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Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens Newsletter

FALL 2013

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM EDITION



Volunteers in **ACTION**

Volunteers from St. Francis College bring sunshine to seniors at Catholic Charities Northside Senior Center.



Robert Siebel, CEO

special THANKS from the CEO

Dear Friends,

As one of the largest multi-service charitable organizations in the nation, we provide care and compassionate support to 110,000 individuals each year. Thanks to our dedicated staff – who work side by side with a loyal cadre of volunteers – we are able to extend a hand in friendship, support and guidance to those who need it most.

At Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens, we provide our friends in the community with three ways to volunteer:

- Individual Opportunities – Individual volunteers are connected with specific positions throughout our Agency. These positions offer a wide range of meaningful opportunities, from clerical and administrative work to serving as a martial arts instructor at an after-school program or as a food pantry volunteer for families in need.
- Group Opportunities – These opportunities enable groups of individuals (school classes, alumni organizations, community service organizations) to volunteer together on needed projects. Projects include “Extreme Makeovers” at senior centers and gardening projects at family housing sites.
- Corporate Opportunities – Corporate Opportunities are provided for corporations who are looking to provide “day of service” activities for their employees. These events can be customized as needed.

In addition, we also count on volunteers when disaster strikes. One of the biggest challenges of the past year occurred in late October, when Super Storm Sandy roared ashore, causing massive damage to our neighbors in Brooklyn and Queens. Volunteers reached out to us like never before, and over 1,250 volunteers rose to the challenge and provided assistance throughout the hardest hit areas. We are still helping those affected by Sandy, and the support of so many volunteers and community members is greatly appreciated during this challenging time.

I extend my deepest thanks to our more than 5,200 volunteers who last year provided over 42,000 hours of service. Together, we are able to make a difference in the lives of thousands of individuals throughout Brooklyn and Queens. Thank you.

Robert Siebel
Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens



This summer I interned at Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens in the Volunteer Office. I assisted in placing much-needed volunteers throughout our 160 programs and services in Brooklyn and Queens. Most notably, I created a Tumblr page for the volunteer program which helps in the promotion and recruitment processes. As a Health and Human Services major at St. John’s University, CCBQ was a great place to work to learn more about the Human Services sector. I enjoyed my experiences and met great people!



Ashley Morcaski
Intern, St. John's University



Congresswoman Yvette Clarke with volunteers at our St. Louis Senior Center in Brooklyn.



Volunteers Revitalize Senior Center with New Tranquility Garden

As part of The University of Scranton's Day of Service, students and alumni assisted in the extreme makeover of Catholic Charities St. Louis Senior Center in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Volunteers created a mobile indoor tranquility garden for seniors to remember their peers and loved ones. The tranquility garden not only brightens up the senior center but also provides a place of peace and solace to help alleviate depression among our aging population. The seniors will continue to maintain the garden throughout the year. At the event, volunteers helped package food at the food pantry and participated in spring cleaning. Volunteers and seniors also enjoyed a billiard, card game and domino tournament. Flowers and potting supplies for the gardening project were generously donated by The Home Depot and James Weir Floral Company in Brooklyn Heights.

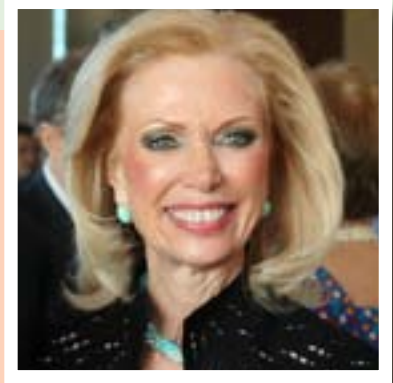
Volunteers Travel from Texas to Help Children in Queens

A group from the Good Shepard Catholic Community of Fort Worth, Texas, traveled all the way to our Colin-Newell Early Childhood Development Center in Queens to volunteer their time with the children of the program. The 40 volunteers rotated between the eight classrooms at the center to teaching the kids different songs. The group takes a service trip once a year where they give back to those in need around the nation. We were lucky enough to have them volunteer with us twice; the first time at the Fresh Air Fund Kiddie Carnival with our program in Jamaica, Queens earlier in the month. The high school students ranged from ages 14-17.



A Retired Superintendent Helps CCBQ's Fundraising Efforts

For the past several years, Dr. Jerilyn Caprio has been a dedicated volunteer and fundraiser for CCBQ. She brings vast knowledge and skills to our fundraising efforts, and has co-chaired and served on the Auction Committee for many of our special events. Her strong ideas and commitment to detail have enabled Catholic Charities to raise thousands in auction funds at the past two Bishop's Humanitarian Awards Dinners, which are used to support the agency's programs and services.



"Each year has been an exhilarating learning experience for me" said Dr. Caprio. "Volunteering for these events is so rewarding—especially when the end-product provides financial success for CCBQ and those they serve."

