

## Five Volunteers Recognized

By Bob Olney, Community Outreach Administrator

*Catholic Charities recognizes five selfless individuals for their outstanding leadership and volunteer service, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

We are very happy to again partner with the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley to recognize Peggy Patterson of Zionsville and Cathy and Deacon Chris Kinsella of Allentown. In addition, Mary Timko of Allentown was recognized as a Lehigh County Unsung Hero and Anthony Carfagno received Northampton County's Outstanding Senior award.

Peggy has served as a volunteer group leader at the Catholic Charities Chew Street Soup Kitchen for the past 28 years. As a nurse, Peggy led many groups over the years in providing tens of thousands of meals served with kindness and compassion. We are very pleased that she has received the



**Peggy Patterson**

**Volunteer Center's Volunteer Leader Recognition Award.**



**Cathy and Deacon Chris Kinsella**

Deacon Chris and Cathy stepped up when the pandemic began, organizing food collection drives, which brought in rooms full of food, as well as monetary donations for the Catholic Charities Chew Street Soup Kitchen. Thousands of people received emergency bags of groceries because of their efforts. Cathy is an

elementary school teacher and Chris is a financial planner and serves as a deacon at St. Thomas More Parish. In addition, he serves on Catholic Charities' Board of Directors. We are very pleased the Kinsellas have received the Volunteer Center's Biggest Heart Volunteer Recognition Award.

Mary has volunteered countless hours at the Catholic Charities Chew Street Soup Kitchen, the Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank, St. Paul Parish, and the Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley. In addition, she has served as a volunteer missionary at St. Mary's Hospital in Marian Hills, South Africa and at Lukusa Umteta, a Home for the Handicapped in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Congratulations, Mary, on being recognized as a **Lehigh County Unsung Hero!**



**Mary Timko**

Anthony advocates for the clients served by Catholic Charities and supports the agency in many ways including his tireless work as Chairperson, along with his wife, Evelyn, of the Annual Gala Committee and serving on the Sponsorship Committee. He also volunteers for and supports Kolbe

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**Anthony Carfagno**



**Catholic Charities**  
*Diocese of Allentown*

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**Lehigh/Northampton Counties**  
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**Carbon/Schuylkill Counties**  
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## Happy Summer, friends!

It seems like the world outside is bustling again as some pandemic restrictions have been lifted and we are beginning to be cautiously optimistic about a light at the end of this very long tunnel.

The world inside Catholic Charities offices are bustling as well. Catholic Charities has been chosen to distribute more than \$24 million in state and federal funding through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. ERAP funds help renters in Lehigh and Carbon counties who are in danger of being displaced due to issues arising from COVID-19. Read more about ERAP on page 6.

Each year we serve tens of thousands of individuals who come to us for a myriad of needs. Even though we are blessed with a caring, committed and compassionate staff, workloads can still be overwhelming. But, as the Beatles sang in 1967, we “get by with a little help from (our) friends.” And those friends are our award-winning volunteers! We could not achieve our Mission every day without these amazing and selfless people. Please read about these super stars on pg. 1.

As we welcome the season of baseball and picnics and family vacations, let’s all take time to also embrace the beauty of summer.

May God continue to bless you!



Rob



Rob Nicolella, Executive Director

## Supporters Use Extraordinary Means To Exceed Fundraising Goal

It was March 8, 2020 when Catholic Charities held its last Gala. The annual event broke records in both the attendance and income categories, drawing 518 attendees and raising \$274,000. Merely days after the successful event, news of the Coronavirus pandemic swept the world.

First thoughts were of travel bans, death tolls, businesses closed, jobs lost, family struggles, and lives destroyed.

Realizing the potential danger a large gathering in March 2021 could present, and out of concern for the safety of potential attendees, Catholic Charities made the difficult decision not to hold a Gala this year.

Catholic Charities staff, board, and volunteers concerned themselves with how programs and services would be impacted without more than a quarter of a million dollars Gala proceeds usually contribute to the budget.

Members of the Gala committee held several meetings, spending hours discussing alternative ways to raise Gala funds without a Gala.

Utilizing the agency’s social media platforms, newly-launched website, email blasts and direct mail, Catholic Charities was named the beneficiary of sponsorships for a brand new Diocesan event called Cooks With Collars, an online cooking competition that turned pastors into amateur chefs for a great cause – their own parishes.

