



BRINGING HOPE TO OUR COMMUNITY

Clients and Donors Sharing in Journey

As many long-time West Side Catholic Center devotees know, the line between client and volunteer often blurs. Sometimes an individual who initially comes to us for meals, clothing, or help with their job hunt makes the journey from valued client to trusted volunteer. Charlie, or Catfish as he's known to his friends, is one such person.

You may know Charlie because you've volunteered with him or from chatting with him in the Resource Center- with his general high spirits and wicked sense of humor, Charlie is hard to miss. Born in Saint Louis and raised in Fremont, Ohio, Charlie moved to Cleveland to be nearer to the VA hospital many years ago.



Portrait of Charlie created by volunteer and artist Polly Barrett.

Charlie served in the army from 1969 to 1972 in both Germany and Vietnam after enlisting at just 17, and like many of his comrades-in-arms, was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder upon returning to the United States. To find some sense of peace and quiet amidst the clamor of society, Charlie began spending his nights in isolated places where he knew he could count on the solitude he was looking for.

A familiar face at many area organizations, like the Bishop William M. Cosgrove Center and St. Augustine Church and Hunger Center, Charlie started coming to WSCC as well about eight years ago. He usually comes several days out of each week for food and fellowship, and never fails to entertain with his hilariously blunt observations and storytelling skills.

If you ask Charlie why he keeps returning to us at WSCC, he'll point out there are plenty of places where he can grab a meal, but he mainly comes here for the people. "I think it's the volunteers," he observes. "A lot of them have turned into my friends." These friends, volunteers and staff members rallied around Charlie when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year.

He's a very private person and reluctant to ask for help, but allowed our staff to help him secure a place at Joseph's Home where he could rest and recover from his grueling treatments. Though some of the side effects are difficult to deal with and he's often tired, Charlie is doing very well and his prognosis is good.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- November 24-25** Resource Center/ Admin. Office Closed
- December 10** Volunteer Mass & Potluck @ Lakewood Women's Pavilion - 4PM
- December 16/19** Giving Tree Distribution @ Resource Center
- December 23** Resource Center/ Admin. Office Closed @ 12PM
- December 26** Resource Center/ Admin. Office Closed
- January 2** Resource Center/ Admin. Office Closed

For more calendar information visit the WSCC website!

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

There are opportunities to join our Associate Board, volunteer or to support the programs of the WSCC.

For more information contact the Advancement Department at info@wsccenter.org.

DIRECTOR'S DIALOGUE



What is your family's favorite holiday tradition? Perhaps it's decorating your home together. Maybe it's sharing a favorite meal, or taking a yearly trip to see loved ones who live far away.

There are also many people who choose to make helping others part of their holiday traditions. I'm humbled when I consider how many people each year make the West Side Catholic Center and our clients a priority,

despite the many demands on their time, talents and treasure during this season. I continue to be impressed not only by the number of people who reach out to us toward the end of the year, but also by the diversity of donors and volunteers. Children donate tiny hats, scarves and gloves for their peers. Teenagers on break from school help out with meals or sorting clothing. Retirees have made their work at WSCC something of a second career.

The WSCC traditions are some of my favorite parts of working here. Giving Tree will provide 1,500 men, women and children with brand new clothing, undergarments, warm winter wear, and full-sized toiletries. For some, this may be the only holiday gift they receive, and it is given lovingly along with a nourishing meal in the Resource Center each December.

Adopt-a-Family has also provided help and hope for hundreds of families over the years. This year, caring sponsors will "adopt" 49 families and make sure they feel loved over the holiday season. By shopping for each member of the family and purchasing both practical gifts and small but "fun" items, like toys for their children or holiday decorations, our donors ensure none of the families in our Zacchaeus Housing Solutions program are wanting for life's necessities at a time of year that is supposed to be joyful. They also spare parents the shame many feel when they are unable to afford gifts for their children.

