

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHERN MISSOURI

MARCH 2024



FROM DREAM TO REALITY: LIFEHOUSE IN CAPE OPENS THIS SPRING!

Over two years since ground first broke in October 2021, LifeHouse Crisis Maternity Home in Cape Girardeau will open to residents later this spring. Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, a beautiful new building on the banks of the Mississippi will become a haven to homeless, pregnant mothers, enabling them to build a life for their children surrounded by love, support, and encouragement.

A project years in the making, LifeHouse in Cape Girardeau has the capacity to house 15 mothers. The building will also hold office space for our Maternal & Family Program staff as well as a courtyard, classroom, and community room for the residents to enjoy.

We are excited to bring the life-changing services provided by LifeHouse to southeast Missouri! Please join us at LifeHouse on Saturday, April 20, from 2-4 pm for an Open House and tours of the facility.

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KEN'S COLUMN

As I write, snow is falling, reminding us of winter's continued grip. I recall Ash Wednesday Masses in my youth with my family, slogging through snow that usually remained through the start of each Lenten Season in Chicago. I always thought "Yes, snowy now...but Spring is coming!" Renewal at its best and as Jesus intended.

The same "waiting for Spring" recollections from my childhood are further triggered by the aroma of lilac bushes that lined about half of my daily walk to school. Again, renewal as He intended. Why the focus on youthful recollections? And renewal? Because each shaped me, just as they shaped you. We all have memories from childhood of family and friends.

Each helped to mold us, and the Catholic Charities Team is about to continue molding others with the opening of LifeHouse in Cape Girardeau.

Building on over ten years of experience at LifeHouse in Springfield, our teams are poised to profoundly impact those in need and vulnerable on the eastern side of the Diocese. Our Springfield location helped to write the life chapters of 138 babies, their mothers, siblings, and families. Each chapter included all the support and guidance to change lives literally, one baby and one mother at a time. Each was offered a renewal, friendships, and a sincere sense of family.

Beginning in early April, more chapters will be written, and more molding will occur in Cape Girardeau. I pray often that Catholic Charities will continue to create memories and experiences for each baby and mother so that each will recollect the chapter Catholic Charities helped to write, smile, and feel His rediscovered warmth in their hearts and minds. Will there be a child's memory of snow falling in Cape? Yes! Will a lilac bush bloom in Spring on the LifeHouse grounds, furthering that child's feeling of renewal for them and their mother? I pray so!

Your continued support, shared across all of our programs serving the vulnerable and in need, helps to write those chapters, trigger those renewals... offer hope, and change lives.

Peace, Blessings and Courage!



Ken Palermo, Chief Executive Officer



UPCOMING EVENTS

BISHOP'S MASS FOR CCSOMO

March 23, 2024

Join Bishop Rice for Mass at St. John Henry Newman Center in Cape Girardeau on Saturday, March 23. Mass will be live streamed across the Diocese on our Facebook page.

LIFEHOUSE IN CAPE GRAND OPENING

April 2024

Join us to celebrate the opening of LifeHouse in Cape Girardeau! Grand opening events will include a public Open House on Saturday, April 20 from 2-4 pm. Please join us at 535 Main St. for this special event.

MISSISSIPPI MINGLE

May 11, 2024

Mississippi Mingle is moving to the Spring! Join us in Cape Girardeau for a day of good food, live music, and family fun on the banks of the Mississippi. Check out our website for how to get involved.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS GOLF TOURNAMENT

June 24, 2024

Join us for a round of golf at Fremont Hills Country Club (Nixa, MO) to support LifeHouse.

DINNER FOR LIFE

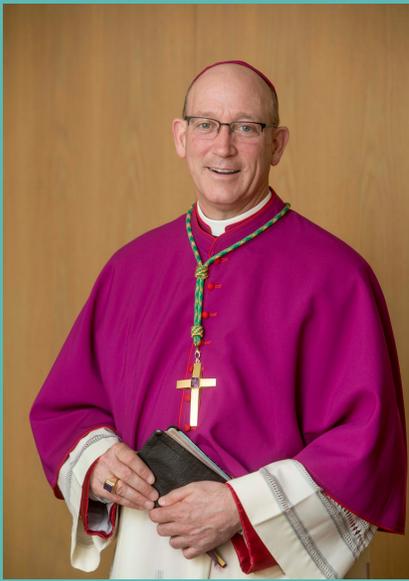
September 21, 2024

The annual gala supporting LifeHouse in Springfield - a can't-miss night of dinner, live entertainment, the famed dessert auction, and so much more!

