

SERVING AND LIFTING THOSE WHO SEEK EMPLOYMENT WHY MILLIONS OF JOB OPENINGS AREN'T TRANSLATING TO EMPLOYMENT

Have you ever seen someone holding a cardboard sign at an intersection and thought to yourself, "there are 'Now Hiring' signs in every store window – why aren't you working?" I thought that until I came to work as an employment specialist at Catholic Charities and tried to get those very same people into the booming labor market. – Deanna Ricke

According to a May 13th, 2024 report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Missouri has 82,000 open jobs, and for every 100 open jobs, there are only 53 available workers. Kansas has 167,000 open jobs and only 51 available workers for every 100 open jobs. It seems counter intuitive, then that every day, men and women are desperately trying to find a job and are unable to do so.

It is not because they are not qualified for the work that is available. Industries most in need of workers include food service, leisure and hospitality, landscaping, cleaners and waste disposal workers; it's not because these available workers are unwilling to do these jobs.

There are 5 main reasons willing workers in Kansas City are unable to land a job:

1. Insufficient Documentation

- You cannot work without an original birth certificate (copies don't count) and a valid government-issued ID. Many, many people do not have these documents, and obtaining them can be problematic. And expensive. In most states, to obtain a birth certificate, you must present a valid government-issued ID. But guess what you need to get a government-issued ID? A birth certificate. It is the definition of a Catch-22.
- In order to get an ID, you also need proof of residency and address – a utility bill, for instance. But many of our clients do not have this. They are couch surfing or living in shelters, abandoned buildings, or on the streets.



Deanna Ricke, teaching her weekly Employment Services Workshop

- **Catholic Charities helps clients navigate this complicated process and Catholic Charities pays the necessary fees.**
- 2. **Enormous Technological Hurdles**
 - 99% of clients do not own a computer and have virtually no computer experience; unfortunately, 99% of employers no longer offer any way to apply except online.
 - While clients can apply on their cell phone...
 - As hard as it is to believe, not everyone has a cell phone. Missouri releases roughly 282,000 people from its prisons and jails each year, and many of those who come to us have no phone and no money to buy a phone. Some have not used a cell phone in years and have zero ability to use one.
 - Applying for a job on a cell phone is difficult and time consuming. It requires creating multiple accounts and passwords, dual authentication, filling

out complicated online forms, and uploading digital copies of resumes, cover letters, IDs etc. I do this work every day, and even I struggle to do all of this on a cell phone.

- Many low-income folks have inexpensive phones and plans with limited data, making it impossible for them to upload all of the required documents.
- The average cost of monthly internet service is \$75.00, and the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provided a \$30 monthly subsidy for internet service, ended June 1st. This program was used by ~ 1 in 5 households, and a recent effort to extend the funding failed in Congress.



Please continue reading on page 2

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

From the very beginning of time as recounted in the book of Genesis, God created man and work, and it was good. *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”* Genesis 2:15

At Catholic Charities we believe in the blessing and dignity that work provides. We have hundreds of clients who go through our workforce development services every year to gain employment. Our front line staff includes one person in Kansas City and one person in St. Joseph.

The team helps a wide variety of people whether they are coming out of incarceration, single mothers or underemployed searching for a family supportive income. For our clients, work is transformative.

