

making every penny count

PHILANTHROPY REPORT | DECEMBER 2022-JANUARY 2023

Grateful for the Gift of Time



Despite the food, friends, family and good cheer, the holiday season can be stressful for people trying to handle the “extras” the season demands, like shopping, cooking, and creating joyful gatherings, all while juggling the care of an aging loved one. There is nothing like being “home for the holidays,” but for many of Maine’s seniors, it’s becoming much harder to live independently at home.

“A friend called me because she knew I worked at Catholic Charities and her parents needed help, but they weren’t sure where to turn. Her father has dementia, and her mother was overwhelmed as the full-time caretaker,” said Belinda Hallett, assistant director of Behavioral Health Network-North. “I knew our SEARCH program might be able to help.” SEARCH pairs seniors across eight Maine counties with local volunteers who can commit a few hours a week providing companionship to older neighbors. The volunteers might play cards, enjoy lunch together, run errands, and, in this case, provide much-needed respite for a full-time caregiver.

“Jane French in the SEARCH Penobscot office reached out and met with the couple within a few days,” Hallett reported. “The daughter told me that SEARCH made a tremendous impact on her parents and thanked me for the referral. It feels good to be part of an Agency that has so many resources for folks in need all across Maine, and to be able to help them get the support they need.”

SEARCH connects more than 200 seniors with volunteer companions annually. The value of the SEARCH program garnered the attention of the Maine Community Foundation, which awarded it a \$10,000 grant to help recruit and retain volunteers for this vital service in the coming year.

Refugee and Immigration Services Program Expands North

Bangor ready to welcome new Mainers

In late September, Catholic Charities Maine opened a new Refugee and Immigration Services (RIS) resettlement site in Brewer. This site, which will serve the greater Bangor area, is a culmination of five years of planning and working with local organizations, including the Maine Multicultural Community Center (MMCC), Penobscot Community Health Center, Literacy Volunteers of Bangor, and several municipal, medical, and educational partners. Now fully staffed, the site is ready to resettle 20-50 refugees in the Bangor region through 2023.

In early November, Bangor Site Manager Melissa Bucholz and Charles Mugabe, RIS assistant program manager, attended a Culture Festival at University of Maine in Orono, where they shared a table with the MMCC and spread the word about the work that both organizations will be doing to bring more diversity to local cities.



Charles Mugabe and Melissa Bucholz from RIS shared a table with friends from Bangor’s Maine’s Multicultural Center at the UMO Culture Fest.

“We heard tremendous excitement for the arrival of refugees in Bangor. It was a wonderful surprise to see a representation of more than 30 cultures from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South America at this event. Our clients will surely not find themselves alone,” said Mugabe.



Giving Back on Giving Tuesday

Spreading Warmth in Portland

The Tuesday after Thanksgiving is known as Giving Tuesday, a global day dedicated to encouraging all of us to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. In the spirit of the movement, a group of CCM volunteers built the Fourth Annual *Wall of Warmth* at our central office. Volunteer knitters donated 500+ homemade and knitted hats, scarves, mittens, and baby items – much needed gifts during these cold winter months.

“We are hearing from our programs that the prospect of housing challenges, hunger, hypothermia, and other medical emergencies among Maine’s most vulnerable is at an all-time high,” said Catholic Charities Maine CEO, Stephen Letourneau, who helped hand out items. “Our team met hundreds of local people at the *Wall of Warmth*, and each one truly appreciated getting some winter gear. We are grateful to all the knitters, state-wide and beyond, who are helping to keep folks warm.”



Seeing Maine's Invisible Needs

Parish Social Ministry takes a local response to rural homelessness

Although many Mainers think of unhoused people as living only in big cities, many homeless people are residing in rural areas; and they need just as much help as city folks but are far less visible to the public.

Christopher Spiegel of Saint Rose of Lima Parish in Jay joined the parish staff to help assist the homeless in his area, where there are lots of agencies to help the unhoused, but often people are not aware of the services available to them.

"Chris is doing great work, and we want to support him with our knowledge of community services and grant availability, because we've seen the difference he can make in his area," said Bill Wood of CCM's Parish Social Ministry. Spiegel has seen how the parish Thrift Store is helping make connections to local people in need.

"A woman shared how grateful she was to have the store so close to home." Spiegel reported, "she told us that she was picking up winter clothing for her grandchildren who had lost their home this past summer after their father was killed in a car accident, leaving her daughter as a single mother to six children. She couldn't afford winter clothing for all of them."



Luckily, Spiegel has been developing a store Voucher Program to extend credit to those experiencing obstacles, which helps locals, like this grandmother, with some basic necessities.

"With each small act, like providing access to rides, warm clothes, food, and a local resource list, we hope to assist in their progress," Spiegel said.

Chris Hoppin, Ignatian Volunteer, contributed this story.

L-R: Christopher Spiegel and Ignatian Volunteer Christopher Hoppin discuss rural homelessness at the Saint Rose of Lima Parish thrift store in Jay, Maine.

Food Donations take Form in the County

Building a food truck to fight funding cutbacks

When is a food truck more than food truck? When it's a truck built of actual food! For a holiday food drive at the Aroostook Center Mall, CCM's Hunger and Relief Services program collected non-perishable food and assembled it into the shape of an 18-wheeler, in honor of the program's well-known "Glinda the Food Truck." Displayed outside the Hope Chest Boutique and in time for the mall's other holiday festivities, it certainly captured much needed attention.



Glinda the Food Truck was the inspiration for building a truck out of non-perishable food at the Aroostook Mall.

"We collected piles and piles of donated food, and this will be a tremendous help in stocking the pantries we serve this winter," says Hunger and Relief Services Director Dixie Shaw. "We've heard about cuts to programs that help feed seniors in our community, and I am just really nervous about that because a lot of seniors struggle. I'm hopeful efforts like this can help bridge any gaps."

Welcome Care Packages Arrive

As part of the CCUSA network, we received an early Christmas delivery of hundreds of hygiene care packages to be distributed among clients at our Behavioral Health, Refugee and Immigration and senior services programs. The kits for men, women, and babies will provide a little extra cheer this holiday season.



L-R: Sabrina and Clarence from BHN-South, Trevor from CCM's Central Office, and Anna from BHN-South helped unload hundreds of hygiene kits in less than an hour. 2. Each kit was filled with essentials for those in need.

The Gift of Warmth

Our Refugee and Immigration Services (RIS) program was thrilled to be the beneficiaries of a winter coat and boot drive from local Capital One staff, who collected the winter gear at their holiday party. The RIS team provides warm coats to refugee arrivals at the airport as one of the first ways to welcome newcomers to Maine. This generous holiday gift will help warm the hearts of our clients well into the New Year.



Charles Mugabe (far left) and Tracy Moore (far right) from CCM's RIS team joined the Capital One holiday party to receive coats from this generous group.

Community Partner SPOTLIGHT

We are grateful for the year-long sponsorship our Community Partners have made to support our mission, day in and day out. In this edition, we feature our Platinum Sponsors: Royal River Grill House in Yarmouth, Tuscan Bistro in Freeport, Tuscan Table in South Portland, and the Sicilian Table in Falmouth. If you are looking for great food – both for eating in or for taking out – remember to support local businesses that so generously give back to our communities.



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