When Gabriel Partee walked through the doors of Catholic Charities, the young mother of two had one goal in mind: “To be stable enough to provide for myself and my kids.”

At 28, Gabriel, has children ages 9 and 3. She also has an associate’s degree in culinary arts. But when she arrived at Catholic Charities of West Tennessee (CCWTN), she had been living with her mother for about a year after losing her job, car and house following a personal hardship. But Gabriel was determined to find another job and had sent out more than 100 applications with no luck. “I was about to give up.”

When a friend recommended the Driving the Dream program at CCWTN, Gabriel decided to give it a try. Catholic Charities is one of four care coordination hubs in Memphis for Driving the Dream, a United Way-funded program that approaches poverty much as a physician approaches any treatable condition. The care coordinator assesses issues contributing to a client’s poverty and connects them to necessary services to move them toward self-sufficiency.

In Gabriel’s case, that is exactly what happened. CCWTN care coordinator Deloris Clayborne arranged an interview for Gabriel at Patrick’s Restaurant, where she now works part-time as a cook. “That was a huge step for me,” she said. Gabriel was especially happy to learn that she could find employment doing something she enjoys.

With her new income, Gabriel was able to pay for an apartment, into which she recently moved. Her uncle helped her find a car to purchase. Now, Deloris is referring her to Porter-Leath to get Early Headstart services for her son, who is 3.

Gabriel will keep in touch with Deloris twice a month for the next 12 months as part of the Driving the Dream program, and she truly appreciates Deloris’ approach. “She seems like a mother to me, caring about how I’m feeling. You don’t find that very often.” And Gabriel’s children appreciate their mother’s newfound independence. “My daughter loves it when I drop her off at school and pick her up,” Gabriel said. “She was waiting for that.”

Catholic Charities helps to fulfill a mother’s dream

Catholic Charities of West Tennessee is forming a Teen Advisory Board of high school students to promote leadership and philanthropy in our local youth. Members will experience first-hand the different shapes that philanthropy can take through activities that help them give their time and talent.

Group activities will include boxing meals, community cookouts, supply drives and special projects. Interested students may apply by contacting our volunteer coordinator at mandy.lamey@acc.cdom.org.

Teens who went on the Catholic Charities Texas mission trip this summer will provide leadership to the advisory board. They include Olivia Stonecipher, a graduate of Immaculate Conception Cathedral School; Gracie Fogerty, a St. Agnes Academy graduate; Maddie Fay, a St. Agnes senior; and Grayson Clothier, a Christian Brothers High School senior.
How one First Responder makes giving a priority

At 30, John Stukenborg is one of the younger First Responders to Poverty at Catholic Charities of West Tennessee. First Responders are monthly donors to Catholic Charities.

“The connotation of a First Responder just really resonated with me,” said John, a father of two with one on the way. “While we have been deemed the most charitable city in the country, we also have the biggest gap between those who have and those who have not. Being a First Responder helps bridge that gap.”

John and his wife, Ann-Katherine, have a monthly budget conversation that includes giving to their parish, Catholic Charities and some other ministries.

“Making it a priority now will allow the habit of giving to grow over time,” said John, a recruiter for a life sciences company.

John is completing his second term on the Board of Directors for Catholic Charities. He also has done volunteer work with Room in the Inn, Dorothy Day House and St. Mary’s Soup Kitchen. A lifelong Catholic and Memphian, he is a parishioner at St. Louis Catholic Church. John graduated from Christian Brothers High School, Mississippi State University for undergraduate studies, and Christian Brothers University for an MBA.

John acknowledges that he is in a busy season of life and mentioned this as one reason he appreciates the chance to be a First Responder to Catholic Charities. “I know my giving is getting into the hands of the people who need it most.”

Become a First Responder today by going to ccttn.org/about/first-responders or by designating First Responder in the enclosed envelope.

Immigration Services: The gift of serving God’s people

A native of Sudan, Matt* fled his home country following the second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005), which resulted in the deaths of two million people and the displacement of four million more.

He and his family lived in a refugee camp in Chad for 10 years before coming to the U.S. in 2016. In Memphis, Matt and his wife can raise their five children without fear.

Matt first came to Catholic Charities of West Tennessee for help preparing the forms that grant him legal permanent residence. Our Immigration Services program helped prepare the forms for an adjustment of status, which is the first step on the legal path to U.S. citizenship.

It can take as long as seven months to get green cards, which verify individuals as legal permanent residents. As Matt and his family waited for their green cards, he worked at a warehouse and the children went to school.

But Matt ran into problems when he went to renew his driver’s license. DMV staff kept asking for additional documents and would not renew the license.

“So Matt was overjoyed when Chris Buson, director of Immigration Services at Catholic Charities, called recently to tell him that green cards had arrived. ‘I’ve seen joy in peoples’ faces but I saw relief in his face like I had never seen in any others,’ she said.

Green cards are valid for 10 years, and Matt and his family are eligible to apply in five years to become U.S. citizens. The Immigration program served 482 individuals in 2018. Although the agency is no longer taking on new legal clients in Immigration, Chris is working to complete the 175 cases that remain active.

Catholic Charities will continue to provide supportive services to immigrants and refugees and offer English as a Second Language classes and naturalization classes to help them prepare for their citizenship interviews. “It is a gift to serve God’s people,” Chris said.

*Name changed to protect client’s privacy.
families and veterans, the hungry, the sick and all God’s people in need, I am pleading for all to place a special importance on helping God’s children who are living on the margins. Please consider becoming a First Responder to Poverty – a monthly donor to Catholic Charities – today by designating First Responder in the enclosed envelope.

Let us share a small part of our comforts to help others with their necessities of life.

On behalf of those we serve together,

Richard C. Hackett
Executive Director
Catholic Charities of West Tennessee
Cell – (901) 265-0121

Volunteers create walking bags of nutrition for the homeless.
We would like to thank the following benefactors for their generous support:

- Mr. and Mrs. Dave Kevern
- Mr. and Mrs. Bill Duncan
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dodd
- Mr. Charles White
- Holy Cross Catholic Church
- Inventory Locator Service, LLC
- Mr. and Mrs. Raphael Schweiger
- Mrs. Frances James

How does Catholic Charities serve the poor?

- **Fig Tree Emergency Services**: Food pantry, Clothing Closet and mobile food outreach.
- **Housing Ministry**: Connects homeless individuals with permanent stable housing.
- **Immigration Services**: Provides support and guidance to those seeking a legal path to citizenship.
- **Driving the Dream**: Connects people to the resources needed to move out of poverty.
- **Birthright Collaboration**: Provides maternity clothing and a food box monthly to mothers in need.
- **Summer Reading Room**: Offers a free book and reading time for children of clients.

Mission Statement: Following the teachings of Jesus Christ, we provide help to those in need and bring them hope by supporting them on the path from poverty to self-sufficiency.

Service Overview: Catholic Charities of West Tennessee serves people regardless of religious beliefs, socioeconomic status or ethnic background. Catholic Charities is not just for the Catholic community, it is from the Catholic community.

Visit us at CCWTN.org

Catholic Charities of West Tennessee is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donations are deductible as allowed by law.