LIFEHOUSE GALA - CAPE GIRARDEAU

November 2, 2024

Formerly Mardi Gras, this dinner gala supports LifeHouse in Cape Girardeau. Join us for a night of good food, live auctions, dueling pianos, & more!



A WORD FROM BISHOP RICE

Dear Friends of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri,

As we enter into the 40 days of Lent, the Church asks her members to take part in fasting and abstinence on certain days. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are the two days of both fasting and abstinence. In addition, all Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence from meat. Those between the age of 18 and 59 are expected to fast, which includes one full meal and two smaller meals. Those ages 14 and older are called to abstain from meat.

Of course, the 40 days of Lent are not just about doing “without.” In prayer, fasting, and almsgiving we're called to put our faith into action. In prayer, we look for those opportunities to attend an extra Mass during the week, or participate in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, or the Stations of the Cross, and to benefit from the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Our approach to fasting can certainly include fasting from treats and meat on Fridays, but it does not need to be limited to such things. Could we also not fast from “screen time,” on television, social media, or time spent on the computer? Could we not fast from gossip, slander, or mean speech (and thought)? By denying ourselves, we discipline our thoughts, our words, and actions with the goal of being more Christ-like! Worthy endeavors, particularly during the Lenten Season.

Almsgiving is highlighted as a Lenten pillar and other works of charity that benefit the neighbor. Our youth of the Diocese will participate in the 2024 Lenten Youth Project to raise funds to combat hunger in southern Missouri by supporting five food pantries throughout the Diocese. Many of our parishes have the Rice Bowl Program to help on an international scale. Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri is our official charitable arm of the Diocese of Springfield Cape Girardeau. Could you make a commitment to skip that cup of coffee at your favorite place and forward that money to Catholic Charities? Could you fortify your pro-life commitment by making a donation to LifeHouse? Maybe you could forgo going out to dinner one evening and designate that money to Catholic Charities for its Veteran’s Program, for example, or another service ministry of the agency.

There are so many creative ways to embrace the three Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. As you consider what the upcoming 40 days of Lent will look like for you, I invite you to join me on Saturday morning, March 23, in celebrating the **Bishop’s Mass for Catholic Charities at 8 a.m. in the St. John Henry Newman Center, Cape Girardeau.** If unable to join us in person, the Mass will be live streamed. I pray this will be your best Lent ever!



BISHOP’S MASS for Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri



**Saturday
March 23
2024**



**St. John Henry Newman Center
512 N Pacific St.
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701**



8 AM

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are in the Season of Lent: a very special, grace-filled and challenging time of the year. It is a time during which we surrender ourselves more and more to God so that “Christ may be formed” in us through the work of the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:19). Like John the Baptist says, “He must increase and I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). Through the threefold means of prayer, almsgiving and fasting, we try to eradicate our ego and sinful tendencies and let the Christ in us increase. Of course the process of becoming Christ is a life-long one, but during Lent we put in our best efforts and hasten that process.

While practicing fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, we will do well to keep in mind Mahatma Gandhi’s words: “Before the throne of the Almighty, man will be judged not by his acts but by his intentions. For God alone reads our hearts.” We should not flatter ourselves and boast about doing what any sinner can do. A sinner can fast, pray, weep, mortify the flesh, but this a sinner cannot do: remain faithful to the Lord.

Pope Francis reminds us that Lent is a time for reflection... a time to look inside ourselves and do a little heart-and soul-searching. He says it’s also a time to look outward beyond ourselves to others who suffer injustice, poverty, and oppression... and to open our hearts and make sacrifices for those in need.

Lent opens our hearts to our brothers and sisters in need and to the pain of the world. The second Vatican Council says, “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (GS 1). Whatever we do, we do out of love for the Lord and for our brothers and sisters. Make sure that you get the maximum from this Lent. I wish each of you a Holy Lenten Season.

The Very Rev. Shoby M. Chettiyath, V.G.

HAPPY (LATE) VALENTINE’S DAY FROM LIFEHOUSE IN SPRINGFIELD!



**LifeHouse is currently home to 15 women, 4 toddlers, and 13 babies.
To date, 138 healthy babies have been born to resident mothers!**

COUNTING THE UNCOUNTED: POINT-IN-TIME COUNT SHEDS LIGHT ON LOCAL HOMELESS POPULATION



Each January, Point-in-Time (PIT) counts are conducted in communities across the United States. These counts aim to establish an understanding of the size of the homeless population in a certain area and are mandated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The numbers are used to determine the amount of federal funding distributed for housing assistance and other programs.