This holiday season, I am extremely grateful for all of you who make these vital programs possible. The barriers our clients face can feel insurmountable. I cannot imagine what it must be like for those who are on the fringes of society, on the outside looking in as those of us who are able to afford holiday meals enjoy them with our friends and family. Thankfully, because of our staff, volunteers and supporters like you, we can ensure this will not be the case for those who come to us in their time of greatest need.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. As you continue to lift up our neighbors who go without, I pray that you and your friends and family enjoy a peaceful, blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Anita Cook, Executive Director

BRINGING HOPE: CONTINUED FROM COVER PAGE



2016 photograph of Charlie, taken by volunteer Stacy Marinelli.

Despite his popularity among staff, volunteers, and other clients, Charlie seems to be surprised at how many people have shown him love during his treatment. "I've had a lot of support- people come to visit me!" he says. To those of us who know him, this is no surprise at all. Charlie is a hard worker who helps out around WSCC without any expectation of accolades. "I see something that needs done, I do it," he explains. Charlie can often be found catching up with volunteers, asking after staff members' families, and doing those small unseen tasks that make a world of difference to his fellow clients.

For every good turn Charlie feels we've done him, he's returned the good karma tenfold. Polly

Barrett, a long-time volunteer here, has experienced this firsthand. Charlie knew Polly was a talented painter, and one day talked her into accompanying him to Cosgrove on a mysterious mission. Before she knew it, Polly was talking with a staff member at Cosgrove who explained one of their former clients and dedicated kitchen staff members had recently passed away. Charlie felt the man should be memorialized in some way for his hard work, and convinced Polly she should create a painting of him in his memory. It hangs at Cosgrove to this day, a testament to both their cook's lovingly prepared Thanksgiving meals and Charlie's determination to make sure his hard work would not go unrecognized.

Paula Conrad, another WSCC volunteer, similarly discovered under his blustery exterior, Charlie has a heart of gold. "Whenever he comes in the room comes alive!" Paula says. Charlie has always gotten along well with Paula and her husband Dennis, and has a special soft spot for their son David. In the summers, when David was off school, he would come to the WSCC and volunteer with Paula. "The two of them would take off and go on adventures," Paula shares. In the time before David went to college, he and Charlie enjoyed taking the bus downtown and going shopping at Unique Thrift, which used to be on Lorain just past the WSCC.

Charlie's story reminds us all that the most important thing here at WSCC is a sense of community, no matter which side of the table you're on. Charlie recognized this immediately and began fostering long-lasting relationships that sustain both him and others through difficult times. "The woman worker needs bread, but she needs roses too," said activist Rose Schneiderman in the early 1900s. This is true not only of women but of all mankind. All humans need healthy food to sustain life, but without the roses of friendship and support, life would be very bleak indeed. We at WSCC feel blessed Charlie has planted so many rose seeds among us.

DID YOU KNOW?

On January 26, 2016, the HUD Point in Time count revealed 1,697 homeless individuals in the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care. Unbelievably, a rising number of these lonely souls are senior citizens. As the generation of Baby Boomers ages, over 40 million Americans are now aged 65 or older. At a time when they should be enjoying a well-deserved retirement, too many of our elders are suffering. There is a severe lack of affordable housing for older adults. Social Security benefits are almost never enough to cover housing, and a shocking number of seniors are going hungry. According to Feeding America, 2.9 million households where people 65 or older reside did not have enough to eat in 2015.

The Resource Center Food Programs, including the Meals Program, Mobile Pantry, and Non-Perishable Pantry experienced year-over-year service level increases in 2016 from 2015. To date in 2016, WSCC has served more than 50,000 meals in the Resource Center, putting WSCC on track to serve well over a record 60,000 meals in 2016.

Can You Spare A Can or Two?

One Man Changing WSCC Pantry

If you're a regular visitor to the West Side Catholic Center, you may have seen a friendly gentleman and his wife delivering large loads of non-perishable food to the Resource Center out of the back of his car. Do they work for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank? No. Hmm...maybe a grocery store that makes in-kind donations? Nope.

