



# 2021 Report to the Community



**Catholic  
Charities**

SERVING CENTRAL WASHINGTON

# A Year of Challenges – Filled with Hope

**A**t Catholic Charities, 2021 was a year of challenge, and a year filled with Hope. The requests for assistance with rent, food, utilities, and other essential needs continued to skyrocket. Thanks to our generous donors, the needs were met as they came. We have more than 350 employees throughout Central Washington who continue to serve those in need of rental assistance, child care, food, diapers, counseling, and so much more. Our employees have their own motivation for the work they do, but it's all with the same goal: bringing hope to life for those most in need.



At Catholic Charities, we envision communities where people are treated with dignity and respect; where their basic needs are met. They are empowered to enhance the quality of their own lives. Many of our services are provided at no cost to individuals in need, or expenses are offset through grant funding and local donations. The breadth of our services includes: providing basic needs, affordable housing, education for new parents and childcare providers, foster youth and young adult services, behavioral health counseling, and senior services.

At Catholic Charities, we exist as a social service outreach of the Catholic church, however, we don't ask about faith, we ask, "How can we help?" We serve all those in need in communities throughout Central Washington.

Many clients who came to our door in 2021 had run out of hope. That's why the work we do is so important. We meet them where they are and walk with them on every step of the journey. We help them see the light at the end of every dark tunnel and provide the resources needed for tomorrow.

We don't do this work alone. You are part of that hope. Your prayers and generosity show others that someone cares. Thank you for being that small light of hope for someone in need.

*Darlene Darnell  
President & CEO  
Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington*

*Motivated by Christ's love, we bring hope to  
life, especially for those most in need.*

# Helping Those in Need . . .

## Generous Donors Continue Aid Throughout Pandemic

The pandemic created many needs. Lost jobs, reduced hours, mounting medical bills, and rising child care costs increased the burden on many families. Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington responded by teaming up with the Diocese of Yakima to create the Light of Hope Fund.

Since then, the generosity of our donors has enabled us to award \$323,000 in direct aid to individuals and families struggling to make ends meet. **The Light of Hope helps by:**

- Paying past-due rent and utility bills
- Providing gas cards to help with transportation to work and medical appointments
- Distributing gift cards to purchase essentials such as cleaning supplies, diapers, coats, and work clothing
- Assisting with unexpected expenses like car and home repairs

### Here are some of the ways the fund has restored hope:

*Anna and her two granddaughters were living in a homeless shelter when she reached out for help. Light of Hope funds paid the application fee for their apartment and a gift card and vouchers from St. Vincent Center helped Anna get household essentials for her new home.*



*Henry is a disabled veteran who recently lost his wife. When his furnace quit working between paychecks, he was hunkered down in his home bundling up in blankets to keep warm. With help from his family and a Light of Hope grant, he was able to have the furnace repaired and restore heat to his home.*

*A single mother of 4, Jenny fell behind on her bills when she contracted COVID early last year. The long-term effects of the virus have caused debilitating joint pain. Jenny's case manager helped her secure rent assistance and she received a Light of Hope grant to help her catch up on past-due bills.*

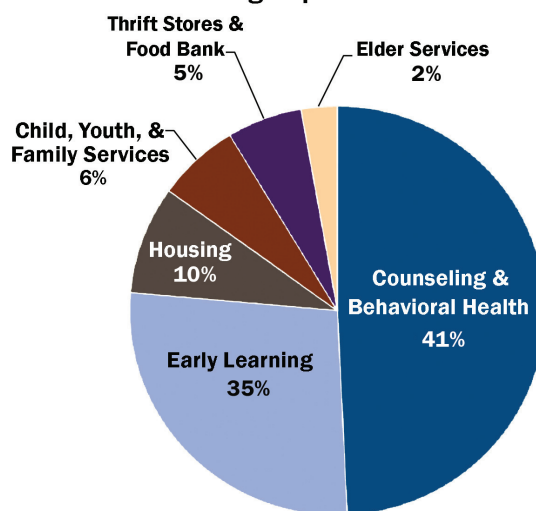


While the Light of Hope Fund was created to help those affected by the pandemic, there are always people around us who are struggling to provide for their families. Light of Hope grants don't solve the problems faced by those in need, but the grants do bring hope by showing that we care.

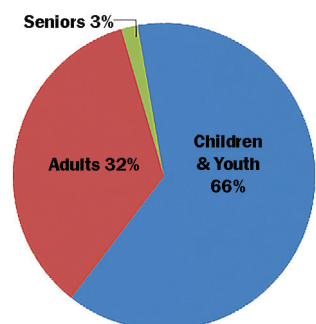
## Did you know?

Catholic Charities brings hope to 50,000 individuals in Central Washington by Embracing People, Strengthening Families, and Empowering to Thrive.

