



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph Announces Mabee Foundation Challenge Grant

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Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph is pleased to announce that it has been issued a \$900,000 challenge grant from The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation. The Mabee Foundation awards challenge grants to inspire widespread public support and act as a catalyst to assist grantees in reaching their fundraising goals. In support of a larger \$4.3 million renovation project, this grant will be fulfilled to Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph when the challenge amount of \$906,437 is raised toward the total project cost. The deadline to raise the challenge amount is July 11, 2024.

Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph obtained appropriate zoning and completed the purchase of the former St. Matthew Church and grounds in April of 2022 and moved interim operations to that location in June after completing some basic repairs. With visibility and easy accessibility from major thoroughfares like Blue Ridge Blvd, and Longview Road, this location is ideal for serving Kansas City and communities to the south by addressing food insecurity and other barriers faced by at-risk families.

“23% of the families residing in the Ruskin Heights/Hickman Mills area live below the federal poverty rate. Two-thirds of them have children in the home, with the majority being single parents. 82% of the children in the area qualify for free or reduced lunch.” explains Karen Noel, CEO of Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph, “This makes not only our food pantry but our wrap-around family support services critical to their stability and efforts to climb out of poverty.”

When complete, the pantry will feature a significant shopping area where individuals have a retail grocery store experience of walking through the aisles selecting their food from shelf stable, fresh produce, dairy and frozen food options. This client-choice model allows little waste, as families can choose foods that meet their unique dietary and cultural needs. This model ensures healthy options for client food selections and provides a dignified way to access pantry services while also serving as an entry point

to other wrap around social services to support an individual's employment, family or housing needs.

A demonstration kitchen will offer recipes and cooking techniques using the currently available foods in the pantry – some of which may be unfamiliar to our clients. A meeting space is planned to allow families and case workers or specialists to have private conversations and intake meetings so appropriate wrap around services may be identified and provided. Volunteers can assist families as they shop, work in the warehouse sorting and stocking food, or filling online orders for families who make their selections via our website.

Through the Serve & Lift Center, Catholic Charities provides a hub for services and a place where those in need and those who wish to serve can create community and restore hope. Each phase of the project will be completed in a sequence that will allow the Serve & Lift Food Pantry to remain open and allow families to utilize the enhanced spaces as they are complete.

“ We are excited to be part of this project via a Mabee Foundation challenge grant,” said Michael Goeke, Executive Director of the Mabee Foundation. “When the board considered this request, they clearly saw the need for the pantry and the value of repurposing a former church building in the neighborhood.”

The Mabee Foundation was founded in 1948 by John E. Mabee and his wife, Lottie E. Mabee. Their legacy of giving includes projects in the areas of education, social and humanitarian services, medical and health and culture and religion. The foundation limits grants to ‘brick and mortar’ projects in a six-state region consisting of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas, Missouri, and Kansas.

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Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph

Founded in 1879, Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph advocates for and serves the vulnerable and those in need. Today, Catholic Charities delivers support through 27 counties in western Missouri with a focus “To Serve & To Lift” by providing emergency assistance, food pantries and robust programming in the areas of employment services, financial services, children and family supports (including adoption services), rapid and permanent supportive housing and more.

www.catholiccharities-kcsj.org