



CARING BEYOND BELIEF

Fall 2024

MISSION IN MOTION

We have moved from summer to fall and are quickly approaching the end of the year. Reflecting on our year gives us a moment to pause and look at what we have accomplished, and what is coming.

The Dispute Resolution Center has named Angela Smith as the new Program Director. Angela comes to the program with previous experience working in a Dispute Resolution Center and in program oversight through her previous role as the Domestic Violence Program Director in Schoharie County. The Dispute Resolution Center serves Chenango, Delaware, Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties providing mediation services for most types of conflicts and is open to everyone regardless of income level.

Two of our programs, Child Care Support Services and the Child At Risk Response Team (CARRT) submitted renewals for the accreditations that they hold. These processes are a lot of work and are a mark of excellence in their field. We are very proud of the quality services that these teams provide. The work that they do is important to children and families and to our communities.

Our agency launched our long awaited newly designed website in September. It is a fresh and attractive site that is user friendly. A lot of work goes into designing a website. This is the second one that I have been involved with for the agency. It takes a lot of planning from the leadership team and once the outline is set up, it takes a lot of work from someone on staff. Vicki Fatum, one of the Program Assistant's in the Oneonta office took on the task of setting up and updating the website for launch. She worked on this with the designers for several months.

Catholic Charities of Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties received funding to assist homeless individuals and families in Otsego and Schoharie Counties through the Solutions to End Homelessness Program (STEHP). The STEHP funding will provide for Rapid Rehousing with a Case Manager assisting with locating appropriate housing and providing support to help with housing stabilization.

In December, Catholic Charities will close our Delaware County Mentoring Program. The program has struggled to recruit volunteer mentors since COVID-19 ended in 2021. With a lack of volunteers available, the funding was re-allocated. The existing Mentors and Mentees, along with those on the waiting list were notified about the change in the program. A final group event was held at the end of October. We are sad to see this program end. We have seen a lot of positive growth from both the children and adults over the course of the program.

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Our Summer Food Service Program bid farewell to our long term Volunteer Coordinator at the end of the season in August. Nadine Stenson from the First United Presbyterian Church was among those who had the first meeting with us regarding offering the summer lunch program to the Oneonta community. She worked tirelessly to recruit volunteers, organize inventory, deliver meals, sit with families at the park, work with the staff, and schedule volunteers. I am not sure how we will move forward without her but I am so grateful for all that she has done to help the program be as successful as it has been.

The Warming Stations in Oneonta and Warnerville opened on November 1st for the season to run through March 31st. Both of these stations are open overnight offering a warm place to sleep during the cold weather for those experiencing homelessness. The warming station is a first come, first served Code Blue shelter offering additional supports including the ability for guests to do a load of laundry, shower, get a warm beverage and something to eat, and get assistance from the Catholic Charities staff utilizing the programs offered at the agency and completing various paperwork or applications necessary to get needed services. Check out our wish list on the back page.

In reflecting on all of that, I am proud to work for Catholic Charities and proud of all that the staff does to assist those in need. They offer help in many forms for things we do not even realize that they have done. The staff offer compassion, hope, peace, and love to those who come to us in addition to food, shelter, heat, and other assistance in getting their needs met.

SPOTLIGHT ON PROGRAMS

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Summer Food Service Program in Oneonta shifted gears this year to respond to the changing needs of Oneonta. The program served at two locations coinciding with the summer swim lessons at Greater Plains Pool and Wilber Park Pool from July 8th-August 23rd. Both sites were non-congregate meal sites allowing children and parents to take meals to go either before or after their swim lesson. Many families who were not in swim lessons were also able to utilize the program, driving or walking up to take meals. Through the summer, with the generous help of volunteers and the First United Presbyterian Church in Oneonta, the program served 2221 meals to children.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER

In November the Dispute Resolution Center will feature a training for its program mediators. This will mark the first in-person training mediators since before the COVID-19 pandemic. The 6-hour training will be about Agreement Writing, and will be held in Oneonta, NY. Kim Reisch, of the Center for Dispute Resolution will conduct the training. Kim facilitates a variety of restorative practices including Peace Circles, Restorative Circles, Juvenile Restorative Conferences and Re-Entry Circles. She is a UCS certified Basic Mediation Trainer, provides advanced training to mediators and provides training in Facilitating Restorative Practices and Communication and Conflict Management.