Prior to volunteering with CCBQ, Dr. Caprio served as the Superintendent of Schools in Allendale, NJ for eight years and North Arlington, NJ for seven years. Earlier, she was Assistant Superintendent in North Arlington and the Principal of a Pre-K through 7th grade school. Dr. Caprio received her Doctorate degree from Rutgers University and began her education career teaching in West Caldwell, NJ before transitioning to administrative roles. Dr. Caprio's husband, Gabriel Caprio, serves as President of the Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services Board of Directors.

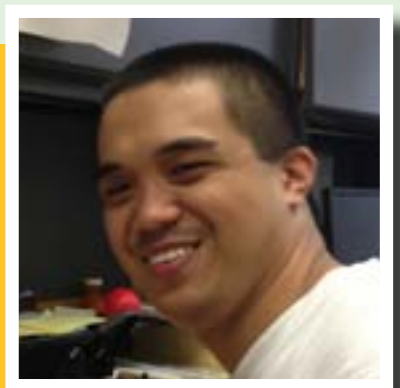


Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens appreciates her generosity and looks forward to a strong relationship for years to come.

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A Love of Service

A native New Yorker, 25 year-old Jeffrey loves being of service in his community. For the past three years, Jeffrey has volunteered at Catholic Charities answering phone calls, distributing mail, compiling weekly data entry and assisting with tasks to help the office of Early Childhood Services run smoothly. Not only does Jeffrey enjoy the feeling of being needed and productive, he also enjoys the friendly environment. "Everyone has welcomed me with open arms since I first started volunteering at Catholic Charities. I plan on staying here for years to come," said Jeffrey. In his spare time, Jeffrey enjoys watching his favorite sports teams play: the New York Knicks and the New York Yankees.





Young at Heart, Lifelong Volunteer is Always on the Go!

Always on the go at 80 years young, Dodi does not let her age or limited vision stop her. An actress and budding writer, Dodi has volunteered ever since she was a teenager. Having recently graduated from St. Francis College with a Bachelor's of Science, she learned about the volunteer opportunities at Catholic Charities at a presentation. Immediately interested, Dodi, asked, "Where do I start?" Within walking distance from her home in Brooklyn Heights, Dodi has volunteered at the Office of Development and Communications for over a year. "I love being here and volunteering. It not only gives me something to do, I also meet so many great people," says Dodi. Always busy, Dodi is studying advanced creative writing at St. Francis College and is currently writing a novel called *Deep in Winter, Memories of Summer* about growing up in Newport, Kentucky, formerly known as Sin City, in the 1950s.



Decades of Selfless Giving

For over 22 years, Cynthia Groopman has been an integral part of Catholic Charities, inspiring many with her courage and dedication. After suffering an accident that left her blind, Cynthia was determined to remain positive. A licensed New York State teacher with a concentration in Special Education and English as a Second Language, Cynthia turned to public service. Cynthia dedicated herself to assisting persons in need through advocacy and providing a voice for the most vulnerable including older adults, the frail elderly and persons with disabilities.

She has taught ESL classes at the Catholic Charities Peter DellaMonica Senior Center, provided citizenship assistance to an emerging Latino population in Astoria, Queens, conducted telephone reassurance with seniors at Catholic Charities Howard Beach Senior Center and reached out to donors to thank them for their continued support of the work of Catholic Charities. Currently, Cynthia volunteers with visually impaired seniors at the Catholic Charities Woodhaven-Richmond Hill Senior Center and routinely calls the frail homebound elderly served by the Catholic Charities Southwest Queens Home Delivered Meals Program. She continues to serve as a group leader and instructor teaching others to succeed despite any obstacles they may face.

"Volunteering is the most wonderful gift that a person can give to another human being," shares Cynthia. "It gives me an opportunity to ease a broken heart, lift the burden of an aging person and bring them a little sunshine and a smile."

We thank Cynthia for creating a legacy of service.



Making a Difference After Super Storm Sandy

I consider myself a citizen of the world. I was born in Sofia, Bulgaria and attended college in Toulouse, France. In 2009, I travelled to New York and met my future husband on the plane. He was sitting next to me and we spoke for the entire 8-hour flight. Now Brooklyn is my home.

It was one sentence that my husband said about New York that brought me to where I am today. "If you surround yourself with ideas, people, and places that speak to you, there is no doubt that you will find success and happiness." From these words, my husband Vinny and I both found ourselves with the people of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens. Our first experience with Catholic Charities was days after Super Storm Sandy.

Not being a native New Yorker or an American, it was important to me to find a niche where I was comfortable and could thrive. The knowledge and generosity at CCBQ gave me an outlet where I felt comfortable and accepted in my efforts. Even my husband, who was born and raised in New York, feels the same about the people and mission of Catholic Charities. Volunteering at CCBQ together gave us a chance to work together in roles we were comfortable in, with people who we now consider good friends. CCBQ gave this "new" New Yorker and a native born New Yorker a positive common point to share and work on together.

