



Freezing Temps, Warm Hearts: Feeding Seniors in the County

On a bright, cold Friday morning in Caribou, Maine, vehicles stretch in a long line for the Commodity Senior Food Pack distribution. Provided through the USDA and distributed by Catholic Charities Maine, these boxes are a lifeline for many older residents in Aroostook County. By 9 a.m., cars and trucks are wrapped all the way around the warehouse and spill down the driveway, forming a steady procession of seniors bundled up against the bitter air.

At the front of the line, Rob Barnett, Caribou Site Manager, and fellow Catholic Charities' employees and volunteers greet each vehicle with a friendly smile and a few treats to go along with the prepacked box — fresh produce, donated bread, or seasonal surprises — to tuck in for anyone who could use a little extra. Even in the frigid weather, with the temperature hovering around zero

degrees Fahrenheit, the volunteers and staff keep things running smoothly, with Rob offering a heartfelt, "God bless you!" as each car pulls away.

More than 700 boxes are distributed every month at about 20 sites in Aroostook County. With many assistance programs geared toward families with young children, seniors living on fixed incomes struggle with rising costs for heat, groceries, and medical needs. "Seniors are so grateful," Rob says. "They're willing to use what they get and make do with what they have." That spirit, combined with the dedication of our team of staff and volunteers, helped turn a freezing Friday morning into a moment of community, dignity, and genuine warmth and caring.

Story contributed by University of Maine, Presque Isle student Jessica Ciszewski, who embedded with our Hunger & Relief Services staff in December.



Catholic Charities Maine Anniversary Gala



You're Invited!

Thursday, April 30, 2026 | 6PM
University of New England Innovation Hall
772 Stevens Ave, Portland

Scan this code or visit
ccmaine.org/gala
to purchase tickets.



Join Bishop James Ruggieri, CCUSA president Kerry Alys Robinson and the Board of Catholic Charities for dinner, a paddle raise to support our mission, and an evening filled with compassionate camaraderie to uplift the most vulnerable in Maine.



Funds raised empower and strengthen individuals and families of all faiths through 20+ programs statewide.

Help us go green and make your donation dollars go further
by emailing development@ccmaine.org with "subscribe" in the subject line to receive future newsletters via email.



Agency Highlights

A Storied Priory in Lewiston Opens a New Chapter for CCM

Catholic Charities Maine has entered a long-term lease with Prince of Peace Parish in Lewiston to occupy the historic priory adjacent to the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. The 20,000 square-foot, four-story structure is currently undergoing extensive renovations to modernize the 130-year-old building, including ADA compliance upgrades.

The project marks a significant milestone during our 60th anniversary year, with the establishment of a central presence in Lewiston ensuring we can continue to provide critical social services across 18 sites statewide.

Once renovations are complete in late fall 2026, Catholic Charities Maine will relocate central administrative operations to the priory and expand social service programming. Several Auburn-based programs will move to the new location:

- **Education Services for Blind & Visually Impaired Children** (birth through age 21, statewide)
- **SEARCH** volunteer senior companion program (serving nine counties)
- **Independent Support Services** homemaker program (seniors and adults with disabilities, statewide)
- **Parish Social Ministry**

Catholic Charities St. Francis Recovery Center, a men's residential recovery program, will remain in Auburn.

A ceremonial groundbreaking was held at 27 Bartlett St. on Wednesday, December 10th, with Most Reverend James Ruggieri blessing the project. "This partnership is rooted in shared mission and values," said Very Reverend Daniel Greenleaf, pastor of Prince of Peace and rector of the Basilica. "Beyond practical benefits, this arrangement will foster collaboration, enable joint events, and create shared space for community engagement."

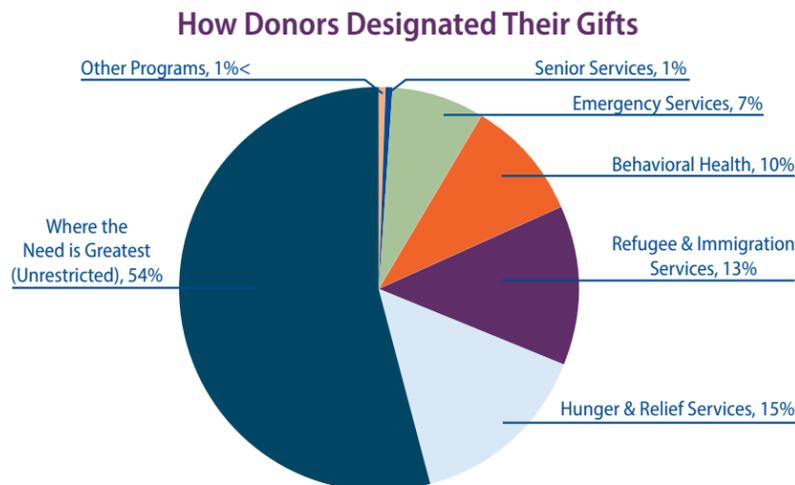
Steve Letourneau, CEO of Catholic Charities agrees: "This is an ideal partnership that will deepen our connection to the greater Lewiston/Auburn area while affording us the opportunity to expand our service offerings."