AGING LIFE SERVICES PROGRAM

The Aging Life Services Program in Otsego County connects adults (age 60+) with services to foster an independent and safe home environment. Our social work component helps identify service needs, provides home visiting, aides in developing a long-term care plan covering issues related to health, disability, finances, transportation, housing, familial concerns, legal questions, socialization and in-home needs. We work with community organizations to assist other needs that may also arise as well. Our wonderful volunteers assist with grocery shopping, laundry, light housekeeping, transportation and friendly calling/visiting.



VIRTUAL COURT ACCESS NETWORK (VCAN)

The Virtual Court Access Network (VCAN) terminal is a centralized station where clients can access a number of virtual court resources. Clients can complete required Do-it-Yourself (DIY) forms, send or file court documents electronically, use Teams to join a meeting with their lawyer and more. The VCAN terminal hosts a confidential computer with internet access and a printer/scanner/copier. The VCAN terminal is accessible during office hours, but is closed Tuesdays and Thursdays. Walk ins are accepted, but appointments are preferred to ensure terminal availability. Appointments can be made by calling (607) 432-0061 ext. 105.



CHILD CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

Over the past year, the Child Care Program, through funding from the Office of Children and Family Services, was able to work with child care providers to target opportunities for quality improvement. Programs always strive to be the highest of quality, however these quality improvement materials can be costly for programs to include in their budget while also maintaining daily operating costs, and unexpected expenses. These funds allowed programs to fulfill program improvement goals without having to dip into their bottom lines.





With the help of Cornell Cooperative Extension and Cooperstown Central School District, some plants were donated to the Cobleskill office to plant in the garden for the Food Pantry.



In May, our Child Care team celebrated Child Care Appreciation Day by delivering gift bags and baskets of treats to all the registered and licensed child care programs in Otsego County!



Thanks to a generous donation from NYSEG, Catholic Charities of Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties will be able to continue to assist those in need with basic needs such as housing, utilities, heat, transportation, and food.



In August, Emily, from Super Heroes Humane Society, stopped by our office with a donation of pet food from their "Feeding Pets of the Homeless" pet food drive! Approx. 120 lbs of pet food was donated by the community! We thank Super Heroes Humane Society & their partner, Roots Public Social Club, for including us in this event!



On June 20th, Andrea from our Cobleskill office and her client Gloria attended the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany's "Gala for Good". Sister Betsy Van Deusen shared Gloria's story with the audience. We were honored to have Gloria attended this event with Andrea.



Our Aging Life Volunteers continue to meet the needs of our clients in new and different ways. In August, volunteers helped one of our clients clear out her shed and move her items into a new space. Pictured from left to right are volunteers Sue Klosheim, Sue Cotter, Joan Kast & John Mancuso.



Our Schoharie County Domestic Violence Program received 100 hygiene kits from SUNY Cobleskill students! These students hosted a hygiene product donation drive and filled bags with items for survivors of Domestic Violence!



In August we bid our long-time Summer Food Service Program Volunteer Coordinator, Nadine Stetson, a "Happy Retirement" after 11 years of working with the program! She will be missed, but we wish her well in this new stage of her life!



Every year on a special day, we wear purple to honor survivors of DV and remember the lives lost. On wear purple day, the Cobleskill Catholic Charities staff showed up!

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OTSEGO AND SCHOHARIE COUNTIES WARMING STATION WISH LIST

Catholic Charities will provide two community warming stations between November and March for individuals experiencing homelessness to have a warm place to go overnight. The warming stations are located in Otsego and Schoharie Counties.

If you are interested in making a donation, we are accepting the following donations for the warming centers in both counties:

- ✓ non-skid socks, hats and gloves
- ✓ ready to eat/shelf stable foods and grab and go foods
 - ✓ juice, bottled water
 - ✓ coffee, tea, hot cocoa, cream, sugar, sugar substitute
- ✓ personal hygiene products - travel size soap, deodorant, toothpaste, shampoo, lotion
 - ✓ toothbrushes
 - ✓ towels and washcloths
 - ✓ personal packages of tissues

