

Providing Hope & Opportunity

THANK YOU

for supporting our mission to provide vital social services to people in need regardless of their religious, social or economic background, to improve lives of individuals, families and the community.

Preventing Homelessness

"Having a home has much to do with a sense of personal dignity"

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home*

On Thursday, June 25, multiple churches, agencies and community members throughout Ocala gathered to celebrate the opening of Open Arms Village (OAV) located at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, NE 8th Rd.

An initiative two years in the making, OAV is an ecumenical effort to bring hope to homeless men and women in Ocala who want to change their lives for the better.

"This is not a shelter, but a homeless rehabilitation center for men and women who are motivated to get back on their feet," said Alan Rettig, Director of Preventing Homelessness at Catholic Charities of Central Florida (CCCF), the social services agency providing case management to residents in partnership with Blessed Trinity Catholic Church.

Reverend Susan Gray, Pastor of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, spoke about the role of

faith in this initiative.

"We do it because Jesus had a concern for the poor. We want to extend and make real the love and grace of God for others. We wouldn't be able to do this without support from partners like Catholic Charities. We are truly blessed by their support," said Reverend Gray.

Plans for OAV began when Ocala Mayor Kent Guinn organized a committee to help build a program designed to support and empower the homeless in Ocala, but could not find the right location.

"This beautiful partnership came together because of a mission looking for a home and a home looking for a mission. We want our residents to feel like they belong and give them a sense of community, faith and hope," said Reverend Gray.



Community partnerships helped transform the facility from various meeting rooms and a children's nursery into living spaces for men and women including sleeping areas and the addition of a laundry room and shower for the residents. With plans to expand, the center currently has the capacity to serve 17 men and 13 women.

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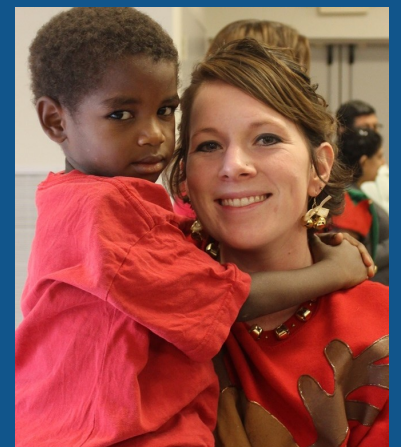
Support our Annual Collection on Nov. 1

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

Matthew 5:7

"As Catholics we are called to bring forth healing and comfort to all God's people. Some of these wounds are deep and may not heal quickly; the wounds of poverty, violence, indifference."

Bishop John Noonan



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OAV features a specialized case management model that holds each resident responsible for their path to independence.

Residents are required to develop a plan that outlines their road to self-sufficiency and evaluate their progress with a case manager. Residents are also required to volunteer a certain number of hours each week to help maintain the center.

“Some might say these are high expectations, but as Christians, the Lord puts expectations on us and we need to put expectations on ourselves,” said Rettig.

Chris is one resident with renewed hope for the future thanks to Open Arms Village.

“I was stuck and asked myself – how did I get myself into this situation and how do I get myself out?” said Chris, a former restaurant manager who lost his job and home to an addiction that consumed his life.

He says balance is now a huge part of his life so that he can work his part-time job to save money and volunteer to be more active in his faith.

“I’ve had a tremendous faith walk over the last year and that’s made me look at life a little differently and realize it’s not all about the

material things,” said Chris.

“Volunteering helps me give back to the people who helped me find my balance while offering support to others like myself who are in need. I’m thankful to these organizations working together to help people like myself out of poverty and homelessness.”

Contributors to Open Arms Village include:

- Catholic Charities of Central Florida providing case management services in partnership with Blessed Trinity Catholic Church
- St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in Summerfield who donated a washer and dryer
- Brother’s Keeper, a ministry of Blessed Trinity Catholic Church, providing daily lunch

Alleviating Hunger

Food pantries provide more than a bag of food

Salvadora, a 71-year-old grandmother and retired accountant, had fallen behind on her bills and was struggling to afford groceries.

In need of food assistance and interested in finding a part-time job, she came to Catholic Charities of Central Florida for help where she met with an Emergency Family Services case manager.

Emergency Family Services is a program of Catholic Charities that provides case management, financial and food assistance to families in need.

“Part of our case management services involves budget counseling for our food pantry clients,” said Anita Capetillo, Salvadora’s case manager at Catholic Charities.

Working with Capetillo, Salvadora received more than a bag of food.

She received guidance and support to help her find a part-time job and simplify and manage her budget so she can catch up on her bills and start saving for a more financially stable future.