This cheerful deliveryman is Alex, and his bins of bounty come from his pet grooming company.

Yes, you heard us right. Alex Canas solicits donations from his clients at Grooming by Alex in Parma, who receive a discount on their pets' services for their donations. Alex and his wife Elizabeth have been bringing personal clothing donations to us since they moved to Cleveland in 1999. They appreciated that the clothing would be given to clients free of charge. One day in 2012, feeling particularly blessed, Alex thought to himself, "how can I do something to help?"

He had recently seen a billboard while driving that said, 'one in five children in America is hungry,' and this really made Alex feel as though he needed to do something about the problem. He discussed his feelings with his wife, and in March 2012 they began collecting donated food from their clients. Four years later, he estimates that about 95% of customers who bring their pets in also bring food for WSCC. Soup, tuna fish, tomato sauce, canned fruit, beans and other nutritious foods pile up at the grooming business, and when there's enough, Alex and Elizabeth personally deliver the food to WSCC. At times, these deliveries have been as huge as three full rolling bins full of canned goods! Some customers also bring cash donations, and Alex uses these to purchase paper goods



WSCC Kitchen Pantry and drop-off from Alex Canas for the food pantry.

and toiletries from Sam's Club to donate as well.

Alex is particularly grateful to his loyal customers, who make this possible with their generosity, and his hardworking staff members who

coordinate the storage and delivery of items. We here at WSCC are grateful too- without people like Alex, our food programming would not be possible. According to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, there were approximately 245,660 Cuyahoga County residents experiencing food insecurity in 2014- the highest rate in all of Ohio. This means these individuals could not consistently access enough safe and healthy food to be well and active throughout the year.

With the help of thoughtful donors like Alex, Elizabeth and their customers, WSCC helps ensure no one who comes to us for a meal or groceries must go home hungry. In 2015, the Resource Center provided 64,684 meals for Greater Cleveland residents in need. Our Mobile Pantry served an average of 374 people each month, and our weekly express pantry served an average of 301.

On behalf of the men, women and children who trust WSCC to feed their families- thank you, Alex and Elizabeth!



Alex Canas at his business, Grooming By Alex, in Parma.

SHARING YOUR TIME AND TALENTS:

Seeking New Volunteers

Thousands of men, women and children depend on the services provided at WSCC. All programs at WSCC are managed by staff, but are supported by the talents and time of hundreds of volunteers. While we take new volunteers in many areas throughout the year, we have a few opportunities available to fill now. Please see the details below and contact Volunteer Manager, Allison Morford by phone at 216.631.4741 ext. 122 or by email at AMorford@wsccenter.org.

CLOTHING & HOUSEHOLD PROGRAM

- SORTERS

TIME - 12-3

DAYS - Monday - Friday

RESPONSIBILITIES - Sort clothing and



household goods, put donated items in the shopping areas.

RECEPTIONISTS

TIME - 9-12:30 or 12:30-4

DAYS - Monday - Friday

RESPONSIBILITIES - Answer phone calls, take messages, light administrative work.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES - MENTOR

TIME - Flexible

DAYS - Flexible

RESPONSIBILITIES - No experience necessary. Work directly with clients on job related questions and issues.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES - TEACHER

TIME - 3 hours

DAYS - Monday - Friday

RESPONSIBILITIES - Work directly with clients. Teach curriculum from Workforce Development classes. No

GIVING TREE:

Blessing Those in Need

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

-Charles Dickens

Each December, in the joyous spirit of Christmas, WSCC provides new, warm winter essentials to over 1,500 men, women and children.

WSCC gives clients the basic necessities of sweatshirts, socks, underwear, hats, gloves, mittens, full-sized toiletries and small toys (if available) for children.

Where do all of these items come from? YOU!