By the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2021, more than \$295,000 had come in, thanks to amazingly generous

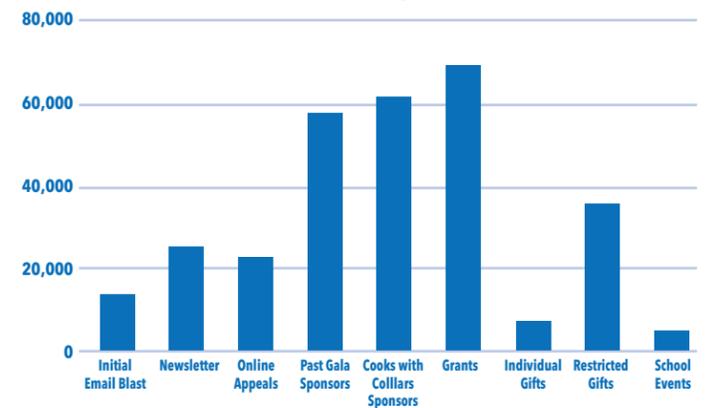
and compassionate individuals from nearly every walk of life.

A few donors sent in the equivalent of their government stimulus checks, large donations poured in with thank-you notes attached; students from Diocesan schools supported fundraising days to benefit the works of Catholic Charities.

One day’s mail brought a \$1,200 donation tucked into a note card that read: “This is from my stimulus check. There are many people who need this more than we do. Please use it to help them. Thank you for the work you do. God Bless You!”

God bless all of YOU who showed the love and understanding that was so crucial to keep services available to those we serve.

### Gala Replacement Income Sources TOTAL: \$295,116



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Academy, De Sales University, St. Joseph’s University, ArtsQuest, and many other non-profit organizations. Congratulations, Anthony, on being named **Northampton County’s Outstanding Senior**.

“We appreciate the hard work and dedication of all our volunteers during the pandemic. This year we particularly recognize five outstanding volunteers for their compassion, leadership and service to those we serve. They have been true ‘partners in mission’ in a most extraordinary year,” said Bob Olney, Catholic Charities Community Outreach Administrator.



**Rob Nicolella**, Executive Director, accepts a check from **Marybeth Okula**, Principal, and students of St. Jane Frances de Chantal School. The money was collected from a school dress down day to benefit Catholic Charities. A total of 14 Diocesan schools raised money this way to help replace 2021 Gala funding. Thank you all for your kindness and generosity!

## Catholic Charities Staff Dresses Down To Lift Others Up

Almost two years ago a staff member at Catholic Charities had an idea to create a grant to help a client (or two) per year who did not qualify for other grants or assistance, but would greatly benefit from knowing that others cared.

The Catholic Charities Staff Grant is funded through Friday “Dress Down Days,” on which staff members can pay \$2.00 on the “honor system” to dress casually for a day while contributing to build up grant funds.

Once \$500 was accumulated for the first grant, agency administrators asked staff to nominate clients they felt deserved the money and the reassurance of others caring about them.

The first grant was awarded to Dwayne Scholl, nominated by Lisa Taylor, Catholic Charities counselor. Dwayne was able to use the grant to pay for his co-payments to extend the number of sessions he could have.



# Board Member SPOTLIGHT

*Msgr. Walter T. Scheaffer has served on board for more than three decades*

Rob Nicolella, Executive Director, shared thoughts on meeting Monsignor Walter T. Scheaffer for the first time. “I recall back in 2000, shortly after I was hired at Catholic Charities, Monsignor Scheaffer had a conversation with me. He asked a poignant question: ‘How has your Catholic faith prepared you to help all those in need?’ It made me reflect on all those CCD classes and how they tied perfectly to my MSW program. Monsignor’s questions really made me think.”

At that time, Monsignor was already 12 years into his tenure as a board member at the agency.

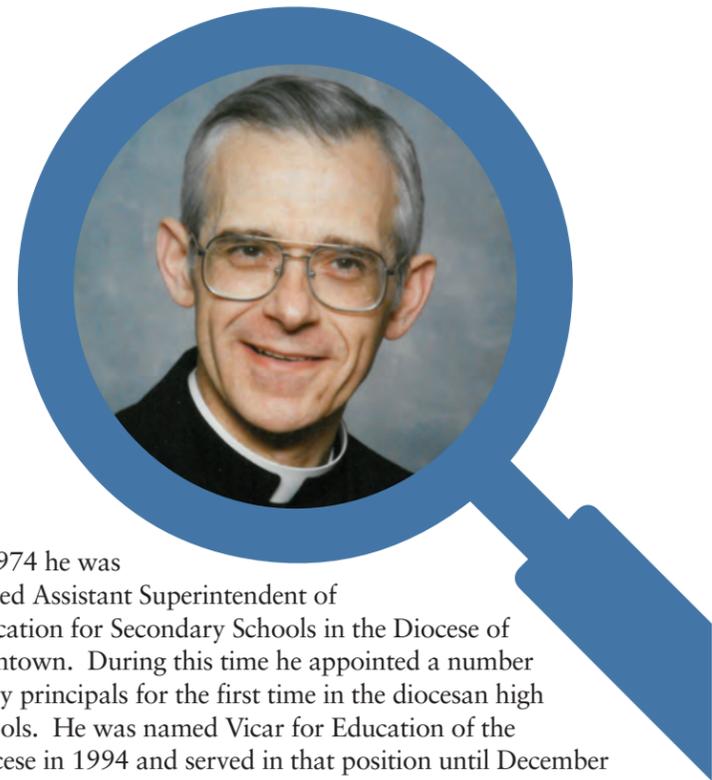
In 1988, Msgr. Scheaffer was named Secretary of the Board of Directors for the Diocesan Catholic Social Agency. He, along with Reverend Monsignor (now Archbishop) Joseph Kurtz, and Mr. William Scharle, formed the Board of Directors of the Catholic Social Agency (now Catholic Charities.) Monsignor Scheaffer served as President of the Board of Directors of Catholic Charities from 2000 to 2013 and remains a board member today.

