion, out like a lamb, in like a lamb, out like a lion.” March, like life, is unpredictable; and it is this unpredictability that Catholic Social Services is poised and ready to assist with. When life is harsh and unkind, it is agencies such as ours that can be the difference in the midst of life’s storms. But what would we be without the help of **all of you, our volunteers**. In this time of renewal, as we prepare for the promise of Spring, we want to say “thank you” for being the change in the lives of those we serve. For being the promise of tomorrow for those who cannot look past today, and for being the lamb when the lion roars.

**You**, the volunteers, are the hands in the darkness, whether it is working directly with our clients and guests, or quietly behind the scenes. Your kindness and generosity make a world of difference to those we serve. I have witnessed your patience and compassion, I have seen the selfless giving of your time and talent, and your gentle care of those who come to us seeking help. What you do is noticed and notable and could not be accomplished without **YOU!**

We currently have over 125 volunteers serving at our sites, and yet there is always the need for more. But for those of you who currently volunteer, we are honored and in awe of the work you do and your tireless willingness to say “yes.”

As we “March” forward, please know that we are grateful for **YOU** and are truly blessed that you have chosen CSS as the recipient of your time and talent. You are the pot of gold at the end of our rainbow.

### *An Old Irish Blessing*

May your days be many and your troubles be few.  
May all God’s blessings descend upon you.  
May peace be within you, may your heart be strong.  
May you find what you’re seeking wherever you roam.  
May the strength of God pilot us, may the wisdom of God instruct us.  
May the hand of God protect us, may the word of God direct us.  
May thy Salvation, O Lord, be always ours this day and for evermore.



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Volunteers:** We need your help to update your information, Email: [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org) or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.
- **Happy Birthday** to all our volunteers who celebrated a birthday in February and will be celebrating in March. We would love to honor and recognize **YOU!** Email your name and birthday to [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org) or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.



## Why be a Volunteer?

It's not for money, it's not for fame.  
It's not for any personal gain.  
It's just for love of fellowman.  
It's just to send a helping hand.  
It's just to give a tithe of self.  
That's something you can't buy with wealth.  
It's not medals won with pride.  
It's for that feeling deep inside.  
It's that reward down in your heart.  
It's that feeling that you've been a part.  
Of helping others far and near,  
that makes you be a Volunteer!

Author Unknown

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES...

**Portuguese speaking interpreters/translators to assist with clients and help with intakes of new clients for the Legal Dept. in Fall River.**

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

**Administrative/Clerical help to assist staff in Legal Dept. This role requires basic computer skills. Bilingual a plus.**

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

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](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org)



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE...

For Vidalia Medeiros and her small band of volunteers—Judith Medeiros, Judy Pavão and Maria José Franca, that is exactly what is happening. Vidalia leads the Santo Christo Senior Group that meets every Wednesday at the parish hall at Santo Christo in Fall River. The group comes together to share a meal and friendship and it gives them an excuse to get out of the house.



Left to right: Judy Pavão, Maria José Franca, Vidalia Medeiros & Judith Medeiros

The group, founded in 2001, started through an initiative of the Azorean government in collaboration with Catholic Social Services. The main purpose of the group was to create a safe and inviting gathering space for older individuals in our communities. The group, like many of its kind, was established to alleviate loneliness which often can occur when older individuals retire, become widowed, or disabled and find themselves with limited social outlets. For many older adults, this isolation can often lead to a loss of self-worth, depression, or of feeling like a burden to others, and in some cases, leads to thoughts of suicide. It was these concerns that prompted officials and community organizations to respond to the social needs of older adults.

A look around the group gathered at the parish hall quickly lets you know that these groups truly do



make a difference. For the members, which currently number at 26 and come from the Fall River and New Bedford areas, the gatherings are something they look forward to every week. They share a meal, their talents, and their stories. Over the years the group has had various artistic members and currently has two poets: Conceição Pimentel and Carlos Pavao, both of whom are given the opportunity to share their poetry with the group.



Vidalia, like many of the current members of the group, learned of it through the invitation of other members. In Vidalia and Judith's case, it was their mother, Maria Helena Medeiros who is still an active member and one of the original members of the initial group. Vidalia would often join her mother on her days off and in 2008, took over as leader of the group. This vital group and the volunteers that make it happen are truly making a difference every day.



Mrs. Maria Helena Medeiros gets a kiss from one of the members—Maria Jose Franca.

For more information about the Santo Christo Senior Group, call Vidalia Medeiros at 508-330-1942.