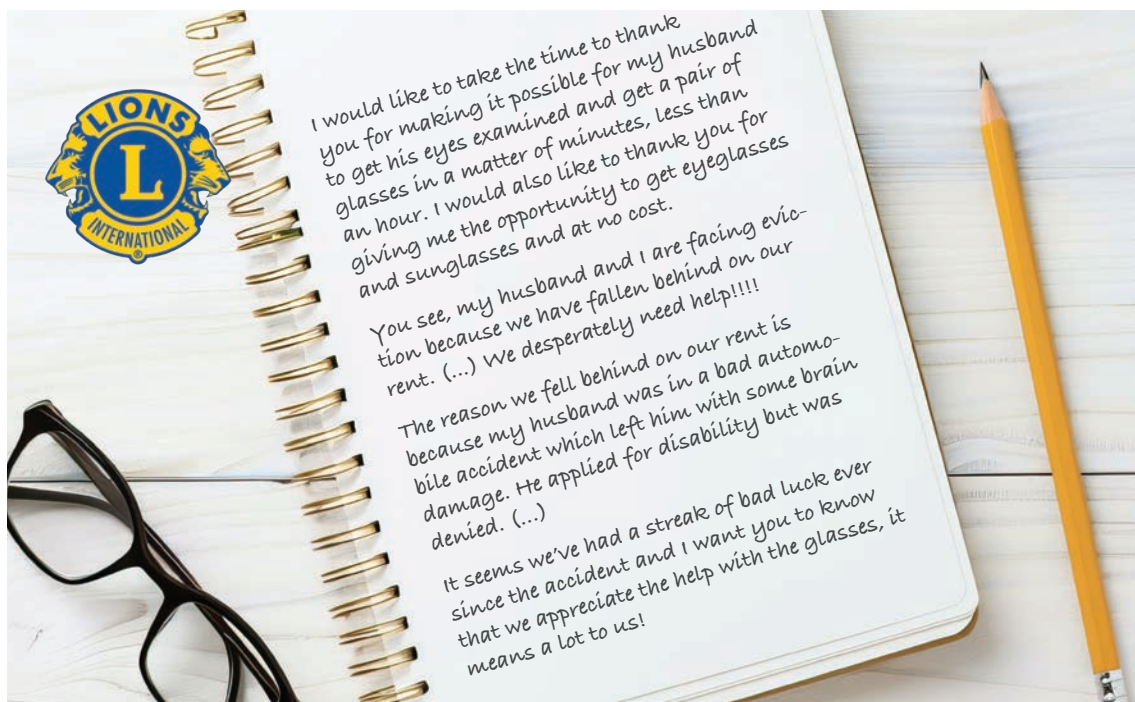
I want to share a quote from our client Chris when he commented about his job and being

able for the first time to provide for himself and his family he said ‘It’s a big deal.’ And yes, it is a big deal.

The volume of clients coming to us continues to grow. We are at the point where we cannot serve all who seek help and sadly, we are having to turn folks away. If you are interested in teaching a workforce development class or assisting clients with their job search, please prayerfully consider volunteering. Our goal is to turn no one away and support all who want to be self-sufficient. You can share the blessing of work to all who seek it. Contact Amy Wiedmaier to sign up as a volunteer: volunteers@ccharities.com

God bless.

**By Karen Noel, Chief Executive Officer
of Catholic Charities of Kansas City–St. Joseph**



Free Eyeglass and Medical Screening Clinic

WHEN: Saturday, August 17th, 2024 • TIME: 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

WHERE: 4001 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Suite 250, Kansas City, MO 64130

Visit <https://catholiccharities-kcsj.org/eyeclinic/> for more details. **Registration Required.**

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- Libraries (and their free WiFi) can and do help, but librarians cannot possibly provide the amount of individual support and time that is needed.
- Catholic Charities helps clients create electronic resumes, apply for jobs, and teaches clients how to use job search sites and prepare for interviews.**

3. Getting to work in Kansas City is difficult- and often impossible - if you don't own a car.

- More than 10% of Kansas City households do not own a car and public transportation options- while improving – remain limited and unreliable.
- There are no buses to some of our largest employers, including the Ford Claycomo plant, the new Meta Data Center, and the Panasonic Battery plant.
- Kansas City's unions are in desperate need of workers – but one requirement is that workers must have a car, because they are often expected to travel to different job sites during the day.
 - Catholic Charities educates people on cheap transportation alternatives like RideKC Flex, and the new ride share service, IRIS, that is similar to Uber, but partially funded by the city, allowing Kansas Citians to move about the city for a fraction of the cost of Uber.