Reverend Monsignor Scheaffer was born in Middleport, PA on June 4, 1938. He grew up in Brockton, PA and was a member of St. Bartholomew’s Parish, attending St. Bartholomew’s Grade School and St. Jerome’s and Marian High Schools. He graduated in 1956 from Marian High School.

Msgr. Scheaffer studied for the priesthood at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, receiving his B.A. degree from St. Charles in 1962, and was ordained a priest on May 21, 1966 by the late Bishop Joseph McShea.

He served as an Assistant Pastor at St. Paul’s Parish in Reading (1966-67); Associate Professor at Reading Central Catholic High School (1967); Regional Director of Catholic Scouting in Berks County from 1966-67.

Msgr. was a Religion teacher and then Director of Guidance at Allentown Central Catholic High School until 1973. While serving at Central Catholic, he studied at Lehigh University, receiving a M.Ed. in Counseling in 1972. He was named Vice Principal of Holy Name High School, Reading, in 1973.



In 1974 he was named Assistant Superintendent of Education for Secondary Schools in the Diocese of Allentown. During this time he appointed a number of lay principals for the first time in the diocesan high schools. He was named Vicar for Education of the Diocese in 1994 and served in that position until December 31, 1998. While Vicar for Education, he served as an ex-Officio Member of the Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Committee. He served on the Diocesan Building Committee (1984-2021) and as Pastor Representative to the Diocesan Council of Priests (1998-2002.) He served for many years on the Diocesan Priest Personnel Committee and Board for the Priest Villa Retirement Home in Bethlehem until his retirement on June 15, 2021.

Msgr. served as Pastor of the following parishes: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Minersville (1979-1982), Holy Ghost, Bethlehem (1982-1986), and St. Mary’s, Kutztown, from August 1986 until June 15, 2021 when he was named Pastor Emeritus of the parish.

On December 16, 1993 it was announced that Pope John Paul II had named him a Prelate of Honor of His Holiness with the title of Monsignor.

On September 29, 1997 Msgr. served as Chaplain for the day to the Pennsylvania Senate by offering prayer at the Senate’s opening session.

“Over three decades as a member of the Board of Directors for Catholic Charities, Diocese of Allentown, I have come to appreciate the professionalism of the Agency. It constantly strives to provide for its clients the highest quality of service. The agency is willing to make adjustments as the economic and the social circumstances of our society change. It is inspired by the Charitable Spirit that Christ modeled and encouraged while on earth and has supported through his Catholic Church through the centuries. It is Christ among us,” said Monsignor Scheaffer.

*“Over three decades as a member of the Board of Directors for Catholic Charities Diocese of Allentown I have come to appreciate the professionalism of the Agency.”*

# Angel Resources

## help families by sharing God’s blessings

When Susan Falkenstein developed Angel Resource Ministries, she found a way to help others by doing something she loves – shopping for bargains!

“Simply put, it’s a cycle: I shop, sell, donate, shop, donate, repeat,” says Susan. “I love shopping. I’m inspired by the gratitude from families, and I’m happy donating to help others.”

While working for a day care for a number of years, Susan became familiar with the difficulties of “the working poor,” those who do not qualify for certain programs or benefits, but have to work two or three jobs just to make ends meet. Susan developed a system to get the most for the money she spends, purchasing items at very deep discounts; passing the savings onto families that can benefit from the nominal prices, and then donating the extras to local non-profits including Catholic Charities. She has donated clothing, hats, coats, gloves, back packs, school supplies, diapers, toys and food.

Although shopping can be the fun part, there is a lot of work involved as well. Susan, with help from family and friends, is up to the task of organizing, categorizing, cataloging and storing sometimes more than 1,000 items at a time.

“Susan’s donations have been a blessing to so many. We are grateful to Angel Resource Ministries for its extraordinary way of meeting the needs of so many families,” said Rob Nicolella, Catholic Charities Executive Director.