### Funds Used to Bring Hope to Those Most In Need



### Clients Served



Learn more at [www.hopetolife.org](http://www.hopetolife.org)

# St. Vincent Center/Early Learning

## Innovative Play Center at St. Vincent Center Allows Children Playtime While Caregivers Shop

The newly designed children's early learning play space at St. Vincent Center thrift store in Union Gap was created in partnership with the Catholic Charities early learning team. This innovative integration of shopping and learning started with a children's center idea, and it evolved into a Play & Learn area while caregivers shop. Designed to increase access, awareness and impact the lives of those furthest from resources, especially those we serve at St. Vincent Center.

This on-site experience provides a safe and inviting play space in the center of the store. Caregivers can ask for a craft activities kit to take home or complete on-site to entertain children while they shop. The intent is to keep children's clothing, shoes, toys, etc., inside and adjacent to the play center for better visual selling.

Tina Sherry, store manager, is working diligently with her team to showcase items for sale inside the play stations.

"We intend to start a facilitated Play & Learn group in the store one day soon. In the meantime, we will continue to offer creative displays, adding a TV monitor for looping early education videos, shared program information, and music. We are currently doing a simple store facelift by securing the donation of paint and adding shelving to display child art and merchandise. These changes will create a more warm and welcoming shopping experience," she said.



## Housing Services

### A+ for Education at Catholic Charities Housing Services

Although the pandemic has brought about many challenges, it has also brought new hope and opportunities for the families we serve through Catholic Charities Housing Services.

In 2021, we reached more than 300 children between the ages of 0-5 with the rollout of "Creative Kids," where the mission centers around early childhood education and school readiness. In addition, we actively serve more than 600 youth between the ages of 6-13 with a monthly distribution of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) oriented activity kits to help children learn while having fun.



Through the partnership with a generous donor with a passion for early learning, Catholic Charities provided early learning activities through home visits and Play & Learn groups to children living in 11 Catholic Charities Housing sites.

*(continued next page)*



## Housing (continued from previous page)

*Maria and her two children, Yuretzi and Cristian, love the weekly activities in Creative Kids at Cristo Rey housing site. “I look forward to Wednesdays, so I can attend the Play & Learn Group. While the children play, I can get away from house chores, relax, and engage in learning with my daughter Yuretzi. Cristian learned so much at Creative Kids and is now attending preschool — he practices counting numbers while playing with blocks. The teacher gave me activities to do at home with my kids. They have learned to share and be more organized. My kids are getting ready for kindergarten.”*

Nearly 92% of all high school seniors residing at Catholic Charities Housing Services sites complete high school. That is higher than the state graduation rate and all the school districts in



Central Washington these students attend. Supported by the Catholic Charities Resident Services team, post-secondary education becomes a reality; 64% of these graduates continue to college or a trade school.

*Dalay is so thankful for Catholic Charities’ support as a graduating senior. “I was not aware of many of the options I had to further my education; I thought after high school, I was done,” she said.*

*With the help of Catholic Charities Housing Services, she participated in college tours and learned that she could go to college. She chose Washington State University, not knowing a global pandemic would hit, and the challenges would be even more significant.*

*“The educational specialist from Catholic Charities encouraged me, regularly checked in, and motivated me to continue. I knew I was not alone. My mom was a single parent struggling to pay bills because she lost her job during COVID, increasing stress at home. Catholic Charities helped with food gift cards and rental assistance. I have someone at Catholic Charities who believes in me—I am so thankful! With my major in Psychology and a minor in Spanish, I hope to help support students like me one day,” she said.*

## Rent Assistance is Lifesaver for Many

**C**atholic Charities Serving Central Washington provides hope to those most in need. One way we made this happen last year was through assistance to families who fell behind with rent due to the pandemic or other life situations.

*Kelly is a single mother whose daughter was diagnosed with cancer. To get the necessary treatment, she and her daughter traveled back and forth to Seattle Children’s Hospital for an extended period. Kelly was unable to work because her main priority was getting her daughter the lifesaving treatment. During this time, she fell behind on rent. Catholic Charities was able to help Kelly with rental assistance during her daughter’s treatment. This assistance helped relieve Kelly’s stress of losing her home during her daughter’s recovery.*

We are privileged to provide hope by helping people remain safely in their homes. Without this assistance, many of these families would not have been able to repay the debt and may have found themselves homeless.

**In collaboration** with partner organizations and CARES funds, Catholic Charities facilitated essential rental assistance to more than 400 individuals and families like Kelly who have struggled to keep up with their rent throughout the pandemic this past year. This assistance supported more than 2,400 months of rent.

# Behavioral Health

## Everyday Hero

### Case Manager's Work is Personally Gratifying

**E**nrique Zalvidar was a young college graduate when he starting working for Catholic Charities 24 years ago. What's kept him is his passion for doing the right thing.