For this annual event to be successful, the WSCC relies on generous donors to give new items and cash donations toward the purchase of necessary items and supplies.



There are a number of ways you can help provide for families in our community. Host a Giving Tree drive or simply gather some of the items yourself. This type of drive is a fun and meaningful way to ensure that men and women have warm winter wear to endure the coming season and for children to have a gift to unwrap for Christmas.

Please drop all donations off by Monday, December 12. Contact Allison Morford at AMorford@wsccenter or by phone at extension 122 for more information.

Suggested Giving Tree Donations:

Men/Women/Boys/Girls - Sweatshirts, hoodies, socks, underwear, hats and warm insulated gloves.

Baby/Toddler - Sleepwear, socks, hats, mittens, ointment, diapers and wipes.

Toiletries (Full-Size) - Soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, shaving cream, razors, lotion.

PLEASE, DO NOT WRAP DONATIONS.

WSCC accepts donations Monday through Friday, 8:30AM - 2:30PM.

Due to the Giving Tree Program, we have limited space for used donations as we are collecting NEW items during the month of December.

NEWS BRIEFS

SHOP AND SUPPORT WSCC

WSCC is registered with AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the WSCC every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the **added bonus that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the WSCC.**

In addition, the WSCC has wish lists of much-needed items on Amazon.com and Target.com. As you shop online this holiday season, or throughout the year, you can shop for the WSCC and have these items shipped directly to our site. It is so easy to add on \$10 worth of socks, shampoo, or toothpaste.

If you have any questions about AmazonSmile or the Target wish list, contact the Advancement Department.



RAISING DOLLARS AND SPIRITS

WSCC's Associate Board celebrated their fifth year in 2016. This growing group of talent works throughout the year to support the mission and programs of the WSCC in all ways they can.

Each month the members of the Associate Board volunteer in WSCC's Mobile Pantry or in Moriah House where they have served meals and started a reading program for the children. Annually, they host a Halloween Trunk-or-Treat event for children in WSCC programs.

In addition to their dedication of time and talent, they host social and fundraising events to raise awareness about the needs of WSCC. At these events they take in-kind donations and raise funds. To date they have raised over \$15,000 through their socials. Combined with three successful years of their beer tasting event, Sips & Swigs, they have raised over \$70,000 for WSCC.

WSCC considers themselves lucky to have such enthusiastic angels on our shoulders. **Look for information in newsletters or in social media about opportunities to attend an AB social and how to get involved!**

FROM THE WSCC KITCHEN

A tasty and inexpensive recipe to enjoy during the holiday season.

ROASTED SWEET POTATOES

3 pounds of sweet Potatoes
1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
2-3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
Salt and pepper

Heat the oven to 450 degrees. Wash and scrub the sweet potatoes. Cut them into 1 1/4 inch chunks and place in a large bowl. Add the brown sugar, and just enough vegetable oil to coat them. Add a few large pinches of salt and pepper and mix until the sweet potatoes are evenly coated. Spread on a baking sheet in an even layer. Bake, stirring occasionally, until the sweet potatoes are lightly browned and toasted, about 30 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings
Total time: 50 mins



COMMUNITY GIVING:

Gratitude for Fundraiser Support

WSCC is grateful for all the generous supporters of WSCC events in 2016, ensuring that the WSCC continues to be the premier social service agency in our community. WSCC 2016 event lead sponsors are listed below.

5k Race & Pancake Breakfast:

Bonne Bell Family Foundation
Steve and Stephanie Byrne
Pre-Check
Fairway Wealth Management
Frantz Ward
Go Media
Gravitas Ventures
Drs. Robert, Chris and Jill Harter
Holy Angels Church
Hyland Software
KeyBank
Merrill Lynch
Oakwood Labs
Oswald Companies
Rini Family

Richard Simmons
Tucker Ellis, LLP

Sips & Swigs:

