MEET OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR

"I look forward to growing the vital human services programs we offer, along with bolstering our authentic Catholic identity."—Andrea Kochan Neagle

Andrea Kochan Neagle recently joined Catholic Charities, Diocese of Allentown, as its Managing Director after spending three years on its Board of Directors.

Mrs. Kochan Neagle spent 26 years in the private sector as a licensed attorney, 17 of those as CFO and Executive Director of Design IP, an Allentown law firm founded by her husband, Damon, which specializes in intellectual property law. She brings financial, marketing, and human resources experience to her new role.

Mrs. Kochan Neagle grew up in the Lehigh Valley and returned to it 20 years ago to raise her three children, Elizabeth, Catherine, and Alexander.

In her new role, she will work closely with Pamela Russo, Secretary for Catholic Health, Human Services, and Youth Protection for the Diocese of Allentown; Lisa Geosits, Director of Donor Relations for the Catholic Foundation of Eastern Pennsylvania and Chairperson of Catholic Charities’ Board of Directors; Rob Nicoletta, Catholic Charities Executive Director of Social Services; and Tom Miller, Catholic Charities Assistant Director of Clinical and Family Services, to ensure the agency provides the highest quality programs and services to the people it serves throughout Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties.

Andrea’s goal is to make every service delivered to a Catholic Charities client be caring, thoughtful, timely and efficient. “It is my privilege to serve in the new leadership position of Managing Director at Catholic Charities. I look forward to growing the vital human services programs we offer, along with bolstering our authentic Catholic identity. I am excited for the future of Catholic Charities and the people we help,” said Kochan Neagle.
IN-SCHOOL STUDENT COUNSELING PROGRAM

THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUR YOUTH

Through Catholic Charities' low-cost, on-site school counseling program, qualified counseling professionals, Jeremy Leidich, Vivian Lins, and Sr. Bernadine Lomema, supervised by Tom Miller, Assistant Director of Clinical and Family Services, work with students who may be struggling with issues including anxiety, depression, OCD, grief, or relationship and family struggles.

Currently, Catholic Charities provides school-based counseling services to all six Diocesan high schools – Allentown Central Catholic, Berks Catholic, Bethlehem Catholic, Marian Catholic, Nativity, and Notre Dame. Additionally, school-based counseling services are provided at St. Catherine of Sienna Elementary School and St. Joseph the Worker Elementary School.

Faculty, administrators, and families of students involved with Catholic Charities' counseling program indicate that, without financial assistance, students would not have sought therapeutic services due to the cost. These services help our Catholic school students successfully cope with emotional and mental health issues that affect their quality of life and academic performance.

Counselors work with the students over the course of the academic year to set goals and discuss a path toward achieving them, monitoring progress along the way and offering an outcome assessment at the end of the year.

Catholic Charities is uniquely qualified to work with students and families because the agency provides not only counseling, but also case management when necessary. In cases where it is apparent that direct assistance may be needed, the agency will provide additional help as available.

One of many success stories from the 2022-2023 Academic Year: “Jack,” a high school junior who recently was involved in a serious accident, began experiencing intense feelings of depression and suicide ideation. Guidance counselors at his school noticed changes in Jack’s personality and referred him to Catholic Charities’ school-based counseling. During treatment, Jack was able to lessen his depressive symptomology using various coping skills learned during treatment. Now, he is excitedly looking forward to his senior year and future career.

If you would like to donate to this crucial and sometimes life-saving work, please visit our website at www.catholiccharitiesad.org; or mail your gift to:
Catholic Charities, 402 W. Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18102. Attn: Julie Scheck

On June 22, Catholic Charities, in partnership with the Catholic Foundation of Eastern PA, hosted an informative planned giving seminar aimed at helping individuals get their financial and legal affairs in order.

The planned giving seminar was organized with the goal of providing attendees with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively plan their financial futures, ensuring that their assets are allocated in accordance with their wishes and benefiting the causes they hold dear. By focusing on topics such as wills, trusts, estate planning, and other financial considerations, the seminar aimed to empower individuals to make informed decisions about their financial and legal affairs.

