



Miracles on 32nd Street

2020: Volume II

HEROES FOR HOPE: THE SHOW MUST GO ON

My dearest friends,

For 43 years it has been our objective to be change-makers. To not ask “why is this happening?” and instead ask “what can I do?”

In my role, I have the great luxury in this life of witnessing the impact of people’s generosity daily. At the time I am writing this, we still maintain all the basic needs programming we are able, given restrictions, and serve an average of 150 people with meals each day. We continue to offer social work and case management services by phone. Our shelter still has residents, including an adorable newborn and her mother. Zacchaeus Housing Solutions has families in housing around Cuyahoga County. We added port-o-potties in the small parking lot behind the Center and continue to allow clients to list us as their mailing address. We have not laid off a single employee, and I’m making it my life’s purpose to keep that as my marching orders.

In short, we will not stop fulfilling this mission.



I am grateful today, and each day, for all of you and the choice you made to join us at WSCC and be a part of this community. This year has looked much different than we could have expected when we published our last newsletter. In some respects, it has forced us to slow down and recalibrate. In others, it has necessitated that we “speed up” and consider how we can best serve in light of new restrictions and guidelines.

This newsletter will touch on what we’ve learned from, and how we’ve adapted to, recent events. My hope is that reading about these Miracles on 32nd Street will inspire you to

join us in helping our mission to continue moving people forward, to continue supporting the people who are “showing up,” and to support those who are ready to take a giant leap into reclaiming their self-sufficiency. Today is another day we can make a difference.

With faith, love, hope, respect... and always more hope,

Michael Bernot
Director of Advancement



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Grounded in **faith, hope, love and respect** for those we serve, The West Side Catholic Center assists **all who come** in need of food, clothing, shelter, **advocacy** and a path to self-sufficiency.

At the West Side Catholic Center, **Black Lives Matter.**

Throughout our history, we have intentionally advocated for homeless and impoverished individuals, working within ourselves and with local partners to do so. We have also organically created a welcoming environment where racism is not tolerated. **But that's not enough.**

Our mission calls us to advocacy. We need to do more, and will be more intentional about recognizing and understanding systemic racism and our own biases in order to break down the barriers that are breeding that racism and causing fear or "othering." We will talk about the challenges we see in those we serve and in those who come to work or volunteer at our Center, and we will work to improve their circumstances.

The recent injustices to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and too many others are a call to **long-term, sustainable action** for our Center. We will take the energy of now and consistently ask ourselves "what next" so that the moral arc of our Center continues to bend toward justice as long as we are in existence. Every death and every injustice is a stain on our human family. We will do our part to advocate for a more just and peaceful Cleveland, especially for the historically marginalized.

We act in solidarity. Catholic Social Teaching addresses solidarity as "one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace" (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2003). Pope Paul VI taught that if you want peace, work for justice. The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

Our goal is actions more than words.

- We have dedicated a staff position to being our diversity, equity and inclusion coordinator.
- We are creating a diversity, equity and inclusion council amongst our staff.
- We have added anti-bias training.
- We will hold up and share resources that help address bias and promote understanding.
- We will incorporate our advocacy message regularly.
- We will augment our strategic plan to incorporate racial equity.
- We will incorporate more artwork that reflects the diversity of our Center.

We have **faith** and **hope** in a better tomorrow, we **love** every member of our community and we **respect** the challenges that systemic racism has brought to the people who work, volunteer or have been served by the West Side Catholic Center.

ON THE FRONT LINES

Like everyone, we've had to act nimbly to adapt our services to comply with COVID-19 restrictions and with guidelines passed down by our health and government officials. We're proud to say that we've continued to provide almost all of our services uninterrupted during the pandemic. Although things may look a little different these days, it is a testament to our dedicated and tireless staff that we've been able to continue being a resource for people who need us. Here, we'll highlight some stories from our staff members working directly on the front lines of COVID-19.

Dana Donegan, Family Coach

What is your role at WSCC?

As a Family Coach, I provide services to children and their families who participate in our programs. We also serve community families that come to the agency in need. We always strive to support and assist the family in ways that strengthen family relationships and promote family wellness. All of this is even more important now.

How has COVID-19 impacted your day-to-day work life?

At first, it took some time to adjust to the day-to-day changes as far as how we would be working, in the office or from home. It has been a challenge to tailor my interactions with clients because we've had to sacrifice much of the face-to-face interactions which are such a critical aspect of my role.

Now that we've had time to adjust our workflow and find the best ways to serve clients, we've been able to continue developing and strengthening these relationships, even from a distance.

What does it mean to you to be on the front lines of this pandemic?