Groundbreaking at The Priory in Lewiston. (L to R) Fr. Dan Greenleaf, Pastor of Prince of Peace and rector of the Basilica of Ss. Peter and Paul; Denis Lafreniere, Diocese of Portland; Catholic Charities CEO Steve Letourneau; Most Rev. Bishop James Ruggieri; Simon Hebert, Hebert Construction; Catholic Charities Board Chair Jared des Rosiers

Thank YOU for your Generous Response to our Fall Appeal!

You're not just a donor — you're a neighbor, a true friend, and a beacon of hope for those most in need in Maine. Because of your thoughtful support, families across Maine are staying afloat, building better futures, and rediscovering what's possible. Thank you for believing, like us, that everyone in our communities deserves a chance to thrive.



Total Raised: \$432,483.02
Total Number of Donors: 547
Number of New Donors: 103

A Note From the CEO: Rising to the Challenge of Serving New Mainers

I want to thank those who have reached out asking how they can help our immigrant clients.

During the same time that ICE enforcement activities increased in Maine, the federal government launched a "re-review" of refugees resettled during the previous administration's tenure. Due to reports in MN, ME, and elsewhere, some immigrants of all statuses — including refugees who are here legally — have been fearful of being detained and are reluctant to leave their homes for work, groceries, and community resources. They are also reluctant to come to our offices for services and programs.

Through our Refugee & Immigration Services program, we work with refugees and other federally eligible populations (asylum-granted, Cuban-Haitian Entrants, Special Immigrant Visa holders, and others) who arrived at the invitation of the federal government and are here because they seek and value safe communities.

We have responded to their concerns by shifting services to remote models, having staff and volunteers travel to deliver services in person, and by hosting virtual trainings.

Additional support for clients currently includes:

- Making direct outreach to refugees in the "re-review" window to offer assistance to any who need help obtaining their green card. This is done through legal clinics conducted by our Immigration Legal Services program which includes volunteer attorney's and Department of Justice-accredited representatives. CCM is proud to be one of only three nonprofits in Maine to be recognized by the Department of Justice to provide immigration legal services.
- Collaborating with a wide network of immigrant serving organizations across the state, to extend our reach.
- Directing clients to multi-lingual "Know your Rights" trainings, provided by ILAP (Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project) and UMaine School of Law, among others.

Our refugee services team also works in close coordination with our own Parish Social Ministry program to connect volunteers with clients to provide transportation to work, grocery pick-ups, and access to other community resources.

Thank you for your care and concern as we stand with every neighbor in Maine in advocating for a peaceful and just society for all.

Stephen P. Letourneau, CEO

Community Partners Program

Our Corporate Community Partners play a vital, year-long role in supporting our work to empower Maine's most vulnerable people and strengthen local communities. Thank you!



We provide comfort; we feed the hungry; we stand for the vulnerable; we seek wholeness; we bring recovery; we teach the children; we offer support to seniors; we strengthen families; we welcome strangers; we change lives.

WE ARE CATHOLIC CHARITIES MAINE!

Agency Highlights

We Did It! Catholic Charities Earns Re-Accreditation from the National Council on Accreditation

"Let me say how significant this achievement is! It represents the fulfillment of countless hours of hard work and the dedication of many people — most notably your staff and board members. Please extend my congratulations to them."

- Jody Levison-Johnson, President and CEO, COA

The national Council on Accreditation's accreditation process is an objective, independent, and reliable validation of an agency's performance. Through rigorous review of administration, management, and service delivery against international standards of best practice, accreditation ensures services are well-coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based, outcomes-oriented, and provided by a skilled and supported workforce.

COA accreditation demonstrates:

- accountability in the management of resources,
- standardized best practice thresholds, and
- organizational capacity and accountability through ongoing quality improvement.

After providing written evidence of compliance, CCM hosted specially trained volunteer Peer Reviewers, who conducted on-site interviews with trustees, staff and clients. Based on their findings, COA's volunteer Accreditation Commission confirmed that CCM had successfully met all criteria for re-accreditation through 2029.

COA is an independent, nonprofit accreditor serving more than 2,000 organizations across the US and Canada, from small local agencies to large statewide networks. Learn more at www.social-current.org.

"Treatment plans are client-specific and aren't cookie cutter, demonstrating therapists take the time to get to know their clients and involve them in setting treatment goals."

"Staff demonstrate a strong dedication to supporting vulnerable older adults in their homes, fostering safety, dignity, and independence through consistent, compassionate service delivery."

"The organization demonstrates strong financial stability, accountability, and compliance."

"The early childhood program highlights a service that prioritizes child well-being, caregiver relationships, and high-quality learning experiences."

Did you know Catholic Charities Maine is also recognized by the Better Business Bureau, Candid, and Charity Navigator?



As a Better Business Bureau accredited charity, CCM has met the Bureau's standards addressing governance, finances, results reporting, transparency, and appeal accuracy.



To achieve our Platinum Seal — the highest rating — through Candid, CCM shares goals, strategies, and metrics along with board demographics to highlight impact and accountability.