4. Many employers refuse to consider those with a felony record.

- As mentioned earlier, Missouri releases roughly 282,000 people from its prisons and jails each year; although some employers will consider those with a record, most will not. Their justice-involved history creates additional barriers:
 - Of all offenders, sex offenders have the most difficulty securing employment. It can be surprising what is included in the sex offense category: one client's offense had been urinating in a public park. At the time of the conviction, this was considered a sex offense. The client is working to have this expunged, but until then the person will probably remain unemployed.
 - Many clients have served time for some type of non-violent drug-related offense and will not be considered by most employers, despite the fact that many employers will require these applicants to pass drug screens before and during employment.

5. To quote Matthew 9:35 “The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few.” The efforts described in this article to assist individuals in returning to work are time-consuming. Catholic Charities' Employment Services — which only includes one front line staff person — served 350 households last year. Far more men and women need this type of support and service to lift our city's unemployed over the digital divide and into the wonderful world of work.

**By Deanna Ricke, Employment Specialist
at Catholic Charities of Kansas City–St. Joseph**

NEW (FISCAL) YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE!



Like most non profit organizations, Catholic Charities operates on a fiscal year – July 1 to June 30. This means that every year, July 1st is New Year’s Day for us! It’s the time that new budgets are in place, annual plans become active and data collection about services provided and outcomes achieved begins anew.

Each July 1st feels like a new beginning, but 2024 has a special sparkle to it. This year, we’ll complete renovations of the former St. Matthew Church and it will fully open as the Serve and Lift Center. Food pantry services will take on a new look, as clients will now be afforded a shopping experience and one-to-one support from a volunteer or staff person as they make their choices. Our client centric service model of full intake meetings with a specialist and specific



referrals to internal programs and supports will be more robust as staff from all our program areas will be housed at the Serve and Lift Center, and connecting clients to the appropriate case worker or specialist will be seamless.

This also means that opportunities to fulfill the mission of Catholic Charities will be much more available to donors and volunteers. The new location affords the space for dozens of volunteers to assist with sorting and inventorying food donations. It provides opportunities for directly assisting clients as they make their food choices in the pantry. Employment services like resume review or job interview prep will need more and more volunteers to sit with men and women who are seeking jobs – often for the first time in years



– and prepare them to present their best selves to prospective employers -and then celebrate with them when a job offer is extended.

This new year, more than any other of our 145 years of service, invites you to be part of serving and lifting our neighbors in need. Your volunteer time weekly can change the trajectory of someone’s life. Your monthly donation to support the food pantry can keep children from going to bed hungry. Your presence at the Center is truly a sign of God among His people.

Come celebrate the new year with us!
By Susan Walker, Executive Director of Outreach and Engagement at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph





CATHOLIC CHARITIES

KANSAS CITY • ST. JOSEPH

Serve&Lift

CENTER

FOOD & JOBS HOPE & HELP

Ribbon Cutting
November 7, 2024, 4:30pm

HOPE BALL CELEBRATES CLIENTS, INAUGURAL OUR LADY OF HOPE SOCIETY

The annual Hope Ball, chaired by Rita and Lamar Hunt, Jr., raised over \$2 million to benefit the programs and services at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph. The beautiful evening, held on April 27 at the Historic Muehlebach Hotel, put a spotlight on the clients served by Catholic Charities and inducted 12 young ladies and 12 young men into the newly created Our Lady of Hope Society.



Rita and Lamar Hunt, Jr, Honorary Chairs



The special moment of Chris Schump meeting Terry Dunn. Chris works at JE Dunn, supporting his family for the first time in his life.

Catholic Charities was pleased to extend an invitation to six of our clients who had previously received services at our agency. One of our client attendees, Chris Schump, highlighted his experience from spending time in prison to working on construction sites as a carpenter in the event’s featured video. Chris’ journey came full circle when he had the

opportunity to meet Peggy and Terry Dunn: Terry is the retired CEO of his employer, JE Dunn.