Over the past two years, Susan has donated more than 1,000 baby items to Catholic Charities for use in its Pregnancy and Parenting Support Services program, which provides counseling and support to women, men and families during pregnancy, exploring the positive options of parenting and adoption. The PPSS program also provides support for parents of children from birth through age 18. All services are free of charge.



Staff members Jeremy Leidich and Lisa Taylor (center) happily accept baby clothing donations from Susan Falkenstein (right).

# This Teen Collects Gifts For Others On Her Birthday

By Lori Mergel, Executive Administrative Assistant

Most teenage girls want a special gift for their 14th birthday... new clothes, a designer handbag, the latest phone, a piece of jewelry, especially as they are about to finish their middle school years and look forward to being a “high schooler.”

But Talia Fogel wanted something extra special this year. Instead of asking for a gift wrapped in a beautiful box, she filled boxes and bags with food for the Catholic Charities Chew Street Soup Kitchen - enough boxes and bags to fill her mom’s SUV.

Talia and her mom, Donna, contacted the Soup Kitchen coordinator, Edith Burga, to determine what items were most needed for the clients. Edith gave them a list, and they decided to create a “theme” for the donation...peanut butter and jelly, every kid’s favorite lunch!

Talia is an eighth grade student at St. Elizabeth Catholic School in Whitehall. She planned her party at Lehigh Valley Laser Tag. Laser Tag is a fast paced game using cutting edge technology to create an exhilarating, heart-pounding adventure. It requires strategy and teamwork to defeat your opponents, all while having fun!

Talia and her classmates certainly worked well as a team as they collected more than 130 items for those in need!

When asked why she wanted donations instead of gifts, Talia replied “I have volunteered at the Soup Kitchen in the past and miss being able to do that during COVID. By asking for the peanut butter and jelly donations, I felt like at least I was doing something to help the community, even if I could not be there in person to serve. I have everything I need, and wanted to do something to help those who don’t.”

Talia is looking forward to coming back to the Soup Kitchen as a volunteer real soon. In the meantime, she is excited to be playing softball with the Notre Dame High School JV squad. She is a pitcher and also plays the outfield. In softball, there are many things that can help you become a better player mentally. The most important



aspect of training is having positive thoughts. Talia is on her way to becoming a great player, on and off the field, as she shares her positive thoughts and beautiful heart with everyone!

**Happy Birthday Talia!!**

# Emergency Rental Assistance Program

It goes without saying that COVID-19 has had an unbelievable impact on the world across all spectrums. The financial struggles caused by shut-downs, unemployment and loss of income have resulted in a crippling housing crisis. Tenants were and are unable to pay their rent, and landlords have, in some cases, not received rent on their properties for over a year.

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) was designed to address these issues. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 included funding for states to establish ERAP programs. Pennsylvania received approximately \$569 million to administer assistance to those qualified renters who face financial hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Tom Miller, Catholic Charities Lehigh and Carbon County Supervisor and Coordinator of the ERAP program, “While the program has been challenging and overwhelming at times, we have been able to provide relief – both financial and emotional – to thousands of people, many of which have never been in a position wherein there was a need to seek such assistance.”

ERAP assistance began in mid-March, 2021 and is expected to run until at least September, 2022, or until funds are exhausted. Presently Catholic Charities has six staff members working exclusively on ERAP cases.

“Catholic Charities is grateful to be directly assisting those in need in both Carbon and



Members of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) staff work to process applications. Clockwise: Nicki Ciminera, Dominique Oyeniya, Nilza Baez, Janice Jarret



Tom Miller, Lehigh and Carbon Counties Supervisor and ERAP Program Coordinator

Lehigh Counties with ERAP funds. Catholic Charities also works by supporting other agencies offering help in Berks, Schuylkill and Northampton Counties. So each office is helping those affected by COVID-19 in some capacity,” said Rob Nicolella, Executive Director.

To date, the ERAP program has provided more than \$7.5 million in rent and utility assistance in Lehigh County and approximately \$800,000 in Carbon County. More than 3,000 applications have been received by Catholic Charities and continue to be processed as quickly as possible.



Nichole Pearson, ERAP Coordinator

**“Catholic Charities is grateful to be directly assisting those in need in both Carbon and Lehigh Counties with ERAP funds.”**



Students, faculty and staff members from Kolbe Academy join Catholic Charities staff members for a post-luncheon photo. The group got together to celebrate their partnership in helping to feed the hungry in our communities.

Kolbe students, staff, and board members conducted a very successful food drive and students planted a garden to donate fresh vegetables to the Catholic Charities Chew Street Soup Kitchen. Thank you, friends!

## INVEST IN FOREVER

Did you know that Catholic Charities has an endowment fund with the Catholic Foundation of Eastern Pennsylvania?

Please contact Julie Scheck at [jscheck@allentowndioocese.org](mailto:jscheck@allentowndioocese.org), or 610-871-5200, ext. 2216 to learn how you can support our future.