

# FRIEND,

As I write this letter, the leaves have begun changing colors and the wind has started getting a bit brisk with fall upon us. I can still recall the strong summer sun warming me and hundreds of my Catholic Charities colleagues as we cheered on the O's at Camden Yards to celebrate our centennial together. And, we all have special memories of the return of the Dragon Boats Races and Festival in September, with crowds gathered in the heat for an exciting day of competition and community (great photos within!). Yet, seasons change.

Seasons change, but the mission of Catholic Charities remains the same. That is certainly shown in the stories in this issue of Blessings. Our continued dedication to envisioning improved spaces and programs for our community shown through the coverage of our Gallagher Day Center and our Intergenerational Center. Our relentless focus on feeding our hungry neighbors is emphasized with our new Protein Ministry partnership. And, our commitment to creating opportunities for all can be seen in the update on the RICH Juice Bar and our Cherry Hill Town Center.

We appreciate your continued commitment as well, from season to season and year to year. In these colder months, your love and compassion for Catholic Charities and those we serve keeps us warm.

Peace,

*Bill McCarthy*  
William J. McCarthy, Jr.,  
Executive Director



FALL 2023

# BLESSINGS

100  
YEARS  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL



## A THOUGHTFUL SPACE FOR A MEANINGFUL PROGRAM

### ANDRÉ WEST-PEARSON GOT GOOSEBUMPS

as he walked into the new home of Gallagher Services' Meaningful Day Program a couple of weeks before it opened. The new furniture, the open space, the thoughtfully designed bathrooms, the lighting – he loved it all, and he knew the guys would, too.



“It’s not like a day program. It’s more like a hangout spot in a college dorm,” he said.

The “guys” West-Pearson was thinking about are residents of a Gallagher Services home for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He supports their day-to-day needs, getting to know their interests, preferences, abilities and limitations.

They were regular visitors to the Gallagher Services Community Center in Timonium, Md. Beginning in October, however, they will begin to use this gleaming new space, less than a mile away.

As West-Pearson toured through the new center, he envisioned new possibilities for the men he supports.

“I can see how this is going to benefit the guys. It’s not a warehouse or an institution,” he said. “Here, they can do their thing, and I can still make sure everyone’s safe and engaged.”

### THE SPACE CHANGES, THE MISSION DOESN'T

Gallagher Services' Community Center on Pot Spring Road opened as a medical day program in 1991. Over time, it evolved to meet changing needs, with a constant focus on the people it served. The Meaningful Day Center, which shares a building with Catholic Charities administrative offices on Dulaney Valley Road, marks a next step in that evolution.

Planners thoughtfully designed and built the new center over more than two years to support and encourage participants to live the life of their choice. For some people, it will be a meeting point before they head out for the day. Others may spend the day at the center, working on art projects, making snacks in the café, or using the building's chapel, gym or cafeteria.

That kind of flexibility is essential to giving people choices, said Alyscia Smith, director of Catholic Charities' Meaningful Day Programs. The building's design prioritizes health and safety, but it also offers open areas, movable furniture and rooms that can serve multiple purposes.

West-Pearson knows it will take time to adjust to the new space.

“The change may be difficult,” he said. “But I see a lot they’re going to like! The guys can’t always tell us what they want, but we can see it.”



# The Triumphant Return of the Dragons!

On September 9, Catholic Charities' Dragon Boat Races returned to the Inner Harbor. The day was filled with friendly competition on the water, followed by a fun festival with local

musicians, food and drink vendors, and family activities. Thousands attended to watch the races, and our presenting sponsor, M&T Bank, emerged as this year's champion. The clients of

Catholic Charities also came out on top due to the community support for the special event.



## RETURN OF THE DRAGONS

• DRAGON BOAT RACES •

SEPTEMBER 9 | INNER HARBOR

2023





# A Fresh Squeeze at the Cherry Hill Town Center



**IF YOU ASK MICHAEL BATTLE ABOUT THE DRINKS AT RICH JUICE BAR**, you may end up learning a little more about Cherry Hill, the South Baltimore neighborhood where the shop is located.