“Big blessings are possible,” Chris said. “The life I live today I never thought I was capable of.”

This year’s Hope Ball was reimagined to honor junior and seniors in high school, who were nominated by their community based on their acts of charity, good character, and living out their Catholic faith.

One of this year’s honorees, Notre Dame de Sion senior Arleth Recio, was recognized for creating the new logo for the Hope Ball. The design of the Blessed Virgin Mary was special to Arleth.



“My family and I view Mary as La Virgen de Guadalupe. It’s such a beautiful story of how she appeared to Juan Gabriel. I view Mary as a second mother, as my holy mother,” she said.

The honorees began the evening with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Johnston, who later blessed and presented the young people with special medals of Our Lady of Hope. In addition to the video and remarks by Catholic Charities CEO Karen Noel and Co-Chairs Rita and Lamar Hunt, Jr., the event included a formal waltz by the honorees and culminated in a performance by KC FLO and dancing into the evening.



Guests revel in the joy of the Hope Ball, dancing the night away for a worthy cause.



Inaugural Our Lady of Hope Society Class with Karen Noel, CEO CCKCSJ, Bishop James V. Johnston, and Michael J. Nolte, Ball Chairman

“My mom and I stayed until the end of the ball literally dancing the night away,” said Arleth. “It is something I will never forget.”

Since the ball, Arleth has graduated from Notre Dame de Sion and is planning on attending Creighton University with a major in biochemistry or biology on a pre-med track. Arleth also intends to stay true to her Catholic faith.

“If I could lead a Catholic ministry in the future, it will definitely have something to do with healthcare since medicine is something I love,” she said.

Arleth provided the following advice for any incoming high school student who wants to participate in Our Lady of Hope Society: “If you are nominated and even a tiny bit interested, you should do it! It was a ton of fun and honestly so worth it.”

Do you know an exemplary high school student who will be a junior or senior during the 2024-2025 school year? Have they demonstrated a commitment to the Catholic Charities’ Mission? Catholic Charities has already started accepting applications for student nominations for next spring’s 2025 Hope Ball. Deadline to submit is 9/27/2024.

If you’re interested in volunteering and/or learning more about Catholic Charities, please call 816.221.4377 or email at assistance@ccharities.com or visit one of our locations. You may also visit our website for more information: www.catholiccharities-kcsj.org

**By Katie Pike, Events and Appeals Manager
at Catholic Charities of Kansas City–St. Joseph**

Photographers: John Caulfield and Glenn Hemberger

Nominate your student for the 2025 Our Lady of Hope Society!

To enter a candidate for consideration:
Student meets below criteria.

Catholic Identity

- Adhere to Catholic Social Teachings
- Acts of Charity (Service hours that comply with high school criteria)

Character

- Student in good standing
- Involved in the community

Academic

- Minimum GPA 3.0



SCAN ME

The last day to nominate a student is 9/27/2024.
<https://www.catholiccharitiesgala.org/ourladyofhopesociety>

THE VISTA AND AMERICORPS PROGRAM: STEVE HAGELMAN'S JOURNEY

Steve Hagelman, a career market researcher, joined Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph (CCKCSJ) to leverage his storytelling skills. His past experience in understanding lifestyles and attitudes through video storytelling has seamlessly transitioned into his role at Catholic Charities.

Understanding VISTA and AmeriCorps

Steve likens AmeriCorps to a domestic version of the Peace Corps. “The United States needs our help too,” he emphasizes, finding AmeriCorps a perfect avenue to utilize his skills for community benefit.

Why AmeriCorps?

Steve discovered AmeriCorps through a job listing for a documentary project. Intrigued, he kept the program in mind and later found his current position through Indeed. This is his first time serving as a VISTA.

