

THE GOOD NEWS

WINTER 2016

A QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER



Year of Mercy: Catholic Charities carries out Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

On December 13, 2015 Bishop Salvatore R. Matano opened the Holy Door of Mercy at the Cathedral, formally initiating the Year of Mercy called for by Pope Francis for the time period December 8, 2015 through November 20, 2016. In this Year of Mercy, we as Catholics are called to prayer, pilgrimage and performing the corporal and spiritual works of Mercy.

This newsletter is devoted to a description of illustrative ways in which Catholic Charities responds to the call to carry out the works of Mercy. Described in previous newsletters are many other ways which Catholic Charities responds to this call not only in this Year of Mercy but also on a regular ongoing basis.

Comfort the Sorrowful

Camp Stella Maris

At Camp Stella Maris, we strive to put mercy into motion. For 90 years, CSM has offered children and families a fun, Christ-centered, and loving environment where they can grow in their faith. We believe that a week at summer camp serves as an outlet for children to openly discuss and discover the deeper meaning of their faith with their peers. Each day, our campers begin their morning with a group spiritual activity. We gather outdoors and admire God's beautiful creation or we enjoy quiet reflection in our chapel. This morning ritual offers our campers an opportunity to connect and grow with their Catholic Community. Our summer staff and volunteer priests do an extraordinary job counseling our youth and inspiring mercy within them. However, this year, we are called to do even more as an organization to embody the merciful spirit of our Creator.

As Catholics, we are called to embark upon this Jubilee Year of Mercy. At Camp Stella Maris, we believe it is our role to live mercifully through the spiritual work of comforting the sorrowful. The Camp Stella Maris Camper-ship Fund offers financial support to families in need. Children dealing with poverty, parental loss, military deployment of a parent, and illness are able to escape from the stresses of the outside world and enjoy a week in a fun, safe, and loving environment where they are free to be a kid. This year, we want to help more children and families than ever before. If you would like to help us share God's mercy with more campers, please consider supporting one of our fundraising events. We will be hosting our 3rd Annual Camp Stella Maris Casino Night on Saturday, April 9th at Monroe's Restaurant. For more information, please call (585)346-2243 ext.216.



Catholic Charities of Wayne County

Catholic Charities of Wayne County is very pleased to be participating in the formation of a new and wonderful asset in Wayne County. Three of our Board members are involved with a number of other community leaders in the establishment of a new comfort care home in Newark to be named **Laurel House**. Laurel House will be a two-bed property where residents spend their final days at no cost to themselves or others, in a highly supportive, warm, and compassionate environment, surrounded by loved ones, kind-hearted staff, and volunteers who attend to their needs.

Our group's desire is to assist the terminally ill by providing housing, supervision, support and love to those who need physical care, emotional support and spiritual sustenance as they approach the end of their lives, and to assist the family and loved ones of the terminally ill with the bereavement process.

Two-bed comfort care homes are relatively rare, and not found in many other parts of the country. Other local homes like the Pines of Peace in Ontario and the House of John in Clifton Springs serve as good models for how to begin and maintain one of these caring properties.

The Laurel House leadership has applied to the IRS for 501c3 status as a charitable organization and is finalizing plans for a location. We hope to be able to open our doors to residents and their families within the next year!

End of life issues can often be very difficult to navigate for individuals and families. Often people struggle with not only the emotional, but also financial challenges associated with the death of someone they love. Our interest to assist with the formation of this new asset in Wayne County will go towards helping with these layers of challenges, providing services to our residents free of charge. This initiative is just another example of how Catholic Charities of the Diocese works to affirm life from conception to natural death.



Visit the Imprisoned

Catholic Charities of Livingston County

Many years ago, when one of our licensed social workers was an MSW student intern, she visited the Monroe County Jail in downtown Rochester. At the time, the Livingston County local jail did not have the capacity to house female inmates, so women sentenced to jail were sent to Monroe County. It was an eye-opening experience for a new student of Social Work. During her early years at Catholic Charities of Livingston County, she

worked for some time under the direction of Sr. Nancy O'Brien. Today, she still remembers the plaque she had hanging in her office listing the Corporal Works of Mercy, which of course includes the instruction to Visit the Imprisoned. A few years later, she visited Monroe County Jail again, this time, to see a client who had been arrested in Livingston County and was being housed

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Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Admonish the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

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in Monroe. The woman in prison was distraught about being separated from her young daughter. Years later, this person still remembers that visit made to her and what it meant to her.