Since our first experience with CCBQ, Vinny and I have continued to be involved with the agency at every turn. From fundraising and special needs to networking events, we are always ready to give a helping hand.

For three months I enjoyed every day of my volunteer



"My efforts and my commitment were valued and appreciated and I was successfully hired to work as a Catholic Charities analyst in behavioral health services."

When so much of the city was in peril and confusion, we walked into the Catholic Charities headquarters in downtown Brooklyn to see a well-oiled machine of people dedicated to making a difference. From the moment we stepped off the elevator, Vinny and I were thrown into a situation where aiding anyone – with tasks ranging from answering phone calls to moving boxes – was a help to the overall effort. From sheltering, to bringing food and supplies, to crisis counseling, CCBQ was doing it all with such a well-organized and focused team of professionals and volunteers. Catholic Charities not only provided an amazing first response but also continued with support in the aftermath of the storm. Inspired by the motivation and genuineness of everyone who was involved with the effort, we continued volunteering for weeks after the storm.

mission and started to get familiar with the other work of CCBQ. I realized that there was much more that CCBQ offered and I decided to apply for one of the open positions in the office. Today, 10 months after my husband and I walked through the doors trying to help people in need, I evolved from a volunteer to a full-time employee. My efforts and my commitment were valued and appreciated and I was hired to work as an analyst in Behavioral Health Services. I genuinely love my job and I am very lucky to be working with such smart, talented and devoted people every day. Volunteering with CCBQ changed my life in many ways and really made me believe that if you do good, good will come to you.

-Teodora Iannelli-

St. John's University Volunteers Host an Exciting Day for Catholic Charities Seniors

The Catholic Charities Catherine Sheridan Senior Residence in Astoria, Queens and the Catholic Charities St. Louis Senior Center in Crown Heights, Brooklyn hosted St. John's University volunteers as part of the University's 11th Annual Day of Service. At the Catherine Sheridan Senior Residence, volunteers helped the seniors clear weeds and debris from their rooftop garden and replant seasonal mums, generously donated by The Home Depot. Meanwhile, at the Catholic Charities St. Louis Senior Center, St. John's Students participated in an energetic Zumba workout session with the seniors. The volunteers also assisted in teaching a Saturday computer class, as well as participated in information sessions on healthy eating and self-care. To end the day, a festive luncheon was served by the volunteers.



St. Francis College and The Home Depot Bring Sunshine to Seniors at Northside Senior Center

As part of St. Francis College's Day of Service, over twenty four students and faculty gathered at Catholic Charities Northside Senior Center to plant flowers and assist in spring cleaning. Volunteers helped organize, refurbish and beautify three floors of the senior center located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Seniors assisted in planting flowers to transform and brighten up the entrance, which serves as a home away from home for more than sixty seniors daily. As a token of gratitude, seniors served a hot lunch, cooked by our resident chef, to the selfless volunteers and shared what this makeover means to them. Flowers and potting supplies for the gardening project were generously donated by The Home Depot. Every year, CCBQ provides hot meals, recreational activities, critical social services and much more to 8,300 seniors at our 17 senior centers throughout Brooklyn and Queens.



University of Notre Dame Alumni Volunteer to Restore Parish Damaged by Super Storm Sandy

Alumni from the University of Notre Dame volunteered with Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens to renovate St. Rose of Lima R.C. Church in Rockaway Beach which had been damaged by Super Storm Sandy. Over a dozen volunteers aided in the clean-up of the parish's basement and painted the walls and ceilings with a fresh coat of paint. Debris and trash in the yard were discarded and dead trees were cut down to eliminate chances of injury, as the parish's yard is shared with an elementary school. Volunteers gained a better understanding of the destruction caused by Super Storm Sandy and the recovery efforts during a tour of Breezy Point. We appreciate the hard work and support of all the selfless volunteers who gave their time to renovate St. Rose of Lima Parish and we look forward to partnering with them on upcoming volunteer projects. We are also grateful to our corporate partner, The Home Depot, for providing the materials and tools for the clean-up.





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Brooklyn and Queens**
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Volunteers distributed 38,000 bottles of water donated by I Am Waters Foundation to help victims of Super Storm Sandy.

During the first few weeks following Super Storm Sandy, over **1,200** volunteers provided **35,000** hours of service to assist those affected.

In addition to Super Storm Sandy Volunteers, over **300** individuals volunteered with CCBO over the past year providing over **5,200** hours of service.

Furthermore, **131** groups volunteered with us comprising of over **5,000** individuals totaling over **37,500** hours of service.

In total, our volunteers have donated an amazing **42,804** hours of service.

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