Lessons and Benefits

During his tenure, Steve has gained deep insights into the nonprofit sector's complexities and challenges. He also honed his filmmaking skills, shooting more



Steve Hagelman, Marketing and Communication VISTA video than many professional videographers. “I will leave a better videographer than I arrived,” he notes. The key benefit, according to Steve, is the ability to help the community while maintaining financial security. AmeriCorps provides flexibility in how members contribute, unlike traditional employment.

Memorable Experiences

Steve cherishes the supportive environment his coworkers provide. Creating videos that showcase the success stories of Catholic Charities' clients has been particularly rewarding. “It thrills me when someone I've filmed loves the story I've told about them,” he shares.

Advice for Prospective Members

Steve recommends AmeriCorps/VISTA as a fulfilling path for those seeking to serve their country. While it may not suit everyone, especially those with significant financial obligations, it offers a productive gap year for young people and a gateway into nonprofit work.

Final Thoughts

Reflecting on his experience, Steve has “no regrets.” His time with AmeriCorps/VISTA has been enriching and impactful, reinforcing the value of dedicating oneself to community service.

By Ashley Everett, Director of Marketing and Communications at Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph



Kari Tibbets, Volunteer Associate VISTA



Shayna Deitchman, AmeriCorps Disaster Case Manager.

CCKCSJ had two VISTAs and one AmeriCorps Member that chose to share their talents with us this past year.

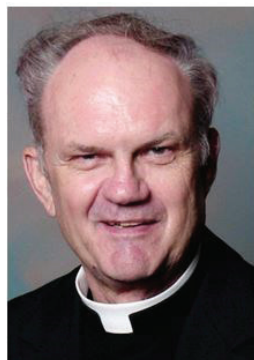


Kari Tibbets, Volunteer Associate VISTA, Steve Hagelman, Marketing and Communications VISTA, and Shayna Deitchman AmeriCorps Disaster Case Manager.

If you are interested in becoming a VISTA or AmeriCorps Member, scan the QR code and watch a video, created by Steve. Or visit: <https://catholiccharities-kcsj.org/careers> to see Job Postings and Service Postings.

EVERYONE WILL LEAVE A LEGACY—WHAT WILL YOURS BE?

“For I was ... in prison and you visited me. ... Whatever you did for one of the least of my children, you did for me.”



Fr. Ernie Gauthier

Visiting and supporting incarcerated and recently released men and women was a hallmark of Fr. Ernie Gauthier’s ministry from the time he was a young deacon in 1961. He became so invested in this ministry that he studied and became a licensed clinical social worker in order to better serve. He often noted the changes he had seen in the jails and the criminal justice system over the decades. Buildings and facility campuses have opened and closed. One thing that has remained the same, however, is that it’s depressing.

“It’s not the inmates that are depressing,” Father Ernie noted in a 2016 interview, “it’s the criminal justice system.”

The behaviors that often put people behind bars are often only a symptom of deeper problems. He described it as the tip of an iceberg. “How much is above the surface? Only about 10 percent. Beneath all this is a co-occurring disorder or distraction that must be recognized and addressed or the problem above the surface is not going away. Unfortunately, society is more interested in punishing behavior than curing it.”

Treating incarcerated individuals with dignity and respect was his focus for nearly half of his life: for more than 40 years he was a regular visitor to Jackson County facilities and worked to connect people with appropriate supports and resources when they were released from custody.

He was an ardent supporter of Catholic Charities’ work, especially with employment services that supported a newly released person as they worked to build a new life “on the outside.” Finding a living wage job is critical – and overcoming the stigma of incarceration is hard. Fr. Ernie knew that these men and women needed support to transition into a successful, self-sufficient life.

To that end, when his parents passed and he inherited funds from their estate, he established a fund to support employment services (then called the Turnaround program) at Catholic Charities – designed to help justice-involved individuals find meaningful employment and be successful in a post-incarceration life.