The renovation of Livingston County jail to accommodate women presented new opportunities for Catholic Charities of Livingston County. Approximately three years ago, Catholic Charities of Livingston County began offering a Parenting Education Group to women inmates at the recently renovated Livingston County Jail.

We had been approached by some educators and ministers in the jail who felt strongly that a need for such a group existed. Some limited funding was obtained. Despite the program not

being fully funded, we felt that our mission was calling us to meet this need: "Rooted in Scripture and Tradition, which emphasizes the dignity of every human person, especially the poorest among us, Catholic Charities of Livingston County provides direct assistance, advocates for social and economic justice, and encourages self-sufficiency through education and support."

Over the past three years, our staff has touched the lives of over 200 women. Many have completed parenting curriculums and received certificates of completion. Some are only there for one class.

Many have requested follow-up services from our agency upon their release, including emergency assistance as well as continued parenting education and support. These women are in jail for a

variety of reasons. They are united by the fact that they are all mothers. They genuinely miss their children. They share the same worries as any mother. They fear their babies will forget them. They worry how to explain their absence to older children. They wonder if their children should visit them in jail or if it will be too traumatic. They regret whatever brought them to jail. There are often tears. But ultimately they are grateful for a kind and gentle listening ear.

We are hopeful that this year we may also begin offering these classes to the men as well. But, regardless of full funding, we shall continue to carry out our mission of education and support through the Corporal Work of Mercy of visiting the imprisoned. Because it's the basis of who we are and what we do!

Feed the Hungry and Give Drink to the Thirsty

Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Through its 150 community-based member agencies, 41 school districts and 20 senior living centers, the Food Bank serves 16,000 different individuals each week.

Thirteen percent of Food Bank clients are senior citizens like Madeline Hetrick who lives at Villa Serene, a housing community in Elmira Heights for seniors and disabled persons, where rent is based on income.

Each month, when the Food Bank's Mobile Pantry distribution takes place at the site, Madeline gathers food from the truck that's waiting right outside the building. Madeline says "These people, a lot of them don't get food from other places. A lot of them don't qualify for SNAP benefits. Maybe they're a little bit above the threshold."

Madeline fills her cart with needed items at the distribution. She also helps deliver food to some of her neighbors who also



Madeline Hetrick at the Mobile Food Pantry senior food distribution at Villa Serene.

need it most, like her friend who is disabled and unable to make it out to the parking lot. "She ran out of food stamps last month and she told me she didn't have food stamps for a whole month. I said don't worry, you won't go hungry. I filled my cart up and took food up, and fed her for a week." Others who live month to month say the Mobile Food Pantry distribution is a life saver. After they pay their bills and purchase a few comfort items, there's not much left at the end of the month. Madeline points out that "A lot of us make just enough for us to get through the month, so the food is a huge help. It's very essential that we get this food."

In 2015 the Food Bank more than doubled its Mobile Food Pantry distributions to senior specific sites helping more seniors like Madeline make ends meet.

Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes

Each weekday at the Geneva Community Lunch Program, nutritious meals are served to poor and vulnerable residents of Geneva and the surrounding community. Some guests are regular, others attend a little less frequently, but at 11:45 am sharp, all are graciously welcomed in the safe, nurturing environment. To witness guests moving through the meal line, you can't help but be struck by both the efficiency and the graciousness with which the meal is served. It is clear that program volunteers fully embrace the idea of feeding the hungry as both a literal and figurative opportunity.

Arriving at 9:00 am, daily volunteers are quick to assess the food on-hand, and to adjust the menu to account for such challenges as incorporating an unexpected food donation that requires prompt usage, or for an unplanned snow day that might cause more young children to accompany their parents. Their challenge isn't easy, trying to predict how many might come for lunch and cooking accordingly. The program serves close to 15,000 meals each year, with some days as few as 30 guests and other days the number exceeding 100. The volunteers break into small groups, readying the dining room, preparing salads or the main course, and unloading the day's delivery of breads or produce—all along chatting amicably and welcoming new volunteers with kindness and expert coaching. The atmosphere, even before the first guest arrives, is one of hospitality.