Nearby Veronica Avenue is often called VA, inspiring VA Rose, a refreshing combination of watermelon, ginger and lime juice. Cherrydale Apartments, a 10-minute walk from the shop, led to Cherrydale Delight, a cherry-strawberry-banana-almond milk smoothie. And Carver Gold, a pineapple, mango, mint concoction, reflects the name of the street where Battle's mother raised him – and her heart of gold.

RICH Juice Bar opened this summer in the Cherry Hill Town Center, which Catholic Charities owns and operates, bringing organic cold-pressed juices and plant-based offerings to an area that has long lacked access to fresh, healthy food. From its launch, neighbors and news crews have filled the store.

"The community has been receiving it, supporting it, promoting it," he said. "We have people coming from far and near just to experience the RICH Juice Bar."

## EMPOWERING YOUTH

RICH stands for Restoring Inner City Hope and is also the name of the nonprofit Battle and his wife started in 2011 to support local young people. The nonprofit offers an after-school curriculum that includes entrepreneurship, financial literacy, health and wellness, and more.

The idea for the juice bar emerged from Battle's own health journey and his observations of community need.

"We're in a food desert," he said. "So, I wanted to create a place where people can come and get fresh fruits and vegetables and healthy, affordable foods."

The 10 youth employed this summer picked up lessons on nutrition and business as they juiced fruits and vegetables. And to ensure the shop remains youth-driven, the juice bar shifted its hours to after-school and weekends as the summer ended.

## EXPANDING THE RELATIONSHIP

Battle also works for Catholic Charities as the property manager of the Cherry Hill Town Center. He didn't intend for his worlds to collide, but his plans for the juice bar aligned seamlessly with the agency's vision for the Town Center.

"It just happened organically," he said of the decision to locate the business there. "The Town Center, that's the heartbeat of Cherry Hill. I've been going there since as far back as I can remember. That community has my heart. I take this very seriously, and to have someone like Catholic Charities to take it just as seriously – it's just a great relationship."

# How can the Intergenerational Center serve the community? Just ask.

**BEFORE ALEXANDER HAMILTON ELEMENTARY OPENED IN 1982**, Drusilla Bunch attended planning meetings and thought a lot about what she wanted the new school to include for her children.

Three decades later, she is attending planning meetings and thinking a lot about how the now-empty building could serve her and other older adults in her West Baltimore community.

"Baby Boomers – we live a long time, and there's a lot of us!" she said.

Catholic Charities bought the former school this year, with plans to design an Intergenerational Center offering a variety of programs for young children, teens, working-age adults and seniors. Bunch is among the residents who weighed in on plans at a series of community gatherings. Their input will shape how the center responds to a spectrum of community needs and interests.

## ENVISIONING THE POSSIBILITIES

On a warm afternoon, a stream of people arrived at the future Intergenerational Center, drawn by free snowballs and the chance to review plans for the building. The center is not scheduled to open until 2025, but the prospects it offers were clear.



Drusilla Bunch

Angel Collins was excited about expanded facilities for teens and children, like her 4-year-old.

"A lot of kids don't have anything to do," she said. "They have no childhood around here."

Deira Whitaker had commuted downtown to train as a certified nursing assistant, and was thrilled by the prospect of workforce development programs closer to home.

## GETTING ACTIVE

Bunch was reflective about the former school's evolution. She moved to the area in 1974 and had three

children when she learned of plans for the new school. She had been frustrated by the lack of local gifted-and-talented programs, so she "started getting active."

She watched the building take shape, brick-by-brick, and helped foster a school community that educated her children and six grandchildren before it closed in 2021.

In recent years, most of her activities had been in other neighborhoods, but she resisted family members' calls to move.

Bunch grew excited as she reviewed the proposed designs, considered the prospects of re-engaging with neighbors at the center.