Outreach workers and volunteers spread out across the state to count the number of people experiencing homelessness in Missouri. People who are unsheltered as well as those living in emergency shelters and transitional housing are counted as experiencing homelessness. PITC participants not only survey the individuals and families, but they also bring essential supplies to distribute throughout the day.

Angie Webb, Director of Housing and Veterans Services for Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, explained “At CCSOMO our mission is to *improve the lives of the vulnerable, meeting local needs*. Staff participating in the PITC aren’t just out counting people, they are providing those they encounter with needed items such as hygiene kits, hand warmers, clothes, water, and food. **We strive to show kindness, support, and love to those who are typically alienated and overlooked by society.**”

Sixteen CCSOMO staff members participated in the PIT Count on January 24. “By participating in the Point-in-Time count we can work alongside other agencies in these counties with similar goals to get a look at the number of people experiencing homelessness,” shared Chief Programs Officer, Cindi Kopel. “These numbers are then used to help address the housing availability and services needed.”

The annual initiative is a crucial part of the effort to respond to local needs as it provides tangible data that drives a wider community response and allows for agencies like CCSOMO to track progress toward the goal of ending homelessness.

Webb emphasized the importance of the data collection: “The data can be used to help demonstrate to policymakers at state and federal levels the need for funds to help in our communities. Everyone talks about wanting to solve the ‘homeless problem’, but until we can demonstrate the size of the need, legislators don’t know how to begin addressing the funding.”

The following day, January 25, ‘Homeless Connect’ outreach events were held across the state to connect homeless individuals to quality-of-life services like veteran benefits, employment information, legal aid, medical services, etc.

Case managers represented CCSOMO’s Housing and Veteran Services at outreach events in Joplin, Springfield, and West Plains. At the Joplin event, Veteran Services Case Manager Chris met with a former client who now works for one of the homeless shelters in town. He credited CCSOMO and Chris for helping him to reach this point of self-sufficiency in life.

CCSOMO’s programs and services are designed to serve the most vulnerable populations in the 39 southernmost counties in Missouri. The Housing and Veteran Services programs provide case management, financial assistance, and re-entry housing assistance (among other services) for those experiencing homelessness or those on the brink.

Early next year, CCSOMO will open Mountaintop Homes, a 42-unit residential complex that will provide safe and affordable housing for mixed-income families and homeless/at-risk veterans. A partnership with O’Reilly Development, Mountaintop Homes will not only foster a place of belonging but also the supportive services needed to achieve housing stability. A Catholic Charities case manager will work on-site in Mt. Vernon directly with veterans to identify needed resources and aid them on a path of long-term success.

LIFEHOUSE GARDEN OPENS MARCH 25

With the warming temperatures comes the opening of the LifeHouse in Springfield garden! The garden will open on Tuesday, March 26. LifeHouse is blessed to have the dedicated team of volunteers who make this wonderful resource a possibility. Not only is the garden a beautiful part of our grounds, it consistently produces a bounty of fresh berries, tomatoes, squash, herbs, and more for our chef, JR, to use in his delicious meals. What better way for LifeHouse residents to learn about the importance of nutritious eating than by cooking with home-grown produce! Thank you to all those who keep our garden alive and thriving year after year.



We're always looking for volunteers to join our garden team!

PROGRAMS

Construction Services

Developmental Disability Services

Disaster Services

Housing Services

Maternal & Family Programs

Veterans Services

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

GET INVOLVED WITH LIFEHOUSE IN CAPE GIRARDEAU!

When LifeHouse in Cape Girardeau opens its doors, the pregnant women and young children who call it home will receive the stability, support, and resources needed to create a brighter life for themselves and their children. Part of their success will require a dedicated team of volunteers, so if you're looking for a way to get involved in the community, look no further!

LifeHouse needs volunteers to fill various roles, from providing transportation, rocking babies, tutoring, and cooking to security and handyman services. Do you have a life skill you could teach? Could you run errands or help chaperone outings? Would you adopt a room or make welcome totes for new residents? If organization is your thing, would you help maintain the clothing closet? The list goes on, and there is a job for everyone!

Volunteers truly are at the heart of our ministry, and we need you to join our team. Our volunteers say that it's a privilege to be a part of LifeHouse. We view it as a privilege to have you be a part of our mission.

We have a variety of individual and group volunteer opportunities available. If interested, please contact Jill Guise at jguise@ccsomo.org or 417-720-4213.



STAY CONNECTED!



Scan with your phone camera for more information about CCSOMO, our programs, & how to get involved.

