

MARCH 2023



Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri

Reaching Out. Providing Hope. Changing Lives.

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CCSOMO WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KEN PALERMO

The Board of Directors, Bishop Edward M. Rice of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, and the staff at CCSOMO welcomes Ken Palermo as the new Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri. Ken was hired following the retirement of former Executive Director, Maura Taylor.

Ken has had a career full of serving others. He has worked for the Missouri Department of Social Services, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, and Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri before joining the CCSOMO team.

Ken describes his leadership philosophy as that of a servant leader who abides by the Golden Rule, "do unto others as he would want done to himself." His emphasis as an empathetic leader is one of relationship-building, data-informed decision making, developing strategic initiatives, and complex project management. Ken stated, "I lead by example, from engaging a team in big-picture thinking, to building community and relationships." Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri is excited for the future under Ken's leadership.

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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings, from the New Guy! I hope this newsletter finds you ready to welcome Spring and the joys of Easter.

Early in my tenure here I've come to recognize the needs across our communities are growing in complexity. Whether through housing repair, rent assistance, safe shelter and services for pregnant women, credit counseling, disability services, and veteran's support, our teams stand ready to respond to the call for service. We problem solve, we counsel, we guide, we inform, each focused on those in need or the most vulnerable.

The dignity of the human person, no matter their station in life, and their roles in our families and communities should be protected, supported, and enhanced. Catholic Charities, through the solidarity rooted in being our brothers and sisters' keepers, and the love of Christ, offers us the pathway to administer our ministries as we provide hope and change lives. Your donations, prayers and support drive us forward, addressing those complexities with a servant's heart and accompanying grace.

Our agency's first chapter offers a rich history of story after story detailing lives impacted. I believe there is potential to make an even greater difference in the 39 counties we serve. That potential is driven by the team here and your continued support.

Please feel free to reach out to me at kpalamo@ccsomo.org with anything you would like to share or any questions you may have.

Peace, Blessings, and Courage!

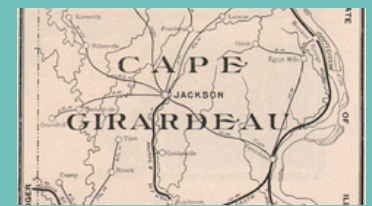
K. Palamo

UPCOMING EVENTS



Knights of Columbus Charity Golf Tournament May 1, 2023

It's almost 'tee' time! Join us for a round of golf at Fremont Hills Country Club (Nixa, MO) to raise funds for CCSOMO. There will be prizes and contests you don't want to miss. Call 417.720.4213 or visit us online at ccsomo.org to sign up, sponsor the event, or to donate.



Mississippi Mingle August 12, 2023

Join us in Cape Girardeau on the banks of the mighty Mississippi for a day filled with activities for the whole family. Enjoy the Knights' famous barbecue, fare from local food trucks, adult beverages, inflatables for the kids, live entertainment, games, and more. Proceeds from this event will help the many programs of CCSOMO.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF LEAVING A PLANNED GIFT TO CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHERN MISSOURI? OUR TAX ID IS 80-0455890.

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LIFEHOUSE CAPE GIRARDEAU

Construction began on February 8 at the corner of Spanish and Park Streets, where LifeHouse Cape Girardeau will call home. Jeremy Rowland, Regional Director, said, "I am very excited construction is underway. RiHC and their team are making excellent progress. I can't wait until LifeHouse Cape is open and serving the women of southeast Missouri."

In the early stages of construction, a lot of the work is below ground, excavating, rock and concrete work, and installing the stormwater structure. Work on footings, foundation walls, and basement excavation is ongoing. Rain and mud have made work challenging, but progress is being made every week.

Rick & Rhonda Cuba, co-chairs of the Capital Campaign Committee, remarked, "Through the grace of God, we have overcome many obstacles to the capital campaign. People in SE Missouri and around the country have opened their hearts to homeless pregnant women and their children through their generosity. The building is under construction, and in 12 months, this beautiful facility will be serving women in our area".

MARDI GRAS BALL FOR LIFE

The good times rolled for the Second Annual 2023 Mardi Gras Ball for Life on February 18 at the Drury Plaza Hotel Conference Center, Cape Girardeau! It was the party of the year, complete with a fabulous dinner, epic raffles, crowning of a Mardi Gras King, and a lively live auction featuring local legend Mitch Miller, who, along with Emcee Mike Renick, entertained the crowd while raising money for the future LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home Cape Girardeau. Capping off the evening was dancing to the live music of Spectrum, St. Louis' premier variety dance band.