"I'm so glad I can start getting active again in my own neighborhood," she said.

# Giving more to offer a well-rounded meal

**RICK BERNSTEIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES** started more than two decades ago as he unpacked loads of produce from the back of his Volkswagen at Our Daily Bread Employment Center, the farm's first distribution site.

Over the years, First Fruits Farms, a volunteer-driven operation that donates fresh produce to local organizations serving needy families and individuals, expanded its acreage and outreach. But its connection with Catholic Charities held strong, and farm staff thought of the agency as they considered how to grow the Protein Ministry.

The Protein Ministry, which adds eggs, dairy and meat to the farm's distributions, emerged from a simple concept.

"We view this as trying to provide a complete package to people who are hurting and in a tough spot," Bernstein said.

### A HIGH-END OPTION

At first, meat distributions were relatively small – just what First Fruit Farms could butcher from the two or three steers raised on their property. Over time, the farm's capacity grew to as many as a dozen

steers, producing around 5,000 pounds of beef. The Farm distributed that meat to Catholic Charities programs and churches responding to needs in Baltimore City and beyond.

"It can make a tremendous difference for a lot of people," said Erin Adams-Ports, First



Fruits Farms' director of development. "The one thing we all hear from our partners is that there is such a shortage – not only for fresh produce, but also for protein."

Hoping to grow the Protein Ministry, Bernstein connected with Roseda Black

Angus Farm, a family-owned cattle operation in Baltimore County. Roseda sells to a largely high-end market – local grocery stores and restaurants. But Roseda's owner, Ed Burchell, understood local needs and agreed to provide beef at a wholesale cost. The partners quickly turned to Catholic Charities for additional support.


### FILLING BELLIES

Today, the three organizations – First Fruits Farms, Roseda Black Angus Farm and Catholic Charities – are jointly raising funds to support the Protein Ministry's meat distribution.

As the collaboration launches, about half the beef is going to Catholic Charities programs, including Our Daily Bread Employment Center, My Sister's Place Women's Center and My Brother's Keeper. The rest is going to churches that receive First Fruits Farms produce, rounding out the options available for meals.

"This is about getting more high-quality protein into the bellies of people who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford it," said Ashley Valis, Catholic Charities' chief operating officer. "The guests who come and eat at our programs are going to love it."

Please join us for an evening




**100 YEARS OF HOPE AND PROMISE**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2023**  
5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.  
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront  
700 Aliceanna Street, Baltimore, MD 21202  
**COCKTAILS · DINNER · DESSERT**

On November 9, Catholic Charities will be celebrating 100 years of hope and promise at its Annual Celebration event at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel. Maryland's largest private provider of human services is commemorating a long history of helping neighbors in need, and the evening will highlight that history along with community honorees and "Mission in Action" employee awardees.

Questions? Call 667-600-2029.  
**RSVP by October 30, 2023 and purchase tickets at [cc-md.org/annualcelebration23](http://cc-md.org/annualcelebration23)**



**LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND'S SELLINGER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT HAS NAMED BILL MCCARTHY, AS THE 2023 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR.**

The award honors business executives who embody Loyola's Jesuit commitment to community and service in the leadership of their organization.

McCarthy will be honored at Loyola's annual Business Leader of the Year dinner Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel in Maryland.


**Catholic Charities Christmas Festival at the Basilica of the Assumption**

**December 14, 2023 | 7:30 – 9 p.m.**

Featuring the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra  
Including Morgan State University Choir  
Dessert and Wine Reception following the concert.

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
409 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

To purchase tickets, please visit [cc-md.org/christmasfestival2023](http://cc-md.org/christmasfestival2023)



**CATHOLIC CHARITIES**  
CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

*Catholic Charities is the largest multi-service charitable organization in Maryland. Serving all, we provide innovative programming to accompany people on life's journey including assistance to those living in poverty, individuals with developmental disabilities, immigrants, older adults, families and children in crisis.*

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