The “right thing,” according to Enrique, is walking with children, youth, and adults when it matters the most. Enrique is an Everyday Hero for his exceptional talent in helping people of all ages navigate some of life's toughest challenges – trauma, grief, depression, anxiety, anger, rejection, behavior problems, and mental illness.

“It's personally gratifying to be serving those most in need and doing God's mission. This is my calling, my purpose to serve others and provide guidance and make a difference in people's lives,” he said.

While his professional training and years of clinical experience guide his work, Enrique believes that the most important things he does are meeting people where they are, validating what they are feeling, and putting himself in their shoes. “Then, and only then, can I begin to help by providing some tools that they can use.”

One of the tools at his disposal are the snacks he keeps in his office, the candy on the window sill, and the trips for ice cream or a treat. “If you leave a good taste

“This is my calling, my purpose to serve others and provide guidance and make a difference in people's lives.”

— Enrique Zalvidar

in someone's mouth, the words you offer them mean so much more,” he said, with a smile.

Hang out with Enrique for a while and you'll quickly learn the difference he makes in the lives of his clients. They often migrate back to his office to give him an update on their lives and offer heartfelt appreciation for his professional help.

And, in fact, Enrique maintains that the positive connection filled with hope is the most valuable thing he offers his clients. “Teen-agers in particular know, they can read you,” he says. “When they look at you



and say, “You really care, don't you?” you know that what you have to say is making a difference.”

To make a difference, you can't focus on fixing a problem. “We can never forget that we're dealing with a human being. So, if they like fishing, that's where you meet them. When they trust you, really believe that you care, then you can begin to help them.”

Enrique and his family immigrated to the United States in 1980, fleeing extreme poverty and a violent civil war in El Salvador. “I faced my own demons and I learned that I couldn't run from them. I learned that when you forgive, healing begins.”

That realization is what gives Enrique passion for his work. “Yes, I help the people I work with, but more than that, they help me.”

# Volunteer Services

## Volunteers are the Heart and Soul of Catholic Charities

**W**hat needs do volunteers fill? That question is as diverse as the individual dedicating their time. Some volunteers offer a few hours a week, and others have a passion for full-time service. From delivering Valentine baskets to home-bound seniors, walking the journey with a pregnant mom, overseeing food bank distribution, assisting low-income families to qualify to purchase a home, teaching employment skills to foster youth, or using accounting skills, all play a critical role within Catholic Charities.

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**More than 600 volunteers  
engaged in 2021**



**Nearly 103,000 Volunteer Hours**



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A common thread joins a recent high school graduate, a grandma born and raised in Central Washington, and a recent university graduate: They are among the volunteers who have given significant full-time service to Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington.



**Cade** serves at the St. Vincent Center Food bank. After graduating from high school, he dedicated an entire year to volunteering with Catholic Charities. Cade thrives on making a difference with his outreach to the homeless and elderly.

**Ruth** served through AmeriCorps at Catholic Charities Housing Services by providing pre-purchase counseling to support very low-income families as

they prepare to purchase a home. Ruth knows the value of homeownership for families — a way out of poverty. When families work together in mutual self-help to build their homes, they have at least \$25,000 in equity by the time of closing.

A family of five had been living in one room in a run-down apartment. Working with Ruth, they improved their credit, got down payment assistance, and bought a home. The result? Immediately the children's grades began to improve, and they were so proud to bring friends to their home. Their teenage son had started hanging out with peers in a gang; his interest in gangs fell away when they moved into a safe neighborhood. He developed positive friendships and even joined a baseball team.



Ruth's journey did not stop with a year of service; she decided to build her career as an employee of Catholic Charities Housing Service and continues to bring hope to life for future first-time homeowners.

After **Kaitlyn** graduated from St. Joseph University, she joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest as a volunteer with Catholic Charities. Kaitlyn's passion was to help foster youth learn the skills needed to enter the real world after high school. Kaitlyn developed trusted relationships with youth who had spent most of their life in foster care. She taught them skills to succeed in a job and offered internships at Yakima Maker Space, Union Gospel Mission, St. Vincent Center, and Carroll's Coffee. Caring adult mentors taught them customer service skills and the basics of having a job — setting them up for success.

***We love our volunteers — they are the heart and soul of Catholic Charities!***

**Yakima**

5301 Tieton Drive, Suite C  
Yakima, WA 98908  
509.965.7100

**Tri-Cities**

2139 Van Giesen  
Richland, WA 99354  
509.946.4645

**Wenatchee**

145 South Worthen Street  
Wenatchee, WA 98801  
509.662.6761

**Catholic Charities  
Housing Services**

5301 Tieton Drive, Suite G  
Yakima, WA 98908  
509.853.2800

**St. Vincent Center Thrift Store  
and Food Bank**

2629 Main Street  
Union Gap  
509.457.5111

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**Our Mission**

*Motivated by Christ's love,  
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**Visit our website: [www.hopetolife.org](http://www.hopetolife.org)**