The seminar began with a welcome from representatives of Catholic Charities and the Catholic Foundation of Eastern PA. Pete Waldron, President of the Catholic Foundation, introduced Beth Dobis Beers, an attorney specializing in estate planning and representatives from Catholic Charities. Speakers shared valuable insights and practical advice, highlighting the importance of careful financial and legal planning.

Participants had the opportunity to engage in lively discussions, ask questions, and share personal experiences. Many expressed their gratitude for the valuable information and guidance provided by the expert panelists.

If you missed the seminar, don't worry! As the planning for future seminars is already underway, we encourage everyone interested in financial planning and charitable giving to join in this enriching experience. Whether you are just starting your financial planning journey or seeking guidance on charitable giving strategies, these seminars will be valuable resources for individuals of all backgrounds and levels of expertise.

We hope to see you at an upcoming seminar in the fall!

For more information, contact:
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School's out for summer!
When most children think of summer break, they think of swimming and games of tag, playing with friends and eating popsicles. They shouldn’t have to worry about being hungry. Unfortunately, many do.

According to the 2022 U.S. Census data, Allentown’s population of 125,850, is comprised of 31,000 children under the age of 18. All of these children qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) free school lunch program, according to the Allentown School District.

This summer, Catholic Charities was invited to partner with St. Luke’s University Health Network, The Allentown School District, and Pennsylvania Department of Education to address hunger among children in downtown Allentown.

Through this free summer meal program partnership, healthy, hearty meals are served to children ages 5-18 Monday through Friday, Noon to 2:00 p.m., from June 12 through August 25 at Sacred Heart Parish’s H.I.S. Center located on North 4th Street.

Often, the meals children receive through this program are the only ones they receive on summer days.

Laureen Conversano, Catholic Charities’ coordinator of the summer meal program and Grace Lynch, social work intern, provide a welcoming atmosphere in which children can enjoy meals, games, crafts, and fun.

Rodale Organic Farm provides fresh vegetables weekly and St. Luke's provides non-perishable food items for participants to take home for the weekend.

Once children finish eating their meal, they are invited to enjoy toys, games, and activities available to them through a generous donation from our friends at Mercy School for Special Learning, Allentown.

Thanks to a private grant, family members who accompany the school-aged children also are welcome to enjoy meals.

On average, 40-50 meals have been served each day through the program.
For the second consecutive year, Reverend Monsignor David James, Pastor of St. Peter parish in Coplay and Diocesan Vicar General, blessed and shared Saint Anthony’s Bread with his parishioners. While doing so, he shared the origins of the beautiful tradition, offering a deeper look into the life of the Saint.

“My purpose for having this is two-fold: I want to promote devotion to Saint Anthony of Padua who was known as the ‘wonder worker’ while he was alive and after his death. We pray to him when we lose something, but his intercession for making miracles happen, such as restoring the dead to life and having a donkey kneel to the Blessed Sacrament to prove the Real Presence to a non-believer, is so important,” said Msgr. James.

“We need to promote devotions to the saints and to Our Lady and Our Lord to help fill out the spiritual lives of the faithful. In so many places the devotional life of the faithful has been reduced to just Mass and confession. And while these are fine and most important, the human soul yearns for the sacred and devotions like Saint Anthony’s Bread provides a tangible devotion. The other purpose of doing the devotion is to help feed the poor beyond the boundaries of the parish. While ‘charity begins at home,’ as members of the Church, the Body of Christ, we must extend our charity to the world, to our brothers and sisters who we do not know and may not ever see,” he said.

The devotion was held the weekend after St. Anthony’s feast day of June 13. After the blessing, parishioners were invited to take the bread and make a freewill offering. Proceeds were donated to Catholic Charities’ Soup Kitchen in Allentown and the Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative. Thank you to our friends at St. Peter!