Just as Mardi Gras is a celebration before the Lenten season of anticipation, this night was a celebration as we anticipate the February 2024 opening of LifeHouse, a residential program for homeless pregnant women aged 18 and older. LifeHouse is not just a shelter but a comprehensive program with the goal of making a better life for the mother and child. Mardi Gras Ball for Life is an annual gala with all funds raised supporting LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home Cape Girardeau. We would like to thank this year's sponsors, including RIHC Contracting, Saint Francis Healthcare System, CPU Inc, Drury Development Corporation, Drury Southwest, Beussink, Hey & Roe CPA's, Knights of Columbus Council 1111, Don Carlos of Cape- Jackson-Chaffee, FGR Mechanical, Red Letter Communications, Steven & Debra Frye, and Kevin & Susan Stanfield. With our sponsors, those who donated or purchased raffle tickets online, and the attendees, Mardi Gras Ball raised \$129,950 for LifeHouse Cape Girardeau!





**Consumer Credit
Counseling Service**
OF THE OZARKS
Financial Wellness. Financial Freedom.

Financial Wellness. Financial Freedom is the motto of Consumer Credit Counseling Service of the Ozarks (CCCS) which became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri five years ago. We have grown to include Springfield, Joplin, West Plains, and Monett offices. The relevance of the services provided by CCCS has never been greater than they are today. In years past, unmanageable debt was primarily due to high credit card balances. Adding medical debt, student loans, and payday loans means over 60% of working Americans live paycheck to paycheck.

In 2022, CCCS provided rental and utility assistance to 1140 unique households, helped 37 families resolve mortgage delinquencies, provided financial literacy education to 488 participants, and assisted 59 families with bankruptcy education and counseling. Our Debt Management Program (DMP) has helped 573 clients pay over \$5.8M in credit card debt.



All of the services provided by our credit counselors have a holistic financial center. The journey from financial crisis to financial wellness starts with education. CCCS staff walks beside each client, preparing them for the future by teaching them the benefits of SMART goals, helping them to understand a credit report, tenants' rights and responsibilities, and preparing a budget to gain control of their finances and money habits. Experience has shown if a family in financial crisis is provided with financial education, tools, and counseling, focus can be placed on other issues to strengthen the family. We help clients take ownership of their money rather than debt controlling their future.

As a nonprofit agency, CCCS differs from for-profit organizations driven by the bottom line. Our HUD and NFCC-Certified Counselors teach how to avoid predatory lenders, the power of an emergency savings account, and how to make positive impacts on credit scores. Holly Wilson, Director of CCCS, teaches budgeting classes at LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home. She asks the women to talk about their relationship with money. Her goal for them is to start creating habits that will ultimately lead to familial wealth instead of poverty. When a Mom understands the harm of payday lending and the risk to her financial future, we have a light bulb moment. If clients can get out of debt, buy a house, pay it off, and leave it to their children upon their death, they have shifted the financial paradigm. Imagine homelessness ending in one generation!

CCCS serves struggling families throughout our Diocese by providing education and e tools to ensure clients are stronger, more resilient, and better able to adapt to changes in the economy. As we expand our education program, CCCS would like to provide financial education to all parishes, but we need Financial Literacy Ambassadors. If you are a retired teacher, banker, or financial advisor, please call Holly Wilson at 417-889-7474.

Like CCSOMO, Consumer Credit Counseling Services relies on the generosity of donors to provide services and resources to our neighbors in need. Everyone deserves *Financial Wellness. Financial Freedom.*



USE THE QR CODE PROVIDED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHERN MISSOURI, HOW TO SUPPORT THIS MISSION, OR HOW TO JOIN US AT ONE OF OUR EVENTS.



SPRINGFIELD | CAPE GIRARDEAU | JOPLIN | SIKESTON | POPLAR BLUFF | VAN BUREN

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RANCHO ROUNDUP

Despite the chaos and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, one community in Missouri banded together to create a beacon of hope for those in need. Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri opened the Rancho Emergency Shelter and Housing Program in Springfield on November 1, 2020, providing shelter for homeless families and women needing respite care. Originally intended to stay open through April 2021, the program's success and the generosity of O'Reilly Hospitality allowed it to continue providing shelter and services to low-income families through January 31, 2023!