The volunteers come from varied backgrounds. Some are retired and looking to find good use for their time. Others are members of various faith communities, volunteering as a show of support for this important ministry. They might be affiliated with



a local school or civic group. Others represent the many local businesses and organizations that cover every Thursday, giving our regular daily teams a break.

Each of them comes to help us accomplish our mission to feed the hungry. But increasingly, the volunteers tell us that they too leave feeling a little more full; their spirit is nourished, too. Our volunteers know the secret...at the Geneva Community Lunch Program, more than a meal is served. The lunch program provides an opportunity to be part of a community—a community of volunteers working side by side, and a community of humanity, nourishing the body and the spirit.

On a cold Thursday in February, students, faculty and staff from Hobart and William Smith Colleges took their turn preparing and serving the daily meal. Pizza and salad were on the menu, served with a welcoming smile and genuine interest in the guests that gathered. As with most days, some of the volunteers took the opportunity to sit and dine with the program guests, a gesture that helps make guests feel more welcome and not just served a meal. The hungry were indeed fed, but not just with food.

Shelter the Homeless

Providence Housing Development Corporation

In addition to managing safe, affordable housing opportunities for 1,500 persons in 22 different projects throughout the Diocese, Providence has recently taken the initiative to develop three new homeless housing opportunities.

In early January, Providence received a \$50,000 grant from the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance which will enable Catholic Family Center to hire a case manager to work with previously homeless residents in the 21 unit Son House facility, a joint venture between Providence and Catholic Family Center. This case manager will help residents address the issues underlying their former homelessness and enable them to take steps toward more independent living.

Two other homelessness initiatives have been approved by the local Continuum of Care and are awaiting final approval from HUD, expected in late spring.

The **Housing First Program** will house at least 75 chronically homeless individuals and families in a permanent supportive housing program. Case managers will develop individualized service programs to help individuals and families maintain their housing status. Another major component of the program is that Providence will recruit, educate and partner with landlords who are willing to assist this population. The total grant amount requested is \$940,000.

The **Rapid Rehousing Program** will enable Providence to provide up to 24 months of financial assistance and/or support

services to enable homeless individuals and families to quickly return to permanent housing. This program is particularly targeted to individuals and families who don't meet the chronic homeless definition and who may not need long-term assistance to stabilize their housing.

Providence will oversee this program which will be carried out in collaboration with a number of different community service providers. The total grant amount requested is \$772,745. Providence currently administers two other similar programs through Shelter Plus Grants and Veterans Grants.

Catholic Charities Community Services

Having a safe place to call home is a basic need. For a person diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, being confronted with the possibility of becoming homeless can severely compromise the opportunity for that individual to live as healthy a life as possible.

Since 1994, Catholic Charities Community Services has offered both emergency and long-term housing subsidies for persons living with HIV/AIDS. Through the years, CCCS has helped hundreds of families like Susan and her four children.

Diagnosed with HIV/AIDS twenty years ago, Susan arrived at Catholic Charities Community Services in dire need of shelter for herself and her family. Her mental health had deteriorated to the point that she was unable to parent and the family was at risk of being split up. Susan and her children were living in an unsafe environment at the time. There was visible mold in their living space and the health of the children was being compro-



mised. Catholic Charities Community Services was able to move the family almost immediately by providing a security deposit and the first month's rent through the emergency housing program.

Today, Susan continues to receive services from Catholic Charities Community Services to keep her housing in place. She is self-managing her health needs and as a grandmother of five, she is able to enjoy the wonderful gifts brought by her children's children.

For families like Susan and her children, it is critical that safe and appropriate housing be secured first before the myriad of additional issues threatening the well-being of at-risk families can be addressed. Anyone facing homelessness is unable to focus on more deep-rooted challenges which can keep them from being an integral and contributing member of our community. Through the housing subsidy program for persons with HIV/AIDS, we are able to help individuals and families begin the transition toward living a full and productive life.

Counsel the Doubtful

Catholic Charities of Chemung/ Schuyler Counties

At Catholic Charities, we are familiar with the wave of change that can come from a single act of kindness. Our works have impact beyond the single point of contact, inspiring hope to not only those receiving assistance, but to the family and friends of the individual. In this way, one single act can stimulate a ripple effect of optimism. What if the ripple effect reached further yet? What if those providing the assistance created their own sphere of hope and inspiration?