### Celebrating a March Birthday:

Patricia B.—March 13

Donna S.—March 29





## VOLUNTEERING IS AGELESS

Volunteering has no age limit. We recently had a young volunteer who needed to complete his service project for Confirmation—one of the Sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Meet Elija Lucas, who along with his dad Rob, came in to help us clean-up, sort through, organize, and prepare coloring books to go over to our Food Pantry. This young man was such a joy to watch, he got right to the task at hand, with his father at his side. Once he completed the project, he asked “What else can I do?” while sporting the biggest smile ever.

We spoke of options that would be an easy project for a 13-year-old. After some brainstorming, he decided he would love to collect crayons and coloring books. So this young man has embarked on a project that is not only fun for him, but will bring smiles to the children he touches with his generosity and kindness. Thank you Elija for choosing to make a difference, and thank you to his family for supporting his endeavors, proving once again that change can begin one person at a time regardless of who you are, how old you are, or how others see you.

*It is the small ideas and inspirations that can begin to move mountains.*

*“Children are more than we think they are; they can do more than we think they can do. All they need is a vote of confidence from grownups, whom they will ultimately replace anyway. Their dream today will become the realities of tomorrow.” — Wess Stafford*



## DID YOU KNOW THAT MARCH IS...

- ◆ Cerebral Palsy Awareness month
- ◆ Irish-American Heritage Month
- ◆ Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month
- ◆ Music in our Schools Month
- ◆ National Athletic Training Month
- ◆ National Bleeding Disorder Month
- ◆ National Celery Month (who knew—must be the green)
- ◆ National Frozen Food Month
- ◆ National Kidney Month
- ◆ National Nutrition Month
- ◆ National Professional Social Work Month
- ◆ National Reading Awareness Month
- ◆ Youth Art Month
- ◆ Women's History Month
- ◆ Season of Nonviolence

### And it has some memorable days:

- ◆ Ash Wednesday—March 2; Beginning of Lent
- ◆ Read Across American Day—March 2
- ◆ World Math Day—March 5
- ◆ Employee Appreciation Day—March 6
- ◆ International Women's Day—March 8
- ◆ Daylight Savings Time—March 13
- ◆ World Sleep Day—March 18 (catch those z's)
- ◆ First Day of Spring—March 20

### And of course:

- ◆ St. Patrick's Day —March 17 (Wishing you the luck of the Irish!)
- ◆ St. Joseph's Day—March 19 ( May St. Joseph always smile upon you!)





## Community in Action -

### ***Catholic Schools Making a Difference...***

The St. Pius X School students in South Yarmouth accepted the challenge to make an impact. The challenge was to see who could collect the most items for their chosen charity or organization.

The winners of the challenge were the students in the St. Elizabeth House, one of four student houses at St. Pius. The students, that range from Kindergarten to Grade 8, adopted the St. Joseph Shelter as their focused organization and charity, collecting much needed items—which they delivered. In addition to the items, they also raised monies for the shelter, and a “dress-down” day netted them \$465. The Parents Friends group also became involved in the project and matched what the students raised, and added additional funds to bring the total donation to \$1000.



These young “philanthropists” proved once again that anyone can make a difference, no matter what age they are. As we read in 1 Timothy, 4:12, *“Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”* These young students have definitely set a great example for themselves, their families, their school and their community.

For more information on how your school can help, call us at 508-674-4681

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### ***“Delivering SMILES!”***



We are all very familiar with the Amazon logo, its distinctive style graces the boxes that are delivered all around the world.

In keeping with their mission to give back to the communities they serve, Amazon has recently partnered with Catholic Social Services, providing much needed items for our programs.

Amazon’s donation will benefit the Food Pantry, the shelters, the HOUSE program, and help us meet the needs of those who come to our doors seeking help. They also provided CSS with much needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), ensuring the safety of our staff and those we serve.



Their generosity, like their service ethic, has gone above and beyond to help CSS meet the needs of our clients and guests. We thank Mandy McDermott and the Team at Amazon for helping to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Corporate sponsors, like our volunteers, are vital to the work Catholic Social Services does in the communities they serve. Thank You!

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## **CORI FORMS**

**Don’t forget to send in your CORI Forms.**

The form and a photo ID can be emailed to [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org); if you choose to mail in the form and ID, please make sure the envelope is addressed to my attention and sent to CSS, 1600 Bay St. Fall River, MA 02724. If you wish to fax it in, also make sure my name is in the attention line and fax it to 508-675-2224.