Charity Navigator is designed to provide donors with the most information possible about organizations they may choose to support. Each eligible charity is scored between zero - four stars, based upon impact & measurement, accountability & finance, leadership & accountability, and culture & community. CCM is proud to be a 4-Star charity.

we teach the children; we offer support to seniors; we strengthen families; we welcome strangers; we change lives. CHARITIES MAINE!

Nationwide Storytelling Museum Tells Story of Christian Service

Every day across Maine, the staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities Maine (CCM) encounter moments that stick with them. These are occasions marked by courage, vulnerability and profound resilience – experiences that reflect the humanity at the heart of our mission.

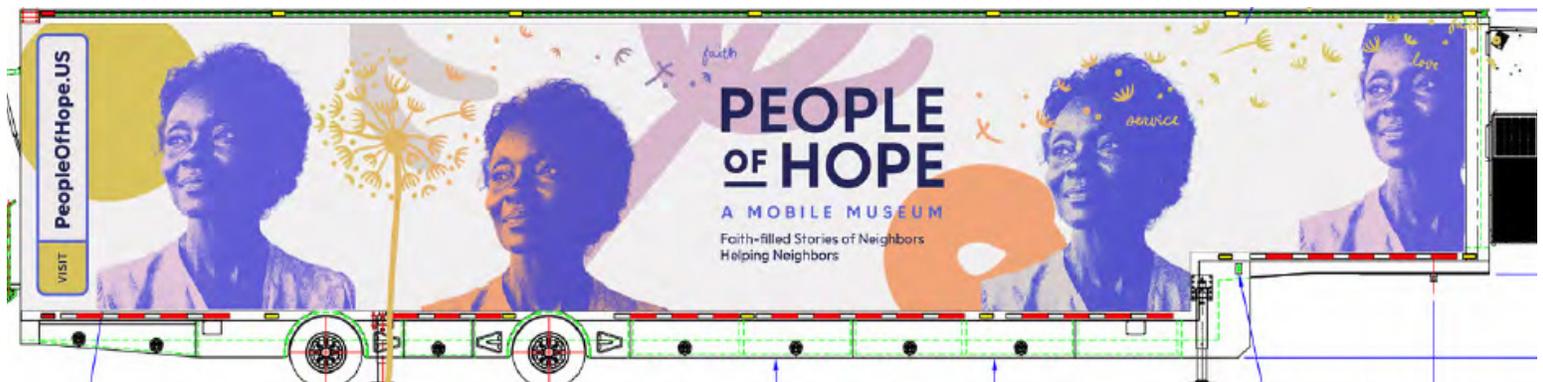
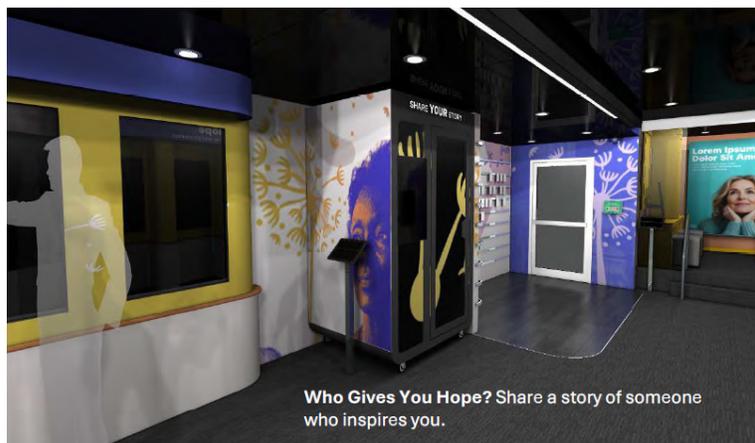
Stories of service are at the center of **People of Hope: Faith-Filled Stories of Neighbors Helping Neighbors**, a nationwide storytelling initiative designed to amplify the profound impact of Christian service. The People of Hope Museum is an immersive experience housed in a retrofitted tractor-trailer that is touring the United States for two-and-a-half years. From **April 24-25, 2026, the museum will be hosted by Catholic Charities Maine at our Central Administrative Office in Portland (307 Congress Street).**

In the People of Hope Museum, visitors can watch first-person video accounts from staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities agencies across the country about meaningful and memorable encounters with families and individuals in need. Visitors will also be able to share

their own stories of hope and service through the on-site recording studio, explore U.S. and state-level poverty data through visual displays, experience an interactive poverty simulation, and listen to audio book excerpts about poverty, social isolation, bridgebuilding and community action from authors such as Arthur Brooks, Oprah Winfrey, Matthew Desmond and Robert Putnam.

CCM's own Kirsten Connelly, Director of Education Services for Blind & Visually Impaired Children, is among those whose story is featured in the museum.

The People of Hope Museum tour kicks off in New York City on March 26, 2026, and will continue through 2028. The initiative is made possible thanks to a 2024 grant of nearly \$5 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. through an invitational round of its National Storytelling Initiative on Christian Faith and Life. To learn more about People of Hope, visit www.peopleofhope.us. Stay tuned to our website and social media for local updates. If you are interested in volunteering at the museum, please email volunteerinfo@ccmaine.org



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