When Fr. Ernie passed away in 2023, he had made arrangements for his support of employment services to continue well past his life on earth. His estate gift will fund the employment training and needs of this group of people – so often shunned and hampered by their past mistakes. In line with a basic premise of Catholic Social Teaching, Fr. Ernie is making certain that these clients are welcomed with dignity and supported as they begin a new life.

If there is an area of service inside Catholic Charities that you strongly believe in, a bequest is a wonderful way to have your impact known far beyond your years. For information, reach out to Catholic Charities and ask about including the agency in your estate plans.

By Susan Walker, Executive Director of Outreach and Engagement at Catholic Charities of Kansas City–St. Joseph



Fr. Ernie’s priesthood was the cornerstone of his life of service. Typically, memorial markers list birth and death dates as highlights of a person’s life, but Fr. Ernie chose to emphasize his day of ordination.

**OUTPACE
POVERTY
5K RUN/WALK**



**Save the Date for our Annual
Outpace Poverty 5K!**

October 12, 2024 • Avila University
outpacepoverty.org

Your participation matters! Lace up your running/walking shoes, gather your food donations, and come out for a day of fun, fitness, and philanthropy.



HopeMatters

2024 DRIVING FOR HOPE 4-PERSON SCRAMBLE JULY 15TH

EVENT DETAILS

REGISTRATION/BREAKFAST 8:00 AM
SHOTGUN START 9:00 AM
AWARDS 2:00 PM

INDIVIDUAL ENTRY: \$150

REGISTER AT:
CATHOLICCHARITIES-KCSJ.ORG/DRIVINGFORHOPE



LOCATION

Lakewood Oaks Country Club
651 NE Saint Andrews Circle
Lee's Summit, MO 64064



Catholic Charities of Kansas City – St. Joseph
4001 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Suite 250
Kansas City, MO 64130
816.221.4377

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
KANSAS CITY MO
PERMIT NO. 1228

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Dear Friends of CCKCSJ,

Summer is in full swing and Phase II of the South Serve&Lift Center renovation is well underway. This has brought some wonderful enhancements to our Food Pantry at that location!

Thanks to an incredible group of volunteers and our tireless Pantry Manager, Janine Urness, moving from the west wing to the newly constructed pantry side was completed in under three hours!

Janine has built a compassionate, organized team of dedicated volunteers at the South Pantry. Her commitment to ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for those we serve, as well as the volunteers who serve with us daily is an inspiration.

Serving 360 households per month and growing, the Kansas City pantry is operated by two dedicated staff members and more than 50 volunteers: filling roles as stockers, greeters, food delivery assistants and drivers. We need you!

Volunteer opportunities are expanding within our KC Welcome Center as we look forward to a full-service opening Fall 2024. Beyond the walls of the Serve&Lift, we are currently seeking volunteers for outreach in our 27-county area, including our food and hygiene satellite



Janine Urness with volunteer Jim Tiehen

distribution sites in St. Joseph and Cameron, as well as in more rural communities such as Trenton and Gallatin.

The CC Volunteer Team is working harder than ever to build a strong community of friends willing and able to serve in a variety of roles and grow with us! Please join us! Bring a friend! Share with others! We need you!

To find out if volunteering is right for you, please reach out to our Volunteer VISTA at volunteers@ccharities.com or visit our <https://catholiccharities-kcsj.org/volunteer>.

By Kari Tibbetts, Volunteer Associate VISTA at Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph



WATCH OUR VIDEO

May 2024

Cameron Distribution by the numbers

Households – 139
Adults – 150
Children – 182
Seniors – 87
Male – 153
Female – 231
Hygiene – 1360

Total Pounds Distributed
(Non-Perishable) – 2668.73lbs

S. Serve&Lift Center by the numbers

Households – 312
Adults – 653
Children – 491
Seniors – 47
Male – 575
Female – 631
Hygiene – 5283

Total weight distributed – 21,195 lbs