I have worked at Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler for over seven years and while I do not work directly with clients, my job is to promote the good work of my colleagues. I work with a team of exceptionally bright and compassionate individuals - many of whom are solely responsible for great feats of positive change in the individuals we serve. They provide hope, inspiration, instruction, support and guidance. They move mountains, so to speak, for our clients. And what they receive in return cannot simply be measured in dollars and cents, just as their impact cannot solely be measured by one case file. The ripple of change our case managers create is immeasurable. And as this story reveals, their work directly inspires those around them.

Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuyler recently participated in the "Point-In-Time" study. A "Point-In-Time" study (PIT) is a coordinated effort within a specific region to count the number of homeless persons during a specific one-day point in time. This year, staff conducted surveys at night (7PM- 7AM) in an attempt to identify those unsheltered in places not meant for human habitation, i.e. under bridges, abandoned buildings, sheds, etc. While the final tallies are not available for the PIT count, 18 individuals were identified as sleeping outside on a chilly January night. In addition, on the same night, Catholic Charities' Second Place East Homeless Shelter had its highest numbers in 9 years — a total of 34 individuals, including 10 children, who accessed our shelter.

For many of Catholic Charities' staff, conducting the PIT survey at night was truly an eye-opening experience. Mattresses and make shift beds were identified in the City of Elmira, highlighting the profound nature of our homelessness issue. Many conducting the survey took home images and stories about their experience. Jamie, a Catholic Charities' Case Manager, told her daughter, Amiah, about the survey and showed her a picture of a bed she had found. Jamie was surprised by Amiah's response, "Mom, you're my hero, because you help people that don't have a home." That night Amiah drew her mother a picture, stating just that — "You're a Hero!"

What a testament to the work that our case managers do every day. They spend their days inspiring hope in our clients and their evenings encouraging the same hope and compassion in their families. Catholic Charities is an essential safety net to our community and our staff are vital to our success. Because of them, our sphere of hope and inspiration expands deep in our neighborhoods, helping those in need and encouraging those more fortunate to help others.

—Written by staff member Lindsay Winters



Catholic Family Center

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, it is important to reflect on the physical and spiritual struggles experienced by many of the families we serve. The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are infused in the work of the dedicated staff of Catholic Family Center. We were honored to receive the testimonial from Family Court Judge Joan Kohout, below, and are grateful for her recognition of the work that we do.

For a sense of the scope of the services referenced by Judge Kohout, in 2015 CFC served 210 families with 557 children in its Preventive Service programs. One hundred and nineteen women received residential substance abuse treatment at Liberty Manor, and 2,646 individuals received treatment in our Restart Outpatient clinic. The Mental Health Clinic served 3,242 adults and 263 children, an increase of 500 clients over 2014 which was likely driven by the walk-in hours to which the Judge refers. The Kinship Navigator program assisted 3,347 families from across New York State in 2015, and 24 children were adopted last year by their "forever families" with the help of CFC.

Catholic Family Center Provides Valuable Services in Family Court: by Judge Joan Kohout

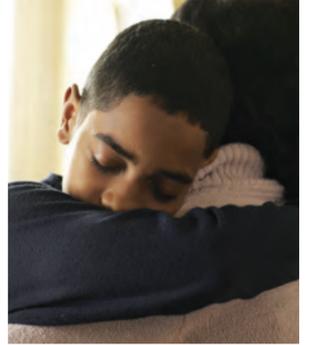
As a Monroe County Family Court Judge for many years, I have seen the wonderful work Catholic Family Center does to strengthen families in our community. With little fanfare, Catholic Family caseworkers provide preventive services to parents who have neglected or are at risk for neglecting their children. These dedicated professionals work on the daily issues facing stressed families with limited means. Chemical dependency services are provided through Restart, which provides outpatient treatment and Liberty Manor, which provides residential care for women. In the near future, Liberty Manor will also provide mental health services on site.

The walk-in mental health clinic is very popular with parents and children involved in Family Court.

The flexibility of being able to see a mental health clinician at the time of crisis rather than wait weeks for an appointment is a great way to engage patients who are sometimes too overwhelmed to keep scheduled appointments. The children's clinic is meeting an enormous need for mental health care for children struggling at home and school with trauma and mental illness. A child psychiatrist oversees medication and individual therapists provide support for young clients.