Britton Custom Cabinets, Inc.
Anita and Tom Cook
The Doyle Family
Frantz Ward, LLP
Hyland Software
Jesuit Community at SIHS
KeyBank
The Krueger Group, LLC
Nordson Corporation
Pattison Landscaping
RR Donnelley
Pat & Nancy Sullivan

Tucker Ellis, LLP

Warm Hearts Winter Nights:

Peter and Rita Carfagna/
Lake County Captains
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fedor Jr.
Frantz Ward, LLP
Holy Angels
Hudec Dental
Hyland Software
Mazzella Companies
Merrill Lynch
Tucker Ellis, LLP

**TO SPONSOR WSCC'S FUNDRAISERS
CONTACT THE ADVANCEMENT
DEPARTMENT AT 216-631-4741.**

DONOR GRATITUDE

You can make a donation to WSCC to celebrate a special occasion, to ask “in lieu of gifts” or to honor someone special. WSCC expresses gratitude for the recent donations made in honor/memory of the following:

In Honor:

Joe Bryan
Elaine Betz
Joe and Joan Bryan
Jennifer Cole
Ken Davis
Patricia Dorenkott
Edward Frindt
Eric Haddad
Aggie Hoskin
Sam and Barb Klanac
Sr. Consolata Kline, H.M.
Fr. James Kramer
John Sheehan and Margaret Ulchaker
Sr. Barbara Sniegowski
Anne Straitiff
Jim and Joanne Suttie

In Memoriam:

Therese Dull
Virginia Fickel
Valerie Gayda
John Langkau
Larry Petrus
Anna Pikovsky
Martha Sikora
Wilf Tremblay

If you are interested in asking for donations to WSCC in lieu of gifts, contact the Advancement Department for assistance at info@wsccenter.org or 216.631.4741 ext. 132.

IN THE KNOW?

Did you know you could read monthly blogs from the Executive Director on the WSCC website? Did you know you can see stories daily on WSCC's social media pages about clients and donors? Have you seen our videos posted on You Tube? Be sure to be in the know and interact with us online.

- For current calendars, to donate or to volunteer go to www.wsccenter.org.
- To like us on Facebook go to facebook.com/westsidecatholiccenter.
- Tweet to us using [@wsccenter](https://twitter.com/wsccenter).
- To see WSCC videos go to www.youtube.com/wsccenter

GIVING CHILDREN HOPE AND BASIC NEEDS

For many the end of the year is a time to hope that the new year will be good to us. However, there will be those who are cold... alone...hungry. On any night in Cuyahoga County there are over 1,600 homeless individuals, and over 200 are children. The Greater Cleveland Food Bank found that there are more than 60,000 children in Cuyahoga County go without food.

We see these alarming statistics playing out in real life at WSCC every day. The mother who creates makeshift diapers for her baby because she cannot afford them. The children dreading the school year because they do not have uniforms or supplies. Children shivering in the cold

because their families cannot afford winter coats.

Thankfully, you have the power to help WSCC make sure no child who comes to us in need must go without.

Now more than ever, we need your support to make sure none of these children have to go without.

We are asking for you to send a gift by December 31 in the envelope enclosed or online.

Your generosity will ensure that countless of your fellow Clevelanders will be able to access the resources they need to restore health and well-being to their lives and once more become self-sufficient.



EVERY \$2.75 PROVIDES A MEAL FOR A MAN, WOMAN OR CHILD WHO WOULD OTHERWISE GO WITHOUT.



3135 LORAIN AVENUE
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113
PHONE: 216.631.4741
FAX: 216.631.2379
WWW.WSCCENTER.ORG

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cleveland, OH
Permit No. 4374

IT IS OUR MISSION :



West Side Catholic Center is grounded in faith, hope, love and respect for those we serve. We assist all who come in need of food, clothing, shelter, advocacy and a path to self-sufficiency.

"To hear a child say 'thank you' when you give them a backpack of food, knowing they would otherwise go without, there are no words to describe the overwhelming sense of humility."

- Summer Backpack Volunteer

