

Catholic Charities Connections

Summer 2017

Welcome to Catholic Charities Connections, sharing stories of *Providing Help* and *Creating Hope* for the people of your community. Spend just a few minutes today and learn how we work to empower individuals with the capacity and desire to improve their quality of life. We know your time is valuable and with our e-news, our aim is to provide you with succinct updates and links to the work of Catholic Charities, which are made possible by your support.

Program Profiles

Substance Abuse Team Provides Compassionate Solutions to Addictions



In the past, addictions were perceived as a problem solely effecting an individual or a family, with no community impact until it resulted in crime. Today, communities are coming together to respond to the opioid epidemic with an increased understanding that an addict could also be a victim. What's happening right next door could affect anyone, including our children and grandchildren, and it's **our** problem.

Seventy-five percent of heroin addicts start their addiction with prescription pain killers. The amount of pain medication sold in Lenawee County in 2014 could provide every resident, adults and children, 40 doses of an opiate-based pain medication. In Jackson County last year, there were 51 deaths due to heroin overdose. Addictions are claiming victims in many ways. Many are incarcerated, some struggle daily, and others have lost their life because of drug use. As the opioid epidemic has intensified over the past few years, it has put a significant strain on communities and families.

Catholic Charities has been in the business of helping people for over 50 years. In the past few years, substance abuse counseling has developed into a core program of the agency - helping individuals combat their addictions. Our current Substance Abuse staff of 14 highly-qualified therapists is led by Program Manager, Kiernan Gamel. Kiernan joined the agency in 2006 and has been providing substance abuse treatment services for 30 years. Kiernan and his team work with over 3,000 people every year both in the community and prisons throughout the state, creating pathways to long-term sobriety through individual and group counseling. In many cases, the team works closely with other agency programs such as foster care and counseling, to develop a multi-disciplinary treatment approach where a therapist, case manager, recovery coach, and clinical supervisor collaborate to determine the best course for treatment.

To continue as a leader in substance abuse treatment services, we are now certified to provide Narcan, a lifesaving treatment in cases of overdose. Further, we have moved towards a Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) model to treat our opioid dependent clients. This model has a higher success rate and includes partnering with community medical doctors or clinics.

What we excel in is saving lives, one person fighting an addiction at a time. “The best part of my job is hearing the hope in the voices of the people I work with,” says Kiernan, “the hope for a drug free tomorrow, the hope for the future of their loved ones, and the hope that they will be part of that future.”

Child Foster Care Services Grow to Help Address Opioid Crisis

Jesus said: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. (Lk 5:31)"

When a parent is sick it affects the whole family especially the children. As the opioid crisis rises in this country so does the strain it is putting on the foster care system, and the Foster Care Program at Catholic Charities is no exception.

A decade ago, about 20% of the cases in which a child needed foster care were related to substance abuse by the birth parents. Today, roughly 80% of children in foster care have parents dealing with addictions. It is not uncommon in these cases for one birth parent to be an addict, while the other parent has died from a drug overdose.

The impact on children in these situations is tragic. Today’s more potent combination of illicit drugs has elevated the number of cases of sexual abuse, severe neglect, domestic violence, and unclean living conditions. Many children are living in an environment of constant fear. Severely traumatized children will undoubtedly suffer even more loss and trauma along the way as they enter the foster care system.

Catholic Charities now averages 40 children at any given time in our foster homes, up from a dozen just a decade ago. We provide these children safe placement with caring, trained foster parents willing to open their homes and hearts and allow the children to enter their lives. In addition to meeting every-day needs of the children, foster parents often provide transportation to needed medical, dental or therapy sessions. If not for these generous caregivers, our foster children may never know the security and support they need to learn to trust again. Foster Parents provide children with safe, loving care that affords the birth parents a chance to work toward putting their lives back together.

[Read about One Family's Story in our 2016 Annual Report](#)

10 Tips to Reduce Stress



Ten ways of living to reduce stress and improve your quality of life. The following tips are things that have been found to be very helpful to a lot of people. The key is to find what works for you. There is no right or wrong answer to what relieves stress. Enjoy!

1. **Breathe.** Regardless of what you are doing or where you are, breathing deeply can improve concentration, decrease anxiety, relieve stress and provide an often much needed burst of energy. The idea is to breathe from the diaphragm. To make sure you are doing this, place your hands on the sides of your ribs and feel them expand as you breathe deeply. In through your mouth, out through your nose. And make sure that your exhale is slightly longer than your inhale.
2. **Laugh.** There is nothing better than a laugh that not only reaches your eyes but comes from your belly at the same time. Laughter releases endorphins which makes us feel better. Laugh as often as possible. The best kind of laughing is the kind of laughing that is at ourselves when we don't take life too seriously.
3. **Drink lots of water.** Everyone knows that you are supposed to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. That can be tough to do without some help. Try to spruce up water with a flavoring or simply with a wedge of lemon. You may also find that you drink more if it is not super ice cold. Reusable bottles are great to help you get as much water as you should and it's good for the environment.
4. **Sleep.** Sleep is a necessity, not a luxury. The number of hours of sleep needed varies for everyone. Some function well on 5 hours while others need 9 to feel refreshed. Regardless of how many hours you need, try to have at least one day a week where you turn off your alarm and wake up naturally, whenever that might be. Did you know that human beings are wired for sleep? Our bodies expend constant effort to stay awake so restorative sleep is imperative for optimum functioning.
5. **Sunshine.** Everyone can agree that we tend to feel better when the sun is shining. Sunshine provides our bodies with vitamin D which is very important. Excessive sun exposure or tanning can be dangerous so sunscreen is very important. Full spectrum light bulbs or sun lamps that can give the vitamin D that is needed are good on gloomy days or in the winter. Need a quick pick me up? Sit outside for a few minutes in the middle of the day to just soak in the rays. Combine this with deep breathing, which feels so good.