Catholic Family Center also provides support to the older generation through its Kinship support program. With increasing frequency, grandparents and other older relatives are asked to provide long term care for children when the parents are incarcerated or unable to care for their children due to drug addiction or mental illness. By supporting these older caregivers, Catholic Family Center helps provide stable loving homes for fragile children.

Finally, Catholic Family Center helps children find "forever families" through its Adoption program. Caseworkers also provide adoption investigations for Family Court to assure that adopting families will provide good care and safe homes to the children they seek to adopt. Those of us who work in Family Court are truly grateful for the services provided by Catholic Family Center to all ages of individuals who find themselves in the court system.



Clothe the Naked

Catholic Charities of Tompkins/ Tioga Counties

Imagine waiting for the bus when it's 20°F. How miserable would you be if you didn't have a winter coat? How cold would your feet get without boots? Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga works hard to ensure that low income people in our community avoid that terrible experience.

For the past 15 years, the Rotary Club of Ithaca has partnered with Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga in the work of mercy of clothing the ill-clad. Through the community-wide project entitled "Share the Warmth," local Rotarians orchestrate the collection and sorting of thousands of items of winter clothing and the Catholic Charities office in Ithaca distributes them.

During the first two weeks of December 2015, Catholic Charities staff, board and volunteers gave away nearly 600 coats for adults and over 300 coats for children, along with 324 pairs of boots, 730 pairs of gloves and mittens, and 795 hats! The recipients were individuals, families with children, young and aged. They

were invited to peruse racks of coats, and choose sweaters and outerwear to their liking. Volunteers helped track down favorite colors and right sizes.

An unusually mild December seemed to turn people's attention away from the need for winter wear; in years past the number of items given away has been even greater. However, bitter cold during January brought many people to Catholic Charities' year-round free clothing closet, where they found those warm coats and other outerwear. The generosity of donors makes all of these efforts possible.

Catholic Charities of Steuben County

Turning Point is a Service Priority of Catholic Charities of Steuben. Our services help people avoid utility shut-off, homelessness, hunger, medicine shortage and position families for long term success. Specialized needs such as winter coats, new and used clothing, and new socks and undergarments are provided through four locations across Steuben County — Corning, Bath, Hornell, and at the Steuben County Rural Ministry in Canisteo. While we provide specialized needs for families year-round, the winter months can be especially difficult for the homeless and low income families.

Recently Turning Point had the opportunity to not only provide clothing but also dignity to a new client. A new Community Resident at Catholic Charities' Weider House, a Substance Free Living residential program for men in recovery, was admitted following a previous state of homelessness. He arrived at our residence with only the clothes on his back, and little else. As the January temperatures proved that winter had arrived, his lack of a winter coat was a major concern.

Our residential staff contacted Turning Point and asked, "Do you have a man's winter coat in a size Large?"

That question, followed by the details of the gentleman's situation, began a beautiful act of mercy that combined programmatic resources with community generosity.

The resident's shirt, trouser, and shoe sizes were noted, and a call was made to Sister Susan Cain's Rural Ministry site where new socks and underwear await those in need, along with other free clothing. At Turning Point Bath, winter coats are available to anyone in need. However, men's size Large is hard to keep in stock. Without a Large or even an Extra Large winter coat on hand, a Facebook post went out to the community reminding friends that slightly used winter coats can be donated to Turning Point, and men's sizes are especially in need. One Facebook post from our page began to be shared by friends, and by their friends, and within 24 hours the request reached over 1,000 newsfeeds. Winter coats began arriving within hours. A hat, gloves, and a scarf rounded out the winter essentials.

Within 24 hours of a caring staff member's phone call, a man was not only beginning a journey toward substance-free living, but he was afforded the dignity of clothes and shoes that fit, and all he needed to be protected from the winter chill. While our resident finds it difficult to put into words what it means to be safe, cared for, and provided for, we know that our actions were, in effect, an acknowledgment of the dignity of his soul. We welcome our substance free living program participants as volunteers at Turning Point. Our staff does not know who the individual was that we helped, but we hope that he has the opportunity to come to our site and serve alongside our staff in the food pantry or on a special project. We won't know him by sight, but perhaps he will take extra care to see that everyone has a warm coat or whatever they need, when it is his turn to provide the care.