“I’m so grateful to receive food from Catholic Charities. I needed help and they were there for me,” said Salvadora.

Providing Access to Healthcare

Volunteer dental specialists care for a father in need in Eustis

Paul, 43, began experiencing pain and swelling in his lower jaw.

Without insurance or a dentist who could treat his symptoms, he came to St. Luke Free Medical and Dental Clinic in Eustis for help.

The clinic, a program of Catholic Charities of Central Florida in partnership with St. Mary of the Lakes and St. Patrick Catholic Churches, is the only

place many local patients can receive the care they need.

Paul met with a volunteer dentist at the clinic who helped reduce his swelling and determined that he needed a biopsy. A volunteer oral surgeon at the clinic performed his biopsy and sent it off for testing. Paul was relieved when his results came back non-cancerous.

"We are so blessed by our volunteer doctors, dentists and nurses who

work together to help care for people in need in our community," said Cheryl Lopez, Certified Dental Assistant at the clinic.

Thanks to community support and a dedicated staff of volunteer medical and dental professionals, St. Luke Free Medical and Dental Clinic is able to provide quality medical and dental care to people in need like Paul.

Our free medical and dental clinics are in need of volunteer doctors, dentists, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, certified health educators and administrative specialists.

If you are interested in becoming a medical or dental volunteer, contact:

St. Luke Free Medical and Dental Clinic in Eustis
Erin.Burley@cflcc.org
352-602-4640

St. Thomas Free Medical Clinic in St. Cloud
Kelly.Bender@cflcc.org
407-593-1256

Lazarus Free Medical Clinic in Wildwood
Myrta.Aviles@cflcc.org
352-748-4567

Caring for Immigrants & Refugees

Refugees leave fear behind and find hope

Sixty-six-year-old Kayibushi and some of his family members arrived in Orlando on June 16 after fleeing Gihembe, a refugee camp in Africa.

Gihembe is one of five refugee camps in Rwanda where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is providing protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Kayibushi's family had been living in the refugee camp since 1995 after fleeing their home in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the beginning of the conflict known as Africa's First World War.

"Life in the camp was hard. We got food, but never enough," Kayibushi said to his translator, Andre, who arrived here from the same refugee camp last summer with his

mother and three siblings.

"I know what they are experiencing. Kayibushi is thankful for Catholic Charities and hopeful for his family's future here in the United States," said Andre who volunteers as a translator for CCCF to help offer hope to people he says need it the most.

"I want to use the opportunities you gave me to help other people," Andre said referring to his case manager who helped him obtain English classes, job assistance and other resources.

"She told me to have hope in everything I do. That word – hope – has helped me accomplish many things."

One of those accomplishments was passing his driver's license exam on the first try. Andre is now able to get to and from work in his own car provided by CCCF's car donation program.

Kayibushi wants to learn how to drive, too. He wants to learn English with his family and see his children graduate from college one day.



Event Calendar

Lunch and Learn @ Bonefish Grill (Brevard County)	Aug. 21 and Sept. 18
Hunger Action Month	Sept. 1-30
Soup Bowl Supper	Oct. 24
Annual Collection	Nov. 1
Links for Health	Nov. 7
Empty Bowls	Nov. 14
Christmas Concerts	Dec. 4-7

For more event info:

www.cflcc.org/news-events

For volunteer opportunities:

www.cflcc.org/volunteer



www.cflcc.org

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[/cflcc](https://www.youtube.com/c/cflcc)

Bishop John Noonan Appoints New Executive Director



Gary Tester will be the new Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Central Florida effective August 17. Mr. Tester is currently the Executive Vice President & Chief Development Officer for Starr Commonwealth, a \$33 million, non-profit human services agency in Michigan.

He has more than 30 years of experience starting, managing and trouble-shooting a variety of community-based, inpatient and residential organizations. He brings forth progressive experience in management, financial management, operational supervision, government relations and advocacy and fund development.

Mr. Tester holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Toledo, a Master's of Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC) from Bowling

Green State University. He also completed prerequisite courses in pursuit of a Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies at Sacred Heart MAJOR Seminary in Detroit. He has served on a number of boards of community and state-based non-profit organizations as well as serving in a number of parish ministries. He is also a volunteer youth soccer coach.

Mr. Tester and his wife, Lynn, have six children, three boys and three girls.

We pray for Mr. Tester as he transitions into his new role, that the light of Christ will always be his guide.

Catholic Charities launches a new website

We hope you agree it reflects our mission to serve our community. The new site includes pages to help you get involved and learn more about our programs and the families we serve. Take a look at www.cflcc.org.

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