6. **Massage.** Touch is an incredibly important part of stress relief, healing and soothing. We get more physical touch when we are babies than at any other time in our lives so as adults, it is very important to be purposeful in this area. A friend once advised that all single people should treat themselves to a monthly massage to get that human contact we need as social beings. Massages can be expensive so an alternative may be to trade foot or back massages with a partner or close friend. Quid pro quo can work well.
7. **Stretching and muscle tension/relaxation.** Ever spend a long time in one spot only to suddenly realize how tense your muscles have been? Try to consciously relax the muscles in your face, neck, shoulders etc. several times a day. Many people hold tension in their shoulders so when they start hurting you know it is time to take a break, walk around, stretch and again, breathe. Notice when you are lying in bed at night, do you have to consciously unclench your fists to relax? Progressive muscle relaxation exercises can help release stress and create a sense of calm.
8. **Have fun.** Life is short so why not enjoy it? Balancing your life between the "have to's" and the "get to's" can help to keep things in perspective. Doing things you love and that make you happy can help you stay grounded and balanced. Having something to look forward to and creating a "count down" to that event can help keep you moving forward. Many people find that donating their time or working with their favorite charity gives them a sense of purpose and renewal.
9. **Owning a pet.** Studies have shown that owning a dog significantly decreases the risk of heart attack and dramatically improves the ability to heal in patients who have suffered a heart attack. Petting a dog decreases the stress hormone cortisol, lowers blood pressure, lowers heart rate and increases the pleasure hormone oxytocin. It is good for the person AND the dog. Research shows that the dog gets just as many benefits as the person when being petted. Did you know that the purr of a cat has healing properties because of its vibration? So the next time you get a headache, try putting a cat on your head.
10. **The 3 M's: Move: Meditate: Motivate.** Move: One minute of mindfulness or focused attention on something other than electronics is equivalent to a 40-minute nap! Meditation or mindfulness meditation is not for everyone however, just taking a moment to clear your mind and look at something pleasing to the eye can be the energy boost you need. Motivation is so incredibly important when trying to accomplish tasks. Positive affirmations can be a huge help. Place your favorite motivational sayings or quotes in key areas where you will see them often. Say your goals out loud as if they have already happened and see what the power of suggestion can do for you. Staying active is key to being healthy. Do little things that keep you moving like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, parking a little further away from the store entrance in a parking lot or using commercial breaks to walk around your house. Every little bit helps so no matter your fitness level, keep moving.

Volunteer Corner

Thank you to the amazing volunteers from the Chrysler Proving Grounds!



It is truly a blessing for all of us at Catholic Charities to have the help of the wonderful volunteers from Advanced Emission Team at Chrysler Proving Grounds. These talented, hard-working volunteers were able to complete a great deal of the maintenance needed on our Lenawee Child Advocacy Center. They made upgrades to the interior and exterior of the facility. We are so grateful for their dedication to our agency and special skills they provide each year during their service efforts. In 2016, they helped with remodeling our new Francis Street offices in Jackson and have patched, repaired, and painted several of our facilities over the years.

Volunteer Wins 2017 Senior Citizen of the Year



Pauline O'Shea was presented with the award by the Jackson County Department on Aging at the Fair for her work with our Transportation services. She has been driving seniors to medical appointments for seven years and has logged close to 50,000 miles. Pauline is happiest volunteering and she often goes the 'extra mile' spending time with clients and helping with the little things, making our clients feel like they are her #1 priority.



[Learn how you can volunteer with Senior Transportation Program](#)

Upcoming Events

Watch for the Grand Opening of our Lenawee County Child Advocacy Center this fall!

The Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Lenawee County will provide services for children who have been involved with sexual or severe physical abuse or have witnessed violent crimes. Imagine these vulnerable children having to talk about such traumatic experiences to various agencies over and over again. As with our Jackson County CAC, we will now have a coordinated effort in Lenawee County between the Prosecutor's Office, law enforcement, Child Protective Services, and the Child Protection Team at U of M. At the Child Advocacy Center, the child tells their story once to a trained forensic interviewer who knows the right questions to ask in a way that does not re-traumatize the child. We then take a multi-disciplinary team approach, working with all these child abuse professionals, to determine the best course of action for the child. Catholic Charities is blessed to be a part of this work to ensure the abused children in our communities have a voice and get the help they need to begin their path to healing.



Join Us for an Evening Of ...

Faith in Action
Benefit Dinner



Featuring our very own ***"Men in Black"***
Fr. Tim MacDonald & Fr. Joe Krupp

NEW DATE
THURSDAY
OCTOBER 5, 2017

Learn how to become a
member of Catholic Charities'
St. Teresa of Calcutta
Giving Society



St. Rita's Catholic Church, Clarklake
\$30/person - Mass @ 6:30 pm (optional) - Dinner @ 7:15 pm
Call Jackson: 517.262.0466 or Lenawee/Hillsdale: 517.879.0599
Email: info@CatholicCharitiesJLHC.org

[Learn more about our Benefit Dinner October 5](#)

Thank you for taking the time to learn how we at Catholic Charities *Provide Help* and *Create Hope* for all who come to us in need regardless of faith or ability to pay. We couldn't do it without your support.

Sincerely,

Sue Lewis
Executive Director

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