Visit the Sick

Catholic Charities Life Issues Office

We are called to visit the sick as one of the corporal works of mercy. That speaks of accompanying them until their natural death, as Pope Francis encourages us to do.

“Palliative care is an expression of the properly human attitude of taking care of one another, especially of those who suffer. It bears witness that the human person is always precious, even if marked by age and sickness. The human person, in fact, in whatever circumstance, is a GOOD in and of himself and for others, and is loved by God. For this reason, when life becomes very fragile and the end of earthly existence approaches, we feel the responsibility to assist and accompany the person in the best way.”

- Pope Francis, Address to the Pontifical Academy for Life, March 5, 2015

Compassion is coming alongside another, to be present to them in their difficult situation. This is what it means to visit the sick, to be truly caring of them. We are called to journey with people as they LIVE their last days in comfort, compassion, and experiencing the Presence of God.

Sadly, the word ‘compassion’ is now being misconstrued to mean the ‘kindness’ and ‘caring’ to help the sick end their lives. Two bills have been proposed in New York State to legalize assisted suicide. The Public Policy Committee here in the Diocese of Rochester includes assisted suicide as one of three key issues in their 2015-16 Agenda.

A principal foundation of Catholic social teaching is upholding the dignity of human life from the moment of conception until natural death. Assisted suicide violates this principle by cutting a human life short with a lethal dose of medication.

The New York State Catholic Conference has helped develop an alliance of faith-based groups, disability rights groups, along with medical associations and legal associations who are working to defeat this proposed legislation. They are pointing out the lack of protection in the bills for these most vulnerable patients and the resources that should be given instead to providing for the physical, emotional, and spiritual



needs of those at the end of life so they may live out their days in comfort and peace.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were sick at heart as they left Jerusalem after Jesus was crucified. It was after fleeing, after giving up on their commitment, that the two disciples sensed themselves accompanied by Our Lord. He came to them at the lowest point of their journey and they came to know God’s presence in the midst of their suffering. This is what we are called to do for one another. We do not abandon another because of their pain and suffering but rather we show compassion. We are called to BE WITH a person.

Compassionate end of life care means taking time to be there to support life-giving decisions. It means being there to encourage people to be as independent as possible, helping them to participate in meaningful activities, and respecting their dignity.

Palliative care provides comfort and pain relief to patients and is not just for the dying. Hospice care is an aspect of palliative care that provides many services to help those who are dying live out their days in dignity, comfort, and peace. Such compassionate care never gives up saying there is nothing we can do — we are present with the people in their suffering — we are not afraid of it because we know their God is there — we and they trust God’s plan and each plan is different — let us be people who accompany others in their time of need.

Bury the Dead

Catholic Family Center with Greater Rochester Community of Churches

When a member of our family dies, we gather together in grief and remembrance to bury our deceased loved one. What happens where there is no family to gather in grief and remembrance at the graveside?

This is the question that led Sister Beth LeValley, SSJ, to organize ministers and members of the faith community under the auspices of the Greater Rochester Community of Churches (GRCC) to gather at the gravesides of people who die without family. Many of the burials are arranged by the Public Administrator hired by Monroe County Department of Human Services. Sister Beth has developed a list of ministers who have volunteered to lead a very simple prayer service and the singing of “Amazing Grace” at the graveside, surrounded by a handful of volunteers. Since starting this ministry in 2012, Sister Beth has organized 117 graveside services, clearly living out the corporal work of mercy to bury the dead.

The ecumenical faith community in Rochester is helping to bury the dead through two other initiatives in recent years. First, as advocates for the poor who need financial assistance to bury their loved ones. On March 1, 2006 Monroe County announced a reduction in funding for indigent burials from an average of \$1,850 to \$1,250. Sister Grace Miller, RSM, founder of the House of Mercy, organized an advocacy effort known as Coalition for a Dignified Burial to fight for a restoration of funding.

The County did not restore the funding, so GRCC, under the leadership of Marvin Mich, Director of Advocacy and Parish Social Ministry at Catholic Family Center, established a second initiative to directly raise money to supplement the \$1,250 from the County. This effort collected \$17,000 between 2010 and 2012. There is still a need to assist poor families with their burial expenses. As Sister Grace recently noted, “the coolers at the morgue are full of bodies awaiting burials.”



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