I feel honored to be able to continue to help our clients get the resources they need in these trying times. Items like food, clothing, toiletries, and baby items are things we might take for granted sometimes, but have been such a big help for our families. When we provided one new mother with newborn clothing, diapers, wipes, and other items, she continued to thank us until we drove away.

What challenges or positive outcomes are you noticing?

One personal challenge for me is not being able to see my children and grandchildren like I used to. What I miss most is how every time my grandchildren see me, they line up in a single file line to give me a hug.

On the other hand, I've noticed that communities are coming together in positive ways to help those

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that are most in need. For example, we've been able to provide some of our programs in an online format, eliminating the transportation barriers for some of our clients who find it difficult to get to our Center.

How can the community support your work?

Consider donating monetary or material items to WSCC. Everything you provide, small or large, helps.

It is also helpful when other agencies inform us of the resources that are still available, so that we can provide that information to our clients as needed. We take advantage of our network to ensure that if we are not able to meet a client's needs in the most effective way possible, we are able to direct them to someone who can.

Kaitlyn Kesner, Nutrition Coordinator

How has COVID-19 impacted your day-to-day work life?

I use my background in nutrition to plan the meals we serve in a health-focused way, and I run an adult fitness and nutrition education program for our clients.

Although COVID-19 has definitely changed the way my job looks, the core of my position has maintained integrity. I've still been planning out each week's meals, six days a week, just like usual. Many hands have worked very hard to ensure we can continue serving hot meals to our clients nearly every day.

What does it mean to you to be on the front lines of this pandemic?

It's been really cool to be a part of. Despite everything going on, and with a lot working against us, it's awesome that we can still show up every day and carry out our mission. I'm so appreciative of the efforts of the rest of our Resource Center team.

It has also been so cool to witness all of the donors and volunteers that have gone above and beyond to ensure we can continue on. I'm glad to be a part of this community of support.



We have updated our policies for in-kind donations during COVID-19.

Drop-off hours: Monday-Friday, 9AM-1PM
Donation limit: Two (2) bags

During this time, we are only able to accept donations of household goods, toiletries, and seasonally appropriate clothing.

You can also support us monetarily at wsccenter.org/donate.

FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting the Incredible Organizations that Support Our Programs



Thank you to the following funders who have stepped in to support our mission during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Bank of America
Cleveland Foundation
Community West Foundation COVID-19 Emergency Fund
Cuyahoga County
Dominion Energy
FEMA
Giant Eagle Foundation
Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund
Greater Cleveland Food Bank
Higley Fund
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The Abington Foundation
The Bruening Foundation
The City of Cleveland
The George Gund Foundation
The Reinberger Foundation
The Thomas H. White Foundation, a Key Trust
United Way of Greater Cleveland

DONOR GRATITUDE

You can make donations 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 memory of the following:

IN MEMORIAM:

Barb French
Elizabeth Gordon
Julia Gorski
Dr. Robert M. Kubinski
Catherine Mazanec
Jean Merriman
Eugene Smith
Carole Ann Stansbury
Catherine Walsh

To learn more about giving, contact the Advancement Department at info@wscenter.org or ext. 132.



A FULL DAY OF ENTERTAINMENT!

The 7th Annual Sips & Swigs and the 15th Annual Pancake Run have collaborated to create a full day of entertainment on September 12, 2020 at the St. Ignatius Carfagna Family Magis Athletic Center and West Side Catholic Center campus. The Pancake Run is a family-fun filled event with a 5k race and, of course, pancakes. At Sips & Swigs, attendees can sample beers and mixed drinks from over twenty local breweries and distilleries.

This year, we hope you'll join the fun, both in-person and through creative social distancing options that are available for both events. In addition to safe, in-person attendance in compliance with state orders and CDC recommendations, participants can join remotely through virtual and to-go options.* There are unique 2-for-1 sponsorship and attendance opportunities available for both events, and we also offer our regular rates in case you can't make both.

*As COVID-19 conditions change quickly, so may our ability to hold in-person versions of these events. Please visit wscenter.org for the latest on our 2020 events.



**NOW (RE)OPEN
FOR DINE-IN!**

STILL OPEN FOR CARRYOUT & DELIVERY*

***THROUGH DOORDASH & UBER EATS**

Domani!

We've reopened our dining room, and we can't wait to welcome you! We have slightly limited our available seating to accommodate a reconfigured COVID-friendly arrangement, and we want to make sure you have plenty of room to enjoy your pizza and other OCP favorites. We urge you to call to reserve your table – (216) 281-5252.

Our exclusive private dining room is also available for additional protection and social distancing.

Dine-in, carryout, and delivery options are available Monday through Saturday beginning at 3PM.



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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.

Pizza, with love!

Thank you to all healthcare professionals and caregivers working on the frontlines of COVID-19!



If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email info@wsccenter.org.