In addition to offering low-barrier sheltering, the Rancho program included a housing component to ensure families had a path to permanent housing. And the results speak for themselves: with the help of on-site case managers, 57 families were successfully housed.

The Rancho Emergency Shelter and Housing Program wasn't just a place to sleep and eat for residents - it was a true community. Over two years and three months, Rancho was home to 115 households, comprising 163 adults and 183 children. The program's residents enjoyed three meals a day, access to a clothing closet, hygiene products, on-site laundry facilities, and various activities, from toys and games to computers and crafts. The staff and volunteers went above and beyond to create a family-friendly environment, holding birthday parties, baby showers, holiday celebrations, and family game nights and organizing water games during the summers. The team made sure that life was as normal as possible for the kids.

Living at Rancho was a safe haven for COVID-positive residents allowing them to quarantine in their units and receive the support they needed to recover. This non-congregant sheltering helped to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in the unhoused population, highlighting the program's commitment to the health and safety of its residents.

But the program's success wasn't just due to the hard work of the staff and volunteers - the entire community rallied around the cause. Local churches and organizations donated everything from hot meals to bedding to job search assistance. Yet, special thanks are due to Immaculate Conception Church for making Christmas merry by sharing gifts from their Angel Tree toy drive, and purchasing air conditioning units for staff offices; to St. Agnes School for adopting Rancho, where they regularly volunteered and held supply drives. Thanks also to St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton's St. Vincent de Paul for supporting Rancho every month; and to the PCCWs and St. Vincent de Paul from Holy Trinity, Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph the Worker, and more that regularly prepared dinners for residents.

It's impossible to list every individual and organization that contributed to the success of the Rancho Emergency Shelter and Housing Program, but it's clear that the program's impact was felt throughout the community. Thanks to the support of donors, friends, and volunteers, CCSOMO was able to provide hope and help to families in need during some of the most difficult months of the pandemic. And as we move forward, the spirit of the Rancho program will continue to inspire and uplift us all. Thank you for helping us in our mission of Reaching Out, Providing Hope, and Changing Lives.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES:

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of the Ozarks (CCCS)

Developmental Disability Services

Disaster Response & Preparedness

Homeless & Homelessness Prevention Services

Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program

Home Repair & Rebuilding

Housing & Financial Counseling

LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home & AfterCare Program

Pregnancy & Parenting Support Programs

Prison Re-Entry Housing Assistance

Purpose Home Repair & On-the-Job Training

SNAP Enrollment Assistance

Support Services for Veteran Families



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

The second annual Mardi Gras Ball for Life, held on February 18 at the Drury Hotel and Conference Center, is a fundraising event for LifeHouse Cape Girardeau modeled after Dinner for Life in Springfield. A group of dedicated volunteers formed the Mardi Gras committee in October 2021, and the Mardi Gras Ball for Life took shape.

Committee members Rhonda Cuba, Flo Johnson, Becky Talley, Becki Essner, Brittney Lee, Maria Gates, and Diana Conroy created the event from start to finish. Calling upon their connections, the women obtained exciting raffle items, captivating live auction experiences, and nominated three Mardi Gras King candidates. They enlisted local talent, Chris Conroy as Emcee and Jim Riley as auctioneer-entertainer, and brought in Spectrum, a dance band from St. Louis.

The inaugural Mardi Gras Ball for Life, Feb. 26, 2022, was a successful fund and friend-raiser. It helped educate and engage the community about the need for service to homeless pregnant women and how the LifeHouse program will fill that void.

Michelle Bradshaw and Bunny Kohlfeld joined the committee for Mardi Gras 2023, and once again, the volunteer-driven Ball shone in glittery gold, green and purple. Local legends Mike Renick and Mitch Miller led the festivities, which included dinner, raffles, a live auction, crowning a new King, and dancing to the sounds of Spectrum. None of this would have happened without the hard work of volunteers, including students from CCM at SEMO, CCSOMO staff and family members from Cape and Springfield. Every volunteer had one goal in mind, and that was to support the mission of bringing LifeHouse to Cape Girardeau. It truly takes a village to run an event, and when Mardi Gras Ball for Life returns in 2024, we'll celebrate LifeHouse Cape's opening. Laissez le bon temps rouler!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Dinner for Life Committee

Teaching Basic Auto Repair/Maintenance to LifeHouse Residents

LifeHouse Gardening

For information on volunteer opportunities please call Jill Guise at **417.720.4213**